BEESTON'S BOYS AND NEGOTIATIONS OF SOVEREIGNTY IN LATE CAROLINE DRAMA

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION: FLESHING OUT THE BODY OF KNOWLEDGE WITH KNOWLEDGE OF BODIES

On the morning of January 30, 1649, while Charles I of England was busy consulting with Thomas Herbert, his groom of the stool, in a locked chamber at St. James's Palace, the leaders of the Parliamentary Commission for his trial and execution were on a desperate search for a proper and willing candidate to wield the fatal axe. Hugh Ross Williamson reports that thirty-eight sergeants who formed the ranks of Hugh's, Hacker's, and Fairfax's armies were gathered "and then offered 100 pounds and the promise of rapid preferment in the army to any two sergeants who would come forward as volunteers for the post of headsman and headsman's assistant. All the sergeants refused, though not with the same emphasis" (80). Grudgingly accepting this unanimous refusal, the Commissioners then approached and threatened Richard Brandon, the common hangman, to assume the distasteful role. Though fearful for his safety, "Brandon . . . refused absolutely to do what was asked of him" (81). Some scholars contend inconclusively that Brandon's refusal was only a public ruse to cloak a deed that was undertaken anonymously. The identities of the two masked men who ultimately agreed to sever the sovereign's head from his body are still shrouded in conjectural mystery, though many theories that implicate Richard Brandon, William Hulet, and George Joyce, among others, have been promulgated. The actual name of the headsman, however, is not of primary importance. Of more

significance are the instances of denial both to enact and publicly claim responsibility for regicide. This reveals that the King's material body still carried a symbolic potency as a reification of the state despite socio-political counter currents arguing for a Commonwealth rid of monarchical tyranny and two civil wars that resulted in countless deaths of those either enlarging or proscribing the powers invested in that body. Revisionist historians continue to overturn notions of Charles's overwhelming unpopularity and, as Sean Kelsey argues, that the "trial was [a] simple prelude to regicide." Instead, Kelsey asserts that "his execution was in fact the unlooked-for outcome of a proceeding undertaken to quite opposite ends" (585). Throughout the trial there hovered the possibility of settlement if only Charles could have recognized the legitimacy of the Long Parliament, and even as the judgment was passed, its endorsement was not unanimous. The King was, to many, still a king.

It would be hard to imagine that the King's person could be rhetorically and univocally maintained as a polarized site of popular antipathy in the midst of such ambivalence about his execution. Charles's chief nemesis in the civil wars, General Thomas Lord Fairfax, could not endorse the proceedings against the King and excused himself from attending the trial where his wife was heard to expostulate that not "half or a quarter" of the people of England accused Charles of high treason and that "Oliver Cromwell is a traitor" (Williamson 40). And the events of 1641 provide evidence to support Lady Fairfax's asseveration of the King's innocence. Just seven years prior on the 25th of November, Charles ceremonially processed through the streets of London to massive encomium in an entertainment entitled *England's Comfort and London's Joy*: "the people responded with loud and joyful acclamations, crying God Bless and long live King Charles and Queen Mary, and their majesties reciprocally and heartily bless[ed] and thank[ed] the people with as great expressions of joy" (qtd. in Cust 314). On the eve of large-scale sectarian strife, Charles's corporeal being was still received by most as the natural, immovable head of state and locus of religious authority. However, in the midst of the common counter argument

that the King was being misled by "evil, popish counselors," was an effort by a minority of MPs to distinguish and separate loyalty owed to the body politic from the loyalty owed to the King's natural person.

> Acts of justice and protection are not exercised in his [the king's] own person, nor depend upon his pleasure, but by his courts and ministers who must do their duty therein though the king in his own person should forbid them; and therefore if judgements [sic] should be given by them against the king's will and personal command, yet they are the king's judgments. (Rushworth 3: 588)

This line of argumentation aimed to abrogate the medieval doctrine of the King's Two Bodies as characterized by Kantorowicz; a doctrine in which "The King's Two Bodies thus form one unit indivisible, each being fully contained in the other" (9). Whatever impurities or imperfections that are contained in the body natural are purged by the body politic, and the two form a purified whole. Charles, coming from a line of monarchs who continually stressed the Divine Right of Kings, clung closely to the traditional Two Bodies concept. He responded to rhetoric against the authority invested in his corporality by stating, "allegiance [of] all our good subjects . . . is due unto the natural person of their prince, and not to his crown or kingdom distinct from his natural capacity" (Larkin 2: 773-4). And the difficulty in finding an executioner as late as 1649 would seem to suggest that this medieval view endorsed by Charles had deep, recalcitrant roots for many English.

The same ambiguity surrounding the King's body cannot be located surrounding representations of either the king or the polity, as both were open to interrogation, ridicule, and violence. Puritanical iconoclasm had swelled in the main current of thought and in 1643 sixty members of Parliament voted to destroy the contents of the Catholic Queen Henrietta Maria's chapel. John Clotworthy, Henry Marten, and a band of troops broke through the chapel door, "struck the painted image of Christ's face 'with terrible words', then struck the face of the Virgin 'and then, thrusting the hook of his halberd under the feet of the crucified Christ, [Clotworthy]

ripped the painting to pieces.' The fragments were thrown in the Thames" (Purkiss 244). Of course, this is an extreme example of violence against an identifiably Catholic forum recessed within an Anglican nation just after the start of the Civil War, but the paintings are also the iconic property of the monarchy and should reverberate with some sanctity. The assault is one example among many of sublimated violence against the King's body, thus being redirected at his wife's property in lieu of his person. It is not that Caroline culture regarded the body as inviolable. Quite the contrary, it was an ethos steeped in martyrdom. The mortification and immolation of the flesh was a testament to faith on both sides of the Protestant-Catholic divide. Hugh Latimer, in a letter to Henry VIII dated 1530, pithily encapsulates the valorization of martyrdom, "where the word of God is truly preached, there is persecution, aswell of hearers, as of the teachers" (qtd. in Monta 37). By 1684 there were nine complete editions of Foxe's *Acts and Monuments*, more commonly known as *Foxe's Book of Martyrs*, and more than 50 works covering the persecution of Catholics (Monta 1). Persecution was, in essence, a requirement for the validation of personal belief and proclaimed identity. In an early modern culture that prided itself on "self-fashioning," the negation of the self, whether through dismemberment, other forms of death, or suffering persecution, seemed equally important in claiming authority (Marshall 4). If the sovereign is the embodiment of ideology that subtends the socio-political unit, "a guarantor of the social order" as Susanne Scholz surmises (10), then he should be a reflection of this core value of "martyrdom," or at least an example of its believable performance.

Charles's neglect of this vital performance is perhaps what made his rule so troublesome for many of his politically minded contemporaries. His reign lacked the lavish parties and open door policy of his politic father James I, the public processionals and pictorial aggrandizement of the Virgin Queen Elizabeth I, and the Catholic assassination attempts made on both of them during their respective reigns. Instead, Charles's rule was marked by an initial favoritism of and thralldom to the Duke of Buckingham, a marriage to the French Catholic Henrietta Maria, a failure to recover the Palatinate from Spanish Catholic domination, a withdrawal from European

entanglements, an eleven year period of personal rule without Parliament from 1629-1640, ship money and taxes to finance, among other things, the enforced adoption of the Book of Common Prayer in Scotland and to suppress a rebellion in Ireland, and private, ostentatious court entertainments. None of these activities placed Charles under the threat of persecution, but were contrarily used to avert persecution. According to Kevin Sharpe, "the years after 1629 were those most in Charles's control" and he was also most in control of the representation of his own image ("So Hard a Text" 387). Rubens painted Charles as "St. George slaying the dragon, not as a warrior prince but as a chivalric lover, whose love secures a realm of peace and harmony" (Sharpe 388). Halcyon images and court masques presenting a nation and marriage secure from the destabilizing effects of turmoil were used repeatedly by Charles to convey his own potency and competency without the necessity of a bilateral Parliamentary commonwealth. But if these pictorial aggrandizements and court events were monolithic and aimed to reduce dialogic engagement with and criticism of the sovereign, English society reacted by shaping the elite theatres, The Phoenix and The Salisbury Court, into a public sphere for disenfranchised MPs and gentry as the via media between popular entertainment offered at venues like the Red Bull and those portrayals of the nation-state endorsed at court.

It is in one elite theatre troupe, The King and Queen's Young Company, popularly known as Beeston's Boys, where the ethos of martyrdom is discovered to be conjoined with a simultaneous extolment and interrogation of the sovereign. Beeston's Boys, begun at the end of 1636 under the leadership of Christopher Beeston and later his son, William Beeston, occupies a position of ambivalence in the records of late Caroline political culture. On one hand, it received the patronage of both Charles and Henrietta Maria, hearkening back to the boy companies of Paul's Boys and the Children of the Queen's Revels that existed under Elizabeth and James; on the other hand, the repertory offered a range of critiques upon contemporary society including the origin of authority to an audience comprised of disgruntled gentry and MPs. Prior scholarship has tended to discount Beeston's Boys as either a "failure" in achieving legitimate boy company

status (since it was more a company of older boys and young adults), or as a negligible anomaly arising from the crisis of an approximately seventeen month plague closure in 1636-1637. But these assumptions overlook the troupe's value as an arena for mitigated persecution and concurrent valorization of Charles's rule; in effect, becoming a sublimated martyrdom of the quasi-mythic image of a unilateral and detached sovereignty which was endorsed elsewhere by Charles.

Bentley's extensive documentary study *The Jacobean and Caroline Stage* imparts that on 21 February 1637 Christopher Beeston was given royal patronage and "commanded to erect and prepare a company of young actors for their Majesties' service" (1: 325), but the company was never a platform of agitprop delivered by Charles to his subjects. The real conditions of composition and performance were much more complicated. Bentley observes that the patronage bestowed upon Beeston's Boys was granted during a time of public theatre inactivity due to plague closure – on the 21st of February – after *Cupid's Revenge* and *Wit Without Money* were presented before the royal family at St. James on the 7th and 14th of the same month, respectively (1: 325). The gift of royal protection was less an indication of Charles's initiative and more of a testament to the 'wily' business practices and unyielding efforts of Beeston. In actuality, as both Andrew Gurr and Martin Butler have noted, a shift in royal patronage and company licensing occurred under Charles that distanced him from the practices of his father. All companies performing during James's reign were provided royal patrons, but "in the Caroline period the number of companies operating was in excess of the royal patrons to sponsor them, and the Jacobean system was tacitly dropped" (Butler, "Adult" 110). In general, companies developed a more independent status from patronage, and conversely became more tied to and representative of the theatres in which they played, thus severing ties to a the political overlordship of London and atomizing the city into neighborhoods with distinct theatrical platforms that reflected local tastes and issues (Butler, "Adult" 11). The primary home of Beeston's Boys, the elite indoor theatre The Phoenix (a.k.a. the Cockpit), formed an alternative parliament during the period of

'personal rule.' This essay argues that Charles certainly used the company to endorse images of religio-political order resonant with Elizabethan England and to adumbrate conjugal harmony and positive portrayals of Queen Henrietta Maria, but MPs, Peers, courtiers, gentry, and artists were also communicating social anxieties and concerns through a predilection for problematic tropes of inversion, disorder, abuses of power and an increased emphasis on the civic-body of London over and above notions of monarchy.

For scholars studying Caroline drama, Martin Butler's *Theatre and Crisis 1632-1642*, published in 1984, has maintained its prominent position as the seminal text which first challenged the hitherto accepted belief that theatre practitioners unarguably adopted the Cavalier position in the years leading up to and through the English Civil Wars. Butler blasted apart the historical Puritan/Cavalier binary to reveal dense networks of socio-political negotiations involving manifold gradations of political affinities carried on through courtly, elite, popular, and civic dramatic entertainments. In his text he argues

> . . . that the best courtly plays were vehicles of criticism rather than compliment; that Puritanism was often compatible with theatre-going; that the plays of the private theatres were engaged in debating serious and pressing issues; [and] . . . the popular theatre tradition still exerted a vital formative influence. (3-4)

In sum, Butler asserts that the theatre was not simply a mouthpiece for Charles's Court and Cavalier attitudes toward government, but a dynamic public forum. Because of the innovative nature of Butler's study of a neglected period of theatrical history, the scope is necessarily wide. Butler offers a broad overview and thorough examination of the theatrical conditions between the years 1632 and 1642, primarily through the conjunction of historical documents and close readings of potentially politically dissident plays, but the scale of the project limits *Theatre and Crisis* from looking microscopically and across time at a specific company's practice and repertory. Beeston's Boys, arising as it does during this moment of cultural 'crisis,' warrants

more attention for its aberrant formation, unorthodox protocol, and ambivalent attitude toward kingship and the body politic.

Many monographs on Caroline Drama have studied the work of single playwrights, representational strategies or thematics across a broad spectrum of playwrights, production companies, and theatrical venues. In contrast, Lucy Munro in her book *Children of the Queen's Revels*: *A Jacobean Theatre Repertory* looks at the production protocol and repertory of one boy company in order to examine the specific social context of production and to "acknowledg[e] the compromises writers make when they engage with institutions such as the early modern theatre" (4). Her book is perhaps the most thorough scrutiny of Boy Companies since Michael Shapiro's invaluable 1977 work *Children of the Revels: The Boy Companies of Shakespeare's Time and Their Plays* and Reavley Gair's 1982 publication *The Children of Paul's: The Story of a Theatre Company, 1553-1608*. The methodology employed in this examination of Beeston's Boys is similar to that of Munro's concentration on repertory and genre, but more attention is placed on the particular representational strains of bodies of sovereignty (ie. the King and Queen and the body politic including its extremities or fringe identities), modes of inversion (specifically sexual), the dialogic participation of Beeston's Boys in 'Elizabethanism,' the effects of theatrical rivalries and intertextualities, and the socio-political atmosphere in the western suburb surrounding the occasions of playing. The final textual product reveals The King and Queen's Young Company embedded in a tableau of overlapping and contentious discursive circles.

Similar to the scandalous satire that infused productions of The Children of the Queen's Revels, particularly the company's production of *Eastward Ho* in 1605, which transmitted anti-Scottish sentiment in the form of mockery and drew immediate indignation from James I, Beeston's Boys' often sardonic sketches subtended a fragile and tumultuous relationship with the seat of government and its Office of the Revels for roughly five years from 1637-1642. In 1640, after William Beeston had assumed control over the troupe from his father, the company fell into disfavor with Henry Herbert, the Master of the Revels, for what was almost certainly a production

of Richard Brome's *The Court Beggar* (Gurr, *Shakespearean Stage* 83). The play unabashedly mocked several member of the Queen's circle including the favored courtiers Suckling and Davenant (though the play's ridicule of Davenant is disputed). Henry Herbert, Master of the Revels, responded with the following interdiction:

> Whereas William Bieston and the Company of Players of the Cockpitt in Drury Lane have lately Acted a new play without any Licence from the M^{r} of his M^{ates} Revells & being commaunded to forbeare playing or Acting of the same play by the sayd M^{r} of the Revells & commaunded likewise to forbeare all manner of playing have notwithstanding . . . (qtd. in Bentley 1: 332-33)

The prohibition was eventually overturned and Beeston's Boys went on to mount another political satire by Richard Brome, *A Jovial Crew, or The Merry Beggars*, which indicates that, though somewhat truculent and politically questionable, the company still fulfilled a desirable function for the crown.

The desirable function for the crown was that Beeston's Boys, through organizational structure and representational strategies, participated in competing strains of what Martin Butler initially characterized as Elizabethanism: "the values of the old national myth of England's greatness which Elizabeth was supposed to have been furthering and which Charles certainly was not," despite attempts to appear as such (*Theatre and Crisis* 198). Both Puritan crusaders for the commonwealth and the centralized authority at court relied upon depictions of and references to aspects and policies of Elizabeth's reign, though oftentimes contradictory. Some of the most insightful recent examinations of the 'troublesome necessity' of participating in Elizabethanism are used by this essay to dissect the layers of ambivalence that enveloped The King and Queen's Young Company during these critical years. As a precursor to Charles's attempts to control representations of his sovereignty, Jeanne H. McCarthy in her essay "Elizabeth I's 'picture in little': Boy Company Representations of Queen's Authority" avers that Elizabeth

> attempted to shape the discourse on her rule by selectively promoting and resisting representations of her politics on stage. In particular, she asserted her prerogative of patronage to bring companies of boy actors into cultural prominence and then used the companies, in turn, as rhetorical instruments furthering her efforts to legitimate her political authority. (426)

McCarthy goes on to investigate Elizabeth's patronage through her control of revenue flows and land grants to companies, and then the Queen's manipulation of representations through "dollhouse-like stagings" in an "Elizabethan aesthetics of the miniature" which thus glorified her own dominant monarchical position atop the hierarchy (439-40). Even more directly applicable to the topic of this paper is John Watkins's book *Representing Elizabeth in Stuart England* in which he argues that representations of Elizabeth reflected "the satisfaction of a perpetual bourgeois fantasy for a lost age of charismatic absolutism" (3). Watkins first challenges the idea that Elizabethanism necessarily meant that the Stuarts were "universally unpopular" and then collapses the fictitious gaps between the reigns of Elizabeth and the Stuarts to reveal striking tactical similarities, looking most closely at the role gender played in constructions of regal authority. Together, the works of McCarthy and Watkins enable the exploration of the manifold resonances associated with usages of the Elizabethan imaginary (from which Beeston's Boys was a direct extension) during the time of Charles I's reign.

This essay is organized by first examining the larger cultural context of play production before moving onto specific readings of Beeston's Boys' repertory and, briefly, the company's significance in the post war years. Chapter 1 has noted the psychological and sociological ramifications of a culture steeped in the ideology of martyrdom and the constant necessity to perform religion and politics. Because of the shifting but overlapping modes of social, political and religious performance, Stephen Greenblatt has defined this as an era of socio-religious "double-consciousness" (to borrow a term from W.E.B DuBois) in which a "certain skeptical detachment" infected the subject's psyche and its relation to state ideology (*Will in the World* 94).

The trajectory of this paper is indebted to a pair of studies that reevaluate the importance of fragmentation in the self-fashioning of renaissance subjectivity, Cynthia Marshall's *The Shattering of the Self* and Susannah Brietz Monta's *Martyrdom and Literature in Early Modern England*. Chapter 2 explores the cultural and political environment of early 17th century London set beside the practices and representations of public and court theatres. Chapter 3 provides background on Christopher Beeston, the middle years of the 1630s, a short history of boy playing companies, and investigates the immediate pressures and enticements that could have prompted Beeston to present Fletcher's *Cupid's Revenge* before the King and Queen – a move which led to the establishment of The King and Queen's Young Company. Chapter 4 offers a look at Beeston's Boys' list of actors, organizational protocol, and repertory set against the competing aesthetics of the King's Men's courtier drama at the Blackfriars. In this chapter I argue that before Christopher Beeston's death he used the work of playwright Henry Glapthorne to draw the company closer to the court at a time when it was still politically and financially advantageous. Two of Glapthorne's plays, *The Ladies Priviledge* and *Argalus and Parthenia*, are scrutinized to expose their united reaffirmation of court values and aesthetics. Chapter 5 sets Beeston's Boys against the historical background of the First Bishops' War to probe into and elucidate the political and practical rift between Christopher and his son William that manifested itself after Christopher Beeston's death. The thematic resonances of new acquisitions in the repertory betray a turn away from the program of appeasing the court that Christopher appeared to have promoted with the plays of Henry Glapthorne. Critical commentaries of plays acquired by William Beeston between 1639 and 1642 are offered with close attention paid to Robert Chamberlain's *The Swaggering Damsel* and Richard Brome's *The Court Beggar*. William Beeston's acquisition of Richard Brome as playwright is the pivot point for the company's drastic socio-political alteration and turn back to the popular tradition. Brome's theatrical biography and his works written specifically for William Beeston form the evidential base for much of this chapter which argues that under William Beeston The King and Queen's Young Company challenged the notion of a

unified sovereign body, and ejected negotiations from official channels into the more democratic public sphere. Finally, a short Epilogue recapitulates prior arguments and then points to the cultural after-effects of Beeston's Boys' short existence. Through this extremely localized critique of company play productions as an ongoing process of social negotiations, I hope to argue effectively for Beeston's Boys' relevance to theatrical history and the illumination that comes from examining performance troupes as social identities equally significant to the identities of playwrights.

The following plays from Beeston's Boys' repertory are mentioned or explored to a lesser or greater degree. The plays represent a variety of genres and arise out of distinct historical circumstances, so chronology and intertextuality are guiding factors in their discussion. The list of extant plays is as follows: *The Ladies Priviledge* (1637), *Argalus and Parthenia* (1638), and *Wit in a Constable* (1638) by Henry Glapthorne; *The Cunning Lovers* (1638) by Alexander Brome; *The Damoiselle,* or *The New Ordinary* (1638), *The Antipodes* (1638), *A Mad Couple Well Match'd* (1639), *The Court Beggar* (1640), *A Jovial Crew* or *The Merry Beggars* (1641) by Richard Brome; *The Bride* (1638) by Thomas Nabbes; *The Lady's Trial* (1638) by John Ford; *The Bloody Banquet* (1639) by T.D.; and *The Swaggering Damsel* (1640) by Robert Chamberlain. Attention will be given to those works that offer up tropes of inversion (e.g. *Argalus and Parthenia*, *The Swaggering Damsel*, *The Antipodes*, and *The Ladies Priviledge*) and others that represent fringe or disenfranchised identities (e.g. *The Lady's Trial*, *The Bride*, *The Court Beggar, A Jovial Crew, A Mad Couple Well Matched*). Plays that are discussed at length are accompanied by a brief summary in order to establish the style of Beeston's repertory and ensconce the reader within the dramatic structure of each play. Also, references are made repeatedly to coeval dramatists and their works which should help to illuminate the cultural-theatrical context of a specific play's production.

Though readings of plays produced during this period are scanty, a few critical voices are captured in this essay. R.J. Kaufmann's 1961 study on Richard Brome is the first modern in-

depth study on this Caroline playwright. Although most recent critics tend to disagree with Kaufmann's characterization of Brome's work as "conservative," his reading of *The Court Beggar* as "sharp political protest through detailed personal satire of specific public figures" opposes this generalization (151). In Chapter 9 of *Richard Brome: Caroline Playwright,* Kaufmann makes a nearly indisputable case for Brome's satirical attack upon his rival dramatists, the courtiers Sir John Suckling and Sir William Davenant. Martin Butler acknowledges his indebtedness to Kaufmann in his own reading of *The Court Beggar* but expands Kaufmann's assessment to profess the play a document of radical politics. Butler observes, "*The Court Beggar* is a full blooded and uncompromising demonstration of the bankruptcy of the personal rule and an attack on all that the court, by 1640, had come to represent" (*Theatre and Crisis* 220). Also a testament to Brome's subversive aesthetics, Butler's oft cited reading of *A Jovial Crew* counters previously held conceptions of the play as escapist. Instead, Butler purports that the play is "profoundly historical, giving vigorous expression to the most central preoccupations of its time, and painfully sensitive to the uniqueness of the moment at which it was being performed, that English history was standing upon a point of decisive transformation" (279). Ira Clark's 1992 study, *Professional Playwrights,* paints a coherent picture of the activity and dramas of Ford, Massinger, Shirley and Brome, setting them within a web of rivalries and collaborations. Matthew Steggle's energetic monograph on Richard Brome focuses on concerns related to his lower class origins as voiced through his drama and provides several valuable critiques of most of his works. Steggle's interpretations of *A Jovial Crew, The Court Beggar* and *The Antipodes* are particularly robust. For *A Jovial Crew,* Steggle looks deeply into the character of Randall, the landed Oldrent's bailey, to read the play as existing somewhere between political allegory and a valorization of the countryside. In Steggle's opinion *A Jovial Crew* embraces the English servant class and its associated values. For *The Court Beggar* Steggle looks at Brome's depiction of patronage and draws parallels between the plot of the play and Brome's own fraught contractual relationships with the theatres of The Salisbury Court and The Cockpit. Some other scholarly

contributions embedded in the close readings available in subsequent chapters are derived from Julie Sanders's insights on beggars' commonwealths and Gary Taylor's analysis of *The Bloody Banquet*. Though theatre historians like Harbage, Bentley, Butler and Gurr mention Glapthorne, the amount of available criticism on his specific works is anorexic, so several critiques of his plays will be structured solely by my own vantage point and line of thought. Likewise, to my knowledge there is only one sizable reading of Chamberlain's *The Swaggering Damsel*. Kathryn Dezur argues that "The Swaggering Damsel . . . both critiques and accepts the blurring of categories that traditionally defined gendered authority and power" (8). Looking at sexual inversion and female agency in relation to financial arrangements, marriage contracts, courts of equity, and the burgeoning public sphere, I hope to problematize Dezur's somewhat conservative interpretation of the play's ambivalence.

In order to construct the framework upon which representations of sovereignty will be scrutinized, the first play I explore is Beaumont and Fletcher's *Cupid's Revenge* and its occasion at court during February of 1637 (Chapter 3). Then I look closely at Glapthorne's body of work, particularly his courtly pastoral and tragicomic extensions of Christopher Beeston's original aims, *The Ladies Priviledge* and *Argalus and Parthenia* (Chapter 4). Next I move on to unpack the chronology and historical instances of The King and Queen's Young Company's repertory after William Beeston assumed full control in April of 1639. Then I examine dismemberment in *The Bloody Banquet*, tropes of inversion in Chamberlain's *The Swaggering Damsel* and, above all, the social satire in Brome's works such as, *The Antipodes, A Mad Couple Well Match'd* and *The City Wit*, with an extensive reading of *The Court Beggar* and some insights into *A Jovial Crew* (Chapter 5).

As an introduction to the parodic style of Brome's plays composed in the latter 1630s, a brief sketch of *The Antipodes* may be beneficial. Written and intended for Beeston's Boys but actually performed by Queen Henrietta's Men at the Salisbury Court theatre in 1638, *The Antipodes* is unique in its satirization of English socio-political culture within the global sphere of

popular and quasi-mythical travel literature. The Antipodes is an island riddled with inverted paradigms – an antithetical London. Brome's treatment of politics and social mores in this play elucidates his unavoidable topicality and sets the stage for the complicated representations of sovereignty and national responsibility found in his subsequent works produced by William Beeston at the Cockpit – works that are more directly and obviously critical of court and civic practices. These productions are significant for their timeliness, disruptive potential, and participation in a London culture on the verge of 'crisis.'

The King and Queen's Young Company has suffered from academic neglect due to its ambiguous status and short-lived nature, but it is for these very reasons that this troupe, arising during a period of sovereign 'tyranny,' deserves to be the object of inquiry. The brief history of this company plays a part in the larger historical narrative of an England in religio-cultural transition. The body of sovereignty represented upon Beeston's stage was prone to excoriations, compartmentalized criticism, and dismemberment; acts that ultimately participate in and set the tone for a nation struggling with the significance of the King's body, soon to be subjected to its own but never inevitable decapitation, and that body's relation to the English commonwealth.

CHAPTER II

ORGANS WITHOUT A BODY: THE TERRITORIALIZATION OF CAROLINE THEATRICS

A desire to impose a teleological narrative upon the history of the 'evolution' of children's companies must be avoided, for the existing archive does not support such a claim. The organizational paradigm and nomenclature associated with the Caroline permutation of the Boy Company carry with them a resonance, a residue, and a trace of prior incarnations, but it is not a smooth history of formation and dissolution to suit the slowly changing tastes of court, cultured citizenry, and popular culture. Political ramifications, anti-theatrical prejudice, religious resistance, biological disruptions, conflagrations, and social upheavals intersected with an ephemeral art whose scanty anecdotal record, as Ellen Mackay asserts, "resist[s] . . . the documentation of its own progress" (6). In the early modern English theatre there existed overlapping allegiances and antagonisms between dramatists, company managers, theatre owners, and the government, shaped by fluctuating financial, personal, and political ties. Very few individuals, if any, were committed to a single venture or venue, and the layers of both production and publication were manifold and oftentimes disturbed from an evenly contiguous organization. It would be problematic as a theatre historian to succumb to the seductive force of narrative that pulls against the rigor of our own discipline; to tell a story that, in effect, runs over the lacunae, contradictions, and inconsistencies in the record. The documentary and literary evidence is consistently revised, re-evaluated, and reset against history not as a totalizing

foreground against a stable historical background, but, as Stephen Greenblatt has famously demanded, in a manner which must be conscious of textual permeability - "the 'recursive character' of social life and language" – and "adequately account for the unsettling circulation of materials and discourses" between texts and life as text ("Towards" 12-13). The historian should not be concerned with charting History but histories located at particular revolving sites; not events in their contexts, but "the relations between events and their *possible* contexts" (Postlewait, "Theater Events" 198); a task, Postlewait admonishes, is further complicated "by not only our historical methodologies but also our historical perspectives" (217).

In *Children of the Queen's Revels* Lucy Munro draws attention to this problem of interpretation associated with efforts to historicize boy playing companies of the early seventeenth century. The typical introduction to these troupes relies on an allusion from Shakespeare's *Hamlet* in which Rosencrantz censures the vogue for children on the stage:

> There is, sir, an aery of Children, little eyases, that cry out on the top of question, and are most tyrannically clap't for't. These are now the fashion, and so [berattle] the common Stages – so they call them – that many wearing rapiers, are afraide of goose-quills and dare scares come thither. (2.2.339-344)

On the surface the passage reveals a petulance toward the children of competing theatrical venues, referring to them as screaming eyases (untrained hawks) who are 'tyrannically' received with encomium, pilfer adult audiences from the public playhouses (common Stages) and intimidate older, established dramatists (old enough to carry a rapier) from scribing and producing their work in popular amphitheaters. This is the received reading based on Alfred Harbage's 'polarized' account of public and private stages set against one another as 'rival traditions' in the late 16th and early 17th centuries, the former occupied by adult players, the latter the elite domain of boy players (*Rival Traditions* xi-xii). However, Munro cautions that this binaristic reading elides the particularities of context for the production and printing of *Hamlet*. The passage may actually be a bit of advertising for the fashionable boy companies. Andrew

Gurr notes that Rosencrantz's comments are "addressed to Hamlet, played by Richard Burbage, the owner of the Blackfriars Theatre and the children's landlord, who may have been keen to protect his investment" (qtd. in Munro 14). Further complicating a straightforward reading of popular and private theatre antagonisms is Knutson's argument that the passage from *Hamlet* does not refer to the original time of production, 1600-1601, during the 'War of the Theatres,' but was added later, during the political backlash caused by the Children of the Queen's Revels' productions of *Eastward Ho* and *Isle of Gulls* in 1605 and 1606, after which the company lost its patent (1). Instead of Harbage's tightly constructed dichotomous history, three plausible histories exist that are neither completely covalent nor entirely discrete, but are rather liquid and permeable.

This chapter seeks to properly historicize Beeston's Boys by first observing the macro-level theatrical and social conditions of England leading up to the middle 1630s, set alongside practices and representations of public and court theatres. Following this initial broad social survey, Chapter 3 examines the immediate context of the company's founding in 1636, particular members, organizational structure, possible origins, and competing narratives involved in that founding, as well as the semiotics surrounding prior manifestations of boy companies. This background is essential to understand the cultural milieu that fosterd Beeston's Boys and the company's repertory that is both an intertexual assemblage of preexisting literary parts and a direct response to its own historical moment.

Despite the suspension of a parliamentary cycle, the resuscitation of the Thirty Years War on the continent, and the levy from ship money extracting £800,000 between 1634 and 1640, Caroline London continued to grow and expand (Cust 191). The city's character and temperament, however, altered greatly, becoming what Jean Howard calls a "city in flux" (4). London developed its own anatomy of culture that seemed to move autonomously from its governing head. "By the third or fourth decade of the seventeenth century, the West End had developed a 'town culture' of wit and leisure distinct from the 'city culture' to the east or the

'court culture' of Westminster" (Howard 5). Richard Brome's *The Court Beggar* mirrors Howards' summation of Caroline culture. Staged by Beeston's Boys at the Phoenix in 1640, the play embodies the recent delineations in the social landscape in the form of three characters that occupy varying degrees of rakishness: Citwit, Courtwit, and Swaynwit. The first two libertines are explained by their names. Courtwit is a "complementer" and Citwit is a "Citizens Son that supposes himselfe a wit" (n4), but the last, Swaynwit, requires a bit more discussion. In the Dramatis Personae he is described "a blunt Countrey Gentleman"; he is the reification of gentry values, traditional morality, and rootedness to the land who is forced to use his native wit to navigate the new urban society in which figures like Sir Andrew Mendicant, who represents the old order of landed aristocracy, have turned into fatuous "court beggars." The fact that Swaynwit persuades Citwit to adopt his country argot and masculine bravado in order to win the hand of Philomel against the wishes of his rival suitors is a reinforcement of traditional and moderate English values associated with mixed monarchy. But *The Court Beggar* imparts these older, bucolic values with the proviso that they must adapt to the new mode of fashionable and sometimes deleterious Caroline society.

John Stow's *Survey of London*, first published in 1598, soberly depicts a nostalgia for the London of yore and a valorization of city's guildhalls and churches, but this was to be replaced by the London of Thomas Dekker's witty pamphlet *The Gull's Hornbook*. Published in 1609, *The Gull's Hornbook* contains extensive, irreverent advice on how to live like a gallant within the walls of the teeming city. Borrowing the language of the city's economy, Dekker calls "The Theater your Poets Royal Exchange, upon which, their Muses (that are now turnd to Merchants) meeting, barter away that light commodity of words for a lighter war than words" (Nagler 133), and advises one that "By sitting on the stage, if you be a Knight, you may happily get you a Mistresse" (134-135), and to "hoard up the finest play-scraps you can get, upon which your leane wit may most savourly feede for want of other stuffe . . . that qualitie (next to your shittlecocke) is the onely furniture to a Courtier that but a new beginner, and is but in his ABC of complement"

(138). Dekker adulterates an architectural and financial emblem of the city, The Royal Exchange, by transforming it into the verbal canvas for his satirical take on foppish modern life in London. Jean Howard sententiously sums up the attitudinal gap between the two generations of Stow and Dekker, stating, "in Stow's city the highest virtue is charity, in the London of Dekker's pamphlet it is fashionability" (6).

