

Shakespeare and the Girl Masquer

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FROM THE MEDIEVAL RELIGIOUS DRAMA to the Stuart court masque, girls can be found on early English stages: in pageants and masques, entries, processions, and other dramatic entertainments.¹ They appeared, in fact, almost everywhere except on the professional stage. In the Middle Ages, girls performed in religious drama, and they danced, sang, and played music in religious festivals and folk celebrations. In Tudor England, girls appeared in civic pageants and processions, as well as in royal entries, triumphs, and other entertainments. And in Stuart England, girls were an important part of the evolving genre of the court masque. Until very recently, however, historical accounts of children's performance in early modern England have focused on the more visible boy actor, who famously played on the public stage and in the children's companies.² The ongoing scholarly process of recovering evidence of women's performance, moreover, focuses largely on adult performers, subsuming girls within the larger category of "women."³

This essay charts the history of the girl masquer—little girls as well as unmarried teenagers—on early English stages, defining her as a distinctive category of female performer, and locating her in a variety of contexts and venues. Meriting her own chapter in the histories of the child actor as well as women's performance, the girl masquer also makes a contribution to the professional stage. Besides providing evidence of girls as speakers in medieval religious drama, Tudor civic pageantry, Elizabethan entertainments, and Stuart court masques, what also matters about the girl masquer is her creation of an arresting spectacle through dance, music, and costume.⁴ This, I argue, is the legacy of the girl masquer: a distinct physical and visual code that was adopted, or translated, by the boy actors on Shakespeare's stage as they performed girl characters such as Juliet, Perdita, the "airy spirit" Ariel, and others. These

Shakespearean girl characters provide an archive of, as well as a glimpse into, performances that were occasional and ephemeral, and seldom recorded for posterity. In different ways, they draw upon and preserve the tradition of the girl masquer that was enshrined in private, domestic, and courtly spaces, as well as in more public ceremonial contexts. The performance of these Shakespearean roles by boy actors developed from the lived experience of girls' performance, and the process of adapting the legacy of the girl masquer to the contexts of the professional stage produced complex and polyvalent engagements with girlhood and with the tradition of the girl masquer.

The history of the girl performer begins with the singers and actresses of the ancient world: the *partheneia* of Ancient Greece, for example, were maiden performers of sacred wedding songs, while ancient Roman actresses learned their trade performing in traveling family troupes.⁵ In medieval Europe, the dramatic writings of the learned tenth-century abbess, Hrosvitha of Gandersheim, are filled with interesting parts for medieval convent girls that depict the "laudable chastity of Christian virgins."⁶ In medieval France, girls performed in Passion Plays and plays of the Presentation of the Virgin at the Temple, and took parts ranging from the Virgin Mary and Saint Catherine of Alexandria, to Mary Magdalen and Herodias's daughter, to the maidens of the Temple and the daughters of Jerusalem.⁷ In Metz, France, in 1468, the teenaged daughter of a glazier performed the meaty role of Saint Catherine, speaking "so spiritedly and piteously that she prompted many people to weep."⁸ A masque of youth also produced in Metz, in 1471, included a cart filled with children, including "une jonne fillette acoustree comme une deesse et se nommoit la deesse de jonesse" [a young girl dressed as a goddess and who was called the goddess of youth].⁹ This was the nine-year-old daughter of Philippe de Vigneulles, who organized the entertainment and recorded it in his journal. Philippe de Mézière's "Presentation of Mary in the Temple" at Avignon in 1372 contains very precise details concerning the "young and most beautiful girl, about three or four years old" who would play the young Virgin Mary, and the "two other most beautiful girls of the same age" who served as her attendants: Mary wore a "white tunic of sendal [fine silk]" to show her "innocence and virginity," and the other girls wore "green and blue, with circlets of silver," holding candles as they walk in procession.¹⁰

"Girls," as John Marshall puts it, "should not be entirely

excluded from the pleasures of medieval theatre.”¹¹ And Meg Twycross observes that “it seems to have been permissible for the girls to appear (both here and on the continent).”¹² In England, the *N-Town Play* records a substantial girl’s part in its play of “The Girlhood of the Virgin Mary,” which focuses on her prodigious learning and entrance into the Temple.¹³ And the now-canonical Digby *Play of Mary Magdalene*, which depicts the spiritual struggle and reformation of its girl protagonist, illustrates a strong dramatic interest in the challenges of girlhood, and in the tension between the sacred and profane, the spiritual and the worldly.¹⁴ The Digby play registers, as well, the intense interest in dramatizing saints’ lives as illustrated by the extensive evidence of plays about virgin martyrs, including Saint Catherine of Alexandria (London, 1393 and Coventry, 1491), Saint Susanna and Saint Clara (Lincoln, 1447–48 and 1455–56), Saints Feliciana and Sabina (Shrewsbury, 1516), and Saint Christina (Kent, 1522): all of which would require, along with the dramatic depiction of horrific tortures and awe-inducing miracles, significant acting ability.¹⁵