The new 'city gallant' was a popular subject of both non-fictional and fictional accounts during the early Stuart era. Ben Jonson's witty theatrical survey of urban topography, *Bartholomew Fair*, first performed in 1614 by the Lady Elizabeth's Men, portrays affluent Londoners travelling to the summer fair held every year in Smithfield on "something of a slumming expedition, for the fair teems with itinerant performers, prostitutes, minor criminals, vendors of trashy merchandise and providers of greasy food" (Maus 961). In such an atmosphere the rigid rules of aristocracy and gentry are loosened and relationships are reconfigured to allow the appetites to be surfeited through craft and trickery. Thomas Middleton's *A Chaste Maid in Cheapside* satirizes the manifold tacit agreements of cuckoldry that characterize life in London through his depiction of Sir Walter Whorehound, a landed lothario fallen into financial disrepair, and who has for many years maintained a mistress in the city, Mrs. Allwit, along with her husband, their own children, and Sir Walter's two bastard sons, Nick and Wat. Master Allwit is cognizant of this arrangement and appears to enjoy the assistance and attentions from his social superior. In John Fletcher's *Wit Without Money*, one of the few plays to be performed during the civil wars, Valentine, a young gentleman described as "a gallant that will not be perswaded to keep his Estate" has intentionally mortgaged his lands to pursue a fashionable life about town (146). Perpetually on the verge of destitution, Valentine relies upon his wit and brutal honesty to gain, although sometimes unintentionally, financial and romantic favor. But perhaps the best instantiation of London's culture of gallantry and wit is Richard Brome's play, *The City Wit* (1629-1632), whose title leaves no doubt as to its central preoccupation. This satirical city comedy deals with the same topics of betrayal and financial dissolution that Shakespeare's *Timon*

of Athens explores, but unlike Timon, Brome's protagonist, Master Crasy, a prosperous merchant now "fallen into decay", does not become a recluse, but goes about the town in various disguises to get even with his wife, mother-in-law, the courtiers, scholars, and fellow merchants who have abandoned him to his creditors in his hour of need. Rufflit, one of the play's courtiers, while refusing to give Crasy the money due to him, provides a detailed description of gallantry in London:

> Dost thou know what a Gallant of fashion is? I'll tell thee. It is a thing that but once in three Moneths has money in his Purse; A creature made up of Promise and Protestation; A thing that foules other mens Napkins; towseth other Mens Sheets, flatters all he feares, contemns all he needs not, sterves all that serve him, and undoes all that trust him. Dost ask me mony, as I am a Gallant of fashion, I do thee Curtesie, I beat thee not. (1.2 pg.292)

Long upheld Civil and moral codes are exchanged for fashion, wit, and knavery. Destitution is valorized as an incitement to artifice, craft, and lechery. The late Elizabethan pride in ownership of both property and responsibility that was outlined by John Stow as the behavioral and superficial lineaments of London, has given way to an ecstasy in belonging to a culture of opportunism owned by the city itself.

With the culture of gallantry there grew simultaneously in London a criminal underbelly. Dekker, due to his financially unstable career as a dramatist and having served approximately seven years in debtor's prison, lived precariously amidst the seedy elements of the city and had intimate knowledge of criminal practice. In times of economic constraint he turned to penning a type of urban literature called "cony-catching" pamphlets that John Twynyng has defined as "attempt[s] to mystify London, to present it as an alien realm honeycombed with shadowy sub-communities [while] shed[ding] light . . . upon that realm's denizens" (127). The pamphlet admonishes, "Read and laugh; read and learn; read and loathe. Laugh at the knavery; learn out the mystery; loathe the base villainy" (Pendry 183). The pamphlets are titillating bits of

scandalous literature masquerading as magnanimous gestures to 'instruct' and warn the city-goer of danger, but they do reflect a very real condition of early seventeenth century London in which the quickly rising population led to increased numbers of the dispossessed, "sturdy beggars," "roaring boys," "whipjacks," "cutpurses," "whores," "gypsies," and "rogues." Bryan Reynolds argues that such ostensibly disparate human elements of corruption were "a substantially *unified* criminal culture" and a significant, growing presence that developed from the 1520s until "the Puritan's rise to power in the 1640s" (22). Beggars and outlaws are represented more frequently in Stuart drama as the decade of the 1630s advances, even in publications and productions that were able to make it to the marketplace after the start of the English Civil Wars. Penned with Thomas Middleton, Thomas Dekker's humorous tour through the grotesqueries of London's underworld, *The Roaring Girl*, is based upon the true-life London criminal, Mary Frith, also known as Moll Cutpurse. In this play town gallants either mesh or clash with Moll's overwhelming criminal persona, but Middleton's morality still bears the old stamp, and, true to comedic form, rough Moll has a tender heart and impeccable probity when it comes to sealing the union betwixt the drama's star-crossed young couple, Sebastian Wengrave and his belle, Mary Fitzallard, whose fathers' have had a falling out and initially forbid their marriage. Much of the action takes place in and around London's fashionable shops and public squares, drawing our attention to the ubiquitous and inexorably attractive, but sometimes undetectable, presence of the subaltern, as rouges mix with respectable gallants and become an economic boon to ethical merchants. *Beggar's Bush* by Fletcher and Massinger, with, debatably, some portions written earlier by Beaumont, was originally produced by the King's Men at Whitehall Palace in 1622. The play continues the tradition of "beggars' communities" initiated be Anthony Munday's Earl of Huntington, "Robin Hood" plays of 1597 and 1598. The plot of *Beggars' Bush* is concerned with the central character, Gerrard, the rightful claimant to the semi-fictional throne of Flanders, but who has been forced to the countryside by the usurper Woolfort, and has disguised himself as an outlaw, Claus, later chosen to be king of the beggars. In this wilderness depopulated of the

semiotics of court and city, all political inversion is corrected, and Gerrard is eventually restored to the throne. What Fletcher's work reveals, along with *The Spanish Gypsy*, attributed most often to Thomas Middleton, is a penchant for depictions of the disenfranchised and alternative politicized spaces in late Jacobean drama.

These early examples from Middleton, Dekker, Fletcher and Massinger are aesthetic and tactical precursors to the "beggars' commonwealth" comedies, and tragicomedies that emerged, as Julie Sanders notes, at the end of Charles's period of personal rule during the Short and Long Parliaments between 1640 and 1642 ("Beggars" 3). Works like James Shirley's *The Sisters*, Sir John Suckling's *The Goblins*, and Richard Brome's *A Jovial Crew* present alternative realms of political negotiation that can be interpreted as a response to the Parliamentary crisis of the 1630s. In each of these plays individuals dispossessed of money, land, and/or political efficacy are forced to seek solace and societal correction through the formation of "beggar/gypsy/bandit" societies ("Beggars" 3). In contrast to earlier depictions of beggars and the marginalized, there exists a sympathetic portrayal of persons forced to find alternative habitats and methods of negotiation while dismantling long-standing hierarchies. The satire is more immediate and the structure of bandit groupings more intricate, affirming Reynolds assertion that a "unified criminal culture" was in a continual process of "development" until the interregnum.

Representations of wounded, wandering, and abandoned soldiers reeling from the Palatinate crisis and their contributions to excursions in the Thirty Years War, or domestic attempts to put down rebellions in Ireland and Scotland, though sometimes humorous, always contained caustic reminders of the systemic negligence to reintegrate soldiers and of communal obligations to reverse this trend. Abraham Cowley's *The Guardian* exposes the troubles that can arise from soldiers with too much time on their hands, and not enough money in their pockets. Captain Blade, "the guardian," good-naturedly assails the "sharking soldier" Colonel Cutter for his not entirely voluntary vagabond lifestyle:

> Nor change your name and lodging as often as a whore; for as yet, if you had liv'd like a Tartar in a cart, (as you must die, I fear, in one) your home could not have been more uncertain. Your last Gests were these: From a Watermans house at the Banks side, (marry you stay'd there but a small while, because the fellow was jealous of his wife) passing o'er like great King Xerxes in a Sculler, you arriv'd at a Chandlers house in Thames-street, and there took up your lodging. The day before you should have paid, you walkt abroad, and were seen no more; for ever after the smell of the place offended you. Next, you appear'd at an Ale-house I'th Covent-Garden, like a Duck that dives at one end of the pond, but rises unexpectedly at the other. But that place (though there was Beer and Tobacco there) by no means pleas'd you; for there dwelt so many cheaters thereabouts, that you could not live by one another; they spoil'd your trade quite. Then from a Shoo-makers, (as you entitl'd him; marry some authors Counter): from thence, after much benevolence, to a Barbers; changing more lodgings than Pythagoras his soul did. At length, upon confidence of those new breeches, and the scouring of that everlasting Buff, you ventur'd upon the widows, that famous house for boorders, and are by this time hoysing up your sails, I'm sure; the next fair winde y'are gone. (1.3 pg.166)

Cutter's societal dislocation and nomadism is a map of the city. Having no home, the entire city becomes his stomping grounds while his image becomes synonymous with those same locales. In effect, his stay within the temporary enclosure of a military regiment never ceases; it is only transformed into the economic currents of London in which he never fully participates. *The Lady's Trial* by John Ford, tells a similar, but much harsher tale of a soldier's postwar, domestic life. After being discharged Benatzi has turned outlaw to escape the pain that comes with a dearth of basic necessities, but he has not been able to escape his post-traumatic stress disorder

bequeathed to him by the war. In an excoriating jeremiad, he laments the maltreatment of soldiers upon their return:

> Cuttthroats by the score abroad, come home, and rot in fripperies. Brave men-at-arms, go turn pander, do; stalk for a mess of warm broth – damanable! honourable cuts are but badges for a fool to vaunt; the raw-ribbed apothecary poisons cum privilegio, and is paid. O, the commonwealth of beasts is most politicly ordered! (3.1 pg.47)

In the context of Benatzi's speech, "fripperies" are old clothes. His overall assessment is that social "order" translates into decay, and a savage association of wild "beasts" in which civilization and basic humanitarian aid have been renounced. It is a politically charged indictment of systemic malfunction, and a simultaneous battle-cry for the assertion of individual and direct action. Presented in 1638 during Charles's period of personal rule and while there was discussion of putting down the rebellion in Scotland caused by Charles's imposition of the English Book of Common Prayer (a choice that led to the First Bishops' War of 1639), such a representation of vituperative dissatisfaction with the government strays widely from the interpretation that the theatre was largely supportive of the Stuart monarch for his perceived opposition to Puritanism.

The Stuart Court, by contrast, was largely concerned with reasserting its unchallenged political import and worldview through the court masque and dramas articulating notions of Platonic love that appealed to Queen Henrietta Maria and her coterie. Most cursory introductions to theatre history examine the spatial arrangements of a proto-typical court masque and surmise, as Peter Thomson does in *The Oxford Illustrated History of the Theatre*, that the masque was a

> . . . courtly ritual . . . a 'liturgy of state' – with masquers as celebrants and their obeisance solemnized by the presence of God's vicegerent. . . . At the end of the hall is a raised stage, at the other, pinpointed to be opposite the stage's centre, is the King's canopied chair of state. His is the only perfect view, and the

> disposition of those in attendance on him is a visual declaration of hierarchy. (196)

In Thomson's reading the King's spatial position is key to understanding the political resonance of the masque which validates a unilateral flow of authority from God to his vicegerent, the King, and the hegemonic conditions maintained by the courtiers' voluntary performance for and subjection to the gaze of the King. The problem with this interpretation is that it omits the subtleties of performance protocol, occasion, and identity of the participants that alter from masque to masque. Bentley notes that though it is commonly believed that masques, due to their "great splendour and expense . . . were rare, they were not. In the reigns of the first two Stuart sovereigns more than a hundred masque performances are recorded and probably at least ninety different examples are involved" (Bentley, *Book of Masques* 12). The possibilities for deviation from the norm were manifold. In addition, the norm mutated as the scepter was passed from father James to son Charles. James was much more publicly active and visible than his son, but within the banquet halls at court he maintained a position in the masque that accords to the usual view of the king as passive though puissant overseer associated with the hierarchy of the Jonsonian masque. Contrarily, by the 1630s, Charles and his Queen had actually danced in several masques when it suited their political objectives. Praxis and semantics of the masque thus shifted with history. Martin Butler's most recent book-length study has exhaustively "retriev[ed] the complexity of the Stuart masques' politics" which were far more dialogic than prior schematics would allow (*Stuart* 4). Butler denies the former claim that the masque was a simple "rehearsal of repetitious politics" in a "stereotypical and inflexible" form, but he also admits that the challenge to court prerogative contained within such ritualized proceedings was never as overt as we discover in Benatzi's previously quoted speech from Ford's *The Lady's Trial* (*Stuart* 4). Within the multiple formats of the masque, hierarchy was never univocally reaffirmed without interstices of dissent.

William Davenant's masque *Britannia Triumphans* was enacted at court in January of 1638 when the word 'rebellion' was first being circulated in Scotland in tandem with Charles's proclamation enforcing the adoption of the prayer book issued by the deputy treasurer for Scotland, the Earl of Traquir. The statement averred that Charles had confirmed the content of the prayer book, that it would effectively "maintain the true religion," and that if the opposition continued in their show of "preposterous zeal" they would be treated as traitors (qtd. in Cust 229). In essence, *Britannia Triumphans* was one method for Charles to reinforce his authority against a rising multitude of factions which differed on both the Scottish problem and the legitimacy of ship money. In the antimasque before Britanocles' arrival there is a heated dialogue between Action and Imposture in which Imposture articulates support for anarchic libertarianism and, paradoxically, austere self-denial associated with the Calvinist position. Action, in response to Imposture's threats of populist revolt, argues Charles's position of restrained sovereignty with "reason, truthfulness, and magnanimity" (Butler, *Stuart* 338). The discussion breaks down into a frenzied dance conjured by Merlin that is eventually broken up by the arrival of the ancient hero Bellorophan and the embodiment of Charles, Britanocles, as sung by Fame. Inigo Jones's powerful maritime iconography coupled with Davenant's text praises Charles's use of ship money to build a sturdy fleet headed by an elite minority of wise individuals capable of defeating Imposture and Merlin. Fame sings,

> Break forth! thou treasure of our sight,
> That art the hopeful morn of every day,
> Whose fair example makes the light,
> By which heroic virtue finds her way.
> [. . .]
> What to thy power is hard or strange?
> Since not alone confined unto the land,
> Thy scepter to a trident change,

And straight unruly seas thou canst command! (284-285)

The masquers move to the gates which open in response to the populace's dire need of salvation, and in answer to their hopes, Britanocles is revealed. The Chorus responds jubilantly, "Britanocles the great and good appears, / His person fills our eyes, his name our ears / His virtue every drooping spirit cheers!" (286) The lines convey a unanimous support for the sovereign Britanocles, but what does not come across in this decontextualized printed verse that would have been obvious in its performance is that the unanimity is problematized by an unusual dearth of choral voices. What makes Davenant's masque unique, according to Butler, is the high numerical presence of the 'unprivileged antimasquers' in opposition to the paucity of 'privileged masquers' (*Stuart* 339). In the traditional form of the masque, the antimasque precedes the masque proper, and its dancer/actors portraying forces of chaos and disorder are always subdued by the greater force, both in numbers and power, of the masque. But *Britannia Triumphans* presents a masque's population that is outnumbered by the destructive antimasquers. This disparity in numbers speaks to the topical, yet "nightmar[ish] scenario of populist revolt" facing Charles (Butler, *Stuart* 339). Echoes of this anti-populist sentiment and anxiety over the Scottish rebellion are heard in a proclamation issued by Charles in early 1639:

> These disorders and tumults have been thus raised in Scotland and fomented by factions spirits and those traitorously affected, begun upon pretences of religion, the common cloak for all disobedience; but now it clearly appears the aim of these men is not religion, as they falsely pretend and publish, but it is to shake off all monarchical government, and to vilify our regal power, justly descended upon us over them. (Larkin 2: 662-3)

And these same feelings are reiterated in a letter from Archbishop Laud to Sir Thomas Roe concerning the Scottish Covenant. "Faction and ignorance will govern the assembly, and faction and somewhat else that I list not to name [treason?] the parliament: for they will utterly cast off all episcopal government and introduce a worse regulated parity than anywhere else that I know"

(Laud, *Works* 7: 584). The statements of Charles and Laud both come at least one year after the presentation of *Britannia Triumphans*, but in them we can hear the elevated pitch, tone, volume, and intensity of the problems of factionalism that Charles attempted to symbolically control through representations of self-righteous monarchical power in Davenant's masque.

Two years later the final masque presented at court, *Salmacida Spolia*, again by Davenant and Jones, betrayed a very different political scenario in which Charles took a much more conciliatory attitude. Coming after a disastrous defeat in Scotland, Charles, infused with a new diffidence, danced with his wife, Henrietta Maria, in a display to reassure his supporters of his efficacy and to placate disgruntled and incredulous courtiers and MPs. The principle spectator was Marie de Medici in front of whom the King and Queen danced as royal lovers. "With King and Queen dancing side by side, the element of compliment was removed and the show was directed more emphatically at the political nation seated in the masquing house, the subjects whose support Charles needed to elicit at this juncture" (Butler, *Stuart* 342). According to Richard Cust, Henrietta Maria had by this time become personally entangled in the prayer book crisis by tapping into Catholic financial support for a second Bishops' War (231). The money was, of course, useful but the political setback from seeking Catholic aid was detrimental to Charles's attempts to gain support in the forthcoming Short Parliament. *Salmacida Spolia* begins with a tempest raised by Fury, but the tempest is eventually subdued through the patient exercise of gentle authority by the masque's protagonists played by the King and Queen. In *Salmacida Spolia* Henrietta Maria, as in political affairs, took a pro-war position appearing as Queen of the Amazons with her Catholic Ladies in her retinue. Charles appeared as Philogenes, "not a triumphant Hercules, but a lover of the people" (Butler, *Stuart* 344). Upon his entrance the chorus applauds his courage in forbearance:

> If it be kingly patience to outlast
> Those storms the people's giddy fury raise,
> Till like fantastic winds themselves they waste,

The wisdom of that patience is thy praise. (322)

The concerns about popular dissidence are similar to *Britannia Triumphans*, but the method for handling such dissidence is decidedly different. Patience and rapprochement are now the characteristics of effective rule; a bilateral political theory that encourages preparing the way for reconciliation with Parliament, rather than a unilateral monarch carrying on a war solely desired by him during a period of personal rule.

The masque was not the only arena in which the sovereign, at least in part, directly controlled his or her own representation. Coexistent with these ostentatious displays at Court and Inns of Court were slightly more humble courtier plays tailored to the respective tastes of Charles and Henrietta Maria. The French Queen imported to Whitehall the continental practice of female performance replete with spoken dialogue, as well as dancing, in plays concerned with Neoplatonic ideals of love and Catholic modes of expression. Her role as the heroine in Walter Montagu's pastoral romance, *The Shepherd's Paradise*, elicited a rejoinder by Puritan William Prynne labeling female actors as "notorious whores" in his *Histriomastix*; a publication that earned him the ire of the crown and the loss of his ears. In this Neoplatonic pastoral it is the beauty of the heroine that qualifies her for sovereignty. Martin Butler reads Henrietta Maria's role in the production as an expression of her agency, "implying that her authority derived not from her public position as Charles's queen but from her personal sway in the hearts of men, a sovereignty firmer – and so more powerful and valid – than any conferred merely by birth or place" (*Theatre and Crisis* 29). Through such images the queen was able to garner political and representational capital equivalent to her husband's. Additionally, this was achieved through the gender exclusivity of her circle where, in a production like *The Shepherd's Paradise*, "nine out of the thirteen actresses played masculine roles. Simultaneously, in Henrietta Maria's masques and in courtier drama there emerged the figure of the warrior woman" analogous to her portrayal of the Amazonian Queen in *Salmacida Spolia* (Tomlinson 11).

Julie Sanders has looked beyond the attention given solely to Henrietta Maria to argue that "her gynocentric theatricals may have been only one strand of a more complex matrix of elite female self-representation" ("Caroline Salon" 450). Sanders examines the life of Lucy Hay, the chief rival of Henrietta Maria, and her particular strain of Platonism to uncover the ways in which these coterie dramas stayed in dialogue with public plays. For it is important to remember that the same playwrights and poets who composed for the court either wrote directly for elite and popular venues sprinkled throughout the city, or at least came into contact with the more popular playwrights. James Shirley, who, in response to Prynne's *Histriomastix*, scribed *The Triumph of Peace* to celebrate Charles and his Queen, was also one of the most celebrated public poets of tragedies, comedies, and tragicomedies, earning his reputation chiefly as house dramatist for Christopher Beeston's company, Queen Henrietta's Men, operating immediately prior to Beeston's Boys. Shirley's comedies like *The Ball* and *Hyde Park* are scathing social satires on the cult of fashionability, while his tragedies such as *The Cardinal* and *The Traitor* contain caustic political critiques. Working as both court poets and popular dramatists, the opportunities for intertextual engagement and cross-pollination between the literature of the court and the public was numerous.

By the 1630s vying cultural arenas had become boldly demarcated and sites within the city of London began generating their own media and intrinsic forms of dramatic expression that spoke to the immediate concerns of the neighborhoods' inhabitants. With the lengthy prorogation of Parliament in 1629, the Court's connection to the rest of the city, though still important, became more tenuous, and the city was anatomized into relatively autonomous organs. Prior theatre historians have adhered to the narrative that London in the 1630s was in an extended period of cultural crisis that led inevitably to a Puritan overthrow of the theatre. They cite the decreasing numbers of new plays entered into the Stationer's Register as evidence for an overall minimization of dramatic output (Butler, *Theatre and Crisis* 3). Such a hasty generalization, however, fails to acknowledge the fact that the methods of production had altered greatly, and the

changing social topography had forced many companies indoors to occupy elite venues where more funds were spent in production to cater to wealthier tastes, while most plays staged in public amphitheaters were remounts of older plays held by the producing company. Theatrical activity was, in fact, very much alive and thriving; only its modality had changed. According to Martin Butler, the years prior to the theatrical closure of 1642 "saw the establishment of the theatre companies as permanent institutional presences within the London landscape, on an apparently solid economic footing, and with a measure of financial security" ("Adult" 108). The indoor theatres of The Phoenix, Salisbury Court and Blackfriars were, in actuality, less dependent economically and socially on the court than in prior years, so interpreting them solely as an extension of cavalier interests and patronage is erroneous. The Caroline audience was more diverse than such an assessment allows, and this is due, in large part, to the upward social mobility of the merchant class and a rise in the presence of country gentry in tandem with the establishment of a city culture of wit within and without London's walls.

Though the gentry would not form a permanent residential body within London until after the Restoration, the late 1620s and 1630s bore witness to the start of construction on wealthy suburbs located on the west side of London, in and around the indoor theatres. The Caroline era was prevenient to the formation of the Habermasion public sphere of the coffee shop of the latter 17th and 18th centuries, but many dislocated MPs of diverse religious inflections and political affiliations still sought a new forum for political dialogue. "Unlike France, England had no salons, and it still wanted the regular round of concerts and balls of later years . . . The gentry's need for an environment in which to meet and establish its own unity was filled precisely by the theatres" (Butler, *Theatre and Crisis* 110). The theatres, then, became sites embedded in a competing marketplace to secure audience members of refined cultural tastes, both from the gentry and the newly established class of financially secure merchants, seeking alternative forms of political engagement. James Shirley in *Narcissus* described it as a 'wit's market' for the new breed of dramatist skilled in verbal acrobatics and keen on appealing to the preoccupations of a

cultured middle to upper class audience. Writers like Shirley, Davenant, Massinger, Brome, Nabbes, Marmion, and Glapthorne competed for audience attention with a new emphasis on witty banter and action set within and around popular city sites of leisure, sport, economic exchange, and appetitive indulgence.

"Politics belong to cities. . . . Comedies too belong to cities," quips Martin Butler (*Theatre and Crisis* 141). An adapted mode of the city comedy became the preferred format for civic and social engagement in late-Jacobean and Caroline theatrical venues. Based on Roman new comedy, the genre arose around 1598 and valorizes the exploits of 'gentlemanly gallants' as they use their wits to secure love and finances from antagonistic merchants, courtiers, and other city figures, thus rising to a position of privilege in London's competitive social market. Jean Howard identifies these comedies as a "remarkable break from the conventions of 'higher' genres such as tragedy and the national history play. . . they mark a moment in early modern culture when urban commoners, those below the rank of gentleman, could become the protagonists in theatrical fictions" (19). After Charles's accession to the throne the "urban commoner," however, had become more socially refined, moneyed (or formerly moneyed), outwardly decorated, and with a proclivity for raillery. In essence, the plays were a mirror to the social and sartorial fashions in the audience. The Prologue to Richard Brome's *A Mad Couple Well Match'd* is a testament to the new form of 'popular courtship' based upon a shared sense of fashionable culture between company and crowd at venues such as The Phoenix:

> Here you're all met and looke for a set speech,
> Put into Rhyme, to court you, and beseech
> Your Worships, but to heare and like the Play,
> But I, I vow, have no such part to say.
> I'm sent a woing to you, but how to do't
> I han't the skill; tis true I've a new Suite,
> And Ribbons fashionable, yclipt Fancies,

But for the compliments, the Trips, and Dances,
Our poet can't abide um, and he sweares,
They're all but cheats; and sugred words but jeeres. (x)

Forgoing the usual appeal to the audience through flattery and by exalting the virtues of the author, the prolocutor points out his own haute couture apparel most likely worn by those to whom he is speaking. Similarly, the speaker of the prologue to Brome's *The Court Beggar* tauntingly remarks upon the social protocol of wit to identify the play, unconvincingly, as being at odds with but inescapably a product of its times:

We've cause to fear yours, or the Poets frown
For of late day's (he know's not how) y'are grown,
Deeply in love with a new strayne of wit,
Which he condemns, at least disliketh it,
And solemnely protests you are to blame
If at his hands you doe expect the same;
Hee'l tread his usuall way, no gaudy Sceane
Shall give instructions, what his plot doth meane;
No handsome Love toy shall your time beguile
Forcing your pitty to a sigh or smile,
But a slight piece of mirth . . . (184)

According to Bentley, the "new strayne of wit" to which Brome deridingly refers is found in the "love-and-honour plays of thirties and [Brome] continues with a reference to the plays spectacularly produced with scenery such as Henry Killigrew's *Pallantus and Eudora or The Conspiracy*, produced 1635, Cartwright's *Royal Slave*, 1636/7, and Habington's *Queen of Aragon*, 1640" (*JCS* 3: 62). Brome's "slight piece of mirth," however, is a product of a different "strayne of wit" set in opposition to those plays he censures. At best, the prologue seems like an

ironic pre-emptive retraction, or an apologia (in the classical sense of the term), for the "mirth and wit" of Brome's own plays brought accusations of moral and political impropriety. Most likely, *The Court Beggar*'s prologue is a veiled defense for *A Mad Couple Well Match'd* presented one year prior by the same company, Beeston's Boys, at The Phoenix. In his 1913 review of Richard Brome's life and career, Clarence Andrews laments "the bad characters all end happily; no one suffers for his flagrant immorality; the hero is faithless, a rake, a scoundrel, and a liar" (77). But Brome was not alone in celebrating a kind of temporary inversion and irreverence upon the stage. Thomas Killigrew's bawdy play, *The Parson's Wedding*, is the most extreme example of rakish wit to grace the playhouses. Deemed a precursor to the opprobrious Restoration stylistics of Wycherly, it premiered in 1641 under the auspices of the King's Men at Blackfriars, several years after *The Court Beggar*. Samuel Pepys later referred to Killigrew's display of agile and tireless verbal prolixity sans plot as "a bawdy loose play" (*Diary* 11.10.1664). But it was this very same "looseness" abhorred by Pepys that was a valuable commodity in the "wit's marketplace" of the Caroline era.

The comedies of the 1630s not only echoed the sartorial and verbal fashions of their day, but on the surface of the texts, and sometimes buried within, are realistic representations of London life whose numerousness has earned these plays the title of a sub-genre called 'place realism.' Julie Sanders, in *The Cultural Geography of Early Modern Drama, 1620-1650*, argues that "drama was one of the key means by which early modern English society strove to make sense of space," not only in the representation of spaces but as a participant in the cultural production and negotiation of space (9). Plays like Shirley's *Hyde Park* and *The Ball* (which was probably the first piece of literature to popularize the term); Brome's *The Spargus Garden, Covent Garden Weeded*, and *The New Academy*; Thomas Nabbe's *Covent Garden* and *Tottenham Court*; and Shackerley Marmion's *Holland's Leaguer*, among others, brought peripheral subjects like prostitutes, dispossessed soldiers, and beggars to the center and commingled fictional plots with real, identifiable locales and pressing issues. Unlike the history plays of Shakespeare that

required a sovereign authority to organize the plot, or drama based on classical subjects and extant stories whose provenance was temporally and spatially foreign, the location in 'place realism' was the generative nexus for the action, and simultaneously represented a conversant domain in which the spectator could exercise agency. The popularity of such drama was unavoidably political because rather than being located solely within the court and its monarch, agency was distributed democratically through the discussion and, in effect, public ownership of egalitarian space. Looking at one contemporary topic attached to public space, prostitution, Jean Howard interprets representations "on the London stage [as] offer[ing] powerful and socially significant alternatives to normative prescriptions not only about prostitutes, but also about women more generally" (115). Shackerley Marmion's *Holland's Leaguer* (1631) is a telling bit of evidence in support of Howard's claim. The leaguer was an upscale brothel located on Holland Street in the Paris Garden liberty on the Bankside of the Thames, south of London proper. A subplot of the play uses the rhetoric of war to recount an actual struggle that took place between prostitutes and constables. The denizens of the brothel threaten Agurtes and his train who are disguised as representatives of the law:

> BAWD. Stop their throats, somebody!
>
> 1 WHORE. 'Twere a good deed to have made them swim the moat.
>
> 2 WHORE. Ay, to have stripped them, and sent them out naked.
>
> 1 WHORE. Let's sally out and fetch them in again! Then call a court on them for false alarms. (4.3 pg.73)

The language chosen by Marmion empowers traditionally marginalized subjects, prostitutes, by banding them together and giving them control over their own 'court' of justice. It is a startling statement of group solidarity and individual agency bestowed upon those most neglected and abused by the law. The play was originally mounted by Prince Charles's Men in 1631, but the rhetoric of popular rebellion against a uniformed agent of the city's legal institution, if it were contained in something other than a 'comedy,' would be most displeasing to the Prince's father.

City comedies, then, were often able to evade the censoring eye of the Master of the Revels and acted as vehicles for political and social transactions outside the vigilant purview of parliament and the court, in effect, proclaiming the theatre as an alternative dialogic forum to interrogate the current state of political and religious affairs.

To some extent, and to reverse Deleuze and Guattari, through its playhouses that catered to specific neighborhoods and a new class of English Citizen, the city became divided into distinct 'organs without a body,' or at least, without a dictatorial, organizing head. Acting troupes drew further away from royal patronage while playhouses became synonymous with particular aesthetic and social sensibilities that resonated with the tastes and dissatisfactions of a growing middle class. It is in this social and theatrical climate of 1636 that Christopher Beeston began resurrecting the old boy company, albeit in a newly adapted form, from the ashes of his former company Queen Henrietta's Men.

CHAPTER III

THE PLAGUE AND NEW CONSCIOUSNESS: THE BIRTH OF A THEATRE

Though it is difficult and perhaps specious to pin down a primary reason for Beeston's resolution to dismantle Queen Henrietta's Men at some point during 1636 and present his new company of youths at court in early February of 1637, it is safe to say that whatever cracks that had persisted in the edifice of Beeston's theatrical enterprise of the past eleven years were widened due to several, large-scale cataclysmic events that affected London and its suburbs during those two years. On the 10th of May 1636 the Privy Council decided that the theatres should be closed due to a sharp increase in plague deaths. Sir Henry Herbert, the Master of the Revels, issued his order of closure to the theatres on the 12th. "This day the 12 May, 1636, I received a warrant from my lord Chamberlin for the suppressing of playes and shews, and at the same time delivered my severall warrants to George Wilson for the four companys of players to be served upon them" (qtd. in Bentley 2: 661). Bentley informs us that these companies were the King's, Queen Henrietta's, King's Revels, and Prince Charles's (2: 661). A visitation of the plague was nothing new and plague closures were rather frequent. London had experienced several recent outbreaks in 1630, 1631, and 1635, all of which forced the hand of the Lord Chamberlain to shut the doors and gates to the playhouses. However, the closure of 1636-37 was, according to Bentley, the most severe since the plague epidemic of 1625 (2: 661). At the time of the pronouncement, no one could have predicted that playing would be set in abeyance until 2

October 1637, with the exception of short period of remission in late February and early March. After a turbid year of financial setbacks and restiveness to perform, by the close of 1636 Beeston must have concluded the dissolution of Queen Henrietta's men at the Cockpit/Phoenix because he was rehearsed and performing at one of the few permissible venues remaining, the court, with a new troupe just one month later.

Andrew Gurr, in his extremely detailed study *The Shakespearian Playing Companies*, uncharacteristically glosses over the steps and causes that led to the formation of Beeston's Boys and states simply that "Beeston . . . found the seemingly endless closure from May 1636 to October 1637 too long, and dismissed [Queen Henrietta's Men]" (423), while Bentley, feeling assured that Beeston could have financially weathered the epidemic, interprets the "wily" impresario as "[seeing] theatrical opportunity while the theatres were closed" and taking full advantage of it (1: 326). These assessments are undoubtedly true. Beeston was a 'wily' manager controlling the only theatre able to contend with the King's Men's royal patronage and use of two theatres, the Globe and the Blackfriars. In July of 1630, Beeston was awarded £100 for ten plays presented at Court from October 1629 to February 1630, while the King's Men presented approximately twelve during those same months (Bentley 1: 224). In Sir Aston Cokain's *The Obstinate Lady*, first performed in 1639, Lorece, while attempting to gain the love of the rich widow, Vandona, puts the two theatrical companies and their venues on equal footing when he boasts, "I at any time will carry you to a play, either to the Blackfriars or the Cockpit" (3.2 pg.64). And Beeston did have a history of taking advantage of times of theatrical closure to reorganize his company and secure royal patronage as his formation of Queen Henrietta's Men during the visitation of 1625 would imply. But to fail to probe beyond these superficial answers would amount to decontextualizing the unusual transmogrification of an "adult" company into a "youth" company during the municipally turbulent year of 1636, and to rest solely upon the idiosyncratic behavior of one of the London theatre's most unique and popular entrepreneurs. It is my contention that Beeston's Boys formed a bridge between the rising 'town' culture of wit,

the court, and London proper – bodies of sovereignty that came into repeated political, ethical, and aesthetic conflict during the 1630s and early 1640s.

Christopher Beeston was both a biographical incarnation of the history of London theatre under three monarchs and a man intimately connected with the western suburbs and the outskirts of Westminster. Beeston began as an actor performing in such plays as Jonson's *Every Man in His Humour* which premiered in 1598 under the auspices of the Lord Chamberlain's Men at the Curtain. At the accession of James I, Beeston joined Queen Anne's Men and remained in that company until his patroness's death in 1619. Quickly asserting his skill in business, Beeston followed Thomas Greene as manager in 1612. He went on to assemble and manage four other companies between 1619 and 1638 playing at either the Red Bull amphitheater or the Cockpit/Phoenix hall playhouse: Prince Charles's, Lady Elizabeth's, Queen Henrietta's and Beeston's Boys. He remained a friend and collaborator with the playwright Thomas Heywood, writing verses for his *Apology for Actors* in 1612 and paying for a plate in his *Hierarchie of Blessed Angels* in 1634 (Bentley 2: 364). Though little evidence remains concerning his religious practice, it is known that he was a life-long Catholic. On July 16th, 1617, Beeston was fined and reprimanded for "not going to church, chapel or any usual place of Common Prayer on the said day [25 March 1617], nor anytime during the three months next ensuing" (qtd. in Bentley 2: 366). For most scholarship on Beeston, his faith has a remained a moot, or rather unavailable, aspect of his biography. The most salient feature of his life and his most important contribution to London theatre, to the distress of many of his new neighbors, was the construction of the Cockpit Theatre and his simultaneous personal move to St. Giles of the Field in 1617.

A frenetic drama surrounds this episode of Beeston's life, but the Cockpit theatre remained his home until his death in 1638. In August of 1619 Beeston leased the property known as the Cockpit from John Best, a grocer who had acquired the property on 9 October 1609 and received "payment as prince Henry's cockmaster" one year later (Teague 252). The property consisted of "one messuage howse or tenement called a Cockpitt and aftwerwards vsed for a play

house and now called the Phoenix with divers buildings thereto belonging" (qtd. in Bentley 6: 49). We know that the adjoining property to the main cockpits, i.e. the 'play house' was comprised of "Cock-houses and shedds . . . with one tenement and a little Garden . . . and one part or parcel of ground behinde the said Cockpittes Cockhouses three Tenements and garden divided" (qtd. in Bentley 6: 48). Beeston signed the lease for 31 years at an annual payment of £45 with the intention of opening a new, elegant indoor playhouse to rival the only extant competition, the King's Men at the Blackfriars. Located west of the city walls and half a mile northwest of Blackfriars, between Drury Lane and Great Wild Street in the parish of St. Giles in the Fields, the theatre would be outside of the city's jurisdiction, just north of the increasingly fashionable Strand, within steps of all four inns of court, just south of Covent Garden (which underwent major development in the early 1630s), near Westminster, closer to Whitehall and St. James than any other theatre, and amongst the moneyed aristocracy and gentry (e.g. sir John Cotton, sir Thomas Finch, the earl of March, sir Francis Kynaston and Lady Henage) (Bentley 6: 49). "For a private theatre, intended to appeal to a more well-to-do and sophisticated audience than that of the public theatres, the location was a good one" (Bentley 6: 49). Beeston, then, sought to transform a structure with a history of performance, albeit cockfights, into a playhouse that interfaced with some of the most elite members of society. By using the adjoining tenement to house himself and his subsequent managers, Beeston planned to accomplish all this under his ever-watchful eye and direct control while still managing the Queen Anne's Men at the Red Bull.

The project was ambitious and in full view much to the consternation of several of Beeston's neighbors who raised an alarum of complaint. Beeston attempted to tip-toe around city ordinances that forbade the construction of new buildings, which meant the laying of new foundations, but which allowed renovations on existing structures. Though he attempted to hide the foundational alterations on the Cockpit under the cloak of his renovations to the surrounding tenements, Beeston's ploy was uncovered by the authorities. In early September of 1616, Beeston's bricklayer, "John Shepperd of Lillypott Lane [was] committed for working upon a new

foundation in Drury Lane" and on September 18 a letter from the Privy Council to the High Sherriff of Middlesex proclaimed, "Christopher Beeston hath erected a base tenement, not of bricke, and, having been formerly prohibited, did promise to make it only an addition to his owne dwelling howse, but since hath made a tenement of it, distant from is howse, and neere to his Majesty's passage. To be pulled downe" (qtd. in Bentley 2: 366). Progress on the Cockpit was temporarily halted and Beeston's problems were exacerbated due to a complaint registered by the benchers at Lincoln's Inn, who were troubled by the thought of a theatre being erected so near their daily activities (Teague 253). These obstacles were, in the end, minor setbacks that Beeston surmounted to eventually renovate the octagonal house and central circular pit into, at minimum, an elegant theatre replete with benches, new curtains, and fresh paint (Teague 253).

By the spring of 1617 Beeston's Queen Anne's Men were ready to make the transfer from the Red Bull amphitheater to the newly renovated indoor playhouse on Drury Lane, but the transfer was anything but smooth. On the heels of the company's move, the London apprentices rioted on 4 March 1617, Shrove Tuesday, a holiday on which those normally indentured to service were set free to indulge their appetites. The riot included a coordinated assault upon the Cockpit. A letter from John Chamberlain to Sir Dudley Carleton summarizes the events of that day:

> On the 4th of the present being our Shrove Tewsday the prentises or rather unruly people of the suburbs played theyr parts, in divers places, as Finsburi fields, about Wapping by St. Katherins, and in Lincolns Ynne fields, in which places being assembled in great numbers they fell to great disorders in pulling downe of houses and beating the guards that were set to kepe rule, specially at a new play house (sometime a cockpit) in Drurie Lane, where the Quenes players used to play. Though the fellows defended themselves as well as they could and slew three of them with shot and hurt divers. Yet they entered the house and defaced yt, cutting the players apparel all in pieces, and other theyre furniture and burnt

> theyre play books and did what other mischief they could . . . (qtd. in Teague 254)

The disorder was widespread but Andrew Gurr assumes that the destruction of the Cockpit was the partially premeditated reaction to the company's move along with its repertory from the affordable and more democratic Red Bull to the more expensive and 'elite' Cockpit. "The apprentices and fishwives could hardly make the same transfer to the Cockpit as the players, because its prices were a lot higher" (*Playgoing* 203). Since the resurgence and decline of the Jacobean boy companies with their emphasis on 'private' performances, the Blackfriars began charging "sixpence or more" as opposed to the penny entry into the amphitheater (Gurr, *Shakespearian* 367). The Cockpit, in an attempt to rival the King's Men at the Blackfriars, followed suit. The attack does appear to have been aimed specifically at the Cockpit, because one year later on Shrove Tuesday a second assault on both the Cockpit and the Red Bull was planned. The group was to assemble at the Fortune and then proceed to its targets from there, but the plot was thwarted by a forewarned Privy Council (Gurr, *Playgoing* 204). Regardless of the precise reason for the attack, whether it was the result of frustration over the transfer of the Queen's Men's repertory to an unaffordable venue, or the replacement of cockfighting with more cultured entertainment, Beeston rebuilt the playhouse as the Phoenix, though it was still known popularly as the Cockpit, and began catering to a new, mixed clientele of refined gentry that lived in the neighborhood and those of the lower classes who either worked in and about the suburbs or exhibited inertia against its gentrification.

Extending from 1626 to 1636, Beeston's ten-year management of Queen Henrietta's Men was his longest to date, but when the plague of 1636 was "established in [the] city," to borrow Antonin Artaud's thoughts on the social disruption surrounding the bacterial infection, "regular forms collapse[d]," and Beeston's theatrical enterprise was no exception (23). Artaud's assessment is not just that the massive number of plague deaths experienced by a population weather away the social fabric, but that the assault upon the societal structure also lays bare

drives, passions, fears, antagonisms, and violence that are usually sublimated through quotidian constraints and public accountability. When the thread of culture has frayed to the point of snapping, that is the moment when "theater is born."

> The theater, i.e., an immediate gratuitousness provoking acts without use or profit. The last of the living are in a frenzy: the obedient and virtuous son kills his father; the chaste man performs sodomy upon his neighbors. The lecher becomes pure. The miser throws his gold in handfuls out of the window. . . . Neither the idea of absence or sanction nor that of imminent death suffices to motivate acts so gratuitously absurd on the part of men who did not believe death could end anything. (24)

Of course, Artaud's statements of a totalizing social inversion are more directly applicable to the Black Death that devastated Europe from 1347 to 1350, but the less severe, more controlled visitations that came afterward were typically accompanied by new hostilities and sometimes violent efforts to restructure aspects of city-life or public policy. The more hardline Protestant mindset had always associated the theatre with the plague, as an answer from the Corporation of London to a petition from the Queen's Players dated 6 December 1574 can corroborate: "To play in plagetime is to encreasce the plage by infection: to play out of plagetime is to draw the plage by offendinges of God vpon occasion of such playes" (qtd. in Chambers 4: 301). Enduring years of rhetoric that conflated disease with theatrical entertainment, the early modern consciousness had long held an inexorable reciprocity between the two. A resurgence of one was interpreted to bring on an increase of the other. Being no exception, the plague of 1636 tore away the veneer of probity and politeness that had hitherto covered brewing political and cultural conflicts to reveal the Caroline society of the 1630s at its most theatrical. Theatre and the discrete theatres not only participated, but were also implicated in these conflicts, capriciously shifting sides of the erratically moving dividing lines.

During the 1630s the rapid expansion of the Western Suburbs encroaching upon Westminster had made the area a site of contention between city, court, and the various class and political affiliations of a diverse population. There was a constant contested distinction between London and the Western Suburbs, and Charles often stepped into the fray in favor of the city's outskirts. Gurr observes that "Authoritarianism grew under James, while Charles promoted a remoteness from city concerns that sometimes led to the use of cynical or quasi-legal devices to fend off what were seen as unimportant pressures" (*Shakespearian* 372). In general, Charles was much less involved in London proper than his father had been, and he tended to pit the area surrounding Westminster against the London polity as a civic and cultural competitor. The western outskirts, for the first time, showed evidence of conscious city planning to house a new 'town' culture of gentry. In 1631 the Earl of Bedford had leased the land which would eventually become Covent Garden to "a group of authorized projectors" (Miles 437). By the next year, Inigo Jones, Charles's chief architect for his personal habitations, had initiated the landscaping and building in the Italianate manner of "a large rectangular piazza . . . with uniform ranges of arcaded 'portico' houses on the north and east sides and a church to the west" (Sheppard 177). The Bedford house lay on the south end. The crown capitalized on this venture, both financially and as an attempt to control the class composition of its neighboring domains, by issuing a license to build "howses and buildings fit for the habitaçons of Gentlemen and men of ability" to Bedford at the cost of £2000 (qtd. in Sheppard 177). A similar plan over which Jones had considerable influence was undertaken nearby in Great Queen Street, Holborn. But attempts to control the growth of the western suburbs through the meticulous planning and construction of high-end dwellings could only avail so much. A document dated October 1632 found in the *Remembrancia* objects to

> the multitude of newly erected tenements in Westminster, the Strand, Covent Garden . . . which had brought great numbers of people from other parts, especially of the poorer sort, and was a great cause of beggars and loose persons

> swarming about the City, who were harbored in those out places. (qtd. in Miles 438)

Apparently, the efforts of the Privy Council to restrict the construction of shoddy buildings and cheap alehouses in the west was only partially effective (Butler, *Theatre and Crisis* 151). Money flowing westward inevitably brought with it all those 'baser elements' of the city in pursuit of money's promises and distractions. Excess cash translated into other cultural excesses, but, above all, excessive and rapid growth. Due to a mixture of contolled and uncontrollable circumstances, the western outlying region was acquiring its own identity against that of London.

During this period of Charles's personal rule, the suburbs, particularly those near Westminster, became topographical zones of his sovereignty set against the sovereignty of London under the sway of its aldermen. Charles actually distanced himself from the city proper and set himself up as an antagonistic market competitor. In the plague year of 1636 the Privy Council instituted the New Incorporation of Westminster, a bold challenge to the freedoms and integrity of the civic polity. Since 1583 the city aldermen and the crown had been building a paper-record of struggle for financial and physical jurisdiction over the suburbs, liberties and out-parishes of London. The mutual antipathies that were kept in check under James grew at an alarming rate during Charles's tenure, reaching their height during the period of personal rule. In 1632 the Court of Aldermen sent a petition of complaint to the Privy Council arguing that the unregulated tradesmen and craftsmen of the outlying areas, able to practice their trade without having to become freemen of the City, were a direct challenge to the "the freedom of London which is heretofore of very great esteem [but] is grown to be of little worth" (qtd. in Sheppard 190). The Privy Council responded with a request that the City Corporation accept part of the suburbs into its jurisdiction. After much temporizing the City Council rejected the request. Charles then responded with the formation of the New Incorporation of Westminster which covered the entire area within three miles of the city walls and established a new body of a governor, four wardens, and eighty assistants. "No one – even a man already free of the City of

London – was to trade without seven years' apprenticeship and enrolment within the new incorporation" (Sheppard 191). This was a definitive juridical split in the civic body and a formation of rival domains of sovereignty. Most of the populace still had to negotiate the two vying 'municipalities,' working in one and residing in the other, and, what had previously been a more or less superficial distinction between the city proper and the western suburbs (i.e., fashion, architecture, and a nascent salon culture) was now deeply planted at the level of political organization that checked the flow of capital.

The years 1635-37 also displayed a fissure in the conjugal-body: that is, the political effects on a widening matrimonial gap between Charles and Henrietta Maria. The controversy surrounding the potential war with Spain in order to defend the Protestant Palatinate factionalized camps around husband and wife, Charles taking the minority position of peaceful appeasement against the hawks encircling the Queen. The Queen's pro-war stance was not due to any sympathy toward the Protestant cause, but, being a French noble, was rather drawn from her fear of an impending Spanish conquest of Europe. By 1636 the greatest faction of courtiers were lobbying aggresively with the Queen for a French alliance. In this, as Butler surmises, the queen actually drew closer to her former Puritan critics while pushing Charles further away, "for a Spanish war, besides fulfilling their patriotic and religious ambitions, would necessitate recalling parliament and returning to more popular forms of domestic government" (*Theatre and Crisis* 27). Jane Farnsworth is astute to echo Butler and point out that the Queen "employed the theater both to present her position and to exert pressure on the king" (382). When the Elector Palatine, Charles Louis, and his brother Rupert visited London, Henrietta-Maria took them to the Blackfriars to enjoy the remounting of the Elizabethan melodrama, *Alphonsus, Emperor of Germany*, in which Germany had to endure the abuses of a Spanish tyrant (Butler, *Theatre and Crisis* 33). Her intention was hardly veiled. Farnsworth sees Cartwright's privately acted *The Lady Errant* as a pro-Charles counter response to the Queen's circle of belligerents. Set in the royal court of Cyprus, rebellious women attempt to take over a government absented by the men

at war with Crete, but the rebellion is eventually thwarted. The message, then, is "If women act in a rebellious fashion to try to usurp men, they are unnatural and dangerous" (Farnsworth 386). The terms of the critique embedded in the play are not as harsh as Farnsworth's distillation, but the central import is certainly present. Queen Henrietta Maria, unlike her predecessor Anne, took a much more active role in politics, especially in the final years leading up to the Civil Wars, and because of her active engagement she faced both continual praise and criticism, depending upon whose banner she was adopting at the time. What Butler and Farnsworth reveal in their studies is that the theatre was one political tool at her disposal.

In a reciprocal arrangement, Royal involvement with and influence upon drama reached new heights in the Caroline era, while the hall theatres focused their topics and locales westward toward Westminster and the fashionable suburbs. Gurr relates that "Under Charles playgoing became more socially respectable than it had ever been, and as a result the different playing companies found their social and cultural allegiances diverging from one another more than ever" (*Shakespearian* 138-139). Companies and dramatists at the hall playhouses competed for an unprecedented high level of aristocratic attention. The esteemed Duke of Buckingham saw Heywood's *Rape of Lucrece* at the Cockpit on 6 of August 1628 (Bentley 1: 223). Both Charles and his queen participated in court masques and drama, but, on occasion, Charles directly manipulated the more popular drama that would eventually be consumed by audiences of the hall playhouses. At some point near 1633 Charles gave James Shirley, at the time the resident playwright for Beeston at the Cockpit, the plot for his play *The Gamester*. In a memorandum from the office of the Revels, Herbert records, "on Thursday night 6 of Febru. 1633, *The Gamester* was acted at Court made by Sherley, out of a plot of the king's given him by mee; and well likte" (Shirley, *Gamester* 185). Directly answerable to the Lord Chamberlain of the Privy Council, the Revels office had always been under obligation to the court rather than the city of London. As Master of the Revels, Henry Herbert, also a member of the powerful Pembroke family, increased the involvement of the office through both official and unofficial channels.

Throughout the Stuart era, as a Pembroke, Herbert was able to escape censure for his involvement in the *Game at Chesse* scandal that occurred under James I, secure stock in the hall companies, accept personal gifts like the "payre of gloves" from Christopher Beeston "that cost him at least twenty shillings" (qtd. in Bentley 2: 368), and exert a high level of ethical and political control over the content of dramatic works. In November of 1632 Herbert censored Shirley's *The Ball* presented by Queen Henrietta's Men at the Cockpit because "ther were divers personated so naturally, both of lords and others of the court, that I took it ill" (qtd. in Bentley 5: 1077). But one year later, either due to the fact that Christopher Beeston "promiste many things which [Herbert] found faulte withal should be left out" of *The Ball* or because Herbert had received another encouraging promise from Beeston that resulted in the previously mentioned gift of gloves to his wife, Herbert excessively praised Shirley's *The Young Admiral* as a paragon of moral drama.

> The comedy called the Yonge Admirall, being free from oaths, prophaness, or obseanes, hath given mee much delight and satisfaction in the reading, and may serve for a patterne to other poets, not only for the bettring of manners and language, but from the improvement of quality, which hath received some brushings of late. (qtd. in Bentley 5: 1168)

The encomium presents a rather bland advertisement for the work, but the didactic message is unequivocal.

As the seventeenth century progressed from the reign of James to that of his son Charles, resident complaints against the theatres increased due to elevated levels of traffic, but these objections often turned into ineffective vociferating that pitted city representatives against the overwhelming power of the crown. The court was, of course, more involved in the theatre but Andrew Gurr draws our attention to two confrontations between officials and the crown, one in 1619 and the other in 1633, in which the court displayed a tactical shift that actually set the value of the playhouse above its immediate environs (*Shakespearian* 371). In 1619 a petition

concerning the King's Men's activities at the Blackfriars as a disruption of traffic, worship, and daily life in the parish was sent to the Lord Mayor who in turn remonstrated with King James. The petition reads, "Wee find this howse a great annoyance to ye Church. . . . Wee finde this howse a great annoyance for the clensinge of the streetes" and complains of the "unrulie multitude of people . . . Coaches, horses, and people of all stores gathered togeather by that occasion, in those narrow and crooked streetes" (qtd. in Gurr, *Shakespearian* 371). James responded heavy handedly in support of his troupe by issuing them a new license that allowed its playing "within their two their [sic] now usuall houses called the Globe within our County of Surrey and their private house scituate in the precinctes of the Blackfriers within our City of London" (qtd. in Gurr, *Shakespearian* 371). There was no attempt at negotiation and the king's will prevailed. In 1633 Charles used a different maneuver to fend off a similar attack from the parishioners of Blackfriars. Rather than issuing a license, the Privy Council's response was to ask for a valuation of the playhouse, the official number being £3000 (though the King's Men claimed £21,000) against the mere £100 offered by the parish to the crown. The response was a humiliating devaluation of parish activities resulting from a "dismissive" attitude on the part of Charles. Charles, unlike his father, was withdrawing from the concerns of London proper and keeping a tighter circle around Westminster, its chosen representatives, and its subordinates (including the players). City officialdom was treated as an inconsequential annoyance.

In tandem with the growing political bifurcation between London and the crown is not only the overt control exercised by the court over the content of drama, but the mounting pressure coming from the court to alter the aesthetics of the theatrical fare offered at the hall playhouses during the second poets' war. The Pulitzer Prize winning playwright Tony Kushner has asserted that aesthetics are unavoidably political, that there is "a very complicated relationship . . . between aesthetics and politics. Good politics will produce good aesthetics, really good politics will produce really good aesthetics, and really good aesthetics, if somebody's really asking the hard questions and answering them honestly, they'll probably produce truth, which is to say

progressive politics" (Bernstein). Kushner's faith in the progressivity of the aesthetic-political alliance may be too idealistically roseate, but his observation on the always potentially politicized nature of the juncture between form and content is grounded in empirical reality. Rather than simply dismissing Beeston's company alterations at the Cockpit as mere financial opportunism, it is within this identified nexus of politics and aesthetics that the compulsion for Beeston's theatrical transformation can be located. Beeston, with Queen Henrieatta's Men at the Cockpit, had maintained a constant rivalry with the King's Men at the Blackfriars, and it was the friction between playwrights contending for royal and genteel favor at the Blackfriars that undoubtedly affected Beeston at the Cockpit in the 1630s, culminating in an alteration in political aesthetics by the year 1636. "Now that playwriting had become a sufficiently respectable activity to warrant courtiers writing for the public stage, the [King's Men] also started taking new plays from the poets who were conspicuously dancing attendance on the queen at court, notably Thomas Carew and William Davenant" (Gurr, *Shakespearian* 379). These poets picked up on the king's and especially the queen's interest in pastorals, Arcadian romance, and tragicomedies that dealt with Platonic subjectivities. The stylistic and semantic choices of these court poets conflicted with the modus operandi of writers like Shirley, Massinger and Ford, who had contributed heavily to Beeston's repertory.

The second poets' war started in 1629 when Davenant wrote *The Just Italian* for the King's Men. Gurr relates that the play "was not well received so to accompany its publication in 1630 [Thomas] Carew wrote a poem attacking the plays and the audience's preference for the rival and currently more popular repertory at the Cockpit" (*Shakespearian* 151). Thomas Carew moaned that Davenant's verses were not appreciated by the uninformed plebeians who "slight / All that exceeds Red Bull, or Cockepit flight" (Davenant, *Just Italian* 206). As the decade advanced the factions surrounding the different styles of drama split further apart while the courtier poets, by adopting the tropes of pastorals so popular at court, prevailed at the Blackfriars. Under Lowin and Taylor in 1634 the King's Men remounted Fletcher's *The Faithful Shepherdess,*

originally presented by the Children of the Queen's Revels in 1608, to mimic the success of Walter Monatagu's *The Shepherd's Paradise* performed by Henrietta Maria at court just one year prior. Davenant followed with a series of courtly showings culminating in *The Platonic Lovers*, a drama that dealt with a favorite preoccupation of the Queen's, Platonism, and eventually trumped James Shirley, a favorite playwright at the Cockpit, for the poet laureateship. The court faction at the Blackfriars achieved its mission and altered the aesthetics of the incoming repertory, which inevitably "carried the hall-playhouse companies closer to the court and further from the country as a whole" (Gurr, *Shakespearian* 378).

Though Gurr avers that "The Cockpit, by contrast, stayed more traditional," the transition of aesthetic consumption at court and the Blackfriars immediately prevenient to the plague visitation of 1636 must have been strong motivation for Beeston to adapt his dramatic offerings. With the frequent addition to the repertory of works by James Shirley, John Ford, and the occasional offering from Massinger, Queen Henrietta's Men did cater to its gentrified audience and those alienated by the growing presence of courtier drama at the Blackfriars. By capitalizing on the "enhanced self-consciousness about being urban . . . [to] create an emphasis on leisure, involve the emergence of the notion of the 'town,' and promote a stronger sense of the country/city cultural divide," the Queen's Men under Beeston at the Cockpit ultimately distinguished their repertory from the drum-and-trumpet popular, more conservative drama usually presented in the amphitheaters like the Red Bull and the Fortune, and established a repertory that sufficiently challenged the courtly repertory of the Blackfriars (Grantley 185). Often this resulted in plays that critiqued or mocked courtly attitudes and political affiliations, like Shirley's *The Ball* which has already been shown to have received the official disfavor of the Revels office. Queen Henrietta's Men had a history of holding their own against the King's Men with the public and at court, "though the King's Men had much the most prosperous operation" (Butler, "Adult" 107). With the heightened presence of the court and the crisis of plague, however, the balance of power began to shift largely in favor of the King's Men during the mid-

1630s. The royal presence in the flesh and as representation became a mark of distinctive success and Beeston was forced to respond. Butler acknowledges this by referring to the new style at the Blackfriars and stating that "some of this drama trickled into the Cockpit too," offering Thomas Killigrew, a royal page, and his tragicomedy *The Prisoner* performed by Queen Henrietta's Men in 1635 as an example ("Adult" 109). But the pressure to conform was much greater and the instances of complicity with the new drama were more numerous than Butler verbalizes.

As Charles was commissioning Rubens to portray him as a chivalric lover and promoter of peace, his Queen was attending plays at the Blackfriars in 1634, 1636, and 1637 (Gurr, *Shakespearian* 379). In 1634, as has been pointed out, the King's Men revived Fletcher's *The Faithful Shepherdess*, while Queen Henrietta's Men kept apace with Joseph Rutter's pastoral, *The Shepherd's Holiday*. Also in 1634 the courtier Thomas Carew, who had denigrated the drama of the Cockpit, sought royal favor with his masque *Coelum Britannicum* presented at court. That same year Queen Henrietta's Men performed a masque by Heywood called *Love's Mistress*, "first staged at the Cockpit before being twice represented at court" (Gurr, *Shakespearian* 422). The third time the masque was performed Heywood scribed an alternative prologue that called attention to the Queen as "A Presence; that from Venus takes all power, / And makes each place she comes in, Cupids bower," thus defining part of the company's mission in the pastoral mode preferred by the King and Queen (422).

John Astington, in *English Court Theatre, 1558-1642*, explores the massive success with the court achieved by two significant and timely productions, Lodowick Carlell's *Arvirargus and Philicia*, a tragicomedy in two parts performed by the King's Men at Blackfriars, and William Cartwright's *The Royal Slave*, a tragicomedy first presented in front of the King and Queen by the amateurs and youths at Christ Church, Oxford, and then represented at Court by the King's Men. After seeing *Arviragus and Philicia* at the Blackfriars, "w^{ch} [was] hugely liked of everyone" it was presented at court on numerous occasions in February, April and December "with great approbation of K. and Queene" (Bentley 3: 113). Carlell was, according to Gurr, one who "did

most to fix the concept of 'wit' as the test of quality in the Blackfriars repertoire" (*Playgoing* 212). Several of his plays, *Arviragus and Philicia*, along with *The Deserving Favourite* and *The Passionate Lovers*, created quite a sensation at court and instituted a vogue for the elevated tragicomedy in which love, in both its romantic and Platonic forms, is able to temper ire and transform the soul. In *Arviragus and Philicia* the chief conflict is between the war veteran Arviragus and the jealous prince Guimantes, and after years of battle in which Arviragus never wavers in his loyalty to his country and his lady, Guimantes, through his love for the strong-willed Artemia, is turned from a rapist and tyrant into a beneficent and just ruler.

Cartwright's *The Royal Slave* valorized similar themes to obtain much applause in courtly circles. The setting for the play is ancient Persia, and the impeccably virtuous Greek slave Cratander is chosen to perform the role of mock-king for three days before his ritual sacrifice, but, fortunately, Cratander's unassailable morality and virtue rescue him from impending destruction. Charles most likely saw himself reflected in this depiction of just monarchy, though Martin Butler feels that "if any figure was meant for Charles it was the Persian king, Arsamnes, himself, who continually finds himself outdone by the superior kingliness of the common slave" (*Theatre and Crisis* 44). Cratander is never revealed, as is typical, to be a king in disguise which supports Butler's assessment, but equally as important, is Cratander's unflagging devotion and subjection to the Persian King who has empowered him – devotion so extensive that he is willing to sacrifice his life and reject his Ephesian countrymen. These thematics undoubtedly appealed to the King and Queen who, as Archbishop Laud (then Chancellor of Oxford) noted, along with others "liked [the play] so well, that she afterwards sent to me to have the apparel sent to Hampton Court, that she might see her own players act it over again" (qtd. in Astington 184). Another report states that the performance "was generally liked, and the Lord Chamberlain so transported with it, that he swore mainly he never saw such a play before" (Astington 184). But more than just the content, it appears that the format of the performance at Oxford, full of spectacle and the utterances of youthful actors, appealed in equal if not greater measure to the

Queen and her circle. Upon the occasion of the 1637 production by the King's Men at court, Laud superciliously remarked, "by all men's confession, the players came short of the university actors" (qtd. in Bentley 3: 136). Much of the audience's and, in particular, the Queen's delight came from the style of the university performance which utilized actors between the ages of 14 and 22 for all roles, a mode which hearkened back to the Elizabethan boy companies. In essence, the occasion for playing instilled an atmosphere of royalty associated with the glorious days of the Virgin Queen, and Charles was firmly ensconced at the center of that occasion.

During the plague crisis of 1636 it must have been evident to Beeston how critical the court was in maintaining his company at the Cockpit and how unsecure his position was as manager of his own space. Just one year prior, the Queen had appropriated the Cockpit in February and set Beeston on the sidelines while she permitted a company of French players to take the stage (Gurr, *Shakespearian* 422). And for most of 1636 and early 1637 during the closure, the King's Men dominated the court presentations earning £210 for 21 plays and at least £30 (a large amount) for *The Royal Slave* alone (Bentley 1: 99). By contrast, Queen Henrietta's Men received £130 for performances spanning a period longer than a year with virtually no activity at court in 1636 (Bentley 1: 249). Hence, there was an intense financial exigency to please the court and the closest aesthetic model was the recent repertory of the King's Men which included Cartwright's profitable *The Royal Slave*, repeated performances of Carlell's *Arviragus and Philicia*, Davenant's *Love and Honour*, and some 'classics' of Fletcher and Beaumont's. Undoubtedly, Beeston was mulling over these successful outputs of the King's Men while the plague dragged on and he was forced to watch his treasury dwindle.

On 7 February 1637, after a period of public dormancy, Beeston brought a new group of young players to perform John Fletcher's *Cupid's Revenge* before the King and Queen at St. James Palace. This was followed one week later with another play by Fletcher, *Wit without Money*, at the same royal venue. According to the visible evidence, Queen Henrietta's Men, had been dissolved and its base elements reassembled. The plague had been ravaging the streets of

London since May of 1636, and, understandably frustrated by Davenant's success at the Blackfriars and the lavish praise bestowed upon the courtier poet's masque *The Temple of Love* (which was presented multiple times at Whitehall and the Banqueting house starting on 10 February 1635, and secured Davenant the position as "the principal writer of masques for the remainder of the reign" [Bentley 3: 195]), James Shirley had left for Dublin, Ireland to write for Ogilby's Men, probably in the "train of the Lord Deputy in November 1636" (Bentley 5: 1069). Shirley was popular at the Cockpit but with the public theatres closed and Davenant edging Shirley out of the only financially secure venue open during the plague, Shirley saw a better opportunity in Ireland and left his theatrical home on Drury Lane. Whether upon Beeston's urging or against his objections, it is unclear, but the fact was that by the fall of 1636 Beeston's principal playwright had left and there was no end in sight for the plague.

Christopher Beeston, not Queen Henrietta's Men, owned the large repertory at the Cockpit so Shirley's plays and others produced under contract there remained in Beeston's possession, which made Beeston's choice to remount Beaumont and Fletcher's *Cupid's Revenge* a matter of some political and aesthetic calculation to gain royal support. John H. Astington has argued for both this play's popular appeal due to its "spectacle," and the "royal favour" bestowed upon the production as evinced by its four performances at Whitehall during the Christmas festivities first on 5 January 1612, then on 1 and 5 of January 1613, the latter production mounted as a special occasion before young prince Charles (I), and once more in 1624 (204). The performers during the years 1612 and 1613 were a part of the Children of the Queen's Revels, who also "often acted [publicly] with great applause" as the title page to the 1635 impression relates (385). The works of Beaumont and Fletcher were extremely popular at court, but the attempt to replicate the specific conditions of performance surrounding a significant period of King Charles's childhood (i.e., a favorite play performed once again by youths near the holiday season) can be viewed as an effort to create an atmosphere of nostalgia that would incline the

monarch and possibly his wife (keeping in mind that it is at Beeston's charge that many of Queen Henrietta's former actors are on the stage at St. James) toward patronage.

Joined with the circumstances surrounding *Cupid's Revenge* are the tragedy's overt semiotics of erotic and Platonic love, a return to the allegorical and mythical of Elizabeth's day, a proclamation of dutiful worship, the valorization of iconographic images, and the integrity of royal bloodlines. In the action of the play, based on Sidney's Elizabethan romance *Arcadia*, the old Duke of Lycia, Leontius, at the entreaty of his two children, Leucippes and Hidaspes, forbids the worship of Cupid and launches a campaign to destroy the cherubic god's idols. Princess Hidaspes in a moment of seething Anti-Laudian Calvinism calls the supplication to Cupid "A vain and fruitless superstition: / So much more hateful, that it bears the show / Of true religion" (1.1 pg.391), while prince Leucippus declares that the blind god "fills the land / With lustful sins" (1.1 pg.393). Nilo, the faithful servant to the Duke, is sent to the priests to tear "down their images" and "deface [their] temple, though unwilling, / And [their] god Cupid here must make a scarecrow" (1.1 pg.393). In this, one hears a rhetoric similar to that found in the "Root and Branch Petition" of 1640, which is an echo of sentiments espoused by the House of Commons in February of 1629. Objecting to Laud's emphasis on the "external worship" of the Church of England – that the "church might be kept in uniformity and decency, and in some *beauty* of holiness" (Kenyon 149) – the "Root and Branch Petition" denigrates this as a "great conformity and likeness both continued and increased of our Church to the Church of Rome, in vestures, postures, ceremonies, and administrations" (Kenyon 155). Leontius's crusade against Cupid is analogous to the attack on the Queen's private chapel cited in the first chapter of this study. But unlike the destruction of the Queen's Chapel that is allowed to go unhindered, Cupid exacts vengeance and inflicts ruin upon the land by entangling his harshest critics in less than salubrious, if not inimical, love affairs and insatiable desires. Hidaspes, for instance, falls madly in love with Zoilus the dwarf who, because of the inexorable disparity of their social stations, meets an untimely end. At the close of the play, the dying Leucippus reverses his father's edict and the

proper submission to Eros is restored, thus affirming the necessity of placating love through ceremonial forms of worship.