This fascination with virgin martyrs extends to civic and royal pageantry. The young Catherine of Aragon was greeted, upon her arrival in England, by “a faire yong lady w^t a whele in hir hand, in liknes of Seint Kathryn, w^t right many virgins on eu(e)ry side of her; and . . . another lady in likenes of Seint Ursula, w^t her great multitude of virgyns right goodly dressed and arrayed.”¹⁶ Saint Catherine was an appropriate choice not only because the fifteen-year-old Spanish princess was named for her, but because, with the saint’s heyday between her conversion at fourteen and martyrdom at eighteen, she was also her peer. With her reputation for learning and debate, she constituted, as well, a nice compliment to the future queen. The betrothal of Saint Ursula to a pagan governor drew an obvious and rather witty parallel to Catherine’s own betrothal to the foreign prince King Arthur, while her 11,000 virgin companions provided an opportunity for multitudes of girl performers. Records of payment to “Gleyns daughter for thassumption & Child(es) eldest daughter for Saynt Ursula and VJ virgens” for the London Lord Mayor’s Pageant in 1523 indicate the ongoing popularity of pageants that involved the theatrical display of girlhood: like Saint Ursula and her virgins, the Assumption involves numerous angels.¹⁷ Anne Boleyn’s coronation, similarly, featured various girls, including the Virgin Mary and the daughters of Saint Anne, who supplied images of innocent and virtuous girlhood

intended to symbolize (with painful retrospective irony) the pregnant Anne's chaste and fruitful union with Henry.¹⁸

In Reformation England, the opportunity for girls to play the rich dramatic roles represented by the saints, virgin martyrs, and the Virgin Mary evaporated with the suppression of religious drama. Whereas Catherine of Aragon had been welcomed by a pair of virgin martyrs in 1501, her daughter Mary I was greeted by just "a girl" on her royal entry in 1553; in James I's Royal Entry into London in 1604, by contrast, "seventeen damsels" met the monarch.¹⁹ During this time, girls' parts in royal masques and civic pageantry shifted from the saints and virgins to mythological figures such as nymphs, naiads, and the classical virtues, opening up a different set of roles. Thus, only a few years after pageants and royal entries featuring Saint Catherine, Saint Ursula, and Virgin Mary, Edward VI's 1537 birth was celebrated by a "Masque of Nymphs" (1537) at Hampton Court, in which naiads wore "garlands of poplar leaves," dryads displayed "unbound hair decorated with oak leaves," and oreads (i.e., nymphs of mountains, valleys, and ravines) sported deerskin, identifying the girl masquer with exuberant figures tied to the natural world.²⁰ In the 1585 London Lord Mayor's Pageant, four nymphs "gorgeously appareled" deliver speeches along with the River Thames, a "sweete and dainty nymph" who asserts both her beauty and her utility with lines that also offer implicit stage directions to run, glide, leap, and play: "with silver glide my pleasant streames doo runne,/ where leaping fishes play betwixt the shores."²¹ Religious figures were also replaced by personifications of abstract values and virtues. In the 1556 Norwich Mayor's Pageant, "four young maids" addressed their listeners as the four cardinal virtues, Prudence, Justice, Temperance, and Fortitude. The maids emphasize their power and centrality to good government: as Prudence puts it, "all things work by my advice."²²

Meg Twycross contends that girls enjoyed a freedom to perform that was not extended to grown women: "in general . . . the rule seems to be that young girls were allowed to play, but older women were not."²³ While much important current scholarship questions this claim about adult women, there is no question as to the rich tradition of performing girls.²⁴ If, as James Stokes puts it, "the records show that women participated everywhere" (32) this is also true for girls, perhaps even moreso.²⁵ However, the evidence of girls' ongoing presence and acceptance on early English stages complicates any attempt to locate a watershed moment of "first-

ness" in relation to the history of female performance, disrupting prevailing assumptions about female public and dramatic speech. In this context, the 1592 *Entertainment for Queen Elizabeth at Bisham*, described by modern scholars as "the first occasion on which English noblewomen took speaking roles in a quasi-dramatic performance," looks less revolutionary, and more like an especially rich and accomplished example of a longstanding tradition that includes the 1585 London Lord Mayor's Pageant and, before that, the 1556 Norwich Mayor's Pageant.²⁶ *The Bisham Entertainment* casts two teenaged girl performers, the sisters Lady Elizabeth and Lady Anne Russell, aged 18 and 16, respectively, as Virgin shepherdesses, Isabella and Sybilla: "keeping sheep, and sowing in their samplers." Composed or "devised" by their mother, Lady Elizabeth Russell, the *Entertainment* engages the girls in witty dialogue with Pan, their would-be, and swiftly converted, seducer.²⁷