The religio-political resonance of *Cupid's Revenge* was not lost on Charles who, unlike Leontius or his son, had always interpreted himself as the Defender of the Faith and on the side of God through the adoption of Richard Montagu's and Laud's anti-Puritan measures. For Charles, the Reformation came close to perfection in Elizabeth's time and since her time certain vital "rites and ceremonies" had succumbed to a sad desuetude (Laud 5: 610). In the preface to the "Canons of 1640," Charles proclaimed to "return" the Church "unto the true former splendour of uniformity, devotion, and holy order" (qtd. in Cust 99). On the issue of religion, Charles usually drew a line in the sand that he would not cross, as Richard Cust has adeptly summarized:

> . . . the most striking features of his style of kingship – his refusal to compromise where he believed his conscience was engaged or his God-given royal authority was at stake. Whereas his father would probably have met the Calvinists halfway . . . Charles was determined not to concede. Each time he felt he was freed from the necessity to appease parliament, he would revert to his basic convictions and back the anti-Calvinists to the hilt. (103)

Part of the thematic appeal of *Cupid's Revenge* to the royal couple, then, rested upon a reaffirmation of Charles's most basic religious principles, the return to Elizabethan tropes, a valorization of Henrietta Maria's Catholic roots and her personal theatrical ventures into representations of pastoral and Arcadian love.

The stylistic appeal, as has been mentioned, was due to Beeston's use of younger actors for many of the roles. The company was, in fact, an amalgam of five seasoned leaders with recruits from Queen Henrietta's and other London companies, and a disproportionately large number of boys with no history of performing. Bentley cites seventeen names associated with the company: "six and probably seven, had been connected with Queen Henrietta's men . . . two had been in the King's Revels, three had been in Prince Charles's company in 1631 and 1632, two

had been in the King's Company, and four, possibly five, had not appeared before" (1: 326-27). The five leaders of the company are known to us from a Privy Council order dated 12 May 1637, when the troupe played at the Cockpit while the plague closure was still enforced:

> A warrant to Iaspar Heyley Messenger to fetch before the Lords Christopher and W^{m}. Biston Theophil Bird Ezech: Fenn and Michaell Moone wth a Clause to Command the Keepers of the Playhouse called the Cockpit in Drury Lane who either live in it or have relaçon to it not to permit Playes to bee Acted there till further Order. (qtd. in Bentley 1: 327).

The five lead players were Christopher Beeston, his son William, Theophilus Bird (Beeston's son-in-law), Ezekial Fenn and Michael Moone (Mohun). From a ticket of privilege issued on 10 August 1639 there are ten more names connected to the company: Robert Axen, William Trigg, John Lacie, John Page, Robert Coxe, Edward Davenport, Robert Shatterell, Edward Gibbes, John Wright, and Samuell Mannery (Bentley 1: 332). And George Stuttville is known to have been with Beeston's Boys since he is mentioned with William Beeston in a warrant of apprehension issued in May of 1640. Nicholas Burt is that last actor that Bentley records because James Wright in his 1699 *Historia Histrionica* states that

> Burt was a boy first under Shank at the Blackfriers, then under Beeston at the Cock-pit; and Mohun (Moone) and Shatterel were in the same condition with him, at the last place. There Burt used to play the principal women's parts, in particular Clariana, in *Love's Cruelty*, and at the same time Mohun acted Bellamente, which part he retained after the restoration. (cxlvi)

Perhaps not all of these actors appeared at court in 1637, but at least the five leaders mentioned in the 1637 warrant were there, and probably a good portion of the other names mentioned throughout the company's five-year history. It is interesting to note that, according to Wright, most actors "went into the king's army" and of those actors in Beeston's Boys, "Mohun was a captain," Burt and Shatterel served respectively as cornet and quarter-master in Prince Rupert's

regiment (cxlix-cl), John Lacy, who achieved popularity during the Restoration, was "lieutenant and quartermaster to the lord Gerard" (qtd. in Bentley 2: 496), and it is highly probable that William Trigg was initially a royalist, but deserted the cause with "Swanston" fairly early in the wars (Bentley 2: 605). Nicholas Burt went on to achieve success upon the stage during the Restoration, Theophilus Bird went to the King's Men, John Wright was "a surreptitious actor during the interregnum" (Bentley 2: 627), and Robert Cox is identified by Kirkman in the preface to the 1672 publication of *The Wits, or Sport upon Sport* (a collection of drolls – short, humorous, highly physical excerpts from classic plays performed during the Commonwealth era) as "the incomparable Robert Cox, who was not only the principal Actor, but also the Contriver and Author of Most of these Farces" (qtd. in Hotson 48). Among these actors there is an overwhelming support for Royalism through the Restoration, and an involvement in the activities associated with London's counter-culture during the interregnum. Of course, in February of 1637 civil war was an imaginary impossibility in the minds of many and the precise trajectory of the company members could not have been known, but the combination of royalist sympathies with an overwhelming number of 'boy players' reminiscent of Elizabeth's heyday must have been attractive to a king and queen attempting survive a hostile political period in which neither Parliament nor the Queen seemed to agree with Charles over the potential war with Spain, and Charles was further distancing himself from the MPs concerning the breakdown in relations with the Scottish Presbyterians and the precarious role of Wentworth in Ireland.

The time was ripe for the presentation of a united matrimonial front against Parliamentary factionalism, and Beeston's Boys fortuitously brought forth a rich collection of signifiers and tropes connected to an idealized Elizabethan form of sovereignty. In the early months of 1637 Henrietta Maria was shifting on the Spanish question and coming "under the influence of the papal agent" at court, and the loose alliance that she had maintained "with the 'country' peers dissolved" (Butler, *Theatre and Crisis* 34). By April of the same year, when the plans came about for Prince Rupert to command a naval fleet to conquer Madagascar, "Henrietta

Maria lost interest" (Butler 34). To Charles I, the content of *Cupid's Revenge* uncovered the dangers in listening to the female voice (Hidaspes's) against the conscience of a king (Duke Leontius), but the context of the production and the one that followed one week later, *Wit without Money*, offered a way for Charles to heal an ostensible marital split over politics and unite the separate circles surrounding the queen and himself under the banner of his "official" culture.

To accomplish his political goals, Charles looked to the practices of Elizabeth I. In Jeanne H. McCarthy's estimation, Elizabeth had "asserted her prerogative of patronage to bring companies of boy actors into cultural prominence and then used those companies, in turn, as rhetorical instruments furthering her efforts to legitimate her political authority. . . . Elizabeth's boy company entertainments tended to define her in more flattering and empowering terms" (426-27). 'Elizabethanism' was highly popular during the 1620s and 1630s, but it resonated differently with Charles and Parliament, particularly during the long period of his personal rule. Parliamentarians heightened the image of Elizabeth as the model 'politic' princess and Protestant warrior as she was presented in the 1625 translation of William Camden's *Annals*. "These works harked back to the triumphs of the Spanish Armada and the war against Spain, when the queen, guided by sage and public spirited councillors like Burghley, had won the hearts of her people through observing the rule of law and meeting regular parliaments" (qtd. in Cust 106). What the *Annals* and those valorizing Elizabeth's even-handed diplomacy built upon, was her ability to compromise with the various domestic political groups while remaining an object of antipathy to hazardous externals. In the *Annals*, Camden stresses the fact that the "Iesuits hated her . . . hated her to the death, as it needeth no other proofe then their continuall practises to take away her life" (14). The same sense of danger from foreign elements did not surround Charles who tended to remove himself from the public view, and also remove himself from contact with Parliament. To many, his distance was very un-Elizabethan. Certainly this was not how Charles viewed himself. Throughout his reign, Charles professed his adherence to an Elizabethan religio-political ideal. In the late 1620s he characterized his reformation efforts at court as an attempt "to bring [the court]

to the ancient form" as it was under "the rules and maxims of the late Queen Elizabeth" (qtd. in Cust 150) and in a speech to Parliament on the 25 January 1641, Charles avowed, "that all courts of justice shall be regulated according to law, my intention being to reduce all matters of religion and government to what they were in the purest times of Queen Elizabeth's days" (Kenyon 17). In the middle of these two poles, 1636 proved to be a high watermark in Charles's Elizabethan rhetoric, once again invoking his reign as a continuation of the political agenda from Elizabeth and his father. Securing the prerogative of the court of Admiralty, Charles was adamant that there were "letters in the time of Queen Elizabeth and King James commanding [the common lawyers] not to intermeddle with any cause arising out of any contract or matter happening on or beyond the seas" (qt. in Watkins 89). And Henrietta Maria, despite her Catholicism and French roots, aligned herself with Elizabeth as is evident in both queens' predilections for posing as Amazonian warriors and a 1647 broadside poem entitled "November" that positions Elizabeth as a beneficial spirit at Henrietta Maria's side: "Next to this *Mother* [Henrietta Maria] stands a *Virgin Queene*" (qtd. in Watkins 91). Indeed, Watkins has challenged assumptions "that the Stuarts departed so dramatically from Elizabeth's example that the differences were apparent to everyone" (4). Charles and many members of his intimate circle, in fact, saw his political and religious program as a return to those halcyon years of Gloriana.

The boy companies of Elizabeth's reign, prior to their dissolution during the Marprelate Controversy of 1590/1, are inextricable from her cultural iconography and political salience. The leading authority on pre-1590 boy companies, Michael Shapiro, has noted that "Court performance was the crucial factor in the development of the early boy companies, if not their raison d'etre, and can best be understood as part of an elaborate ceremonial activity centered around the sovereign" (121). Despite their departure from the overt 'constructedness' and slavish encomium of the masque, the early children's plays still retained that essential element of aggrandizing the monarch. The profit motive for boy companies was much more obvious after their revival in 1599, but the companies before 1590 were wrapped in an aura of voluntary

adulation for the court. Reavley Gair cites 1378 as the date that the child-scholars of St. Paul's, "both of the choir and the grammar school, may be associated with acting" in Old Testament tales around the time of Christmas, but it is "to the Renaissance in England that their involvement properly belongs" (Gair 2). Thomas Elyot's 1531 *Boke Named the Governour* upheld the plays of Terence and Plautus as not only good sources of Latin text, but proper warnings "of youth unto vice, the snares of harlotts and baudes laide for yonge myndes" (Elyot 1: 125). Youth performances, then, were considered part of an educational or religious program attached to the choir or schools of the chapel and entertainment at court during the festival calendar, or, after 1576 when the first public playhouse opened, during times of plague. Early in Elizabeth's reign there existed a plethora of boy companies: The Children of the Queen's Chapel Royal, choristers at St. Paul's Cathedral, St. George's Chapel, Windsor and Westminster Abbey in addition to grammar school pupils from Westminster and the Merchant Taylor's School. Their popularity with the Virgin Queen is proven by the fact that they "appeared at court nearly twice as often as adult companies," particularly Westcott's choristers from St. Paul's (Shapiro 126), but after 1576 and the advent of a public playing season, their popularity declined sharply with only 17 performances at court compared to 39 from the adult troupes from 1576 to 1583 (Shapiro 128).

In response to the challenge from adult professional troupes, many boy companies stopped playing entirely, but Paul's Boys underwent a drastic transformation into a more organized for-profit body determined to produce innovative and literary works. This was in large part due to the concerted efforts of two men: Thomas Gyles, the astute manager who melded the Children of Paul's and the Children of the Chapel Royal into one company, thus absorbing his chief aesthetic competition, and John Lyly, the virtuosic poet whose *Euphues: The Anatomy of Wit* (1578) had instituted a bloated style of long descriptive passages, parallelism, limitless allusions, and endless paronomasia. To say that this venture was "for-profit" is not to confuse Paul's Boys with those boy companies at Blackfriars and Whitefriars under King James; companies whose repertory consisted of satirical works by Dekker, Johnson, Marston, Chapman,

and Middleton and whose "relationship with the audience was informal, and, occasionally, combative, with a tendency either to risk confusing spectators with metatheatrical or generic experimentation, or to overstep the bound of what was considered acceptable in political or social satire" (Munro 1). This style is more characteristic of Beeston's Boys after the resumption of playing in October of 1637, and, especially, under his son William who landed in the Marshalsea for the unauthorized performance of Brome's *Court Beggar*. But Paul's Boys of the 1580s were intent on flattering the Queen so that she bestowed her personal, financial, and political favor upon them. "Paul's boys emerged as the dominant boy company in court performance after the mid-1580s. They alone played at court every Christmas from 1586-7 to 1589-90" (Shapiro 129). The repertoire of new plays consisted overwhelmingly of Lyly's works that hung on allegorical, mythical, and pastoral imaginaries. *Endymion, the Man in the Moon*, probably performed at court in February of 1588, is widely recognized to render Elizabeth I as the moon goddess Cynthia. Endymion admits his love for Cynthia to his friend Eumenides. Tellus, Endymion's former inamorata, feeling slighted and betrayed, employs the sorceress Dipsas to cast a spell that places Endymion into an ostensibly endless sleep. Later it is revealed that Endymion can only be wakened by a kiss from Cynthia who has hitherto returned his affections with a mild rebuff. The comedy ends in marriage for several couples, but Cynthia chooses to stay a virgin goddess and Endymion must accept her decision as final. The parallels between the play and Elizabeth's life are not difficult to apprehend, nor is the cloying blandishment that seeps from the long descriptive passages about Cynthia's charms and virtues. Lyly's chief aim was preferment at court, and going by the extant evidence it was a thirteen-year endeavor that ended in failure. Fairholt's collection of Lyly's (Lilly) dramatic works records two petitions from Lyly to Elizabeth seeking her favor: "Thirteene yeares your highness seruant, but yet nothing. Twenty friends, that thogh they say they will be sure, I finde them sure to be slowe. A thowsand hopes but all nothing; a hundred promises, but yet nothing" (Lilly 1: xix). It seems that the popularity of Lyly's poetry could not translate into the popularity and solvency he desired at court.

The similarities between Gyles and Lyly's efforts with the Children of Paul's at Elizabeth's court and Beeston's venture with his new youth troupe's performance of *Cupid's Revenge* at St. James before Charles and Henrietta Maria are numerous. Both Beeston's production and the plays of Paul's brought youthful actors as laudatory servants to the court and each troupe relied on myth and allegory to valorize the sovereign. Though it is doubtful that the event contained the same imagistic conjurations, intentions, and meanings for Charles and Beeston, both the monarch and his subject interpreted the occasion as one from which each could profit. Beeston probably was preoccupied with the successful runs of the *Royal Slave* and *Arviragus and Philicia* by the King's Men at court, the prolonged plague closure and its financial toll, and the most recent attempt to revitalize the boy company at Salisbury Court Theatre. The Salisbury Court was opened in 1629 as a third private playhouse under the management of Richard Gunnell and his partner William Blagrave who attempted to reintroduce the first boy company since 1613, the Children of the Revels. The company was comprised of 14 boys under Gunnell's supervision, and "Gunnell hired Thomas Randolph, perhaps as house dramatist, to provide plays suited to their talents . . . wittily satirical but inoffensive dramas tailored to the boys' abilities" (Butler, "Adult" 113). The future of the emprise looked promising, but an outbreak of the plague forced the theatres to close in 1630 and the opening of the Salisbury Court Theatre was delayed while Gunnell and Blagrave went slowly into debt. In 1631 another complication arose when, following the birth of the crown prince, the Prince's Men took over the Salisbury Court and the Children of the Revels were displaced to the Fortune amphitheater. When the troupe returned to the Salisbury Court in 1633-4 it had metamorphosed into a company of adults. Had Gunnell not faced so many unforeseen an immediate complications, his venture most likely would have succeeded. Martin Butler cites Gunnell's attempts as a primary motivation for Beeston to create a new boy company and states that by forming a "troupe of youths, Beeston had further solidified his position by stealing a march on the Salisbury Court" ("Adult" 113). Perhaps in part due to Beeston's opportune cobbling together of The King and

Queen's Young Company in 1637, the immediate financial threat that the Salisbury Court posed to the Blackfriars and the Cockpit never manifested, and it was really only the King's Men at the Blackfriars that effectively challenged Beeston and won the larger audience from the public and at court.

Charles and his wife must have seen their own advantage in sponsoring Beeston's Boys during the plague closure of these volatile political years, because, despite all the evidence that supports Beeston's entrepreneurial skill as the sole cause for the company's existence, the decrees coming from the King and his Revels office make every effort to claim credit for the troupe's origin. Gurr elaborates on the political valence of the company's transformation at the Cockpit by drawing our attention to the fact that "Henry Herbert's notes about the change typically suggest that his role in setting them up was more direct and interventionist than it actually was" (*Shaksesperian* 423). Henry Herbert records, "Mr. Beeston was commanded to make a company of boyes, and began to play at the Cockpit with them the same day" (Herbert 66). Bentley cites the date for this entry as 24 Feb 1637, approximately two weeks after the court performance of *Cupid's Revenge* during a "short period of activity" (1: 325-26), while Gurr, though with little explanation, interprets the entry as occurring eight months later. Regardless of the precise date, the fact remains that Herbert's note was entered *after* the royal warrant "to sweare M^{r} Christopher Bieston his Ma^{tes} servant in ye place of Gouuernor of the new Company of the Kinges & Queenes boyes" dated the 21 February 1637 (qtd. in Bentley 2: 369). This warrant, it must be acknowledged, came one week after Beeston's Boys' performance of *Wit without Money* and two weeks after *Cupid's Revenge* at court, for which he was paid £20 on 10 May 1637. Since all recognition of legal command and royal patronage came after the court performances, it is obvious that Beeston was the sole impetus for the company. Yet it is intriguing that all the language on record stresses the royal couple's and Master of the Revels's desire for the fruition of and sense of ownership over Beeston's Boys. On the surface, Beeston's Boys appears to be the result of royal command – a culturally 'procreative' joint effort of the King and Queen that

stresses both marital harmony and political hegemony. A closer look at the repertory and five-year activity of the King and Queen's Young Company, however, reveals that the troupe was in flux with its era while negotiating the sometimes oppositional sovereignties of 'town' and crown, and that whatever panegyric the King and Queen received was balanced by modes of subversive critique.

CHAPTER IV

COURTING THE COURT: GLAPTHORNE'S AESTHETICS AND THE EARLY YEARS OF APPEASEMENT

The name 'Beeston's Boys' conveys a sense of sole ownership and continuity for the short life of the company, but the troupe actually persisted through three distinct phases shaped by the death of Christopher Beeston in October of 1638: a period of appeasement between town and courtier cultures under father Beeston until his death, a transitional phase from October 1638 until April 1639 when William was assuming control but power was also heavily invested in his mother, and a period of truculence and instability in which the repertory marks a shift toward pleasing the town at the expense of alienating the crown. In this last phase the company became an embattled cultural and political commodity, or, "warlike" as Andrew Gurr deems the "last years," when William Beeston was jailed in the Marshalsea and the courtier William Davenant was installed as governor of the King and Queen's Young Company. Davenant's tenure, however, was 'unproductive' and cut short by his involvement in the failed army plot to rescue Strafford from the Tower of London and his subsequent sequestration from public view. The preeminent theatre historians of the past century (i.e. Bentley, Gurr, and Harbage) recognize that Christopher was a much more astute governor and politic manager than his son (see Bentley 1: 332). This is certainly true if the objective of the management was to remain inoffensive or, at least, to mitigate the impact of the company's offenses. Linking key management decisions with

choices of new productions, textual acquisitions and their representational schematics, it is my contention that 'giving or avoiding offense' was never of primary concern, but contingent upon a larger cultural objective; that the three phases of Beeston's Boys previously outlined signal a political-aesthetic fluctuation from father to son – a fluctuation most visible in the movement from the pastoral and tragicomic works of Henry Glapthorne in the first phase to a heavy reliance upon the scathing wit of Richard Brome in his depictions of city, court, and country in the final phase. Examining company praxis and dramatic content in parallel firmly ensconces The King and Queen's Young Company in dialogue with the fraught political culture of its day.

The company history recounts infractions during both Christopher's and his son's terms as "Governour & Instructer," but the written record reveals that Christopher was more adept at palliating official discontent. On 12 May 1637 during the plague closure, just two days after the company had received a payment from the court, Beeston was issued an edict "command[ing] the keepers of the playhouse called the Cockpit in Drury Lane who either live in it or have relaçon to it not to permit plays to bee Acted there till further Order" (qtd. in Bentley 1: 327). Judging from a response from Beeston to the Privy Council, it appears that the transgression involved a public performance that the 'wily' governor sophistically defended as an invited dress rehearsal:

> Petition of Christopher Beeston to the Council. Petitioner being commanded to erect and prepare a company of young actors for their Majesties' service, and being desireous to know how they profited by his instructions, invited some noblemen and gentlemen to see them act at his house, the Cockpit. For which, since he perceives it is imputed as a fault, he is very sorry and craves pardon. (qtd. in Bentley 1: 327-28)

The council was evidently appeased because on 10 June 1637 the Lord Chamberlain, in a move to protect the company's repertory, promulgated an order that restricted the publication of plays to those accompanied by "some Certificate in writeing vnder the hands of Iohn Lowen and Ioseph Taylor for the Kinges servants & Christpher Bieston for ye Kings & Queenes young Company"

(qtd. in Bentley 1: 328). Bentley is resolved that this type of protective meddling in theatrical copyright issues was "not likely to have taken place had one [of the companies] been in disgrace, or even out of favour" (1: 328). One gathers, then, that whatever anger Beeston had provoked was mollified and the original offense soon reconciled or forgotten.

An important distinction must be drawn between Beeston's offense and the future offenses of his son, the former drawing ire for his premature practice before plague restrictions had been lifted, the latter for the staging of criticism, portrayals, and disruptive semantics that went against official ideology. To all appearances, Christopher Beeston was aiming to draw the crown closer to his new company through favorable exploits at the level of representation, while still maintaining his standard repertory of James Shirley, Francis Beaumont, John Fletcher, John Ford and Philip Massinger . On 3 May 1638 Herbert licensed John Ford's last work, *The Lady's Trial*, to Beeston's Boys, but unlike Ford's earlier works which were known for their "economy and simplicity of dramatic language" (Neill 92), Ford's new comedy, dealing with a primary plot of male redemption through female constancy and virtue, is, according to Mark Stavig, "more like the fashionable Cavalier plays of the court dramatists . . . there is in the play an artificiality and refinement not found in the earlier plays but pervasive in the court drama of the time" (84). John Ford had been writing for both the King's Men and the players at the Cockpit since around 1630 and his name carried weight with the Inns of Court gentry, but after the plague closure he seems to have either been forced out or abandoned the King's company for the Cockpit, though still mimicking the courtier-playwright style. Gurr proposes that this trend toward "respectability" in the hall companies in 1630s "reflected the female presence" in the theatrical houses and "called for refinements in the verbal crudities of the older repertory" (*Playgoing* 211). And the most visible lady, Queen Henrietta Maria, set the standard for a more elegant, female friendly dramatic format.

Beeston's Boys' relationship to its patrons was an ambiguous one. Bentley notes that the company was under the managerial auspices of several share-holders in addition to the Beestons

and George Stutville, though there is no record of any of these shareholders, other than those just named, of ever being "sworn Grooms of the Chamber as the other London players were, and the name of the company is omitted from the list of those whose members had been so sworn in 1641" (1: 324-25). Yet all the language coming from the Revels Office stressed Charles's role in commanding and authorizing Beeston's emprise as Beeston had conceived it - as a troupe of "boyes" under the supervision of a team of adult shareholders. Despite the lack of formal oaths, while the Queen was successfully pressuring Charles for military action, not in Spain this time but in Scotland as a response to the Prayer Book rebellion begun in 1637, under Beeston's direction the company was striving for an aesthetic, and possibly, a religio-political alliance with the Queen. Concerning the proper course of action to take in response to the Scottish Parliament and Kirk's vociferous rejection of Charles's imposition of the English Prayer Book because it opposed the 'true religion' of Scotland, the English Privy Council was divided: "Arundel, Cottington, and Sir Francis Windebanke favoured force, while Northumberland, Coke, and Sir Henry Vane . . . were urging accommodation" (Cust 231). The Queen loudly supported the Scots Catholics, Con and Nithesdale, who were rallying for war. After extensively debating the issue, in June of 1638 Charles sent the marquis of Hamilton northward to bargain with the Scottish Covenanters along with the orders that if they refused to surrender to Hamilton, the Covenanters were to be treated as "rebels and prepare for war" (Cust 233). The Covenanters refused to give in to Charles's demands and the King responded with vehemence, "I will rather die than yield to those impertinent and damnable demands . . . for it is all one to yield to be no king in a very short space of time" (qtd. in Cust 233). To Charles, the Scottish demands amounted to an end of episcopacy and a complete overthrow of his authority.

Whether it was hearsay arising from the religious sensitivity of the time or Beeston, a known Catholic, had a hand in it, the King and Queen's Young Company was connected to a Catholic conversion at the highest levels of the aristocracy. On 9 November 1637, just one month

after the official re-opening of the theatres, Mr. Garrard wrote to Thomas Wentworth, the Lord Deputy of Ireland:

> Here hath been an horrible Noise about the Lady Newport's being become a Romish Catholick; she went one Evening as she came from a Play in Drury-Lane to Somerset-House, where one of the Capuchins reconciled her to the Popish Church, of which she is now a weak Member. (qtd. in Bentley 1: 329)

Though there was never any direct link established between the play Newport witnessed and her subsequent apostasy, it is inescapably scandalous that her conversion was connected to her visit to the Cockpit and Beeston's activities there. Not enough evidence is known to support the thesis that Beeston was using the Cockpit as a clandestine meeting place for English recusants, (those of the Queen's own faith), but Newport's abandonment of Protestantism after her visit to Beeston's theatre seems less than completely coincidental when coupled with the company's stylistic adoption of the Queen's penchant for pastoral Neoplatonism, Arkadian Romance, and tragicomic plot structure in the vein of Montagu and Carlell.

The evidence for this move toward pleasing the crown (particularly the queen) through the courtier style of playwriting made popular both at court and at the Blackfriars by the King's Men, is found in Beeston's acquisition of the dramatic work of Henry Glapthorne. Though his work has often been censured for verbatim recycled metaphors, tropes, allusions and plot sequences, Glapthorne's political, religious, and artistic inclinations are ambiguous enough to have made him a prime candidate for negotiating the new style of the court and the older traditional repertoire of the Cockpit. Much of what is known about Glapthorne comes from a scanty official record, a few dedications, seven extant plays attributed to him along with their title pages, and a collection of poems first collected with his plays in 1874 (Bentley 4: 477). Part of Glapthorne's biography connects him to strong puritan, anti-royalist sentiment. Heinemann reports that "Glapthorne's father was bailiff to Lady Hatton, the formidable wife of Sir Edward Coke" (230). Coke was most famous for his chairmanship of the committee that pushed through

the Statute on Monopolies in 1624, an act which greatly limited the monarch's ability to grant patents and monopolies, and for his aid in passing the Petition of Right in 1628, basically an extension of the Magna Carta which protected civil liberties from royal infringement. Glapthorne's collection of poems known as *Whitehall,* first published in 1643, contains elegies on Puritan Parliamentarians the 4th Earl of Bedford, and Henry Earl of Mancherster, "both were Parliamentarian opposition leaders on the eve of the Civil War" (Heinemann 230). And, based on Glapthorne's *Albertus Walenstein* staged at the Globe circa 1634, a tragedy about the atrocities committed by the eponymous Catholic-Imperial general during the Thirty Years War, Martin Butler, in *Theatre and Crisis,* is quick to surmise that the play was "well calculated to incense the indignation of an audience avid for Protestant success in the continental war" (234). Twenty-four years later in his book *The Stuart Court Masque and Political Culture*, Butler reiterates his original statement by stating that "Glapthorne's political outlook can be deduced from his lurid tragedy *Albertus Wallenstein*" (326). One hopes and assumes that Butler is highlighting Glapthorne's sensitivity to an incendiary issue and his ability to capitalize on the public's preoccupation with that issue, rather than reducing *Albertus Wallenstein* to a document of Glapthorne's own religio-political convictions. Glapthorne's religious and political leanings are neither so obvious nor inflexible. Several of his dedicatory poems and elegies also valorize Catholics and Cavaliers on the opposition. Glapthorne penned an elegy to Richard Weston, 1st Earl of Portland and a suspected crypto-Catholic, who assisted Charles in going around Parliament to raise the funds necessary to maintain his period of personal rule and successfully urged for treaties with the two foremost banes of Protestant England, Spain and France. Glapthorne praises Weston in unsettlingly Catholic and autocratic terms:

> Into whose Essence (all conceiv'd) that State
> Did its own soule even transubstantiate:
> Such were his Counsels, so supremely wise,
> They alwais conquerd where they did advise (*Poems and Plays* 2: 205).

And Glapthorne dedicates *Whitehall* to "my noble friend and Gossip, Captain Richard Lovelace," the renowned Cavalier poet whom Glapthorne, by noting his military distinctions, urges us to remember his efforts on the royalists' side in the Civil Wars – efforts for which he faced imprisonment. Going by the patronage and friendships Glapthorne maintained on either side of the religio-political divide, it is impossible to place him in one camp, but between 1637 and 1639, a time when Beeston was producing very few new works, the shrewd manager of the Cockpit had enough faith in Glapthorne's suitability as a playwright to produce several of his dramas in his hall-playhouse and at court.

Though they were not his first stage trials with Beeston, we can assume that Glapthorne's first works for the newly created King and Queen's Young Company were *The Ladies Priviledge* and *Argalus and Parthenia* produced during the years 1637 and 1638 (Harbage, *Annals* 138-40). The title page to the 1639 publication of *Argalus and Parthenia* states that it "hath been Acted at the Court before their Maiesties: And At the Private-House in Drury Lane, By their Maiesties Servants," and the 1640 publication of *The Ladies Privilege* expresses that it was "Acted with good allowance at the Cock-pit in Drury-lane, And before their Majesties at Whitehall twice. By their Maiesties Servants." Glapthorne and the publisher proudly draw attention to the fact that the plays were produced at court in addition to Beeston's private-house, and from the available record it is obvious that Beeston was a valuable aid in putting Glapthorne's dramatic offerings before the King and Queen. Though *Albertus Wallenstein* achieved success at the Globe in the capable hands of the King's Men in 1635, there is no indication that the play was ever performed at court (Bentley 4: 477). Neither is there any record of a court production for *The Lady Mother*, probably performed by the King's Revels in 1635. Likewise, there is no record of any performance of his three lost plays, *The Noble Husbands*, *The Vestal*, and *The Duchess of Fernandia*. The only other plays certified as having a public performance are *Wit in a Constable*, performed at the Cockpit by Beeston's Boys in 1639, and the 1636 production of *The Hollander, or Love's Trial* "Acted at the Cock-pit in Drury lane, by their Majesties Servants, with good

allowance. And at the Court before both their Majesties." The title page to the 1640 publication asserts that the first performance of the play was under the auspices of The King and Queen's Young Company, a company not formed until early 1637, but internal evidence dates the play to 1636, and Bentley proposes that since Beeston's Boys was "the successor to the Queen Henrietta's men under the same management and at the same theatre, and much of their repertory was inherited from that company . . . the play was originally written for Queen Henrietta's men" (4: 482-23). So prior to forming The King and Queen's Young Company, Beeston and Glapthorne had shared a presumably successful venture at the Cockpit and at court, because it led to several more future collaborations. Since the only three known instances of Glapthorne's work presented before the King and Queen are directly connected to Christopher Beeston's management, it is safe to aver that Beeston was integral in promoting Henry Glapthorne at court, and that the relationship was mutually beneficial.

The Hollander and *Wit in a Constable* provide some insight into Glapthorne's willingness to make a rather dismal foray into the style of Jonsonian place-realism, an extremely popular form with the 'town' culture in the mid 1630s. But Glapthorne's attempts at humor appear to be far less successful than his contemporary Richard Brome whose *The Sparagus Garden*, a play written in the same Jonsonian vein, grossed £1000 at the Salisbury Court Theatre in 1635 (Kaufmann 29). *Wit in a Constable* marks Glapthorne's last go at comedy in 1638. His remaining works are either tragedies or tragicomedies. The first lengthy commentary on Glapthorne's life and works appeared in the 1820s in the *Retrospective Review*, which Shepherd quotes at length in his 1874 collected works. The critic, at times, praises Glapthorne for his control of poetic language, but more often derides him for his lack of depth, feeling, and wit.

> Glapthorne belongs to an inferior order of genius: not being able to lay open the springs of passion, he covers them with flowers, in order that, as he cannot gratify us with their refreshing waters, he may, at least, hide their existence . . . we find poetry instead of pathos, and elaborate speeches instead of passion. (x)

And of Glapthorne's aim at wit the *Review* is no less scathing: "*The Hollander* . . . contains some fine writing, but very little comic power, except in the character of Captain Pirke . . . Sconce, the Dutchman, from whom the piece is named, is, we think, a failure" (xi-xii). "*Wit in a Constable*" earns a little more praise as "an entertaining comedy" but this encouragement proves to be a backhanded compliment because the critic quickly laments that it is a play "without possessing any passages which are particularly worth extracting; it certainly does not satisfy the expectations which the title is calculated to raise" (xii).

These plays may not convey a good sense of comedic timing or humorous content, but they do expose Glapthorne's consciousness of the city-town-country-crown divides and the predominantly 'town' audience of the Cockpit from which he was at least trying to elicit laughter. *The Hollander* follows the trail of money and morality to the charlatan Doctor Artlesse who has settled himself among the suburban gentry. His wife rejoices,

> The Tide is turnd with us: when thou wert an Inne-
> Keeping Apothecary in the Country,
> The furniture of our shop was Gally-pots,
> Fild with Conserve of Roses, empty Boxes,
> And Aqua vitae glasses; and now thou art
> My most admir'd Doctor, walk'st in Sattin,
> And in plush, my heart. (1.1 20-26)

The poverty of country living is contrasted with the rich potentialities of town life. The town hosts a population with disposable funds and thus offers the crafty businessman multiple chances of transformation to meet the population's demands – alterations in identity (from apothecary to doctor), changes in financial fortune (from Gally-pots to Sattin), and the potential to metamorphose both of these through romantic unions. The various conflicts in *The Hollander* are resolved in parallel marriage plots that bring money and breeding together: the young gentleman Free-wit is confessed and purified by the Lady Know-worth, Sir Martin Yellow is cured of his

domineering possessiveness of his wife, his nephew Popingay falls hopelessly in love with the doctor's daughter, and Sconce, "a Gallant naturaliz'd Ducthman," is happily duped into marrying a disguised chambermaid. The fashionable haunts surrounding London are natural sites of moral, sexual, and financial resolution. *Wit in a Constable*, using a much different strategy, valorizes town culture and its locales by ridiculing "excessive allegiance to the City . . . the pompous and aspirational citizen, Alderman Covet is made ridiculous by his combination of self-importance and unfashionable pride in the City" (Grantley 142). Covet eulogizes the city government to Sir Geffrey only to be embarrassed by the news that the constable is drinking in a tavern nearby when he should be on duty. It is not the historico-political infrastructure of London and its anfractuous bureaucracy that are rich in cultural capital and serve as pockets of redemption; that honor belongs to the evolving and informal public spaces of the town.

If *Wit in a Constable*'s slightly veiled dramatic privileging of a town culture of gentleman over that of city officialdom still leaves a question as to where Glapthorne's allegiance lies, then Glapthorne's explicit and direct address to the privileged gentry in his poem "To a Reviv'd Vacation Play" resolves that question:

> It is a dead Vacation; yet we see
> (Which glad our souls) a wel-set Company
> Adorn our Benches: We did scarce expect
> So full an Audience in this long neglect
> Of Court and Citie Gentry, that transfer
> In Terme their Visits to our Theater.
> The Countrey Gentlemen come but to Town
> For their own bus'nesse sake, to carry down
> A sad Sub-poena, or a fearfull Writ
> For Their Poor neighbour, not for love of Wit.
> Their comely Madams too come up to see

New Fashions, or to buy some Raritie
For their young Son and Heir, and only stay
Till by their Sheepshearing they'r call'd away.
The Courtiers too are absent, who had won
To buy your Wares on trust, they'r gone to hunt
The nimble Buck i'th Countrey; and conceive,
They give you Int'rest, if you but receive
A haunch of Ven'son, or if they supplie
Your wives trim Churching with a Red-Deer Pie.
Few Gentlemen are now in Town, but those
Who in your Books remain uncross'd for Clothes,
Who, when you ask them money, are so slack
To pay't; their answer is, What do you lack?
You are our daily and most constant Guests,
Whom neither Countrey bus'nesse nor the Gests
Can ravish from the Citie; tis your care
To keep your Shops, 'lesse when to take the Ayr
You walke abroad, as you have done to day,
To bring your Wives and Daughters to a Play.

(*Plays and Poems* 2: 194-5)

The "courtiers" and "country gentleman" are not the "constant guests" that "adorn the benches," but merely casual attendees that visit the theatre as an afterthought to other business. The loyal patrons are the shopkeepers and local gentry whose domestic lives and business practices inextricably entangle them in the thriving life of the city, and even more specifically, focus their attentions westward to the fashionable district of the hall playhouses. The routine audience is not as vertically diversified as it is horizontally diversified among the 'middle class.' "Wives" and

"daughters" claim a privileged place in the pool of spectators, and the drama of the day had to be tailored to fit their predilections. As a poet, Glapthorne was, if anything, aware of the middling gentry or merchant class values and behaviors of his audience, and he strove to reflect their images and tastes in his poetry.

With his dramatic output for Beeston's Boys between 1637 and 1640 (when most of his works were published) there is a distinct shift in Glapthorne's choice of genre, plot development, rhetoric, iconographic strategies, and representations, and this shift is most evident in his plays *The Ladies Priviledge* and *Argalus and Parthenia*, which marshal their elements toward pleasing a courtly or courtier-poet nourished audience while displaying a heightened consciousness of that audience's feminine members. In short, the plays target the royal couple and their overlapping circles. This is not to say that *The Ladies Priviledge* or *Argalus and Parthenia* are sycophantic blandishments in verse, but rather that the religious and social critiques offered by them are juxtaposed with a symbolism palatable to courtly tastes, which sometimes results in conflicting aesthetics, multivalent readings, and ambivalent politics. Butler sees *Albertus Wallenstein* as an unambiguous piece of Protestant, drum-and-trumpet agitprop for the popular stage, but the unresolved subtleties of Glapthorne's later works shroud his political and religious sympathies in a cloud of doubt. *The Ladies Priviledge* and *Argalus and Parthenia* present tantalizing bits Neoplatonism, Arkadian romance, and unwavering devotion to one's lord, all wrapped in ornate poesy and all obvious attempts to gain royal favor, but coterminous with these savory notions are representational tendencies that disturb, even if only temporarily, the foundations of court protocol, traditional gender divisions, and the hegemonic apparatus of the State. Glapthorne's dramas are indicative of Beeston's sensitive style of negotiation, drawing court favor while dancing around semantic and practical strictures on the theatre. The dramatic pieces of the non-courtier Glapthorne mimic court affectations, but by doing so in bold outlines, Glapthorne promises and rewards affective expectations momentarily tainted with a residue of their potential,

if not actual, negation. Adorni in *The Ladies Priviledge*, when talking to the Duke's kinsman, Bonivet, states this most sententiously:

> Sir, although I am
> One that affects not the nice phrase of Court,
> Having bin nurs'd in warre, yet I can frame
> My selfe to imitation of what humour
> Shall there, or any where appear to be
> Worthy my laughter. (2.1. pg.105)

Adorni lets us know that imitation is always possible and always self-consciously distant from the subject/object being imitated; it comes pre-loaded with its own critical economy of language and gesture.

Using the language of the court, *The Ladies Priviledge* is an enticement to Henrietta Maria and her often overlapping proclivities for playing both in politics and in the masquing house. The play is the type of "Love and Honour" drama that Glapthorne's coeval Richard Brome castigates in his prologue to *The Court Beggar*, a "handsome Love-toy [that] shall your time beguile / forcing your pitty to a sigh or smile" (9-10), and a play that Bentley deems "one of the more absurd love-and-honour plays" (4: 486). Glapthorne was probably attempting to ride upon the coattails of Suckling's popular drama *Aglaura* presented as a tragedy by the King's Men at court on 7 February 1638 and then again on 3 April 1638, but as a tragicomedy with a revised fifth act replete with comedic ending. Bentley believes that the King's Men had the script in their possession as of July 1637 and were trying the play out at the Blackfriars (5: 1206). Suckling's play is set in Persia and recounts a ludicrously high number of intrafamilial and courtly struggles between love and duty. Harbage relates that "it was produced with a sumptuousness unjustified by its quality and then printed in folio" at the expense of the playwright (*Cavalier Drama* 110). An eye-witness account of the February production at court states that the "Play cost three or four hundred Pounds setting out, eight or ten Suits of new Cloaths he gave the Players; an unheard

Prodigality" (qtd. in Bentley 5: 1202). Suckling's multiple presentations at court and "the [many] allusions to the play before the Restoration . . . seem to imply that the play was a profitable item in the Blackfriars repertory" (Bentley 5: 1207). While playwrights like Brome, who adhered to the popular tradition, jealously derided the play's uncalled-for success, Glapthorne appears to have interpreted *Aglaura* and the phenomena surrounding its production as an occasion to be replicated.

A summary of events in *The Ladies Priviledge* reveals the obvious parallels. Admiral Doria of the Republic of Genoa has just returned from a successful naval campaign against the rival Venetians. Along with the many civic accolades he receives, the admiral expects a warm reception into Chrisea's, his beloved's, heart, but while he is in the snares of passion's protestation he also swears an oath to perform whatever imposition suits Chrisea's fancy, an oath "so binding, that no Law / Or power can dispense with" (1.1 pg.101). Her request is unexpectedly and severely cruel: Doria must persuade his best friend, Vitelli, to love and serve only Chrisea. This is coupled with Chrisea's complete rejection of Doria's affection. Doria is then forced to navigate the fatal Scylla and Charybdis of Love and Honor with a third counterpoised obstacle, the Law, set in his way. Against his own will, Vitelli submits to Doria's persuasions and unconvincingly pursues Chrisea, but his courtship is complicated by the precondition of Vitelli's sworn devotion to Chrisea's sister, Eurione. Doria must keep the secret of his obligation to Chrisea's arbitrary vagary locked within his breast, but Bonivet, Chrisea and the Duke's kinsman, accosts Doria for his ostensible rejection of his beautiful cousin. Ever the soldier, Doria cannot withhold the use of his "steele" against the slur "degenerate Coward" and he fatally injures Bonivet defending his action until the end as "The truth I owe my reputation tells me, / Was right in poynt of hounour" (4.1 pg.140). The duel does not set well with the Genoese authorities under the Duke, and Doria is apprehended and held in prison until the penultimate scene of his trial.

The catch, and where the play receives its title, is that Doria can be exonerated and manumitted from the Law's otherwise irrevocable ruling on his life by a virgin's proffer of matrimony. Vitelli and Eurione plead with Chrisea to come forward, take the law's privilege, and submit herself to rescue Doria from his impending doom, but no impassioned words for their friend's safety can pierce her "flinty breast" and Chrisea is resolved not to save the admiral. While Vitelli and Eurione ineffectually plead with Chrisea, Sabelli, Doria's page, tenderly but equally ineffectually pleads with his master to let him die with Doria if he is not saved from the clutches of the Law. Doria is, like Chrisea, unyielding and resolved to die alone if judged guilty. The trial proceeds but suffers several interruptions. First, from the comical, aged court matron Corimba, who offers herself as a virginal sacrifice to Doria's wedding bed, and, second, from a beautiful, unfamiliar maid who, against Doria's objections, convinces him to take her as wife and thus save not only his own life, but also ensure the future protection of Genoa. Refusing the former offer from Corimba, Doria accepts the latter offer from the attractive stranger, but only as a result of extreme communal pressure.

The final scene opens with the preparations for Doria's festive wedding day, though his misery subverts all efforts at conviviality. In an 'unexpected' turn of events, Chrisea materializes at the wedding and repents her actions which were all performed as an excessively lengthy and harsh trial of Doria's devotion to herself, his own honor, and Vitelli's affection for Eurione. In addition to the satisfying sight of Chrisea's contrite tears, Bonivet, in actuality, is not deceased but has been kept hidden away, recovering from his wounds inflicted by Doria. Chrisea and Doria express a mutual desire to marry, but only the prior legal contract of his marriage to the unnamed Lady (a point on which the Duke will not budge) stands in the way of bliss. Fortunately, the Lady to whom Doria is contracted is discovered to be Sabelli, his loyal page, now freed from a life of cross-dressing to save his master. The play ends happily with the expectation of two love marriages.

The centrality of the feminine actualized in the privilege of the woman over the male prisoner's life and Chrisea's exorbitant power over her lover Doria "would no doubt have pleased the cult of Henrietta Maria," and this, in addition to the Neoplatonic motifs embedded in the text, most likely led to the two court performances printed on the title page (Bentley 4: 486). In the pages of *The Ladies Priviledge* there is a pandemic and recurring concentration on the feminine body and its affects that initiates domains of sovereignty in the play's action and reinforces the semantic privileging of the female sovereign in the intended audience, Henrietta Maria. On another level, the same bodily-affective strategies in Glapthorne's drama work to mitigate and usurp female sway and replace it with the masculine State prerogative. When looking closer at the negotiations of these conjecturally autonomous gendered and juridical bodies, the ideological parameters of Sovereignty and the State appear ambiguous while bodies articulate permeability. Whether intentional or unintentional is irrelevant, but there are pervasive moments of destabilization and collapse in Henrietta Maria's preferred metonymy, which ultimately and ironically privileges homosocially male oriented sovereignty, though it fluctuates disturbingly between sovereignty as embodied Prince and as the disembodied pluralism of the Law.

There is enough tropic treatment of the Platonic soul in *The Ladies Priviledge* to have satisfied the Queen. To press the full force of the Law's corporal punishment the Duke must first, paradoxically, dematerialize the victim. Trivulci excoriates Doria for his supposed murder of Bonivet equating taking "man's life" with the destruction of "Heavens Image" (4.1 pg.142). The wedding masque framed within the play's larger structure opens with an incantation from the Virgins to the empyrean, bidding, "Come bright vertues that reside / In heaven, as in your proper sphere" (5.1 pg.150). Chastity, Temperance, Modesty and Truth then descend to earth to join the triumphant dance. The virtues remain fixed in form but have the ability to leave their domicile above and be "contain'd in the faire bride," thus purifying her otherwise base material substance (5.1 pg.150). And that same bodily substance is further debased by Doria when he lambently proclaims, ". . . free me from this cruell / Oppressive weight of flesh, which does entombe / My

martyr'd soule" (5.1 pg.151). The true formative elements are fixed in the heavens and the material world is only their insubstantial and corrupt image, while the flesh is a tomb for the soul; these notions have their roots in Platonic discourses like the *Republic*, the *Phaedo*, and the *Phaedrus*. *The Republic* likens the visible realm "to [a] prison dwelling" filled with "shadows" in contradistinction to the "intelligible realm" of the sun containing "the form of the good" (517b-c), and the *Phaedo* envisions a temporal provenance of the soul that "existed apart from the body before they took on human form, and they had intelligence." (76c). According to Plato, the whole aim in life is to "purify[y] [oneself] by philosophy [in order to] live in the future altogether without a body" (114c). Doria's boast of benevolent bellicosity, that it is his warrior's "profession to infranchise soules / From prisons of their flesh" (2.1 pg.119), and his lamentation over his own soul's imprisonment, ". . . free me from this cruell / Oppressive weight of flesh, which does entombe / My martyr'd soule" (5.1 pg.151), echo Plato's denial of corporality. This transmission of Platonic philosophy is, however, unsettled by Vitelli's rubuke of Doria's "passion too effeminate for a heart / Endu'd with manly courage" (5.1 pg.151). He offers a corrective by encouraging Doria to look "Upon the lustre of this Ladyes [his bride's] looks" (5.1 pg.151). Doria is verbally travelling the journey laid out in the *Phaedrus*, from the worldly object of beauty to the disembodied realm of the soul free from pain, but Vitelli warns that such a passionate drive toward a disembodied end is also the adoption of an "effeminate" subjectivity. Rather, Doria should halt his progress at the point where his male gaze falls upon the female object of beauty, thus ejecting effeminacy from his own subjectivity by objectifying the feminine in his bride and, consequently, reclaiming his neglected masculinity.

The Ladies Priviledge emphasizes the formal, the corporeal and the iconographic over the immaterial in a very Catholic economy of language, but the language is slippery and the emergent meanings are multivalent – the shifting sands of gender work so that they never seem completely to affirm or disavow the sovereignty of either a Catholic or feminized ideological position. Holding a ludicrously arduous trial of Doria's faith and honor (a trial that almost ends in a death

sentence) while enduring an endless stream of tears from her sister as she forces her lover, Vitelli, to abandon her, paints Chrisea as a sadistic tyrant rather than a lover wrestling with her own deep-seated insecurities. What provides Chrisea with this redoubtable dominion over the others is the affective potency of her bodily presence akin to religious relics. Doria describes her as

> . . . a Lady, who may claime
> The priviledge of all hearts . . .
> . . . such a jemme, that should old nature strive
> To frame her second it would quite exhaust
> her glorious treasury. (2.1 pg.117)

For Doria, Chrisea's body is, in the words of Lauren Berlant, "an enabling object that is also disabling" (95). Doria's addiction to her is an addiction to a space of intense affect and proximity to her is proximity to an object as "a cluster of promises," both carnal and spiritual that are always on the verge of materializing (93). And while Chrisea's entire physical being is surrounded by the aura of masculine subservience to her feminine will, the greatest potential is localized in the eye. Unlike "the Petrarchan conceit of the eroticized eye . . . [as] a female eye that does not see but solicits the male gaze" (Lobanov-Rostovsky 197), Glapthorne describes Chrisea's vision in accordance with Plato's theory of sight and reverses the origin of the gaze from the male to the female which places Chrisea in a typically masculine position of power. In Plato's theory of vision, the eye projects an inner fire and thus forms elemental air into apprehended images (Lobanov-Rostovsky 198). Filtered through Aristotelian notions of reproduction, sight is gendered masculine:

> . . . the female always provides the material, the male that which fashions it, for this is the power that we say they each possess, and this is what it is for them to be male and female. Thus while it is necessary for the female to provide a body and a material mass, it is not necessary for the male, because it is within what is produced that the tools or the maker must exist. While the body is from the

> female, it is the soul that is from the male, for the soul is the substance of a particular body. (Aristotle 2.4.738b.19-26)

Like the male seed, sight "is able generate in another"; it contains the formal elements that shape the material world, such as the passive materiality of the womb, into a world made substantial and animated by 'man,' and hence, for him and at his disposal (1.2.716a.20-21). Doria ruminates upon Chrisea's penetrating gaze:

> There is a Lady
> In whose each eye sits fire, & on her cheek
> Victorious beauty captive to her smiles
> Dances in lovely triumph, one who emblems
> The glory of mortality in each looke,
> Contracts the orbe of lusture to a glance
> Brandishes beames, whose purity dispence
> Light more immaculate then the gorgeous east
> Weares when the prostrate Indian does adore
> Its rising brightnesse . . . (2.1 pg.113-14)

Glapthorne marries the light of Platonic Realism to an inner fire that has the martial ability to conquer the hitherto formidable soldier. The "dance" and the "looke" carry more repressive force than the march of an army, and the final impression that Doria bequeaths to his friend Vitelli is that of complete submission – an Indian "prostrate" in worship to the Platonic sun. Vitelli borrows this metaphorical bombast when he describes his own lady love, Eurione who

> . . . has wone
> By the subduing valor of her looks,
> That in a field of fancy, not of blood,
> And ere another shall usurpe her right,
> In the defence ile dye her willing martyr. (2.1 pg.116)

Vitelli, urged by the "valor of her looks," eagerly submits to the will of Eurione in exchange for spiritual salvation through love. The rhetoric surrounding the captivating female gaze is that of an enrapturing call to crusade; to commit an action of religious devotion that demands the martyrdom of the male prerogative. But Eurione displays restraint and tempers Vitelli's self-denying passion; she ultimately reinforces his masculinity. Doria also gives up his ability to act autonomously to Chrisea's "masculine fancy" while urging his friend by "all sacred ties . . . To gratifie her fancy" (2.1 pg.114), but Chrisea, unlike her sister, proves insatiable in her polyandrous desire to consume masculine initiative. For her, male autonomy (or male autonomies) must be enthralled to her female autocracy; an autocracy that is maintained by the masculine force of her feminine affective potential and demands the all-consuming poltical and religious devotion of the male subject.

Chrisea's affective potency is not the only instance when the sacred and the political are conflated with the iconographic. At Doria's hearing the Duke claims that

> Religious conscience, utterly disclaimes
> An act so barbarous to take a man's life,
> Is to destroy Heavens Image, and if those
> Are held as Traytors, and the law inflicts
> Severest tortures on them, who deface
> The stamps of Princes in their coyne, can they
> Appeare, as guiltlesse whose rude hands disgrace
> The great Creators Image, and commit
> Treason 'gainst awfull nature . . . (4.1 pg.142)

The Duke appeals to the masses' penchant for holy images, and argues that violence against God's image in man is equivalent to violence against reifications of the state but writ large in timeless metaphysics; both are legitimations for imposing death – the former a death of citizenship, the latter a death of one's body. The image of the Prince in the "coyne" carries an

excess of the actual concrete object, it transmits the potential for violent retribution backed up by the ever-present gaze of the Law. This is analogous to Doria's interpretation of the sanctity that is in excess of Chrisea's body, secured by her 'masculine' stare. But the Duke's gaze and voice are extensions, if not embodiments, of the Law, however severe, and carry a resonance of sanction in comparison to which Chrisea's severe demands are simply a travesty. The gaze of the Law is capable of condemnation *and* redemption; Chrisea's eyes are only full of "poison . . . that will / Like to juyce of Hemlocke drowne [Doria's] soul" (5.1 pg.152). Her eyes are those of the mythical basiliske which, according to Pliny, kills "both by seeing and by being seen," but can never gaze upon itself and comprehend or define its own subjective position (Lobanov-Rostovsky 196). Like Chrisea placed at the center of the court's attention, the Basiliske was subjected to the domineering, empirical gaze of the male during the early modern period and ultimately rejected as a fantastic, vacuous allurement (205). Though Chrisea recants and apologizes for her harsh trial of Doria, she is unable to effectuate her desire to save and possess him – only the rigor of the Law can redeem him.

Female authority is established but suffers repeated usurpations of power most evident in the cross-dressing of homosocial bonds. Sabelli, Doria's loyal male page, is ultimately able to articulate the male-oriented ideology of the feminine position better than the women of the court and then liberate his master from the bonds of certain death. Ironically, Act I is rife with endorsements of obsequious submission to divinely anointed kings juxtaposed with castigations of effeminate courtiers. Doria announces to the court that

> . . . subjects ought to offer,
> With sincere devotion that our Priests
> Doe prayers to Heaven, their hearts as sacrifices
> To their deserving Princes whose sole savours
> Doe as the quickning lustre of the Sunne
> Cherish inferiour spirits . . . (1.1 pg.96)

The Prince is equated to the Sun, the source of knowledge and the home of God, and he holds a sacred sway over his subjects. In this speech Glapthorne enunciates a rhetoric similar to James I's speech on the "Divine Right of Kings" delivered to Parliament on 21 March 1610: "The state of monarchy is the supremest thing upon earth; for kings are not only God's lieutenants upon earth, and sit upon God's throne, but even by God himself they are called gods . . ." (Kenyon 11). Doria quickly follows his praise of princes with his derision of "Chamber Lords / That dance to Ladies shadowes" (1.1 pg.99), and the imbecilic courtier Frangipan is repeatedly mocked for his effeminate imitation of French fashions, his sole desire being to "appeare more lovely" through the application of cosmetics (1.1 pg.97). Based upon these lines the text appears to endorse a masculine sovereignty with an overtly masculine service to the sovereign. The play opens with an admiral fresh from "a multitude / Of his Sea Victories," an acknowledgement, similar to the endorsement found in Davenant's masque *Salmacida Spolia*, of the King's beneficial extraction of ship oney to augment the English navy (1.1 pg.93). The play ends with an exoneration of Doria overseen by the commanding eye of the Duke as the Law. But between these poles is found a surprising instructional sermon aimed at rulers and subjects of the State; a didacticism that transgenders authority and modes of service to impart its monarchical/nationalistic message.

The Ladies Priviledge, above all, betrays an anxiety about the privilege held by its ladies, and the tyrannous exercise of Chrisea's power is but the most visible. Corimba, the court matron, boasts of her own acting abilities in order to convince Adorni and the other male courtiers to let her perform the "womans part": "Why doe you think I cannot play the woman? I have plaid a womans part about twenty, twenty yeares agoe in a Court Masque, and tho I says't well as some o' them, & have been courted too . . ." (2.1 pg.106). Corimba's vocalized desires are not taken seriously and she is never provided the opportunity to act before the gaze of the men. Sabelli, however, deceptively dons the frame of a woman and, in the opinion of the male court, impersonates "true womanly virtue" more persuasively than the women that surround him. The judgment of what defines Woman is a male judgment and homosocial interaction better

reinforces that judgment. After Corimba's failed attempt at offering up her "musty virginity" to win Doria his freedom comes Sabelli's awe-inspiring performance of Woman which enraptures the court. Most striking is his outward form and his penetrating gaze. The Duke says of Sabelli:

> A most excelling beauty, such an eye
> Would tempt religious coldnesse to a flame,
> Thaw Ages chill frost, at such a cheeke,
> The Spring might take a patterne to create,
> A most accomplish'd freshnesse; in her looks,
> Are modest signes of innocence such as Saints
> Weare in their liveliest counterfeits. (4.1 pg.146)

The Platonic-religious linguistic economy to describe Sabelli as Woman is analogous to the terms that circulated around Chrisea, but there is no disabling "poyson" shot from the eye, but rather a performance of modesty. The male has usurped the feminine domain indicating that a transgendering of the subject makes a more perfect subject; one that blends "True constancy in men" that Chrisea admits, with the affective capacity of the feminine form (3.1 pg.123). The feminine gaze is problematic because it has the ability to emasculate if it is anything other than passive, whereas the male gaze in feminine form reflects back the male-constructed ideology of Woman reinforced by homosocial and homoerotic bonds. Unlike the masculine hero Doria, and the powerful female Chrisea, the cross-gendered subject, Sabelli, has access to and control over the Law. It is not Doria's prior service to the State nor his admission of guilt that frees him; neither does Chrisea's pleading nor Bonivet's return from the dead set him free; but it is Sabelli's construction of feminine identity that manumits Doria from prison and his subsequent deconstruction of his own female artifice that releases him from the ersatz marriage contract. Sabelli declares, "the formall lawe / Shall not oppose your peace, Ile disanull / The marriage easily" (5.1 pg.157). Sabelli then removes the artifice he has constructed around his performance

relating that it is not just exhibition that manumits, but the exhibition's stripping away – an acknowledgment of the performance's own value as artificiality.

In the final analysis of *The Ladies Priviledge*, the male world of feminized performance is provided a legal sanction; valorized as both efficacious for the subject and willingly subjected to the law. This is the world of the Caroline court where female authority is given temporary free rein to voice itself on the theatrical and political stage, but must eventually be subsumed and internalized by the masculine ascendancy. Women are not displayed as wholly wicked or corrupt, but inconstant and potential affective threats to the rational political order. When their feminine properties are adopted by the male subject, however, the result is a tempering of affect, bringing it under the sway of the sovereign and unifying homosocial political networks.

Like *The Ladies Priviledge*, Glapthorne's *Argalus and Parthenia* homo-erotically charges masculine bonds to sketch the ideal subject as internally androgynous, but there are greater emphases placed on *cross-factional* male bonds, corporeal integrity, and transgendered unity which convey a less timorous interpretation of feminine agency and (unusual for a tragedy) a conservative optimism about political reconciliation. Of all Glapthorne's plays *Argalus and Parthenia* was engineered for the royalist cause before the cause had solidified. Herbert's records indicate that during the nascent years of the Restoration the tragedy was performed first on 31 January 1661, with "the Kings Companie at the Red Bull and the new house in Gibbon's Tennis Court near Clare Market" (Herbert 117). Samuel Pepys, in his diary, comments upon the occasion as a matter of some importance: ". . . to the Theatre, and there sat in the pit among the company of fine ladys, &c.; and the house was exceeding full, to see *Argalus* and *Parthenia*, the first time that it hath been acted; and indeed it is good, though wronged by my over great expectations, as all things else are" (qtd. in Bentley 4: 479). Pepys comments on at least two other performances that same year, on February 5th and October 28th, and Maguire observes that John Dryden and John Dover borrowed from Glapthorne's tragedy to write their own heroic valorizations of the monarchy (122,156). In summation, *Argalus and Parthenia* proved to be

Glapthrone's most durable work that spoke to a restoration audience high on the hopeful enthusiasm that accompanied the return of King Charles II.

The play's conscious intertextuality was a huge factor in its favorable critical reception at the time of its composition and more than 20 years later during the Restoration. *Argalus and Parthenia* is based on Book 1, Chapters 5-8, and Book 3, Chapter 12 of Sir Phillip Sidney's pastoral romance *The Countess of Pembroke's Arcadia*, first written as the *Old Arcadia* ca. 1577 and eventually published in 1593, but going through no less than 13 editions to rapidly become an Elizabethan literary staple and standard of excellence (Evans 9). Glapthorne's work is also understood as a response to Walter Montagu's *The Shepherd's Paradise* performed at court by Queen Henrietta Maria and her ladies in 1633. *Argalus and Parthenia* recounts two plots. The central plot concerning the title characters adheres to Sidney's romance with only a few, yet important, detours, while the subplot focuses on the romantic entanglements of the noble but knavish shepherd Clitophon in his pursuit of pretty nymphs, and the vainglorious but hollow self-praise of the rough swain Strephon. In the primary plot set within the aristocratic circle of Arcadia, Parthenia loves Argalus and Argalus loves Parthenia, but Parthenia's mother, Chrysaclea, for reasons not entirely fleshed out but indicated to hinge on Argalus's hazy birthright, questionable intentions, and "effeminate carriage," despises Parthenia's inamorato like Juno detested Jove's bastard son, Hercules. She meddles in their mutual promises and invites her neighbor, Demagorus, a bloodthirsty commander of soldiers, to romantically entice her daughter. Not used to wooing but desirous of the match, Demagorus relies on "the blunt phrase of war" and courts Parthenia "In the Heroick Dialect, as [he uses] to court Bellona" (1.1 pg.9). Rather than conquered and captured, Parthenia is repulsed by his "courtships cloth'd in angry threats" and quickly retreats (1.1 pg.12). Enraged by the rejection and insulted by the presentation of a masque supposedly in his honor but really intended for Argalus's eyes, Demagorus waylays Parthenia while singing alone in the woods and proceeds to "poyson" her beauty with a "contagious leprosie" (2.2 pg.29). Mired in disgrace, Parthenia cloisters herself from the sight of

all, including her beloved, who swears vengeance upon the "monster," the "devil cloth'd in human shape" who "murder'd beauty" (3.1 pg.33). Argalus happens upon Demagorus while he is planning a siege of Kalander's (Parthenia's uncle) stronghold. Despite his supercilious faith in his own martial prowess, Demagorus falls to Argalus's impassioned vengeance.

Meanwhile, the otherwise noble and virtuous Amphialus, son of Cecropia and nephew to King Basilius of Arcadia, has captured the king's daughters, Philoclea and Pamela, because Philoclea "will by no intreates, / no services, yet be induc'd to love" the distraught Amphialus (3.1 pg.35). To "avoid effusion of more humane blood" resulting from Basilius's assaults to gain back his daughter, Amphialus has issued a challenge to the king to find a "Champion daring singly to oppose /[Him] in a combat" but the king's choice is not yet "divulg'd" (3.1 pg.36). While Amphialus roams the countryside bewailing the lack of tenderness from his beloved, Argalus's fortunes suddenly change. A young lady claiming to be Parthenia's sister but bearing an uncanny resemblance to Parthenia herself, brings the terrible news of Parthenia's demise. She swore an oath to the dying girl to bestow her affections upon Parthenia's former lover, but Argalus professes that "in [him] / Parthenia only must have room to live" (3.1 pg.42). The ruse is quickly dissolved and Parthenia's sister reveals herself to be none other than Parthenia herself, restored to her former beauty. A wedding speedily follows, but after a single night of sensual pleasure, the command comes to Argalus to prepare to battle his brother since childhood and his former brother in arms, Amphialus. Contrary to Parthenia's objections Argalus accepts the challenge as an opportunity "To snatch the fiery chaplet from his [Amphialus's] head, / And as a garland of victorious bayes, / Wreathe it about these [his own] temples" (4.1 pg.49). Argalus's optimism, however, is not corroborated, and he is slain by his closest friend. Following her lover to the bitter end, Parthenia then poses as a knight and challenges Amphialus, who initially rejects the challenge but later responds with violence to the mysterious knight's disparagement of his beloved Philoclea's attributes and his loathing of her person. Amphialus fatally wounds the knight, but before the young warrior expires it is revealed that the unknown knight is none other

than Parthenia, gone now to join her Argalus in his "chariot drawn by doves" (3.1 pg.64). The play ends with Parthenia's body carried on the shoulders of her ladies in procession while Amphialus is consigned to carry the burden of "This impious act of [his] dire fate" (3.1 pg.65).

The comic subplot of *Argalus and Parthenia* is an amalgamation of moments and characters from *The Countess of Pembroke's Arcadia*, Edmund Spenser's *The Shepheardes Calender*, and the pastoral lyric tradition. It bears only a tangential relation to the play's action, yet it operates within main plot's symbolic and thematic economy. In the original *Arcadia* of Sidney's, Clitophon is the aristocratic son of Kalander and known as the "Knight of the Pole," but Glapthorne draws Clitophon as "an inconstant Shepherd" intent on seducing every dainty nymph and maid with whom he comes in contact. When not in the company of the fairer sex, Clitophon is quick to repudiate them. He says to his friend, the 'foolish swaine' Strephon, "I no more affect a woman than the Sky / Does Birds that sore in it, they are as vaine / Inconstant as the flying showers of rain / in Aprill" (1.2 pg.14). Strephon dim-wittedly buys into Clitophon's false sincerity but unwittingly verbalizes Clitophon's hypocrisy. Strephon responds, "The more dissembling fellow you: why do you protest to every Wench you see, you are enamored on her . . ." (1.2 pg.14). Strephon then enumerates his own physical attributes, which are actually far shy of attractive, and discloses his ability to misread the nymph's insults of him for compliments and their rejection of him as incitement to self-praise. The nymphs in the train of Sapho, a poetical Shepherdesse, are well aware of Clitophon's philandering duplicity and Strephon's false arrogance. The subplot revolves around Sapho's continual rejection of Clitphon in order to convert him to a proper husband and around the nymphs' hollow encomium of Strephon, only to reveal publicly their true feelings of antipathy and renounce him at the play's closing. The sub-plot is constructed from earlier works, it often detracts from the main action, and the humor is stale, but these recycled pastoral elements had wide appeal at the Caroline court. Annabel Patterson argues that the popularity of these overused pastoral tropes during the 1630s "was due in large part to Henrietta Maria's famous preference for pastoral as her personal style, and the

encouragement she gave to writers to imitate that style" (qtd. in Randall 186). Sidney's *Arcadia* was one rich vein that writers could mine for favorite devices; Spenser's *The Shepheardes Calender* was another. Both form the basis for the subplot of *Argalus and Parthenia*, but *The Shepheardes Calender* shapes its subtle nationalistic themes.

The Shepheardes Calender is a direct descendant of the pastoral tradition dating back to the idylls of Theocritus of Syracuse living in the first half of the third century BCE. Theocritus first outlined the idyllic countryside as an open forum for competitive debate and free discourse, often pitting shepherds, cowherds, swineherds, and goatherds against one another in cordial verbal disputes and musical contests while the rustic countryside is idealized as a serene landscape. Most influential to the Renaissance poets were the pastoral "Eclogues" of Virgil who inherited the Theocritean tradition and refined the bucolic idyll into the genre of "The Pastoral" in which rustic characters converse upon a number of topics that tied them to the political, social, and religious world of Rome. By placing debates in the mouths of his bucolic characters, Spenser's poem, which thematically explores all twelve months of the calendear, stands firmly in the Theocritean-Virgilian tradition. Most significant is the "Aprill" eclogue of *The Shepheardes Calender* which is, as Spenser states in the "Argument" leading into the main body of the poem, "purposely intended to the honor and prayse of our most gracious sovereigne Queene Elizabeth" (517). Praise certainly fills the lines of his poem, but the manner in which Elizabeth is praised in the guise of the "fayre Elisa" bears, as my reading infers, the imprint of Spenser's national republicanism.