While girls were known to address various audiences, from those of the religious drama to those of the civic pageant or the country entertainment, they also made an impact through dance. In medieval drama, the story of Salome provided an opportunity for seductive dancing and striking costumes. Together, the girls of the guild of Saint John the Baptist at Baston, in Lincolnshire, danced Salome's seductive dance before King Herod, performed in exchange for the head of John the Baptist, in the parish's annual festivities.²⁸ At Mons, France, in 1501 one versatile "Wandru, daughter of Jorge de Nerle" played both the Virgin Mary and Salome.²⁹ The Computus rolls, college accounts for Peterhouse, Cambridge, admit repeatedly to the payment of dancing girls, latter-day Salomes entertaining powerful men.³⁰ Girls were also paid for dancing at the court of Henry VII: £30 for the "young damoyzell that daunceth" in 1493 and, in 1497, £12 for the "litell mayden that daunceth."³¹ The Digby Candlemas play of *The Killing of the Children* included *virgines*, "as many as a man will," who sang and danced, going "rounde aboute the tempille" holding "tapers in ther hands."³² The virgins of the Candlemas play convey and enact what Theresa Coletti calls the "sexuality and sacred power" of chastity and generation associated with Saint Anne, to whom the play is dedicated.³³

Eye-witness accounts of girls' dance performances dwell on their visual impact, drawing inspiration from a tradition that puts virginal girlhood at the forefront of religious devotion. In Tudor England, the eleven-year-old Princess Mary dazzled all in the

Greenwich triumphs of May, 1527, celebrating the conclusion of a two-month-long French embassy.³⁴ According to Gasparo Spinelli, the secretary to the Italian ambassador who gave an account of the events to the Venetian court, Mary and her entourage danced as “beautiful nymphs:”

Dancing thus they presented themselves to the King, their dance being very delightful by reason of its variety, as they formed certain groups and figures most pleasing to the sight. Their dance being finished, they ranged themselves on one side, and in like order the eight youths, leaving their torches, came down from the cave, and after performing their dance, each of them took by the hand one of those beautiful nymphs, and having led a courant together for a while, returned to their places.³⁵

This is the account in Hall’s *Chronicle*:

then out of a caue issued out the ladie Mary daughter to the kyng & with her seuen ladies, all appareled after the romayne fashion in rich clothe of gold of tissue & Crimosin tinsel bendy & their heres wrapped in calles of golde with bonetes of Crimosin veluet on their heddes, set full of pearle and stone: these eight Ladies daunced with the eight Lordes of the mount.³⁶

Spinelli tries to recreate the dance steps for his reader, while Hall provides a careful account of the costumes: both attempt to convey the experience of watching Mary’s performance. Spinelli was particularly impressed by all the jewels:

On her person were so many precious stones that their splendor and radiance dazzled the sight, in such wise as to make one believe that she was decked with all the gems of the eighth sphere.

The masquing over, Henry VIII let down his daughter’s long hair:

in the presence of the French ambassadors [he] took off her cap, and the net being displaced, a profusion of silver tresses as beautiful as ever seen on human head fell over her shoulders, forming a most agreeable sight.

As a symbol of virginity, Princess Mary’s long locks signal not only her youth but also her potential value to the French as a future consort: as Janette Dillon points out, this concluding spectacle may also highlight “the time that must elapse before the marriage could

be carried through to completion.”³⁷ But for Spinelli, Mary’s transfixing beauty also makes an affective impact that transcends politics:

Her beauty in this array produced such effect on everybody that all the other marvelous sights previously witnessed were forgotten, and they gave themselves up solely to contemplation of so fair an angel.

For Spinelli, then, watching the princess perform is a kind of communion with the divine, just as charged, spiritually, as any encounter with a saint.

The girl masquers that figure in the 1596 memorial portrait of the Elizabethan diplomat Henry Unton communicate a similar sense of divinity. Roy Strong describes the girls who are depicted dancing in a masque at Unton’s wedding, carrying garlands of flowers for presentation to the wedding guests:

The glittering procession is headed by Diana, Goddess of the moon and the chase, wearing a crescent moon in her headdress and clasping a bow and arrow. . . . Behind her walks a train of six maidens in pairs carrying bows and garlands, their heads crowned with flowers, wearing grey-green robes and white skirts patterned with red flowers. (104–5)³⁸

Unton’s portrait represents the most significant aspects of his life: his writing of diplomatic letters dominates the portrait, and other scenes include his birth, studies at Oxford, continental travels, death in France, and the transportation of his body back to England for funeral and burial. The girl masquers, representing Diana, goddess of chastity and childbirth, are key to the depiction of Unton’s wedding, just as the image of Oriel College emblemizes his time at Oxford. Unton himself had a personal history with girl performers: he described his relationship with Lady Elizabeth Russell, author or “deviser” of the *Entertainment at Bisham*, as “as respective as of my own mother.”³⁹ In the *Entertainment at Bisham*, shepherdesses chatter away wittily, but in the Unton portrait, Diana’s maidens convey stateliness and artistic control through their physical action: from their movements we can just about gauge the beat of the music played by the broken consort.

Humanist writers theorized dance as “a language of command and control” (115), as Janette Dillon puts it, enacting political principles of sovereignty and mastery. “Like Oratory,” writes Skiles Howard, “courtly dancing was classically authorized, codified,



Detail from Unton Portrait © National Portrait Gallery, London

rehearsed, and devised to control response.”⁴⁰ It was a “fully framed political discourse,” in which “the expansion of the dancer’s control at the centre of the hall” became “a micrometonym of the centralized state.” Thus, George Peele’s lines, in *Anglorum Feriae* (1595), call upon England’s nymphs, the “sacred daughters of King Jove” (1), to spread their “sparkling wings” (2) and celebrate “England’s high holiday” (46), Queen Elizabeth’s birthday:

Wear eglantine,
And wreaths of roses red and white put on
In honour of that day, you lovely nymphs,
And paeans sing and sweet melodious songs;
Along the chalky hills of Albion
Lead England’s lovely shepherds in a dance.

(39–44)

The nymphs’ dance here symbolizes the Queen’s long, orderly reign: “years that for us beget this golden age,/ Wherein we live in safety under her” (50–51).⁴¹

In *The Book of the Governor* (1531), Sir Thomas Elyot extends the orderliness of dance to the heavenly spheres, aligning it with Platonic notions of celestial harmony:

the interpretours of Plato do thinke that the wonderfull and incomprehensible ordre of the celestial bodies, I meane sterres and planettes, and their motions harmonically, gave to them that intensity, and by the deepe serche of raison beholde their coursis, in the sondrye diversities of nombre and tyme, a fourme of imitation of a semblable motion, whiche they called daunsinge or saltation; wherefore the more nere they approached to that temperance and subtile modulation of the saide superior bodies, the more perfecte and commendable is their daunsinge, which is most like to the trouthe of any opinion that I have hitherto founden.⁴²

Here Elyot describes the planets as dancers, holding fast to the rules of number and time, and emphasizing the subtlety and control of their movements. Sir John Davies’s *Orchestra, or a Poem of Dancing* (1596) expands upon this idea, as Antinous justifies dancing to Penelope, waiting for the return of Ulysses, by explaining that dancing is “love’s proper exercise:” a form of participation in the divinely-ordered structures of nature, with the whole universe viewed as a well-structured dance.⁴³ Sir Thomas Churchyard reconciles the divine and the political spheres in *A Musical Consort*

of *Heavenly Harmony* (1595) by making it clear that musical and divine harmony equally derive, in fact, from Queen Elizabeth herself.⁴⁴

Along with its symbolic enactment of and engagement with political and divine order, dance was also regarded as a courtly accomplishment, reflecting the carefully cultivated skills of the individual courtier: as Skiles Howard puts it, “an instrument for the acquisition and exercise of social power” (3). In *The Scholemaster* (1570), Roger Ascham includes dancing in a list of aristocratic skills that includes riding, swimming, and playing instruments: “to dance cumlie, to sing and play on instruments cunningly.” Here, adjectives such as “cumlie” and “cunningly” convey a sense of personal, individual accomplishment, reflecting a broader sense of the orderly, not to mention clever, self: “nothyng is brought to the moost profytable use” he writes, “which is not handled after the moost cumlye fashion.”⁴⁵

Insofar as it draws eyes to the body, however, dance opens itself up to charges of sinful indulgence. Juan Luis Vives writes dismissively, in *The Education of a Christian Woman* (1524), of “such light and trifling pleasures, wherein the light fantasies of maids have delight, as songs, dances, and such other wanton and peevish plays” and complains of “this newe fasshyon of daunsynge of ours, so unreasonable, and full of shakynge and bragging, and unclenely handlynges, gropynges and kyssynges: and a very kendlyng of lechery.”⁴⁶ In John Northbrooke’s *A Treatise Wherein Dicing, Dancing, Vaine plaies or Enterludes with other idle pastimes, etc. commonly used on the Sabboth Day are reproved* (1579) the allegorical figure, Age, turns Youth against dancing through the example of Salome, whose dance for King Herod brought about the death of John the Baptist.⁴⁷ Salome is a favorite figure for critics of the dance: John Bromyard’s *Summa praedicatorum* (1360) complains about miracle plays generally, but he has specific words for dancers: “dancers whose feet are swift to seek out evil . . . dancers are like that dancing daughter of Herodias, through whom John the Baptist lost his head; thus, through dancers, many lose their souls.”⁴⁸

What does not come through in these moralizing discussions of dance (pro or con) is a sense of how the dancer was experienced as a lived presence, as a lively experience. Contemporary descriptions of court masques, however, provide insight into what the audience experienced and considered significant enough to record about the

girl masquer. In an otherwise dismissive account of Jonson's *Pleasure Reconciled to Virtue*, performed on Twelfth Night, 1618, Jacobean court insider John Chamberlain observes to Dudley Carleton, that the best thing about it was the "Master Controllers daughter":

There was nothing in yt extraordinarie but rather the invention proved dull. Master Controllers daughter bare away the bell for delicat dauncing, though remarquable for nothing els, but the multitude of jewells wherewith she was handg as yt were all over.⁴⁹

It is fitting that what was most memorable about *Pleasure Reconciled with Virtue* was the spectacle of the dancing daughter: the masque's depiction of the temptation of Hercules by Comus, the mythological figure for sensuous pleasure, inspired Milton's 1634 *Comus*, or *A Mask Presented at Ludlow Castle*, featuring the 15-year-old Alice Egerton. Like Spinelli, Chamberlain was particularly taken with the sparkling jewelry. For Chamberlain, the girl masquer elevates an otherwise unenjoyable masque, making an impression on even the toughest audience. In fact, her performance would be lost to the historical record, were she not fulfilling a rhetorical purpose for a letter writer intent on conveying just how little he thought of the Jonsonian masque. Here Chamberlain, albeit unintentionally, shifts the terms of our discussion of dance away from abstract concepts of sin or divine harmony, or even the courtier's fetishization of skill, to instead an acknowledgement of the effect of the girl masquer, however haphazard and amateurish, on her audience.