Coinciding with Spenser's poetic career and the 1579 publication of *The Shepheardes Calender*, by the 1570s the cult of the Virgin Queen had taken root in the representational repertoire along with an increasing concern over Elizabeth's marriage and the prospect of a Protestant heir. One prospective groom for the queen was the Catholic son of Catherine de Medici, François, the Duc d'Alençon and Anjou, and by 1578 marriage negotiations had resumed with increased intensity. This intended match became a threatening reality to many critics who

saw it as their responsibility as national republicans to defend the stability of English political and religious life by voicing dissent. The most influential group circled around the Earl of Leicester. Edmund Spenser, as has been argued by critics such as Montrose and Johnson, was aligned with this "republican" circle in his disapproval of the marriage and used *The Shepheardes Calender* not only to valorize Elizabeth as monarch, which the text does undeniably, but concomitantly to criticize the Alençon marriage (Montrose 907). According to the characteristics of the "mixed monarchy," as Patrick Collinson articulates, "In the sixteenth century . . . There was no perceived incompatibility between 'monarchy' and 'republic.'. . . But it was precisely because the integrity, security, and very being of the state required and uncontested monarch that the Elizabethan protestant political nation was quasi-republican in its thinking and methodology" (qtd. in Montrose 914). The Leicester camp that opposed Elizabeth's marriage thus interpreted themselves as staunch nationalists whose dissension from the queen's opinion was in the nation's best interest.

This dissension took the form of an artistic and aesthetic campaign that co-opted and manipulated Elizabeth's image into that of a Virgin Queen wedded to her state, and Spenser's pastorals can be seen as the culmination of this national partisan project under the guidance of a self-styled national poet. The authority of Elisa in the "Aprill" eclogue is constructed by the voluntary acts of praise that issue from the countryside itself. Elisa's sovereign body functions to bring together materially different entities that are geographically isolated, revealing her ability to promote concordance and harmony in what amounts to a celebration of "decking the bride." Nymphs come from "watry bowres" while "Virgins, that on Parnasse dwell" (41) descend, "Calliope speede her to the place" (100), the Muses attend, and the three graces "dauncen deffly, and singen soote" (111). The mythological figures join with "shepheardes daughters, that dwell on the greene" (127) to pay homage to Elysa, "The flower of Virgins, may shee florish long, / In princely plight" (48-49). In accordance with the cult of the Virgin Queen Elisa's body is the nexus of purity (Virgins), nature (flower), sovereignty (princely plight) and divinity as elsewhere

she is called a “Goddesse” and “Syrinx daughter without spotte / Which Pan the shepheardes God of her begot” (50-51). As the offspring of Pan she is divine and pure, yet inextricably tied to the land in order to maintain her identity and hegemonic sovereignty.

It is not only the image of Elisa as a bride of the land that poetically contributes to the historical dialog of the Virgin Queen married to England, but it is a characteristically English land that Elisa is bedecked in by virgins which gives the central figure national substance. Colin’s song lays stress upon the fact that into Elisa’s presence “Let none come there, but that Virgins bene, / To adorne her grace” (129-130). The emphasis on virginity is clearly a reference to the cult of Elizabeth, but it also urges the monarch to maintain her pure coterie of support by remaining chaste herself. In preserving her chastity and national connection, Elisa’s naked form is dressed in the flowers of the English countryside, in contrast to the graces whom E.K. points out in his gloss are “painted naked”:

> Bring hether the Pincke and purple Cullambine,
>
> With Gelliflowers:
>
> Bring Coronations, and Sops in wine,
>
> Worne of Paramours
>
> Strowe me the ground with Daffadowndillies,
>
> And Cowslips, and Kingcups, and loved Lillies:
>
> The pretie Pawnce,
>
> And the Chevisaunce,
>
> Shall match with the fayre flower Delice.
>
> Now ryse up Elisa, deckéd as thou art
>
> In royall array . . . (136-146)

Nancy Jo Hoffman, who has traced the etymology of the individual flower names, finds Spenser deliberately eschewing certain Latinate botanical word choices in favor of rustic nomenclature associated with the English countryside in order to blend both high and low linguistic elements

that "permit a uniquely English nature the authority to deck a queen" (74). This device sets Spenser's English pastoral in stark contrast to French pastoral that allows no combination of high and low terminology, but the use of native flora is also covalent with criticisms against foreign fashion and cloth that circulated in public discourse during the 16th and 17th centuries from such socially varied but equally vocal proponents as Philip Stubbes and Thomas Dekker (Hentschell 548). Spenser's rhetorical outfitting of the queen separates her from foreign elements while, providing her identity through the "royall array's" association with the indigenous, generative power of England reified in the varieties of flowers. Yet authority is not eternally guaranteed, for it rests in the vestments of flowers. These are destined to die once plucked from the native soil and must be continually re-supplied by the land's inhabitants who, according to this function, share a large portion of responsibility for the maintenance of the commonwealth.

In the 'comedic' pastoral scenes of *Argalus and Parthenia*, Glapthorne relies upon Spenser's *Calender* as a structuring agent and strives for the same sense of national unity centripetally located around the body, but uses a slightly different army of metaphors and an alternatively gendered body than Spenser. In Act 2, Scene 2, Strephon appropriates Elisa's place as the worshipped centrality bedecked in flowers until he becomes synonymous with the countryside:

> Who indeed has a such a face,
> So full of bewitching grace.
> My head loves pillow, wher he does rest
> As safe as Magpie in he nest.
> My forehead sweetly is bespred
> With Violets, and Tulips blew and red:
> The amber Couslip, and the corall Rose,
> Pretious complexion of my sweeter nose.
> My eyes are elements from which fall showers

That make my cheeks a spring of severall flowers.

So is my head a nose-gay growing on one stalke,

My body is the garden, though it walk;

And ther's no woman but may well,

To th' worst part about smell.

My armes are Dragons that defend all these;

Now view in me living *Hesperides* (2.2 pg.25-26)

Sapho picks up on Strephon's grandiloquent poesy and adds the "blushing Piony" and "yellow Primrose" to his litany. Strephon responds with more self adulation: ". . . shee'l praise me shortly into the starres, and then I shall (for a new Planet) be set I'th Shepherds Kalender" (2.2 pg.26). Glapthorne seems to be extremely conscious of Spenser's pastoral and employs its style to serve his own agenda. The passage ends with a direct reference to Spenser's Elizabethan work and the two poems have a number of similarities, but there are several telling differences. Strephon, like Elisa, is religiously connected to the flora of the land (the Hesperides is Juno's sacred garden) but his image bespread with a motley array of flowers destabilizes his masculine integrity. The corporeal image is not one of harmony, but it is gendered into comic discordance. Likewise, the authorization for the ornamentation of Strephon's body does not come from the neutral diagesis of the distant poet-observer as in Spenser's poem; it comes autocratically and mimetically from Strephon himself. Spenser's Elisa is outfitted during the voluntary contact of nature and her body. She appears virginal in her thick buffer of flowers between her body and other potential bodies, but the buffer was formed by the marriage of her materiality with the materiality of the flowers, cemented through pastoral ritual. The flowers that adhere to Strephon are self-created accoutrements of his own pastoral imaginary. Both Spenser and Glapthorne portray a union of land and sovereign human, but Spenser leaves us with the impression of a union that is a mutually created republic while Glapthorne presents the marriage of flora and human fauna as a rarefied, comedic autocracy.

Despite the comedy inherent in such an image, it is a unity that Strephon will not dismantle, and his refusal to dismantle carries political implications. All the shepherdesses and nymphs have feigned love to Strephon, but it is apparent to the rough swain that it is impossible to provide ample pleasure to all of his admirers:

> Woulds't have me make an Anatomy of my self?
> Or dost suppose
> That unto one I'le wed my nose,
> And to another all the rest of this sweet face? A pretty jest.
> Should I pretend my selfe to match,
> The wenches then would play at catch
> That catch may; each get a limbe,
> Or rather themselves in rage,
> They cruell civil warre would wage
> And with those terrible weapons, their nailes,
> Which them in battell never failes;
> And farre more terrible tongues, in spight
> They'd fighting scold, and scolding fight. (5.1 pg.58)

The body broken into parts is tantamount to the body politic fractured by "cruell civil warre." With Strephon's concerns Glapthorne is rehashing Livy's metaphor of the body politic found in Book II of his *History of Rome* and the opening scene of Shakepseare's *Coriolanus*.

> They therefore decided to send as an ambassador to the commons, Menenius Agrippa, an eloquent man and dear to the plebeians as being one of themselves by birth. On being admitted to the camp he is said merely to have related the following apologue, in the quaint and uncouth style of that age: In the days when man's members did not all agree amongst themselves, as is now the case, but had each its own ideas and a voice of its own, the other parts thought it unfair that

> they should have the worry and the trouble and the labor of providing everything for the belly, while the belly remained quietly in their midst with nothing to do but to enjoy the good things which they bestowed upon it; they therefore conspired together that the hands should carry no food to the mouth, nor the mouth accept anything that was given it, nor the teeth grind up what they received. While they sought in this angry spirit to starve the belly into submission, the members themselves and the whole body were reduced to the utmost weakness. Hence it had become clear that even the belly had no idle task to perform, and was no more nourished than it nourished the rest, by giving out to all parts of the body that by which we live and thrive, when it has been divided equally amongst the veins and is enriched with digested food – that is, the blood. Drawing a parallel from this to show how like was the internal dissension of the bodily members to the anger of the plebs against the Fathers, he prevailed upon the minds of his hearers. (Livy 117-18)

The political ideology is clear that the state must exist in a unified whole with the belly at the center. All extremities, though unconscious of the belly's primacy and sanctity, must coordinate to fill the body's central organ, which actually sustains all the members. Employing this rhetoric, Glapthorne opts for a unified body politic reified as Strephon commanding a feminized, autocratic ersatz of a republic, over a disjointed and factionalized body at war; in spite of, or perhaps because of the fact that the political unity is a feminized, autocratic and spurious republic.

The feminization of male beauty occurs at several points in *Argalus and Parthenia* with each representational node operating as a liminal zone of reconciliation between oppositions. The overall effect is unification through the solidification of male homosocial bonds, despite initially competitive political aims. Demagorus, Argalus's bellicose rival-in-love to Parthenia, does not pursue Parthenia's beauty for its own sake or his own possession. His conquest of her does not

fall in line with the traditional renaissance conceit of sole ownership of the female subject. Rather, Parthenia's attributes are desired by Demagorus only because they are desired widely and would serve to unite him in common purpose with other men. To win her love Demagorus brags,

> I'le bring on
> Well-manag'd troops of Soldiers to the fight,
> Draw big battaliaes, like a moving field
> Of standing Corne, blown by the wind
> Against the frighted enemy; the Van
> Shall save the Rere a labour, and by me
> Marshald, shall fold bright conquest in the curles
> Of their conducting Ensigns . . . (1.1 pg.9-10)

Demagorus is leading the charge on her beauty, but the spoils of "conquest" are shared amongst the "Soldiers" and "fold[ed] . . . in the curles / of *their* conducting Ensigns." The wooer is not lost in the lady's attributes but wooed by his own association of obtaining her beauty with a united, regimental assault on an enemy. Whatever 'beauty' Parthenia possesses is subordinate to the beauty of concerted masculine effort in war.

In Parthenia's estimation, what Demagorus lacks in this rough speech is a "Court like" demeanor, or what her mother says of Argalus, an "affable and courtly carriage" (1.1 pg.8). Parthenia expounds upon her mother's characterization of her lover and sighs, "in his youthfull looks / Sits a divinity able to inchant / . . . Musick and rich perfumes are in his breath" (1.1 pg.12). But Argalus is not just appreciated for his dazzling looks, he is the epitome of manly valor and "does excell in feats of active armes / The ablest youth of Arcady" (1.1 pg.13). Demagorus equates Argalus's refined behavior to effeminacy, which becomes a crucial preoccupation for him (and one strictly found in Glapthorne's work, not Sidney's *Arcadia*), and threatens his life in terms more sexually charged than his promises of love to Parthenia, for if Argalus continues to oppose him, Demagorus will "dart a frowne / Should ravish his mortality

into Ayre, / For the presumption" (1.1 pg.7). The *OED* cites "ravish" as having several lexical variants during the 1630s:

> 1a. To plunder, rob, steal from (a place, building, race or class of people, etc.); to devastate, lay waste to (a country). 3b. To transport (a person, the mind, etc.) with the strength of some emotion; to fill with ecstasy, intense delight, or sensuous pleasure; to entrance, captivate, or enrapture. 5b. To rape, violate (a woman).

"Ravish" is simultaneously a violation/restriction/corruption of pleasure, the taking of pleasure by force, and the sensuous fulfillment of pleasure. The choice of this word envelops Demagorus's intentions in ambiguity. It should also be noted that unlike his massive group attack waged on Parthenia's beauty, Demagorus hopes to take/corrupt/fulfill Argalus's form intimately in single combat with a bloodless "frowne." Both his wooing of Parthenia and his threats to Argalaus are violent, but the latter is unnecessarily loaded with erotic undertones and a bodily proximity lacking in the former.

Parthenia's corporeal centrality as the object of desire is arrogated from the romance narrative and transformed into a locus of mediation between Demagorus and Argalus. The corruption of her beauty is Demagorus's response to the desirability of Argalus's physical affective capacity. Rather than challenge his rival for the supposed female love object, Demagorus "poysons" her facial features with the aim of taking away a central source of pleasure from Argalus, and thus putting himself in her cognitive place as the desired object. It becomes Argalus's attentions that Demagorus needs for his own validation. He seethes to Parthenia,

> Try if the passing sweetnesse of your tunes
> Can (like the voice of Magick) charme my rage
> To pity, or bring Argalus to your rescue;
> Would he were here, and arm'd with sulphurous clouds,
> Like Jove imbracing Semele in fire

This hand should snatch thee from his circular flames

To my revenge, inforce him to behold,

Helplesse, the present ruines of thy beauty. (2.2 pg. 24)

These lines are not the "blunt phrase of war" that Demagorus claimed he could only speak when courting Parthenia, but the "effeminate" phrases of the "distastefully" offensive masque. Difficult as it may be to attach a mythical-romantic metaphor to Parthenia's body when 'courting' her, it easy for Demagorus to imagine Argalus as the sexually excessive Jove and Parthenia as an overpowered Semele when concentrating on his male rival's physical form. The destruction of Parthenia's face is the removal of an obstacle between Argalus and his rival, like removing Semele from Jove's arms, but to remove the object that sustains the rivalry is to change the nature of the relationship altogether. The original hetero-erotic territorial dispute becomes void and replaced by a same-sex eros. All that remains are the two men, the one proclaiming the event of combat as performance for the other. Parthenia's concern that "Perhaps / He [Demagoras] does intend my ravishment" is soon allayed for it is not her affective potential he is possessed by, but "that effeminate Argalus" whose ravishment Demagoras has already promised (2.2 pg.24).

When the moment comes to make good on that promise of violence, Demagoras finds himself restricted from doing so, not by Argalus's temerarious urge for combat but by his feminized affective potential. Unlike Parthenia's beauteous appearance that could be swiftly sacrificed, Demagoras wishes to spare the "young gallant['s]" body fit onely for "effeminancie and sport." Demagoras haughtily requests,

. . . prithee goe

Poore boy, and fight a combat in the court

With some soft Mistresse, dance, or touch a Lute

Thou are a thing so abject thou'rt not worthy

The anger of Demagoras; arme, be gone,

Lest I do frowne thy soule away . . . (3.1 pg.33-34)

Contrary to his former braggadocio, Demagorus is unable to murder or harm Argalus's male beauty. Rather, he desires that it be preserved for "combat in the court." And it is not the particularly feminine attributes worth preserving, for Demagoras at the pinnacle of his misogyny would have revenged himself on "her [Parthenia's] whole sex . . . [and] converted their choice formes / To the same loathsome leprosie" (3.1 pg.33). It is instead the amalgam of feminine and masculine aspects in Argalus, the oddly tantalizing transsexuality of his being that is fit for conservation in the court. And Argalus proves that he has equal amounts of hard masculine valor and soft feminine looks when he quickly dispatches the formidable Demagoras. He is the perfect unified subject; a combination of prowess and submissiveness, with the social sensitivity to forecast when a predominance of one over the other is appropriate.

Glapthorne's extended interrogation of Argalus's feminized yet powerful beauty is completely his own addition to Sidney's *Arcadia*, and it is indicative of an alteration in the representation of the court favorite and courtier par excellence in the Caroline era. Mario DiGangi in his book *Sexual Types* asserts that during the Caroline period the Ganymedean, favorite, "an attractive young man who is blamed for weakening the monarch's judgment," like Gaveston in Marlowe's Edward II, is replaced by the "monstrous favorite: an ambitious politician imagined in terms of grotesquely excessive influence, treachery and violence" (192). Argalus is not a favorite as DiGangi is using the term, but the Arcadian court in the drama does shower its favoritism upon him. He is between the Ganymedean type of sexually servile boy, similar to Sabelli in *The Ladies Privilege*, and the blustering, masculine warrior, or monstrous court favorite. A touch of orthodox masculinity added to a homoerotic surplus goes a long way. His figure is a defense against William Prynne's attack on the gentry and courtier theatregoers imitating the actors "so womanish in their frizzled Perriwigs, love-lockes, and long effeminate pouldred pounced haire" (qtd. in Bly, *Queer* 113); a defense not by abrogating the charge of effeminacy leveled at players and playgoers but by showing its peaceful coexistence beside masculinity, if not masculinity's engendering agent, for it ties one to the life of the court.

Sugared conceits never come before Argalus's 'masculine' duty to the Arcadian nobility. Glapthorne stresses this by compressing the time between the wedding and his command to battle Amphialus for the release of the King Basilius's daughters. Months pass before Argalus must face his opponent in the *Arcadia*, but only one night of lassitude in a lover's arm is allowed in *Argalus and Parthenia* before the hero must face his impending death; a death nearly averted by the mutual pleasure taken by the warriors Argalus and Amphialus in each other's face and figure. Carried away by the affective potential of their proximity to each other's bodily presence, they enter into a political imaginary of "two brothers [that] . . . strive to atcheive one crowne, yet still be friends" (50). In this confrontation a gendered unity promotes national unity.

An obvious nod to Henrietta Maria, gendered unity is capable residing within the feminine subject as well. Turning away from Sidney's depiction of an emotive Parthenia at the moment of Argalus's sacrifice, Glapthorne presents us with a heroine in the vein of *Orlando Furioso's* Bradamante who is capable of commingling one's duty to one's lord with one's duty to prince and country while maintaining an orthodox hierarchical organization of society. Sidney's Parthenia vociferously and ecphonetically laments the condition into which she and her beloved have fallen. "O wretched eyes of mine, O wailful sight, O day of darkness," Parthenia exclaims (506). This is followed by a scene of rabid self-castigation and self-destruction: "But when indeed she found his ghost was gone, then sorrow lost the wit of utterance and grew rageful and mad, so that she tare her beautiful face and rent her hair, as though they could serve for nothing, since Argalus was gone" (508). These turbid motions of the soul contrast greatly with Glapthorne's powerfully equanimous portrayal of Argalus's bride. To her husband's killer she replies,

> Doubt no so much my temper, I am calme.
> You see o'th sudden as untroubled seas.
> I could stand silent her an age to view
> This goodly ruine. Noblest Argalus,

[. . .]

since

Thou perish'd nobly, let thy soule expect

A joy, not sorrow from me . . .

I'le not diminish

Thy glory by a teare (4.1 pg.55-56)

Despite her initial objections to the combat, Parthenia has now accepted Argalus's death as a noble sacrifice. This impels her to don a suit of armor and "die for love's glorious martyrdom" (4.1 pg.56). In the final scene containing the conflict between Amphialus and the disguised Parthenia, Amphialus again refuses to "staine / [His] conquering hands in your [Parthenia in disguise] too innocent blood" (5.1 pg.63). The armor intended for a man but set upon a woman's body shapes a "gentle youth," disarming in his "outward sympathy" (5.1 pg.62-63). The aura of femininity tied to the male promotes peaceful reconciliation. Nevertheless, Parthenia sacrifices herself for her lord and dies a proper martyr for her conjugal and national causes.

Capitalizing on the royal preference for the pastoral/tragicomic mode of drama, Glapthorne's work is a brief and sometimes playful sojourn into the subtle disordering, the slight subversion, and the mild inversion of that world, but never at the expense of alienating official culture. The royalist cause is probed, prodded and smiled upon, but never renounced. Glapthorne's plays draw strength from the feminization aesthetic of the court to consolidate power around the body of the king and reaffirm a normative socio-sexual hierarchy. Multiple bodies of difference do not diplomatically debate and coordinate, but a single body is infused with transgendered affective potentiality and becomes a self-contained dialectic – the thesis, antithesis and synthesis – of political order. Beeston promoted Glapthorne's adulation of courtly affectation and semantics of unity at a time (1637-38) when national and conjugal harmony was within the horizon of possibility for Charles. By the year 1639, shortly after Christopher

Beeston's death the previous October, the disastrous effects of the First Bishops' War were forcing any vision of a unified England beyond that horizon.

CHAPTER V

POPULAR REVOLT: THE PRODIGAL SON AND THE LATER YEARS OF POLITICAL SATIRE

An edict issued from the Lord Chamberlain on 10 August 1639 provides the most abundant information as to the character, mission, and valued relationships of Beeston's Boys for the years following Christopher Beeston's death and the company's devolution to his son, William.

> Whereas William Bieston Gent' Gouuernor &c' of the kinges and Queenes young Company of Players at the Cockpitt in Drury Lane hath represented unto his Ma^{tye} that y^{e} suerall Playes hereafter mentioned (vizt) Witt without money: The Night Walkers: The night of the burning pestill: Fathers own sonne: Cupids Reuenge: The Bondman: The Renegado: A new way to pay old debts: The great Duke of Florence: The maid of honor: The Traytor: The example: The young Admirall: The opportunity: A witty fayre one: Loues Cruelty: The wedding: the Maids reuenge: The Lady of pleasure: The schoole of complement: The gratefull seruant: The Coronation: Hide parke: Philip Chabot Admirall of France: A mad couple well met: Alls Lost by Lust: The Changeling: A fayre quarrel: The spanish gipsie: The World: The Sunnes Darling: Loues Sacrifice: Tis pitty shee's a Whore: George a greene: Loues M^{rs}: The Cunning Louers: The rape of

> Lucrece: A trick to cheat the Diuell: A foole and her maidenhead soone parted: King Iohn and Matilda. A Citty night cap: The bloody banquett: Cupids Vagaries: The conceited Duke & Appius and Virginia doe all and euery of them properly & of right belong to the sayd House, and consequently that they are all in his propriety: And to the end that any other Companies of Actors in or about London shall not p^{r}sume to act any of them to y^{e} preiudice of him the said William Bieston and his Companyes of Actors heerby concernable: that they are not any ways to intermedle wth or Act any of th'aboue mentioned Playes: Wherof I require all Master and Gouuernors of Playhouses and all others whome it may concerne to take notice & to forbeare to impeach the sayd W^{m} Bieston in y^{e} Premisses as they tender his Ma^{tes} displeasure and will answere the Contempt. Giuen &c' Aug. 10 1639. (qtd. in Bentley 1: 330-31)

A number of important inferences about the company can be made from this document and the circumstances of its issue. Butler notes the proclamation as "a landmark change, since for the first time it asserted that the repertoire was owned by the theatre rather than by the company" ("Adult" 115). Actors and repertory were no longer mobile entities, but tied to the Cockpit under Beeston's management. Hence, control of the company and its assets was protected by law and concentrated in the person of William Beeston. The protection of the Privy Council was no small favor so the company must have been held in high regard. A ticket of privilege issued that same day for twelve actors of "ye young Company of [sic] at ye Cockpitt" confirms this (Bentley 1: 332). Beeston most likely used the order to guard against artistic encroachments from his former company of Queen Henrietta's Men and his chief rival, the King's Men, at the Blackfriars. Listed among the plays is the older core of Queen Henrietta's repertory that William's father had secured: works of Beaumont and Fletcher, Massinger, Middleton, Chapman, and, of course, James Shirley; but there are a few recent acquisitions as well: Alexander Brome's *The Cunning Lovers* (performed in 1639) and 'A mad couple well mett' which is undoubtedly Richard Brome's

A Mad Couple Well Match'd (also performed in 1639) (Kaufmann 33). At no point is there mention of any of the four works of Henry Glapthorne that would have been in Beeston's possession, i.e. *The Hollander*, *The Ladies Priviledge*, *Argalus and Parthenia*, and *Wit in a Constable*. Bentley questions whether or not this "lack of interest" in Glapthorne's work is indicative of "some violent break with the managers of the theatre in Drury Lane" (4: 476). The degree of violence associated with the break is indeterminable, but its significance can be accurately gauged from the surrounding circumstances.

The absolute dismissal of Glapthorne can be interpreted as an extension of William Beeston's rejection of a major portion of the politico-aesthetic program of his father. That program consisted of reconciliation with the aims of the court and its dominion over the western suburbs by appropriating the courtly predilections for "love-and-honour" tragicomedies and pastoral romances. Glapthorne's plays, as have been explored in Chapter 4, may contain a few critical retorts to the governmental practices and societal fashions of his day, but they always reaffirm the personal rule of King Charles not only through the adoption of courtier poetics, nomenclature, and interpretations of feminized masculinity, but through the establishment or re-articulation of societal and gender hierarchical norms. The three occasions of Glapthorne's court performances during the latter years of the 1630s, when the King's Men dominated the royal venues is no minor boast. But the significance of these performances did not outweigh the disagreements, concerns, or dissatisfaction that William had harbored against the playwright.

That there was a deficiency of trust or lack of alignment between William and his father can be gleaned from a reading of Christopher Beeston's will. Beeston was buried in St. Giles in the Field on 15 October 1638. His will was finalized on October 7 and probated on the 30th of December of that same year. From the will we know that Beeston "[stood] possessed of fower of the six shares in the Company for the King and Queenes service att the Cockpitt in Drury" but in an unusual move, the departing Beeston did not leave any shares to his son (qtd. in Bentley 2: 632). In the will Beeston demands that "twoe of his fower shares be delivered vpp for the

advancement of the said Company and the other twoe to Remaine vnto my said executrix," his wife, Elizabeth Hutchinson (2: 632). William is listed as a paid employee under the control of his wife, entitled to "twentie pounds . . . p[er] ann[um]," but no share in the company (2: 632). Leslie Hotson points out that a codicil attached to the will gives Beeston's son "one half share of the two shares" in his wife's possession "which would better engage William's diligence" (even though it amounted to about the same £20), but would also allow him more control in the company's direction (93). The half-share is still only a fraction of the company's worth, and what exactly prompted Beeston to append a codicil in his son's favor is unclear, but what is clear is that the will went against patrilineal expectations and bestowed more financial authority in William's mother as well as the company as an entity apart from William Beeston's governorship. This indicates that father and son were probably at an impasse over certain aspects of the managerial and artistic style of The King and Queen's Young Company.

In the winter of 1639, at the end of his first year in the position of governor, William was facing new external pressures that would have contributed to enlarging the schism between his father's vision and his own. Alignment with the crown was more precarious. Charles's failure in the First Bishops' War, which had resulted in the highly unstable and humiliating Treaty of Berwick, had several debilitating effects. The Scots were still in a state of rebellion but the treasury had been exhausted which prompted discussions on the necessity of calling Parliament to raise funds for a second campaign that would force the Scots into submission (Sharpe, *Personal Rule* 851). The first war had been extremely unpopular which actuated one chronicler to write that "the people in England in general abhorred that wicked war as a design to enslave both nations and loved the Scots as brothers prosecuted by that same wicked power" (qtd. in Sharpe, *Personal Rule* 823). The statement is somewhat hyperbolic in its claims of English "brotherhood" with the Scots, but it is accurate in its expression of popular disapproval of "Charles's war." The simultaneous disaster in the northern campaign orchestrated in large part by the Queen and her ascendant close circle of advisors also "fostered a fear that began to seize

the nation in 1639: a suspicion of popish plots and a fear of a Catholic invasion or rising" (Sharpe, *Personal Rule* 842). This further induced many to sympathize with the plight of the Scottish covenanters. The result was a tensely factionalized political environment. In London, the split between the Crown and the Country was probably the most pronounced, for what had whittled away at the solidity of Charles's personal rule and compelled the king to call the parliaments of 1640 and 1641 was, to a great extent, "the downright refusal of the 'city' [the Corporation of London] to support his campaign against the Scots with either funds or men even when invasion of England was threatened" (Kaufmann 163). Depleted of both funds and popular support, the crown and its New Incorporation of Westminster were in a dramatically unstable condition that allowed the Corporation of London enough latitude to enjoy a period of ascendancy. The pressure to please the crown during the plague closure of 1636-1637, a pressure that confronted Christopher Beeston on a daily basis, had now been effaced by an unpopular religious war which had bankrupted the royal coffers. The new imperative staring at William was to maintain his traditional clientele by distancing the repertoire from what was both politically and aesthetically unpopular, thus, moving away from the pretensions and prerogatives of the crown.

Another recent and immediate concern of William Beeston's during the years 1639 and 1640 was the theatrical aspirations of William Davenant. According to Bentley, "On 26 March 1639 Davenant was granted the King's patent to erect a large theatre near the Three Kings Ordinary in Fleet Street in which to present music, musical presentments, scenes, dancing, and plays" (3: 195). If construction had proceeded, the establishment would have been a direct threat to Beeston's enterprise at the Cockpit. On October 2nd of the same year, however, Davenant renounced his patent and agreed not to "frame, erect, new build or set up upon any other parcel of ground lying in or near the cities, or suburbs of the cities, of London or Westminster any theatre or playhouse" (Adams 430). Though Davenant's schemes to erect a new playhouse had been abandoned, his desire for acquisition of a theatrical home had been declared openly and still

persisted. After *The Court Beggar* debacle of 1640 and Beeston's subsequent imprisonment in the Marshalsea, Davenant again petitioned the crown and won the right to control the Cockpit until his involvement in the failed tower plot forced him into hiding. In the spring of 1639, Davenant's intended venture to establish a theatre undoubtedly forced William Beeston to reevaluate his repertory and audience loyalties, and it would appear that this reevaluation impelled Beeston to abandon the dramatic mode of Glapthorne, thus realigning the Cockpit with its popular base of support.

The new acquisitions in the repertory of 1639-1640 reflect the growing anxieties and interests of a London gentry audience at odds with the crown's propaganda of a unified urban, political culture. If not a rejection of specific policy, there was at least the pervasive miasma of societal fracture. The old nagging concern of the limbs at war with the stomach (or head) of the body politic seemed to have reified as political factionalism. *The Bloody Banquet* performed by Beeston's Boys in 1639 addresses the imminent reality of dismemberment and social cannibalism (Harbage, *Annals* 142). The plot is similar to several Jacobean era revenge tragedies, but the conclusion is a shocking and visceral diorama of enforced cannibalism. In the tragedy, a tyrant, Amatrites, has usurped the throne of Lydia but retained Tymethes, the son of the kingdom's former ruler, as a favor to his own son, Zenarchus. Tymethes and the tyrant's beautiful, young queen, Thetis, develop a sordid, clandestine love affair on the condition that her identity must remain secret. Tymethes cannot help but brag about his sexual conquest of the 'mystery lady' and flaunts tokens of their amorous tryst. Rumors travel swiftly to Thetis and, forcing Tymethes to pray for forgiveness before she bestows any affection upon him, she shoots him with two pistols. Amatrites, the tyrant, having discovered their affair and giving no credence to his wife's accusations of attempted rape, has Tymethes dismembered and starves his young wife into consuming her lover's flesh. Gary Taylor, who has conducted extensive scholarship on the play, makes a substantial argument for Middleton's authorship and a 1609 composition date. Taylor has said of the play that "*The Bloody Banquet* self-consciously resurrects an old-fashioned

romance, set in the fabulous Mediterranean, in order to investigate the extremes of human violence, sexuality, and need; like *Coriolanus* (1608), *The Bloody Banquet* dramatizes a conflict between court and commons along the political and psychological dividing line of food" (3). Beeston's 1639 production is significant because the play collapses the distinction between female sexual rapaciousness and "corporeal excesses" of the court. The transgressive consumption of flesh is not a necessary condition, but instead a political weapon and a tactic of humiliation. However, *The Bloody Banquet* is not just a comment on tyranny, but a testament to early modern anxieties over female desire, particularly in political circles. Given too much latitude the young queen's appetites are insatiable, disruptive, and capable of being coaxed into consuming what was once beloved; in essence, forcing the dismemberment of the body (both civil and corporeal) that was formerly a source of pleasure.

Betraying similar anxieties to *The Bloody Banquet* but differing drastically in genre, tone, and plot, Robert Chamberlain's *The Swaggering Damsel* (which most scholars assume to have been presented by Beeston's Boys in 1640 [see Harbage, Annals 142]), posits a dubiety about the efficacy and necessity of social regulation through legal channels and, as an alternative, maps the inchoate stages of the Habermasian public sphere. Embedded in the play's cross dressing and Saturnalian jollity are liberalist affirmations of public circuits of negotiation arising from the private sphere and persisting outside the jurisdiction of the Court and the Law. The primary plot revolves around the trials and tribulations of two lovers, Valentine Crambagge and Sabina Testy, while a minor plot concerns the amatory interests of Valentine's cousin, Fairefaith and Sabina's sister, Mirabell, whose union can only be secured through a resolution of the central conflict between Valentine and Sabina. Valentine is the son of the parasitic yet likeable usurer Sir Plenteous Crambagge. In the most cloying of Petrarchan conceits, the young gallant proclaims his love to Sabina, daughter to Sir Timothy Testy, "an old angry decayed Knight" (pg.3b). Confirming Fairefaithe's warning that Valentine's "civill nature ne're will correspond / With her wanton humours," (1.1 pg.5b), Sabina bluntly rejects Valentine's advances. Meanwhile,

Fairefaith has had his affections reciprocated by Mirabell, but Valentine's failure in love has problematized his own pursuit of conjugal bliss. Valentine lugubriously turns to his father and cousin for consolation. Sir Plenteous immediately expresses his disapproval of the potential match, citing Sir Testy's poverty as the chief dissuading caveat. He labels him "a decai'd gentleman and one that which riot and excesse has cut so many collops out of his estate" (1.1 pg.9b). Persuaded by Valentine's despondency old Crambagge concedes to the marriage on the condition that "if Sir Timothy can, or will, give a considerable portion, tis a match" but, if not, then he "will have no brood of beggars in [his] house" (1.1 pg.9b). Sir Plenteous then approaches Sabina's father, Sir Testy, who agrees to the union, but his inability to provide a dowry results in a mutual volley of colorful expletives, insults, and the breakdown of all future negotiations. Learning of her father's anger toward Sir Plenteous and his disapproval of the match, Sabina effects a change of heart and decides to "salute [Valentine] speedily" in a romantic epistle (2.1 pg.11b). Valentine and Sabina acknowledge their intense feelings for one another and, in uncharacteristic move, manifest their feelings in a night of shared sexual passion.

Now having satiated himself with "the pleasures of the forbidden sheets" (3.1 pg.16b), Valentine is doubtful of Sabina's chastity, and he repudiates her. Sir Timothy soon hears of his daughter's despoilment and calls upon the assistance of his kinsman, the lubricious attorney Muchcraft, to structure a suit against Valentine for trespassing. Fearing legal and physical reprisal, Valentine disguises himself as a woman and hides at a Shoemaker's house in the Strand. To make amends to his beloved Mirabell for her sister "thus dishonor'd" by his kinsman and to prove that such "detested blood" does not "flowe in [his own] veins," Fairefaith, with Sabina and Mirabell, devises a ruse to reclaim her reputation and to correct Valentine's scurrilous impropriety (3.1 pg.19a). Sabina dresses as a man and poses as her own cousin come from abroad to avenge her abused kindred. The disguised Sabina exclaims, "Nothing but blood shall pacifie my sword" (4.1 pg.21a). But upon seeing Valentine disguised as a woman, Sabina feigns to have felt "a blow upon [his/her] heart" (4.3 pg.23b), and threatens Valentine to agree to instant

marriage or "If thou'lt not marry me immediately, / Those looks that doe so much resemble [Valentine's] / Shall whet my sword against thee" (4.1 pg.24b). To avoid the effusion of his own blood, Valentine agrees to marry Sabina's cousin. After the ceremony Valentine is fearful of the wedding night in which the marriage must be consummated, but he is still confident that he can manage to escape. Unfortunately, he discovers that he has married a woman, though her identity is unbeknownst to him, and is now mired in a legal marriage contract. Regretting, his litany of follies Valentine claims to the menacing Sir Testy that he would marry Sabina and restore her reputation if only he was not legally bound to another woman (probably a prostitute). Sabina then reveals herself to have been Sabina's cousin in disguise so that now she and Valentine can finally and publicly declare their loving union, while Fairefaith and Mirabell can legally verify their vows. All parties are reconciled happily.

The reconciliation through "reveal" is the hackneyed byproduct of the comedic ending and not important in and of itself, but the alternative conduits used by Chamberlain to arrive at this point of resolution have a liberal political valence. His dramatic project is similar to Christopher Hill's agenda in *The World Turned Upside Down*, to examine "the attempts of various groups of the common people to impose their own solutions to the problems of their time" (13). Chamberlain's common people are not *commoners* in a strict definition of the term, but *The Swaggering Damsel* does evoke either new or marginalized "groups" of individuals, brought together by apolitical mutual interests, and groups that are resistant to existent social or juridical categorization. Power fluctuates between servant and master to a point where classifications are sometimes indistinguishable, servants often reveal class unity which translates into a level of control over their social betters, women proclaim homosocial unity against legal oppression while the bonds between men are fractured by a recognition of unfair social abuses against the fairer sex, gender is shown to be performative and legally circumscribed, and above all, the repressive force of the State and the Law are vilified and vitiated by the use of public forums to resolve disputes. One working metaphor for the play's politics is evident in the

Epilogue which metatheatrically links judgment in the plot to the "Judges of [the play's] Life and Death" in the audience (5.1 pg.35b). Adjudication is painted as non-juridical; it is instead openly public, pluralistic and arrived at through compromises in audience taste and approval – it is always negotiable and capable of being pursued without the mediation of the Law.

The Swaggering Damsel's circles of resolution are literary artifacts of the incipient stages of the public sphere associated with the rise of the middle class. Jurgen Habermas, in *The Structural Tranformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society*, was the first to identify these 'informal' congregations as an outgrowth of Enlightenment rationality and the rise of commercialism.

> The bourgeois public sphere may be conceived above all as the sphere of private people come together as a public; they soon claimed the public sphere regulated from above against the public authorities themselves, to engage them in a debate over the general rules governing relations in the basically privatized but publicly relevant sphere of commodity exchange and social labor. (1745).

Habermas interprets this public forum's sustainability as a product of the power of capital vested in the hands a new commercial/middle class which bases its formation on the "intimate sphere of the conjugal family . . . a public sphere in apolitical form" (1747). This sphere eventually established itself as an enclave in the larger political existence of the state.

The public sphere is a category whose causation bears relation to the early modern notion of Equity against courts of Law that operate under strict legal precepts. Ina Habermann defines equity as the "painstaking inquiry and fair judgment in consideration of the particular circumstances of a case" and goes on to aver that during this time in England equity "emerge[d] as a privileged point of contact between the court and the stage" (100). Unlike the Law which relies on universal claims and legalist interpretations, equity examines character, intentions and particularities of an event and its agents. Habermann cites John Webster's (who had formal training at the Inns of Court) placement of "female characters at the centre of the action" as an

early instance of using "femininity to interrogate the law," and underlines him as an impetus for associating courts of equity with the theatre (100). For the purposes of discussing *The Swaggering Damsel*, concepts of equity and a rudimentary 'public sphere' reveal that the juncture of comedic plot and representation in Chamberlain's work is not just the reiteration of Greek New Comedy tropes, but is a forum for expressing dissent that would become more manifest, more pervasive, and more hostile by the end of the Long Parliament in 1642.

In *The Swaggering Damsel* there is an immediate calling into question of not only the Law's ethicality but also its potential inhibition of productivity. Sir Plenteous Crambagge's objections to his son's marriage are solely on financial grounds, and it must be understood that all Crambagge's wealth was acquired through usury and the manipulation of legal channels. He vituperates, "Have I endur'd a'thousand millions of curses for exacting of forfeited bonds, and mortgag'd lands for this?" (1.1 pg.9b) By "this" Sir Plenteous is referring to Valentine's desire to marry into a destitute, fallen family, but Crambagge never states what type of marriage money should purchase other than one that brings with it "a good portion" (1.1. pg.9a). Even his romantic attachment to his own wife is quantifiable in terms of gold and silver. Fairefaith asks Sir Pleneteous, "Were ye not in love with your Lady before ye married her?" Sir Plenteous replies, "Tis true, I had a great deal of money with her" (1.1 pg.9a). "Had" can be taken in two senses of the word: as gain or as product. Both are disconcerting in the fetishization of love and money. Love is transferrable to liquid assets while money has no exchange value. To have "had" money as gain implies that it simply reproduces itself and never enters the marketplace. To have "had" money as product is to replace the natural offspring of a marriage, i.e. children, with money, that, again, never enters the marketplace. The result is entirely incestuous and non-productive. Sir Plenteous is imposing a form of socio-financial sterilization upon Valentine, and one to which, due to its severity, neither Valentine nor Sir Plenteous can adhere.

Another worrisome vilification of legal practice is the duplicitous machinations of the attorney Muchcraft. Here again, family ties are vendible commodities, but no more than that.

Upon hearing of his daughter's defloration, Sir Timothy Testy requests the counsel of his cousin Muchcraft who agrees to assist him in seeking legal redress for the crime of trespassing, " a most transcendent crime sir; a most foule matter" (3.1 pg.22b). Muchcraft appears confident that "both Law and Equity supports [Testy's] cause," but this is merely a cover for his own intentions of selling the case to the highest bidder (3.1 pg.22b). Having received a substantial fee from Sir Plenteous, Muchcraft avers that "Sir Timothy's cause is not worth the legge-of-a-Fly and yet he does so torment my house" (4.1 pg.25a). Sir Testy discovers the surreptitious payment from Sir Plenteous to Muchcraft with the result that the original dispute is exacerbated. Both family solidarity and the prospect of legal settlement are obviated by a corrupt agent of the corruptible Law.

Like the Law, other traditional categories of reverence are negated to allow for reinterpretations of social aggregations and the dissemination of power. Chamberlain presents servants in two unique modes: 1. as a group that defines itself through its own social networks and alliances. 2. as a source of contingency for the master's authority that is always and concomitantly a potential source of destabilization for that authority. Our knowledge of the young gentry at the center of the plot first comes to us filtered through the private banter of the servants, Roger, Rowland, and Hilts. The reader learns that Sabina is a "wilde thing" while Valentine is "a pretty dappart young gentleman, but in respect of her he is but a childe . . . she is a Blade, a Sparke a Tear-coate" (1.1 pg.5a). Our reading of the social and sexual performance of the gentry is shaped by the interpretive community of servants, and it must be noted that the aristocratic voice is completely absent from this opening picture of that community. In regard to dramatic structure, Chamberlain bestows a large dividend of power upon a lower, marginalized class.

Hilts is the most fully realized embodiment of the nature of service as loaded with the potential for inverting authority. When marriage negotiations fall apart, Hilts is able to perform what only his master can threaten: he forces Sir Plenteous to leave Sir Testy's residence. Hilts

menaces Sir Plenteous, “Come, come sir, lets see your backe, or your worships pate feele the weight of my cudgel” (2.1 pg.11a), and later Sir Plenteous complains that Hilts has “abus’d” and “bruis’d” him (4.1 pg.21a). For a domestic servant to beat a gentleman in the early 17th century, it is a rare and egregious offense of the law. But Hilts comes into a consciousness of his being outside of his social role, and uses his physical prowess to effect an alteration in established relations. Akin to Hegel’s slave in the Master-Slave dialectic whose “consciousness, qua worker, comes to see in the independent being [of the object] its own independence” (635). That is, in the products of the worker’s labor as existing because of the worker but still independent of him/her, the worker/slave is now conscious of his/her independence of the master. The reverse is actually true for the master who produces nothing, but instead is painfully aware of his dependence on the worker/slave as the manufacturer of goods and performer of service. Chamberlain does not just invert the master-servant hierarchy, he expands Hilts’s individual consciousness into class consciousness. When Valentine’s servant Trash commits a similar disgrace to Testy in his own home, Hilts temporizes and avoids meting out the onslaught of abuse in order to allow Trash time to cogently argue his position and avoid punishment.

> SIR TESTY. Sir your master has abus’d my house and Ile make him smart fort.
>
> TRASH. Tis like enough and please your worship, but shall I be punish’d for the wickednesse of my Masters Codpeece, and please your worship, no no.
>
> SIR TESTY. Carry him away I say.
>
> TRASH. Your worship’s a merry Gentleman, you love to make sport I see that.
>
> SIR TESTY. Hilts, I bid you once more carry him away, what dee thinke to laugh me out of my resolutions?
>
> HILTS. Come your wayes sirra.
>
> TRASH. Hilts is in sober sadnesse and please your worship.
>
> [. . .]
>
> SIR TESTY. Well, let him goe for this time, get ye gone sirra. (3.1 pg.20b)

Trash has individuated himself from his master and made a distinction between his body and his body in service to Valentine, claiming that the punishment does not pertain to both servant and master, but to master alone for whom Trash performs in the capacity of servant. Still unpacified, Sir Testy demands retribution on Trash. In an analogous situation Hilts had unsympathetically threatened and beaten his social superior, Sir Plenteous, but in this instance Hilts is able to respond empathically to Trash's plight and only mutters a gentle "Come your wayes sirra." There is a tacit acknowledgment of class cohesion among the two servants. The numerical odds do not favor Sir Testy, and unable to remove Trash alone, he unwillingly relents. The scene is an understated version of Betty's (Sabina's waiting maid) more vociferous defense of female domestic servants as a class with shared experiences: "No indeed forsooth my voice is quite gone, Chambermaides have occasion you know forsooth now and then to sit up in the nights when they have businesse to doe, and that spoiles a maids voyce quickly forsooth" (2.1 pg.13a-b). Both scenes, however, recognize the inherent value in the personal activity of servants and betray a class consciousness in opposition to authoritarian strictures.

Class, particularly concerning those of the lower stations, forms one ideological pillar around which members aggregate in acknowledgment of shared concerns and experiences, but more prominently featured in *The Swaggering Damsel* are the categories of sexual identity and its associated problems of performing gender. Chamberlain's comedy champions the rights of women but not by the usual tactic of pitting one homosocial group against another in a battle-of-the-sexes narrative. Instead, *The Swaggering Damsel* is a direct inheritor of the representation of female agency found in Middleton and Dekker's *The Roaring Girl*, in which a masculinized woman is able to concretize female alliances while recruiting men to her feminine cause. Thus, female homosocial bonds remain intact and are strengthened by the addition of men, while male homosocial units degrade, despite the additional undergirding of consanguinity. Chamberlain accomplishes this through several steps taken towards group formation. First, Sabina individuates herself from essentialized concepts of femininity: "I scorne to be directed, / I am my

self sir, and my onely soule / Is my owne will and humour" (1.1 pg.6b). She reclaims the ontological and pseudo-scientific categories of the soul, will, and humours, categories which have been previously adumbrated by the masculine prerogative. Next, Mirabell rearticulates a segment of Moll Cutpurse's famous speech from *The Roaring Girl* and defends not only her sister from social ostracism but execrates the 'common' and systemically maintained plight of women. Mirabell denounces the vileness of men, "Poore Women! into how many fooles paradices are wee daily brought by these wicked men!" (3.1 pg.19a) Her charge is against what seems requisite for the consummation of male identity – to delude and abuse women as objects. Echoes of Moll's lines from *The Roaring Girl* are heard:

> In thee I defy all men, their worst hates,
> And their best flatteries, all their golden witchcrafts
> With which they entangle the poor spirits of fools
> Distressed needlewomen and trade-fall'n wives. (3.1.93-96)

Across divisions of class, occupation and conjugal affiliations, there is a commonality between women based not upon an essential biology or universalized philosophical maxims, but upon a recurring shared experience of objectification in a widespread system of inequitable gender relations.

The empirical crux of Mirabell's statement signals the embryonic stage of Enlightenment induction – moving from particularities of experience toward general assessments – and the amorphic beginnings of classical liberalism. This translates into the formation of new alliances and social groups based upon shared experiences under the law rather than rigid, universal identity categories held onto from the religio-monarchical estate system of the Middle Ages. Rather than identifying himself as essentially male and thus obligated to defend Valentine, Fairefaith expostulates that it is unjust that Mirabell should be "Displeas'd with [him] for [Valentine's] faults," and offers his "best assistance" to rectify the situation (3.1 pg.19a). Fairefaith, Sportlove, Trash, and Rowland form a coalition around Sabina and Mirabell to

publicly pressure and lead the young gentleman Valentine (now disguised as a woman) into a marriage contract. Kathryn Dezur observes in this push toward the "conjugal conclusion" that *The Swaggering Damsel* "rather conservatively upholds the value of marriage as an ordering institution," but in that observation Dezur fails to see the unorthodox social formation and mechanics that arise to uphold the rights known to but kept from Sabina as a woman (8). The group is uniquely democratic, comprised of aristocratic males, servants, and women, not bound by explicitly conjugal or commercial interests, but a belief in the social correctness of their common purpose – a purpose arrived at through public discourse concerning the circumstances surrounding Sabina's particular case. There is no recourse to the Law to enforce marriage. Only the united will of a mixed group of individuals proves expedient to bring about connubial arrangements. When Fairefaith is asked by Rowland, "why did you, being my Masters kinsman, and an old souldier stand so patiently and see him so affronted?", with the classically liberal sentiment of limited government in tandem with a belief in the possibility of public reconciliation, Fairefaith responds, "I confesse I had no disposition to medle in't, because I know they'le agree themselves . . ." (4.1 pg.28b). Fairefaith resists playing the role of the law by denying the urge to 'medle' directly in their affairs, and he refuses to champion the cause of his cousin, despite their familial bonds. His actions are guided by social principles and a belief in the sanctity and efficacy of public and private spheres of resolution, rather than prevenient blood ties.

Equal in importance to the malleability of identity categories and social formations to bring about resolution is the play's recognition of the arbitrariness of gender ascriptions and the public sphere as socio-political stage for their performance. Actions are not bound up with essentialized gender categories but are the result of learned and, hence, performable behavior. Judith Butler's preface to *Gender Trouble* (1990) posed a crucial question concerning what drag reveals about gender: "Is drag the imitation of gender, or does it dramatize the signifying gestures through which gender itself is established? (xxxi) Devoting three chapters to examining how signifying acts are discursively constituted, the oft quoted answer to Butler's original

question comes at the end of Chapter 3, "Subversive Bodily Acts." She posits, "Gender ought not to be construed as a stable identity or locus of agency from which various acts follow; rather, gender is an identity tenuously constituted in time, instituted in an exterior space through a *stylized repetition of acts*" (191). Her answer, then, is that drag does dramatize reproducible acts that work discursively to construct identities. Hence, identities are fluid and created in an exterior space but are falsely internalized as essential. Acts of gender are always filtered through some interpretive paradigm constructed speedily through the assemblage of social codes. Trash makes the arbitrariness of the paradigm glaringly obvious when he comments upon Valentine's sexual encounter with Sabina and his subsequent rejection of her. Valentine begins to hypocritically indict Sabina's chastity, "O cosin Fairefaith, had I beene born a woman –," but Trash interrupts, "You wud have beene an arrant whore in my conscience" (3.1 pg.16b). Valentine assumes that had he been a women he would never have given himself over to sexual desire, which he as a man, in fact, did. Rather than empirically examining the circumstances surrounding the coital liaison and his own complicity in bringing it to fruition, Valentine's assumption is that male and female constitute essentially different identity categories replete with different societal expectations. Trash disrupts Valentine's erroneous assumption by calling him an "arrant whore." This interpellation of the male subject reveals that the sexual act, while remaining neutral and shared, reverberates differently from constructed gender oppositions. It is only because Valentine is identified outwardly as male that he avoids the whorish designation he would otherwise deserve if judging solely by the act or his internal state of desire.

Sabina proves most dexterous at using the outward signs of masculinity and the male language of courtship to display her own rhetorical skills and claim feminine agency. In the first act Valentine attempts to woo Sabina with the most saccharine, hyperbolic, and sexually loaded love conceits:

VALENTINE. Welcome fair one,

Welcome I say, toth' armes of him that flies

All joys but those that in thy bosome lies.

SABINA. My bosome? what dee you finde there pray sir; you have a minde perhappes to my Jewell, if you will not hurt it, ye shall have it a while to play with, tis a pretty bright thing sir.

VALENTINE. Not so bright as your white bosome, Lady.

SABINA. As how pray ye? What see you there?

VALENTINE. O no, the gods wu'd frowne if any mortall breath,
Shu'd once prophane that milkie way,
There's not a little in that lovely place,
But does create a wonder:
When Cupid's thirstie, and desires a sip,
Of Nectar, than he runnes unto thy lip,
And for your haire, the brightnesse of it does
Perswade my soule the very graces spun
The golden twist. (1.1 pg.6a)

Sabina's bosom is compared to a paradisal garden of the gods where the lips of cupid could run over her founts of nectar in order to quench the blind god's thirst. Valentine's gaze and rhetoric cast Sabina's body as an oasis that is open to and made more substantial by the disport of a male deity. The metonymy of virginal land and female virginal beauty as zones awaiting colonization occurs frequently in early modern literature. Sir Walter Raleigh in his *Discovery of Guiana*, refers to the land as, "a maidenhead, never sacked, turned, nor wrought . . . never conquered," but existing in this virginal state, it is imperative that England must implant within the land its imperial seed (Hakluyt 408). Sabina's body is likewise a wild and sublime but empty parcel awaiting the loving cultivation of a man's touch. Yet, outfitted in male garb in her confrontation with the femininely bedizened Valentine, Sabina reverses the flow of rhetoric and objectifies Valentine as a feminine garden in need of masculine tending:

I see betwixt those brests

Is Adonis garden and Elisiums love,

And from these lippes proceedes an ayre transcends

Sabean spices, or the Phoenix nest;

Lady,

Be pleased to let this Jewell pride it selfe

Betweene those snowie hills, and you engage

My soule unto your selfe. (4.1 pg. 23b)

Valentine's body is now the garden and his faux breasts are "snowie hills" to be claimed by a sellable token, a jewel. By effecting the externality of a male "Sabina evinces and applies [her rhetorical skill] with an agency that surpasses what cultural ideals allowed for women" (Dezur 17). Command of language is not an inextricably male realm, but shown here to be made possible by performing male codes. These codes are also imbricated in the language itself that conflates feminine sexuality with inanimate land. Thus, Sabina performs the code publicly to persuade Valentine to create the desired conjugal conditions of her privatized, domestic sphere.

And it is ultimately Sabina's and her sister's rhetorical ability to effectuate a coalition for their cause that resolves the initial dispute. Neither the Law nor masculine homosocial networks can enforce reconciliation. In the final scene Sir Timothy Testy sends an officer 'offstage' to recover Valentine's 'unidentified' wife, but the officer never returns and is never mentioned again. Instead, Fairefaith and Sportlove enter with Sabina "veil'd" (5.1 pg.34a). Resolution is reached through conjoined effort and in a public domain, without the need for the repressive force of the law. *The Swaggering Damsel*'s final tableau is one of a pluralistic society of disparate identities whose effective communicative apparatus is already in place in the body of the populace. Chamberlain's theatrical portrayal of the western suburbs is one in which city officialdom and the Crown are absent and replaced by a culture of the 'town.' The contrast between the pluralistic democracy of Chamberlain and the unified yet feminized male subject in

willing submission to the gaze of the law in Glapthorne's dramas is drastic. Each style represents a vastly different ideological treatise and indicates a significant alteration in the intended audience and the company aims of Beeston's Boys.

The heaviest bit of proof for a major break between what Glapthorne's conciliatory dramatics represented and William Beeston's socio-artistic mission is found in the same protective edict from the Lord Chamberlain issued on 10 August 1639 (see page 108). Listed among Beeston's property is 'A mad couple well met,' a variant upon Richard Brome's *A Mad Couple Well Match'd*, one of Brome's few plays to be produced by Beeston's Boys at the time of the Lord Chamberlain's decree. Bentley along with Kaufmann, Steggle, and Clark are confident in attaching Brome to the Cockpit as resident playwright by this time (Bentley 1: 330). Prior to this arrangement with Beeston, Brome was contracted as house playwright for the competing Salisbury Court, then under Heton's management. The 1635 contract with the Salisbury Court stipulated that Brome was "to write three plays a year for three years at a salary of 15s. a week, plus the first day's profit from each new play as a benefit" (Kaufmann 29). In 1638 a new contract was drawn up to include a seven year arrangement similar to the original but with the proviso that Brome would deliver 4 of the 9 plays he still owed to the company. Apparently, Brome did not look favorably upon the possibility of another exclusive stint with Heton. Negotiations broke down and Brome soon left to tender his services with Beeston at the Cockpit, which led to the lawsuit brought against him by the Salisbury Court management in 1640. Brome, in his deposition, states that

> . . . before Ester tearme 1639 this def.^{t} brought them another new Play written all but parte of the last sceane But this def.^{t} found that divers of the Company did so slight the last menconed plays and used such scornefull and reproachfull speeches concerning this def.^{t} and divers of them did advise the rest of them to stop all weekly payments towards this def.^{t}. (qtd. in Steggle 119)

The Salisbury Court countered that William Beeston had 'tampered' with the arrangement and had lured Brome away from his contract by "promising to bee his good freinde and to give him more salarye then yo^{r} subiects by the Agreem^{t} aforesaid Hee the saide Richard Brome did voluntarily faile to present unto your subjects any more of the said playes for which he was in Arreare" (qtd. in Steggle 119). There is some validity to the Salisbury Court's claim that William Beeston poached on their territory. During the post plague years of 1637 and 1638, Brome wrote at least three plays intended for other companies while still under contract with Heton: *The English Moor*, *The Damoiselle* and *The Antipodes*; two were, against Brome's wishes, produced by the reassembled Queen Henrietta's Men at the Salisbury Court, but *The Damoiselle* was supposedly performed by Beeston's Boys in 1638. Appended to the Epilogue in the 1640 publication of *The Antipodes* is a statement that makes it abundantly clear that Brome had intended to provide William Beeston with that play as well, but was unable to enact his plan due to legal obstructions.

> Courteous Reader, You shal find in this Booke more then was presented upon the Stage, and left out of the Presentation, for superfluous length (as some of the Players pretended) I thoght good al should be inserted according to the allowed Original, and as it was, at first, intended for the Cock-pit Stage, in the right of my most deserving Friend Mr. William Beeston, unto whom it properly appertained; and so I leave it to thy perusal, as it was generally applauded and well acted at Salisbury Court. Farewell, Ri. Brome. (339)

Despite Brome's inability to fulfill his intention to Beeston with *The Antipodes*, their friendship remained strong enough that Brome wrote his last play for "the Salisbury court sometime before Easter 1639, and thereafter was attached to the Cockpit" (Bentley 1: 330). And their social values and artistic sensibilities were similar enough to promote four years of fruitful collaboration.

Since Clarence Edward Andrews's 1913 study, *Richard Brome: His Life and His Works*, Brome's biographers and critics have ranged in opinion on his socio-political stance, but all have

tended to agree with Kaufmann's assessment that Brome had a "close and critical relationship to the particular historical and theatrical era in which he wrote" and that his drama is "heavily topical and is shaped by an alert sense for the shifting manners and moral attitudes of a crucial period in English history" (1). Added to this is a shared interest in Brome's humble beginnings as Ben Jonson's servant; beginnings that are repeatedly interpreted to have crystalized his connection to the "popular style" and made him the antithesis of the courtier dramatist (Butler, *Theatre and Crisis* 220). Beyond that, critics have fallen into two camps. The first camp adheres to Kaufmann's statement that "Brome's point of view is conservative. . . . He is genuinely and deeply concerned to preserve the values of the older 'Tudor culture'" (3). Ira Clark links McLuskie in *The Revels History of English Drama* to this 'conservative' group as its most recent and most vocal exponent (155). The second camp, as labeled by the scholarly contributions of Ira Clark and Matthew Steggle, connects the work of critics like Shaw and Sedge to Martin Butler's cogent argument in *Theatre and Crisis* about the "subversive possibilities of the popular style" (220), or, in Matthew Steggle's estimation of Butler's work, Brome's work as "a popular, politically radical drama which did not shrink from confronting the raw issues of the day" (7). Most contemporary critics, like Clark and Steggle, have consolidated strength around Butler's hypothesis. Julie Sanders, though perhaps less alacritous than Butler to politically characterize Brome, also admits that Brome's merry beggars in *A Jovial Crew* "reveal some deep discrepancies within his own wider community" – viz. England during the time of Charles's personal rule ("Beggars" 9). Regardless of the multivalent political inferences critics have drawn from Brome's work, there is a definite sense of historical 'situatedness' in all his plays; an identifiable locality and topicality that is always and already political, or, as Ira Clark pithily iterates, "Brome presented pressing issues in a pressing time" (157).

Though his birth and childhood remain obscure, Richard Brome's lower class station and his initial service to Ben Jonson are fairly well documented, and not just in the shared stylistics of the two playwrights. Aptly enough, the first known written reference to Brome occurs in the

Induction to the 1614 publication of Jonson's *Bartholomew Fair* (discussed briefly in Chapter 2). The stage-keeper relates, "But for the whole play, will you have the truth on't? I am looking lest the poet hear me or his man, Master Brome, behind the arras – it is like to be a very conceited scurvy one, in plain English" (qtd. in Andrews 1). Biographers have probed into the nature of Brome's service to Jonson, but have come up with no definitive answers concerning his obligations or his distinction. Brome's friend and editor of his posthumous works, Alexander Brome (no relation), felt the need to write in the 1659 publication of his verse, "Poor he came into th' world," perhaps noting his poverty to glorify Richard's elevation in social and literary circles (Andrews 8). Kaufmann believes that Brome most likely fulfilled "a domestic servant's role" for Jonson but that the relationship evolved into a mentorship, friendship, and congenial rivalry over time (21). Evidence for this comes from Jonson's, albeit self-congratulatory, tribute to Brome in the 1632 edition of Brome's *The Northern Lasse:*

> I had you for a Servant, once, Dick Brome;
>
> And you performed a Servants faithful parts.
>
> Now, you are got into a nearer room,
>
> Of Fellowship, professing my old Arts.
>
> And you do them well with good applause,
>
> Which you have justly gained from the Stage,
>
> By Observation of those Comick Lawes
>
> Which I, your Master, first did teach the Age.
>
> You learn'd it well , and for it serv'd your time
>
> A Prentice-ship: which few doe now adays.
>
> (qtd. in Andrews 10)

Jonson is proud to point out Brome's move from a servant "into a nearer room, / Of Fellowship" in the art of dramatic poesy. Despite the uncertainties surrounding Brome's service to Jonson, it is certain that the relationship between the two men was a formative one for Brome and one that

established Brome's artistic trajectory by the time he left Jonson around 1628, when his name appeared in the list of the Queen of Bohemia's Players (Kaufmann 19). [NOTE** If Richard Brome the playwright was not, in fact, Richard Brome the player of the Queen of Bohemia's, the timeline still holds since *The Northern Lasse* and *The Lovesick Maid* were performed by the King's Men just one year later in 1629.] Jonson's interrogational and critical style of city comedy, his finger on the pulse of the politics and manners of his day, and his disdain for amateur playwrights are defining features in Brome's own works.

Throughout the Caroline period, Brome was a chief negotiator of urban space and a chief combatant for theatrical, aesthetic, and occupational space. With only a few exceptions, most of his extant comedies are set within the milieu of contemporary London or its immediate suburbs. These sites are never neutral. Populating these spaces are examinations of "celebreties" and challenges to the unquestioned assumption of "new fads" and "contemporary institutions" (Clark 157). *A Mad Couple Well Match'd* is set in the morally opprobrious Ram Alley and, according to Bradley Ryner, offers an economic critique by "represent[ing] the distinction between financial and sexual transactions as completely meaningless in a desire-driven consumer culture" (2). *The Weeding of Covent-Garden* satirizes both Puritans and fashionable society for which the eponymous neighborhood was known, but beyond these superficial mockeries the play stages "the way suburban developments were imagined as colonial ventures" which unrepentantly "weeded out" the poorer inhabitants of the western suburbs to make way for the profitable gentry (Van Renen 35). *The English Moor* is set within London and depicts the absurd lengths that the possessive old codger Quicksands will go to in order to secure his younger, unwilling fiancé, Millicent. Painting her in blackface to pass her off as an 'unattractive' Moor, Quicksands rests upon the tacitly held racist belief that black bodies are undesirable, but his plot crumbles when the philandering Nathaniel engages in a sexual encounter with a woman in Moorish disguise, who is later discovered to be Phyllis though at the time presumed by Quicksands to be Millicent. Andrea Stevens views the playwright at his socially interrogative best in this play and observes

that Brome's "body trick plays with the notion that all black bodies are the same, a racist iteration of the misogynist 'bed trick' that assumes that all women resemble each other in the dark" (424). *The New Academy* is a direct assault on the Platonic salon culture inspired by Henrietta Maria. The 'academy' is owned by a group of wealthy shopkeepers, the Camelions. The young gallant Erasmus describes the venue in the following terms: "It is but private lodgings kept by / Both men and women, as I am inform'd, after the French manner / That professe Musick, Dancing, Fashion, Complement" (3.1 pg.55). But the sophistication of this little social clique is undercut by Valentine's salacious question, "And no drabbing?" To which Erasmus responds, "A little perhaps in private" (3.1 pg.55). This sexualized interpretation of the 'academy' is, according to Grantley, a satire on attempts by "members of the London elite to acquire a spurious veneer of cultural knowingness" (177), but it is also a direct attack on the French manner popularized by the Queen. Time and time again Brome makes it evident that he had no qualms about questioning, insulting, attacking, or rejecting the fashions and institutions of his day.

The courtier fashion of wit, the insipid thematics of love-and-honour tragicomedies, and cloying pastoral romances were modish aspects of high-end culture that Brome never shied away from attacking. His tactic of vocal assault reached its zenith in the later 1630s and poised itself as the complete obverse of Glapthorne's endeavor to conciliate the court and appropriate the symbolic economy of its preferred cavalier poets. Alfred Harbage in *Cavalier Drama* calls Richard Brome "the chief spokesman of professional antagonism toward the gallant interlopers who, with the Cavalier mode, were making his kind of drama old-fashioned overnight" (154). "Old fashioned" is, of course, relative to a particular audience's taste, but Harbage is correct to label Brome the "chief spokesman" for his profession, another part of his inheritance from Ben Jonson. In the Prologue to *The Antipodes,* played before the middling classes at the Salisbury Court ca. 1638, Brome rejects a common

> Opinion, which our author cannot court,
>
> (For the dear daintiness of it) has of late

From the old way of plays possess a suite,

Only to run to those that carry state

In scene magnificent, and language high,

And clothes worth all the rest, except the action,

And such are only good those leaders cry;

And into that belief draw in a faction,

That must depose all sportive merry wit

Because some such great play had none of it. (pg.230)

In Brome's opinion the effeminate "daintiness" and overwrought "language high" of such drama is made worse by the large financial backing these vapid tragicomedies received. This is Brome's response to Suckling's *Aglaura*, which, as has been stated earlier in chapter 4, cost the cavalier playwright £300 of his own money and his artistic integrity (since he altered the original tragic ending to a shallow comic conclusion) in order to achieve the lavish display and saccharine ending to gain favor at court. Reverberations of this same sentiment are found in the Prologue to *A Jovial Crew* (1641):

Our comic writer, finding that romances

Of lovers, through much travail and distress,

'Till it be thought no power can redress

Th' afflicted wanderers, though stout chivalry

Lend all his aid for their delivery;

'Till lastly some impossibility

Concludes all strife, and makes a comedy . . . (pg.351)

True to the utmost dictates of Jonson, Brome primarily objects to the manipulation of genre, and, thus, audience expectations. This again is a direct comment upon Suckling who had clumsily transformed the strictly tragic plot of *Aglaura* into an incredulously comedic ending to please the court.