John Finnett, Master of the Ceremonies to James I, records a highly enthusiastic audience response to the girl masquers of Samuel Daniel's *Tethys' Festival* (1610):

they performed their Dance to the Amazement of all the Beholders, considering the Tenderness of their Years and the many intricate Changes of the Dance, which was so disposed, that which way soever the Changes went the little Duke was still found to be in the midst of these little Dancers.⁵⁰

Performing in a masque that celebrated the investiture of Prince Henry as Prince of Wales in 1610, little girl masquers appeared as Naiads, with the ten-year-old Prince Charles, Duke of York, who played Zephyrus, the west wind. According to Samuel Daniel's stage directions:



A Lady as a Naiad (pen & ink on paper). Inigo Jones. Bridgeman Art Library International.

Eight little ladies near of his stature represented the naiads, and were attired in light robes adorned with flowers, their hair hanging down and waving, with garlands of water ornaments on their heads. (57–60)⁵¹

The masque featured Anne of Denmark, as Tethys, “Queen/ Of nymphs and rivers” (93–94). Her attendant nymphs, representing the rivers of England, included the thirteen year-old Princess Elizabeth as “the lovely nymph of stately Thames/ Darling of the Ocean” (111–12). The Princess had written breathlessly to her brother, Henry, Prince of Wales, about her preparations for “the ballet . . . about to be enacted.”⁵² With her fellow nymphs she danced “measures, corantos, and galliards” (309) to songs that drew attention to their “glory bright” (261) and “beauteous shapes” (325) until they were magically returned to their own “fair shapes” (349).

Finnett’s account of the pleasure that the audience took in the little girls’ appearance on stage implies that the experience was charged with the tension between their young age and inexperience, and their mastery of the steps. The child performer rises to the challenge, registering the awkwardness of her intense effort, and the novelty of just-acquired steps, while the audience witnesses the excitement and charm of a fresh accomplishment. There is pleasure, too, in the audience’s recognition of the performers, as Horatio Busino, the chaplain of the Venetian Ambassador, suggests in his account of *Pleasure Reconciled to Virtue*:

they discerned beautiful and most delightful faces, and at every moment they would say, ‘Oh look at this one, oh see that one; whose wife is that one in the third row, and whose daughter is that pretty one nearby?’⁵³

The naiads of *Tethys’ Festival* were not paid professionals: although their identity was not recorded for posterity (unlike those of Princess Elizabeth and her nymphs), they were nevertheless well known to the audience, as John Finnett puts it, “all of them the daughters of earls or Barons.”

The girl masquer’s appearance as a nymph or naiad in *Tethys’ Festival* and other court masques embeds her within the natural cycle of life.⁵⁴ Nymphs and naiads bring together the spheres of the human, the natural, and the divine, by animating aspects of nature, personifying the natural outflow of a spring or a river into the form of a young girl. Symbolizing nature’s ebbs and flows, the girls are physical embodiments of its ongoing processes: “Breathe out new

flowers” sing the Tritons, “which yet were never known / Unto the spring, nor blown, / Before this time, to beautify the earth” (77–80). As the masque concludes, the girl masquers represent the swift passage of time, in all its melancholic beauty: “Glory is most bright and gay/ In a flash, and so away. / Feed apace then, greedy eyes/ On the wonder you behold;/ Take it sudden as it flies, / Though you take it not to hold” (300–305).

In her discussion of Tudor court masques, Howard reflects upon dance as a unique form of discursive practice:

the word ‘discourse’ etymologically derives from *discurrere*, moving ‘back and forth,’ or ‘running to and fro,’ . . . Inherent in the meaning of ‘discourse’ is the iconicity of transformation, and the paradoxical materiality and evanescence of dancing. (23)⁵⁵

This “paradoxical materiality and evanescence” underwrites the discursive power of the girl masquer: in these examples, she embodies youth and beauty and poignantly invokes the swift passage of time. Dance and youth are both ephemeral: “In a flash, and so away.” Mitigating against the eternal structures of divine harmony or the idealized constructs of political power, the girl masquer is a poignant reminder of the beauty of temporality, subverting by her very presence and movements the discourse of a genre invested in permanence and universality.

Shakespeare registers and represents the impact of the girl masquer, her “paradoxical materiality and evanescence,” in *Romeo and Juliet* (1594). This may be the Shakespearean play in which dance is most significant: the lovers meet at a dance, the play makes frequent references to dance, and it has proven easily adaptable to ballet and musical theater from Sergei Prokofiev to Jerome Robbins and beyond.⁵⁶ Romeo is eventually persuaded against his better judgment to attend Capulet’s “mask,” which he learns about when he reads aloud the invitation’s addressees—a catalogue of daughters—creating a mental image of throngs of young females, “all the admirèd beauties of Verona” (1.2.87), that recalls Saint Ursula and her 11, 000 Virgins:

Signior Martino and his wife and daughters;
County Anselme and his beauteous sisters; the lady
widow of Vitravio; Signior Placentio and his lovely
nieces; Mercutio and his brother Valentine; mine
uncle Capulet, his wife and daughters; my fair niece

Rosaline; and Livia; Signior Valentio and his cousin
 Tybalt, Lucio and the lively Helena.
 A fair assembly.⁵⁷

(1.2.65–74)

Romeo's arrival at the Capulet's "mask" brings with it another image of dancing girls: "A torch for me. Let wantons light of heart/ Tickle the senseless rushes with their heels" (1.4.33–44). The play returns repeatedly to the image of the girl's feet, from Capulet's reference to "ladies that have their toes/ Unplagued with corns" (1.4.129–30) to his order "foot it, girls" (139) And the Capulet party provides the opportunity for Romeo to spot the young Juliet, "not fourteen" (1.2.8), in lines that hinge on the theatrically effective interplay between light and dark, and black and white:

O, she doth teach the torches to burn bright!
 It seems she hangs upon the cheek of night
 Like a rich jewel in an Ethiop's ear,
 Beauty too rich for use, for earth too dear.
 So shows a snowy dove trooping with crows,
 As yonder lady o'er her fellows shows.
 The measure done, I'll watch her place of stand,
 And, touching hers, make blessèd my rude hand.
 Did my heart love till now? Forswear it, sight,
 For I ne'er saw true beauty till this night.

(1.4.156–66)

As Romeo's speech narrates the spectacle of the dancing Juliet, comparing her to a "rich jewel," his words continually flicker between light and dark, echoing the binary rhythm of Juliet's feet until she finally reaches stillness, "the measure done." As Romeo consistently figures Juliet as a kind of airborne goddess, he associates her with the kind of roles danced by the girl masquer: "bright angel" (2.1.69) and "wingèd messenger of heaven" (71). While, by contrast, Juliet notices Romeo for his failure to dance, she describes her first feelings of love using the metaphor of a dance: "A rhyme I learn'd even now/ Of one I danced withal" (1.4.255–56). It is this intense liveliness that gives her eventual stillness, first by drug and then by dagger, its extra poignancy: "No warmth, no breath, shall testify thou livest; / The roses in thy lips and cheeks shall fade" (4.1.98–99).

When the lovers arrange to meet at Friar Laurence's cell, Romeo

and Friar Laurence are awestruck by the vision of Juliet bounding toward them: *Enter Juliet*. As the Friar puts it, “Here comes the lady. O, so light a foot/ Will ne’er wear out the everlasting flint” (2.5.16–17). The corresponding stage direction in the 1597 first quarto of the play records the boy actor’s speed and gestures, just as Friar Laurence observes, “Youth’s love is quick, swifter than swiftest speed” (2.5.9): “*Enter Juliet, somewhat fast, and she embraces Romeo.*”⁵⁸ John Russell Brown describes this entrance as “as physically alive as it is verbally silent.”⁵⁹ While “*somewhat*” conveys a sense of hesitation combined with excitement, the stage direction seems, as well, to register a controlled, modulated, movement: the trained steps of a dancer. Friar Laurence’s reaction in the first quarto registers the full visual impact of Juliet’s arrival: “See where she comes, / So light of foot ne’er hurts the trodden flower. / Of love and joy, see, see, the sovereign power” (2.5.9–11). The Friar’s words also serve as gloss to help with the characterization of Juliet, potentially lending support to the work of a less experienced boy actor by telling the audience just what they are supposed to be seeing, here, which is that Juliet moves like a goddess. The trodden flowers, the light feet, the sovereign power: so much is being said here about Juliet’s impact, as a lone girl masquer, on her small audience of two. The friar’s words convey, as well, the pleasure of watching a girl, well-known to her audience, transfigured by performance: it is as if Juliet, embarking upon a new stage of life, is trying out some new steps.⁶⁰

In the 1599 Second Quarto, Friar Laurence is much gloomier about their prospects, but the traces of this powerful moment remain: “Here comes the Lady/ so light a foot will ne’er wear out the everlasting flint; / A lover may bestride the gossamers/ That idles in the wanton summer air, / And yet not fall” (2.5.16–20). Here, the visual impact of Juliet’s swift lightness in Q1 is transformed into a meditation on love itself as the experience of airborne divinity.