Brome's animosity toward the tragicomic, romantic vein of drama can be charted to his parodic recitation of courtly mannerisms in *The Love-Sick Court,* presented by Queen Henrietta Maria's Men at the Salisbury Court in 1638. Harbage initially interpreted the play as a "tribute of imitation" to "the new fashion . . . we discern the leaning toward courtly romance, even though Brome moves with ludicrous awkwardness amidst the emotional subtleties of his theme" (*Cavalier* 158-59). But Kaufmann has effectively argued that the ludicrous awkwardness of *The Love-Sick Court* is, in fact, an intentional satire on the predilections of the Queen's coterie – "his vigorous techniques of deflation at their heartiest. . . . a burlesque of excessive posturing in the role of friend and lover . . . and overindulged theatrical affectations" (109-110). This unabashed travesty of manners coincidental with the play's primary political critique – that the "cult of courtly romance . . . makes effective civic government impossible," – prompts Steggle to quip that "One might wonder whether *The Love-Sick Court* should be construed as an extended resignation letter from Queen Henrietta Maria," the company's patroness (139).

Brome's antagonism toward the crown's circle evident in *The Love-Sick Court* is not an isolated incident, but an outward feature of an inveterate distrust of official, legal culture and its theatrical representatives which were swelling during the politically tumultuous years 1637-1642. Butler has cordoned off these years of Brome's career as "adumbrating a kind of mature comedy of political life" in the vein of other satires that expressed dissatisfaction "with England under Charles, and in an aggressive popular manner that made no concession to the tender feelings of courtiers and politicians" (*Theatre and Crisis* 210). Ira Clark, though interpreting Brome as less politically oppositional than Butler does, admits that Brome "shared with much of his known audience a nostalgia for tradition combined with some dismay over the current court scrambling that thrived on absolutism and favoritism" (156), and Clark recognizes in Brome's depiction of the legal system "a Brome disturbed by peremptory, tyrannous authority" (157). However, Clark does not designate these instances as "radical politics" but as milder "calls for reform" (Clark 158). Despite the lack of consensus over Brome's intentionality, both critics agree that Brome's

"social and political targets are obvious" and that his plays immediately prior to the English Civil Wars reveal a ubiquitous concern with abuses of authority (Clark 158). The years 1637-1642 envelop Brome's most caustic satires and extreme demonstrations of social inversion in works like *The Damoiselle, or The New Ordinary* which looks at abuses of litigation and usury involved in the fluctuating fortunes of four interconnected families: the Vermins, Brookalls, Bumpseys, and Drygrounds. Having been ruined by Vermin's usury, Drygrounds aims to sell off his assumed daughter's virginity. Though the play ends with three happy marriages, moral and sexual integrity is repeatedly threatened by an unforgiving 'justice' system. Martin Butler has argued for the play as "a sweeping broadside against the systems of usury and law in which [Brome's] sympathies are unequivocally with the victims of these two professions, the beggar-maids and ruined gentlemen cast off from society" (*Theatre and Crisis* 210-11). More fantastic but equally dubious as to the law's rectitude, *The Antipodes* stays true to the tradition of Utopian/Dystopian social commentaries extending back to Sir Thomas More's *Utopia*. To cure his son, Peregrine, of his mad obsession with fantastic voyage narratives like *The Travels of Sir John Mandeville*, an obsession that has delayed Peregrine's consummation of his marriage for three years, Master Joyless creates an anti-London called the Antipodes. Letoy, a wealthy aristocrat, offers the use of his players to enact the play within the play, a host of absurd inversions that eventually cures Peregrine. The inset play of *The Antipodes* "extends patriarchy from the absolutism of the family through the arbitrary hierarchy of society to the capricious tyranny of the state" (Clark 189). But by presenting such an extremity of societal alteration, Brome's aim is not to argue for "the necessity of some release from tyranny" but, as Ira Clark surmises, to "show the necessity of a healing reform" (183). Embedded in Brome's plays of these volatile years is a critical conflation of personal grudges, scathing social satire, artistic commentary, and political interrogation – a mode of criticism that reaches its most visibly raw apex in Beeston's Boys' 1640 production of Brome's *The Court Beggar*.

Presented at the Cockpit in early May of 1640 while the Short Parliament was still in session, *The Court Beggar*, like many of Brome's plays, relates the struggles of one young couple in their desires to marry against the wishes of a tyrannous father. Sir Andrew Mendicant has left his country estate to live in the fashionable Strand to "purchace wit" and preferment at Court (1.1 pg.187). He has since been entangled in manifold, unprofitable projects and patents that have depleted his fortune. His current project is to marry his daughter, Charissa to his patron/liaison at court, the "noble Cavalier Sir Ferdinando." Charissa, however, is in love with the dashing young, Frederick, who is rich in "valour, wit, and honour . . . and of a noble Family extracted" but has no estate (1.1 pg.186). Mendicant outright refuses Charissa's suit and pursues his plan to wed Sir Ferdinand to his daughter. But the rakish Sir Ferdinand has fallen into madness due to the rejection he received from the rich widow Lady Strangelove. Strangelove, who has formed a mixed-sex coterie around her person, has invited Courtwit, his cousin from the country, Swaynwit, and the ever-amusing Citwit to join her Platonic circle of aesthetes. To cure Sir Ferdinand's madness Mendicant has deposited the court aspirant at Lady Strangelove's residence. Faced with guilt that has arisen from her complicity in his madness, Lady Strangelove works with the dubious doctor who has accompanied Sir Ferdinand in order to bring him to his senses. The result is that Sir Ferdinand attempts to rape Lady Strangelove. Meanwhile, Gabriel, Mendicant's servant and kinsman, has been forced out of Mendicant's home for his support of Frederick and Charissa's union. Gabriel hatches a plot with Frederick and Frederick's guardian, Sir Raphael, to provide the young couple with marital fulfillment. At Lady Strangelove's estate, Courtwit, Citwit, and Swaynwit combine with Lady Strangelove and a "Sowgelder" to retaliate against the doctor for his part in the Lady's near-rape, but what the team gets instead of the doctor's testicles, is a confession from the doctor to which only Lady Strangelove is privy. In a subplot the craven Citwit has vowed to fight the painter Dainty for the hand of Lady Strangelove's chambermaid, Philomel. A humorous tutorial in masculinity ensues. Before Citwit can challenge his rival, Frederick disguised as a doctor visits Sir Ferdinand on the pretext of a medical examination, but

quickly throws off his disguise and challenges Sir Ferdinand to a duel. Rather than fight Frederick, the cowardly Sir Ferdinand admits that his madness was a feigned attempt to both avenge the ill-treatment he received from Lady Strangelove and to gratify himself on her body. Lady Strangelove, however, had already coerced this bit of information from the charlatan doctor. To make amends Sir Ferdinand agrees to provide Frederick with a substantial boon to his jointure. The play ends with a chaotic antimasque, but all conflicts are resolved. Mendicant is pleased with Frederick's newfound fortune, Charissa and her beau can now marry, Citwit unveils Dainty as a pickpocket and wins the hand of Philomel, Gabriel and Mendicant patch up their differences, and Sir Ferdinand receives a promise of marriage from Lady Strangelove. *The Court Beggar* ends in a pleasant manner that somewhat belies the political implications of its name.

Kaufmann and Butler have thoroughly examined two different aspects of *The Court Beggar*'s satirical attack on the court of Charles I. In *Richard Brome: Caroline Playwright* Kaufmann makes a nearly indisputable case for the play's participation in the second poets' war with its scathing lampoon of Brome's rival dramatists, the courtiers Sir John Suckling and Sir William Davenant. Recent critics such as Matthew Steggle have contended that Courtwit may not be an exact representation of Davenant, but in my opinion there are enough similarities between many of Courtwit's attributes and Davenant's theatrical and political activities to warrant the claim that Brome is at least ridiculing the beliefs and prejudices held by Davenant and other courtier poets. No one, however, has contested the solid evidence that Kaufmann has gathered on the subject of Brome's mockery of Suckling in the guise of Sir Ferdinand. The "Exquisite Cavalier, Courtier and Souldier, / Scholler, (and what not!) brave Sir Ferdinando" is a man "rising in the favour Royall" (1.1 pg.186). Gabriel also calls Sir Ferdinand an "extreame Amorist, desperately devoted / unto the service of some threescore Ladies" and one who gives presents of "Banquets and Verses" (1.1 pg.190). Added to this list is Sir Ferdinand's passion for gambling at "cards and . . . cribbidge" (3.1 pg.219). Kaufmann has shown that all of these attributes and titles (cavalier, courtier, ambitious of royal favor, lothario, poet, and gambler), can be ascribed to Sir

John Suckling (see Kaufmann 151). The most telling bit of topical evidence for Suckling's unflattering representation, and the one that landed William Beeston in the Marshalsea, is Brome's remark upon Sir Ferdinand's performance in what was obviously the First Bishops' War. Sir Ferdinand is first brought into audience view feigning madness and muttering about his martial affairs in a recent skirmish:

> Am I then taken prisoner in the North?
> Wounded, disarm'd and bound? I shall be ransom'd.
> To which of your rebelliously usurp'd
> Castles ha' you brought me? you sir *Presbiter*
> That better can pugnare then orare,
> And so abjure all duty and allegiance – (3.1 pg.218)

The references to the north, defeat, 'Presbiters,' and the abjuration of duty and allegiance leave no doubt that the verse is alluding to the First Bishops' War, in which, as Kaufmann notes, "Suckling served with a beautifully uniformed troop of one hundred horsemen of his own equipping" but "was the most noticeable coward among a wretched band at Berwick in that campaign" (159). Though the representation is most obviously and conclusively an attack on Suckling, Charles did not appreciate being reminded of his recent losses and took action against the King and Queen's Young Company. Henry Herbert records,

> On Monday the 4 May, 1640, William Beeston was taken by a messenger and committed to the Marshalsey, by my Lord Chamberlens warrant, for playinge a playe without license. The same day the company at the Cockpitt was commanded by my Lord Chamberlens warrant to forbeare playinge, for playinge when they were forbidden by mee, and for other disobedience and laye still Monday, tusday, and wensday. . . . The play I cald for, and , forbidding the playinge of it, keepe the booke, because it had relation to the passages of the K.s

> journey into the Northe, and was complaynd of by his M.^{tye} to mee, with commande to punishe the offenders. (Herbert 66)

At a moment when Parliament was meeting for the first time in over 10 years, the reference to the King's failure to suppress a Scottish uprising must have been interpreted by the King as a mild act of sedition. To impugn his character during such a sensitive period of negotiation with Parliament was a threat to his entire political program. Suckling was undeniably Brome's target, but whether intentional or not, Beeston and Brome's satirical assault also took aim at and hit Charles's international politics.

Martin Butler acknowledges his indebtedness to Kaufmann's interpretation in his own reading of *The Court Beggar* but expands Kaufmann's assessment to focus on the play's wider reaching political import. Butler professes the play a document of radical politics and avows that "*The Court Beggar* is a full blooded and uncompromising demonstration of the bankruptcy of the personal rule and an attack on all that the court, by 1640, had come to represent" (*Theatre and Crisis* 220). In support of his claim, Butler highlights the play's constant preoccupation with the court's distribution of projects, patents, and monopolies. Kevin Sharpe has said that "these novel schemes to raise money . . . emerged from genuine inventiveness, a governmental desire to regulate a trade or to protect new manufacture" (*Personal Rule* 120). In several instances these projects "brought a worthwhile sum into the Exchequer" but more often than not "the profits made at the expense of the consumer lined private pockets more than the royal coffers" (Sharpe 121). By 1639 the clientage system had become riddled with abuses of patents, projects, and monopolies; abuses that had become so prevalent that the Privy Council issued a proclamation in which Charles, finding many of them contrary "to his gracious intention in granting" such licenses, declared them "utterly void" (Larkin 2: 674). Butler finds the *The Court Beggar* extremely topical in its attack on three types of clientage sustained by the Stuart court. The first is represented by Sir Andrew Mendicant who is an "intermediary between courtiers and non-courtiers who need to pursue business at court but have no direct access to it" (221). Second,

Butler cites the beggarly Mendicant as both a casualty of and predator on the court's avaricious misconduct in the administration of estates "which, through the incapacity of their owners, have fallen into the gift of the crown" (222). The third type of clientage is Mendicant as "an aspiring patentee" who uses projectors to seek out patents and monopolies from which he can draw personal profit (222). These three types of clientage are shown to have detrimental effects on the traditional estate system, proper governance of the population, and community consciousness.

Butler and Kaufmann both see *The Court Beggar* as an attack on specific agents and policies of the court, and while their readings are thorough and valid, I would like to build upon their work to revivify Kaufmann's concept of Brome's 'conservatism,' which is at play in *The Court Beggar* through its valorization of 'country values,' but in a manner which radically reinterprets the population's relation to the court and its representatives. Brome sets up an initial contradistinction between the Court and Countryside. Charissa looks longingly at the distant yet ever-present possibility of returning to her father's lands. To her father, Sir Andrew Mendicant, she outlines the current case plainly,

> Your ayme has bin to raise
> Your state by Court-suits, begging as some call it,
> And Lands too ever since my Mother dy'd
> Who while shee liv'd with best of womans judgement
> Which held you from that course of selling faire
> Possessions to enable you with money
> To purchace wit at Court . . .
> And for th'Exchange of a faire Mansionhouse
> Large fruitfull Fields, rich Meadowes and sweet
> Well cropt with corne and stockd as well with Cattell,
> A parke well stor'd with Deere too, and Fishponds in't,
> And all this for a lodging in the Strand now . . .

Your own fed Beefes and Muttons, Fowle

Loaded your long boords then; and you had then

Neighbours could boast your hospitality,

And poore, that for the remnants pray'd for you,

Now all concludes upon a two-dishd table.

And whereas then you had a numerous Family

Of Servants and Attendants, out of which

For profit or for pleasure you could call

Your Bayliffe, Groom, your Falconer, or your Huntsman,

Now sir, a Varlet Coachman, and Footboy

Are all your Retinue; and for the Hounds

You kept, that made you sport and Musick, now

None but your project Beagles, that smell out

Where such forfeiture is to be begg'd;

Where one would Purchase a Reprieve, another

A Pardon or a lease of Life Rope-free

For ready money: Then where Goods or Lands

Are found of men that make away themselfes,

And so of fooles and madmen; All to set

Your trade of Begging up, and still you beg:

But your own want of favour holds you back

From reaching any profit by't, because

You beg by Mediators tongues, which you

Call Favorites, who reape the crop of all

And leave you but the Gleanings; some small pittance

To keepe alive the itch of begging in you – (1.1 pg.187-88)

Between a life in the Country and a life looking toward the Court there is a litany of binaries. The Country is the land of plenty and variety, "Large fruitfull Fields, rich Meadowes, Cattell, Deere, and Fishponds." The yield from the land is massive and able to sustain a "numerous Family of servants and attendants" over which Mendicant maintained paternalistic, hegemonic control. By contrast, Mendicant's town life is shaped by a trade of begging at court that yields nothing but more begging. Social connections are based on mutual avarice rather than a mutual interest in the land. A trade of begging means that Mendicant, in actuality, has no trade because he "begs by Mediators tongues." In the country he had property, produced crops, held a sense of social obligation to the poor, and supported manifold familial bonds through common purpose; under the thrall of the court he is propertyless, produces nothing, is alienated from any form of labor, and maintains an intense degree of social isolation. According to John Locke's "labour theory of property," each person has property in "the labor of his body and the work of his hands" (Goldwin 486). When applied to the common land, "As much land as a man tills, plants, improves, cultivates and can use the product of, so much is his property" (Goldwin 487) Property, then, comes from determining the use-value of common land, rather than simple legal claims of ownership. Brome's notion of property is analogous to Locke's, that a man must put his labor directly into the land, or through the employ of proxy laborers. But proxy labor only functions for the good of all when guided by a sense of congenial paternalism, "a family of servants and attendants." The ultimate danger in Locke's theory is that common land is made private through labor. The only thing that tempers exploitative abuse of the land and laborers is a liberalistic recognition of universal human rights based on empathy. Locke hopefully states, "For this labor being the unquestionable property of the laborer, no man but he can have a right to what that is once joined to, at least where there is enough and as good left in common for others" (Goldwin 487). Brome makes a similar appeal to ethical restrictions on abuse which can be derived from recognition of common human purpose, but this, *The Court Beggar* relates, is too opaque in court protocols. Rather than laboring upon property, the beggar and the unfortunate

destitute become the property upon which avaricious "project Beagles" and sycophantic courtiers perform their labor. No sense of social empathy prevails when men are seen as raw land to be cultivated into property.

Like most of his place-realism works, Brome, according to Denys Van Renen, "lays bare an urban topography that upends traditional social relationships grounded in land ownership among the underclass" (35-36). Similar to *The Weeding of Covent Garden*, the west end is depicted as an area of cultivation, where the lower classes are "weeded out." One of the officious projectors puts forth a new project to Mendicant:

> This is a weighty one: For massy summes
> That may be freely given out of the City,
> To have but this assurance, that hereafter
> They may ingrosse the getting of their own
> Children: by order tane that Cavaliers,
> And Courtiers may no more invade,
> Or mix with Tradesmens wives: whereby tis thought
> So many City Prodigalls have been gotten;
> Onely the thrifty country Gentlemen
> To be excepted: for by them 'tis guest
> So many Citizens grow landed men. (1.1 pg.194)

The city and its populace are envisioned as an exploited colony taken over by "Cavaliers and Courtiers" intent on breeding out the indigenous population. Brome points to the drain on the city coffers both by the necessity of having to pay to keep the Cavaliers away from lower-class women and their procreation of "City Prodigalls." A humorous distinction is made between "thrifty country Gentlemen" and "Courtiers," highlighting the fact that the country is still where the core wealth of actual land is retained. The court uses the city to profit on the consumption of bodies. Sir Ferdinand makes the same parallel when he says of the Court, "there, they never /

Shall finde a happier opportunity / To Raise a new Plantation" (3.1 pg.221). David Scott Kastan points out that the word "plantation" was used frequently to describe English settlements in Ireland during the early seventeenth-century (186). In *The Court Beggar*, Court and commoners are described as internationally opposed like Ireland and England. Though Ireland was considered a part of England by 1640, it was also considered the colonized "other"; a wild hinterland riddled with Catholics to be domesticated by English customs, religion, and manners. Under the influence of such a court-infected urban atmosphere, traditional bonds formed by a mutual attachment to the land cannot be maintained. This is evident when Sir Andrew Mendicant chooses court aspirations over family bonds and fires his kinsman and devoted servant, Gabriel. More than a servant or distant Kinsman, due to mutual interest, Gabriel has served as a surrogate father to Mendicant's daughter while Mendicant "Has not a fathers love towards [Charissa]" (1.1 pg.197). But Mendicant, furious at the prospect of losing Sir Ferdinand's interest in his daughter due to Gabriel and Frederick's interference, denies kinship ties and turns Gabriel into property to be discarded. Mendicant calls him a "death deserving villaine" with all the feudal serfdom resonance the term 'villaine' connotes, and forces him from his house (4.1 pg.238). What Sir Andrew fails to observe in his choice of a master/servant (or property owner/property) relation over blood ties is his own vulnerable position as one in service to, and hence the cultivated property of, courtiers and projectors. Mendicant assumes he has employed such men to his service, but in actuality he is their "plantation" upon which they cultivate profit.

The Court Beggar does eventually reconcile the Country with the City, but the Court is absent from this final vision of the nuclear family and its larger social counterpart. When describing Courtwit the attractive chambermaid Philomel says of his amorous pursuits:

> As of a Courtier Madam, that has tasted
> So much of all waters, that when he has a fountaine
> Of his owne hee'l be too jealous of it.
> And feard that every man will drink of's cup

When perhaps none dares touch it . . . (3.1 pg.226)

Courtwit, like all courtiers, is a philandering scavenger whose countless instances of poaching create a paranoid subject unable to use and enjoy his "fountaine," that is to say, his wife, when he finally obtains her. Only the fusion of Citwit's "wit and money" and Swayne wit's bravery can win the heart of the sturdy country maid. Though Citwit will "say he has no King . . . rather then fight," he will fight for the love of Philomel (3.1 pg.230). But to conquer his own cowardice, Citwit must borrow the rhetoric of Swaynwit to use in combat against his rival, Dainty. Backing Dainty into a corner Citwit excoriates him much to the approval of Swaynwit:

CITWIT. The wench thou lov'st and doat'st on is a whore.

PHILOMEL. How's that?

CITWIT. No, no, That was not right, your father was a cuckold tho', and you the sonne of a whore.

SWAYNWIT. Good, I shall love this fellow.

DAINTY. I can take all this upon account.

CITWIT. You count all this is true then. Incorrigible coward! What was the last vile name you call'd mee Mr. Swain-wit? O I remember, sirrah, thou art a Pick-pocket and a Cut-purse . . . (5.1 pg.255)

Citwit draws strength, stamina, and nomenclature from Swaynewit, bringing together city wit and country valor to defeat those effeminate Daintie(s) who would pick the pockets of innocent victims. Winning his love, the urban nuclear family at the end of the play is thus comprised of Citwit, the country lass Philomel, and her bastard son, Billy, made possible by Swaynwit's assistance. Citwit remarks, "Never was man so sodainly, so rich; Nay never looke Gentlemen, shee is mine, hee's mine own . . . And all faults are salv'd" (5.2 pg.260). Wealth and property are measured in newfound conjugal ties, not in the pursuit of patents and monopolies. *The Court Beggar* offers an alternative to the effete and parasitic system of court favoritism in the image of

a paternalistic welfare state that conjoins traditional country values with city ingenuity. This anti-court sentiment no doubt multiplied the anger of Charles already infuriated with the play's allusion to the First Bishops' War.

According to Bentley and Gurr, the offense of *The Court Beggar* was severe enough to justify the Lord Chamberlain to force Beeston from his role as governor and place William Davenant in his stead (Bentley 1: 334; Gurr, *Shakespearian* 425). Whether the change of guard was premeditated or simply Davenant taking advantage of a fortuitous circumstance is impossible to determine. What is determinable is that the order came as a stark reminder that the activities at the Cockpit posed a threat to the government and that the business of theatre "was not yet an entirely private enterprise" (Gurr, *Shakespearian* 425). The order reads:

> Wheras in y^{e} Playhouse or Theatre commonly called the Cockpitt in Drury Lane there are A Company of Players or Actors Authorized by mee (as L^{d} Chamberlaine to his Ma^{tye}) to play or Act vnder the Title of the Kinges or Queenes servants and that by reason of some disorders lately amongst them committed they are disabled in their seruice & Quality. These are therefore to signifye that by the same Authority I doe authorize and appoint William Dauenant Gent' one of her Ma^{tes} servants in mee and my name, to take into his Gou'nm^{t} & care, the sayd Company of Players, to gouerne, order & dispose of them for Action and prsentmentes, and all their Affayres in the sayd House, as in his discretion shall seeme best to conduce to his Ma^{tes} seruice in that Quality. And I doe heerby inioyne & comaund them all, and euery of them that ar soe authorized to play in the sayed House vnder the previledge of his or her Ma^{tes} seruantes; and eury one belonging as prentices or servants to those Actors to play vnder the sayd p^{r}viledge that they obey the sayd M^{r} Dauenant & follow his Orders & direccons as they will answere the contrary. Which power or previledge Hee is to continue & inioye during that lease which M^{rs} Elizabeth

> Bieston alias Hucheson hath or doth hold in the sayd Playhowse. Provided Hee bee still accomptable to mee for his care & well order the sayd Company. Giuen under my hand and seale the 27th of Iune 1640 P. & M.[I]
>
> (qtd. in Bentley 1: 335)

The direct meddling in the company's management indicates that Beeston had wandered too far from his patrons' expectations. The placement of Davenant in Beeston's position was an attempt by Charles to control his public image. Sovereignty of the sovereign had to be reasserted in the public sphere. Davenant, who had carefully constructed the most ostentatious and flattering representations of Charles in his court masques, was a prime candidate. Davenant's personal risk but failure in the army plot to rescue Strafford from the tower on 2 May 1641 made it clear where his allegiance lay. In the mishandled plot, Suckling, Jermyn and Davenant, along with a band of armed soldiers, were to pose as reinforcements for the Tower of London, but in actuality, would take over the Tower, secure Strafford and "use their control of the stronghold as a means of cowing 'rebellious London' into submission" (Adamson 279). Suckling, however, only gathered 1/3 of his intended force and the planned coup had to be postponed until the next day. By that time City Aldermen had learned of the plot and Charles's efforts had been foiled. On 6 May 1641 Davenant attempted to flee with Suckling and Jermyn, but was captured and brought back to London. At that point Davenant's involvement with the King and Queen's Young Company came to an abrupt halt (Bentley 1: 335).

William Beeston was reinstated sometime in later 1641 after the failure of the army plot to free Strafford, but his punishment apparently did not dissuade him from his original subversive intentions. The final play presented by Beeston at the Cockpit/Phoenix was a forceful re-articulation of his political insubordination, and it is often read as the swan-song for an entire era of theatre starting with the rise of the professional playhouses in the 1570s and 80s during Elizabeth's reign. Opinions have varied as to the precise political position in Brome's *A Jovial Crew, or The Merry Beggars*, but no recent critic has denied its ineluctable topicality. First

performed in 1641 and repeated up until the closing of the theatres on 2 September 1642, the prologue speaks to the continual crisis London society faced during the final years of the theatre before the civil wars:

> THe Title of your *Play*, A Jovial Crew,
> May seem to promise Mirth: Which were a new,
> And forc'd thing, in these sad and tragick daies,
> For you to finde, or we expresse in Playes.
> We wish you, then, would change that expectation,
> Since Jovial Mirth is now grown out of fashion. (pg.351)

The prologue does not promise fantasy and mirth, but hints at possibly squeezing out a little mirth while acknowledging the reality of "these sad and tragick daies." Butler's oft cited reading of *A Jovial Crew* counters Kaufmann's conception of the play as a "profoundly escapist" product from "a man spent, disenchanted, and old" (Kaufmann 169). Instead, Butler purports that the play is "profoundly historical, giving vigorous expression to the most central preoccupations of its time, and painfully sensitive to the uniqueness of the moment at which it was being performed, that English history was standing upon a point of decisive transformation" (279). The plot centers on four dissatisfied lovers who leave Oldrents's estate to join an alternative beggar community, free from the responsibilities and concerns of their former life. But the beggar community is itself troubled by hardships and political concerns. Brome seems to claim that escape from socio-political life is not an option. As a response to "these sad and tragick daies," Brome continues his line of argument found in *The Court Beggar* and stresses the need for a communal form of civic responsibility. The beggars in the inset masque praise the apolitical community of the beggars' commonwealth:

> With them there is no Grievance or Perplexity;
> No fear of war, or State Disturbances
> No Alteration in a Common-wealth,

Or innovation, shakes a thought of theirs . . .

We have no fear of lessening our Estates;

Nor any grudge with us (without Taxation)

To lend or give, upon command, the whole

Strength of our Wealth for publick Benefit:

While some, that are held rich in their Abundance,

(Which is their Misery, indeed) will see

Rather a general ruine upon all,

Then give a Scruple to prevent the Fall. (4.2 pg.426)

In one sense, a society where "there is no Grievance or Perplexity" is hopelessly escapist and only possible through the mutual penury of the beggars. In another sense, there is recognition of the realities of inequitable distribution of wealth that exists in political environments, and that beggars can provide nothing "for publick benefit." With civic arrangements comes a civic responsibility to the public; wealth is made from such an arrangement of people and should be more beneficial to the majority of those on whom and by whom the wealth is made. Brome, then, does not point the way to an escape route from political crisis but uses the beggars as didactic, yet entertaining instruments for reformation. From most readings of *A Jovial Crew,* reformation seems as indeterminate as the times.

This last theatrical image bequeathed by Beeston and Brome in 1642 is full of societal inversions, open-ended political questions, and uncertainties, much like the days ahead would be. The wedding of Brome's contumacious theatrics to the royal patronage enjoyed by The King and Queen's Young Company was indicative of longstanding political fears of decentralization of authority and internecine conflict. If one company remained defiant to the royal prerogative, then what was the state of the nation in 1642? The theatrical arsenal of Beeston's Boys offered no definitive portrayl of the future predicaments in which the nation would find itself ensnared, nor did it offer an answer to resolve the present growing disputes. What the final plays of Beeston's

Boys did state firmly is that a process of negotiation must continue on, and that the theatrical stage was a healthy and preferable alternative to the stage of war. Sadly, in August of 1642 the theatre of war supplanted the mock wars conducted in theatres – England was divided by civil strife.

CHAPTER VI

EPILOGUE: A BODY AT REST?

On 2 September 1642, for the first time in history, the order for the closing of the theatres came from *Parliament* rather than the Privy Council:

> It is therefore thought fit, and Ordeined by the Lords and Commons in this Parliament Assembled, that while these sad Causes and set times of Humiliation doe continue, publike Stage-Playes shall cease, and bee forborne. Instead of which, are recommended to the people of this Land, the profitable and seasonable Considerations of Repentance, Reconciliation, and peace with God, which probably may produce outward peace and prosperity, and bring againe Times of Joy and Gladnesse to these Nations. (qtd. in Bentley 2: 690)

The order is extraordinary for its interface of Parliament and Players – two worlds that seemed to exist in different orbits. But 1642 was the year in which what had previously been kept apart now violently collided. The country had been in a declaration of civil war since August 22 and the theatre's added commentary upon sovereignty was not welcomed by Parliament. In essence, what once was believed to be a unified whole was now riven by violent factions. The King and Queen's Young Company was both indicative of and respondent to the build toward this crisis. Father and son did not appear to agree exactly on the company's direction, and it was only the death of the one that made way for the aims of the other. Their disparate visions were tied to

complex negotiations of sovereignty on a national scale. During the mid-17th century it was debatable whether the body politic was coterminous with the body of the king or persisted discretely from the king's corporality but in tandem with the ever-changing body of the populace. The return of the king in 1660 indicates that the uncertainties surrounding this debate had not been resolved, but that it was best to err on the side of safety and work toward, at the very least, a mixed monarchy. Leading up to the Civil Wars it was never just the king's body that formed the central organizing force of the nation but his body in a constant state of negotiation with the prerogative of his queen and his country. In the *Basilikon Doron* James I had cautioned his son "That a King is as one set on a stage, whose smallest actions and gestures, all the peoplle gazingly doe behold" (43). Beeston's Boys, or The King and Queen's Young Company, was one theatrical extension of the nation as stage simile, both reproducing and challenging the various representations of the King. As is the nature of theatre, the Cockpit/Phoenix was a *dialogic* forum for performers and spectators, and an arena that participated in the larger ongoing national debate over sovereignty. Through its participation The King Queen's Young Company revealed that the public sphere was in transition – old allegiances and blood ties were being radically reinterpreted. The September order from Parliament was not the end of negotiations, but only a document for the necessity of its continuance. The repertory and practitioners of Beeston's Boys would linger on to take part in that negotiation.

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APPENDIX

CHRONOLOGY OF BEESTON'S BOYS' PRODUCTIONS

Author	Title	Proposed Year
Beaumont and Fletcher	*Cupid's Revenge*	7 Feb. 1637
Fletcher, John	*Wit Without Money*	14 Feb. 1637
Rutter, J.	*I The Cid*	1637-1638
Glapthorne, Henry	*The Ladies Priviledge*	1637-1638
Brome, Alexander	*The Cunning Lovers*	1638
Brome, Richard	*The Damoiselle, or The New Ordinary*	1638
Glapthorne, Henry	*Argalus and Parthenia*	1638
Glapthorne, Henry	*Wit in a Constable*	1638
Ford, John	*The Lady's Trial*	1638
Nabbes, Thomas	*The Bride*	1638
Brome, Richard	*A Mad Couple Well Match'd*	1639
T.D. (or Thomas Middleton)	*The Bloody Banquet*	1639
Anon.	*The Conceited Duke*	1639
Anon.	*The World (?)*	1639
Brome, Richard	*The Court Beggar*	1640

Author	Title	Proposed Year
Chamberlain, Robert	*The Swaggering Damsel*	1640
Brome, Richard	*A Jovial Crew, or The Merry Beggars*	1641

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Scope and Method of Study: Caroline English Drama 1637-42. Historical and Literary.

Findings and Conclusions: Recent revisionist histories and scholarly analyses have opened up spaces for local critiques of social drama and the drama in the social life of late Caroline England. This essay examines the political and cultural relevance of one particular acting troupe, The King and Queen's Young Company, popularly known as Beeston's Boys. Prior scholarship has tended to discount Beeston's Boys as either a "failure" in achieving legitimate boy company status (since it was a company of older boys and young adults), a status which hearkens back to Elizabethan and early Jacobean dramatic tastes, or as a negligible anomaly arising from the crisis of plague closures in 1636-1637. Beeston's Boys, ascending as it did during this moment of cultural 'decline,' warrants more attention for its aberrant formation, unorthodox protocol, and ambivalent attitude toward kingship and the body politic. This essay argues that Charles certainly used the company to endorse images of religio-political order resonant with Elizabethan England and to adumbrate conjugal harmony and positive portrayals of Queen Henrietta Maria, but MPs, Peers, courtiers, gentry, and artists were also communicating social anxieties and concerns through a predilection for problematic tropes of inversion, disorder, abuses of power, and an increased emphasis on the civic-body of London over and above notions of monarchy. During the early years under Christopher Beeston's management, the company relied on the poetics of Henry Glapthorne to draw closer to the court and the courtier style of drama. However, after Christopher's death, his son William found it politically expedient to alienate the court and reach out to Charles's antagonists, primarily through the work of popular dramatist Richard Brome. In essence, the biography of the company mirrored the factionalized biography of England just prior to the Civil Wars. The methodology employed in this examination of Beeston's Boys is similar to that utilized by Lucy Munro in *Children of the Queen's Revels* with its concentration on repertory and genre, but more attention is placed on the particular representational strains of bodies of sovereignty (i.e. the King and Queen and the body politic including its extremities or fringe identities), modes of inversion (specifically sexual), and the dialogic participation of Beeston's Boys in 'Elizabethanism.' The final textual product reveals The King and Queen's Young Company embedded in a tableau of overlapping and turbulent discursive circles.

ADVISER'S APPROVAL: Dr. Maria Beach