Because the visual and physical codes of the girl masquer were dynamic and interactive, they shifted, over time, as Shakespeare’s stage opened them to new forms of contestation and complication. Although Ariel in *The Tempest* is gendered as male, at least initially (“Ariel and all *his* quality” 1.2.193), this ostensibly male spirit makes himself into a “nymph o’ the sea” (1.2.301), at Prospero’s behest.⁶¹ When Ariel appears in a costume typically worn by the girl masquer, he does so, like Juliet, as love’s agent. The songs

“Come Unto these Yellow Sands” and “Full Fathom Five” console Ferdinand, “allaying” his “passion,” immediately before he encounters Miranda. As “Come Unto these Yellow Sands,” narrates a dance, it organizes Ferdinand’s emotions:

And then take hands;
 Curtsied when you have, and kissed
 The wild waves whist,
 Foot it featly here and there,
 And sweet sprites bear
 The burden.

(1.2.374–80)

Similarly, while the “sea nymphs” that “hourly ring his knell” in “Full Fathom Five” (397–405) mourn the ostensible death of Alonzo, they also mark and shepherd Ferdinand’s perceived translation, his “sea-change,” into an alternative reality of love and courtship: “i’t’h’air or th’earth?” (388).

The part of Ariel was consistently played by girl actors, often accomplished singers and dancers, from the Restoration to the twentieth century, and the tradition continues sporadically to this day.⁶² And Ariel appears in female disguises throughout the play: as a Harpy, a bird with a woman’s face, in the banquet scene, and as the Goddess Ceres in Prospero’s wedding masque for Miranda and Ferdinand. Stephen Orgel suggests that the goddess Iris’s call to “you nymphs called naiads of the windring brooks” (4.1.128) may be a reference to *Tethys’ Festival*.⁶³ The masque suddenly ends, just as the nymphs have joined the reapers, “sunburned sicklemen,” in “a graceful dance” (138 sd): the natural world dancing with its human controllers. Ariel re-appears again in masquing garb, “loaden with glistering apparel” (4.1.193 sd), to set the dogs on the conspirators. And when Ariel anticipates his promised freedom with the song, “Where the Bee Sucks,” the song focuses on the bee’s restless movement from lying on the “cowslips’s bell” (5.1.89) to flying “on the bat’s back . . . Merrily, merrily shall I live now” (91–3). With dance, nymph costumes, and “glistering apparel” so central to the play’s conception of Ariel, the legacy of the girl masquer can be charted in this “airy spirit,” just as Prospero addresses him, throughout, in feminine terms: “delicate,” “dainty,” “chick.” Even “tricksy” (5.1.226), which Orgel glosses as “playful, sportive,” reinforces the girl masquer’s association with dance and swift physical movement. While Ariel’s costumes con-

stitute a memorialization of courtly practice and cultural poetics, they also serve as a reminder of the always dressed-up, performative sense of gender, returning the focus to Shakespeare's own transvestite stage.

Shakespeare's representations of the girl masquer are, thus, acutely conscious of the boy actor beneath the glittering garb. When Perdita in *The Winter's Tale* appears at the sheep-shearing as Flora, "peering in April's front" (4.4.3), she comes in the guise of a courtly girl performer: "poor lowly maid/ Most goddess-like pranked up" (4.4.9–10).⁶⁴ Flora, as Orgel explains, was "the nymph Chloris" who, in Ovid's *Fasti*, was "transformed into the goddess of flowers by the love of Zephyrus, the west wind" (168, sd). While Zephyrus was the part that young Prince Charles played in *Tethys' Festival*, Flora is precisely the kind of role that Perdita would have played if she had spent her girlhood at court. And her upbringing as a shepherdess casts her in yet another role for the girl masquer, recalling the Russell sisters in the *Entertainment at Bisham*. Perdita is also reminded of Pentecost, another popular occasion for girls to perform: "Methinks I play as I have seen them do / In Whitsun pastorals" (4.4.133–34). Just as Ariel sings, "Foot it featly here and there" (4.4.179–99), implying neatness and elegance, Polixenes notes, of Perdita, that "she dances featly" (4.4.178–99) in the "*dance of Shepherds and Shepherdesses*." Florizel provides a more detailed sense of how Perdita's dancing modulates effectively between motion and stillness: "When you do dance, I wish you / A wave o'the'sea, that you might ever do/ Nothing but that; move still, still so, / And own no other function" (4.4.140–4). Just as part of the girl masquer's charm comes from knowing her, so, too, does Perdita's audience marvel at how her distinctive personality shines through her costume, as Florizel observes: "Each your doing / So singular in each particular, / Crowns what you are doing in the present deeds, / That all your acts are queens" (4.4.143–46).⁶⁵

Although Perdita plays the goddess Flora in *The Winter's Tale*, Flora was also performed by a professional boy actor in Thomas Campion's 1607 *Lord Hay's Masque*. Shakespeare thus invokes the girl masquer not simply to reinforce the gendered identity of girlhood, but also to complicate it. The girl masquer has no exclusive claim to the part of Flora, and Shakespeare's representations of her call attention to the presence of the boy actor.⁶⁶ Boy masquers figure, along with girls, in *The Merry Wives of Windsor*. Mistress Page is disguised, with her little brothers, as "Like urchins, oafs, and



ARIEL - MISS VIOLA TREE.

Viola Tree as Ariel, 1904. By permission of the Folger Shakespeare Library.

fairies, green and white, / With rounds of waxen tapers on their heads, / And rattles in their hands” (4.4.47–51) as they perform the Masque of Herne the Hunter, designed to humiliate Falstaff: “then let them all encircle him about / And fairy-like to pinch the unclean knight” (56–57).⁶⁶ It is in the guise of a fairy that young Anne is supposed to be shuffled away to marry Doctor Caius or Slender, but, taking “a boy for a girl” (5.5.189), they each get a wrong fairy and end up marrying “lubberly” (182) little boys; “lubberly” here classifies their dancing as the opposite of “feately”: clumsy, heavy, dull, cloddish.⁶⁷ Fenton, of course, is not bamboozled: he sees Mistress Page as his own “Fairy Queen,” and it is in this guise, as “the queen of all the faeries / Finely attired in a robe of white” (4.4.70), that she claims her own freedom, like Ariel, to run away (although in this case it is to join her lover, like the cross-dressed Julia in *Two Gentlemen of Verona*, or Rosalind in *As You Like It*).⁶⁹

As I have shown, little girls are typically nymphs and naiads, while it is more often little *boys* who played the fairies: as in Jonson’s *Masque of Oberon the Faery Prince*, or Shakespeare’s *Good Master Mustardseed and Peaseblossom*.⁷⁰ The fairy costume, then, may be a kind of cross-dressing for Mistress Anne, but not for her brothers. On the other hand, when Queen Elizabeth visited Norwich in August, 1578, *The Show of the Nymphs* featured boys costumed as nymphs who were so persuasively nymph-like that everyone thought they were actually girls, and it was considered so supremely and dangerously comical that the next day the boys were all given fairy costumes, so that things could return to normal.⁷¹ And while Robert Greene’s *James IV* (1590) includes any number of fairies in it, including Oberon, it also calls for a “boy or wench” to play the part of a child who dances a hornpipe.⁷¹ So perhaps girls did make it onto the professional stage after all.⁷²

Illustrating the many ways in which a performance can make an impression beyond words, the girl masquer revises our presuppositions about speech as the key indicator of a dramatically significant role. She embodies an alternative to the humanist modes of speech and declamation that underwrote professional performance in the early modern period and that continue to shape our own definitions of dramatic performance. She offers, instead, the experience of the body in motion. While Shakespeare deploys the rich vocabulary of girlhood associated with this tradition, the girl masquer appears to us, in his plays, in boyish guise, leaving her open to dynamic and interactive appropriations, shifts, and contestations.

Girls have a place in a variety of performance spaces throughout early modern England, defying any attempt to exclude them from the pleasures of the stage. And although she may never have found her place on Shakespeare's stage, the girl masquer is evoked by Shakespeare in a way that acknowledges her performative power and communicates, as well, a poignant sense of desire for her theatrical presence.

Notes

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1. Throughout this essay, I use the word "girl" to refer to girl children and female teenagers, in accordance with how the term was defined in the early modern period and continues to be used today in the context of the recent emergence of the field of Girls Studies. See my *Shakespeare and the Performance of Girlhood* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2014), and Jennifer Higginbotham, *The Girlhood of Shakespeare's Sisters* (Edinburgh: University of Edinburgh Press, 2013).

2. On the boy actor and the children's companies, see Lucy Munro, *Children of the Queen's Revels: A Jacobean Theatre Repertory* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005) and Edel Lamb, *Performing Childhood in the Early Modern Theatre: The Children's Playing Companies, 1599–1613* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2009). See also Harold Newcomb Hillebrand, *The Child Actors: A Chapter in Elizabethan Stage History* (New York: Russell and Russell, 1964), Katherine Hudson, *The Story of the Elizabethan Boy-Actors* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1971), and Michael Shapiro, *Children of the Revels: The Boy Companies of Shakespeare's Time and Their Plays* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1977).

3. On women and the early modern stage, see Clare McManus, *Women on the Renaissance Stage: Anna of Denmark and Female Masquing in the Stuart Court 1590–1619* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2002); *Women and Culture at the Courts of the Stuart Queens*, ed. Clare McManus (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2003); *Women Players in England 1500–1600: Beyond the All-Male Stage*, ed. Pamela Allen Brown and Peter Parolin (Burlington: Ashgate, 2005); Karen Britland, *Drama at the Courts of Queen Henrietta Maria* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006); Sophie Tomlinson, *Women on Stage in Stuart Drama* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009). See also two recent special journal issues on the subject of women and performance: *Access and Contestation: Women's Performance in Early Modern England, Italy, France And Spain*, ed. Helen Ostovich and Erin E. Kelly, *Early Theatre* 15 (2012) and *Renaissance Women's Performance and the Dramatic Canon: Theatre History, Evidence, and Narratives*, ed. Clare McManus and Lucy Munro, *Shakespeare Bulletin* 33 (2015).

4. On girls' dramatic speech, see my "Chastity, Speech, and the Girl Masquer,"

in *Childhood, Education, and the Stage in Early Modern England*, ed. Deanne Williams and Richard Preiss (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, forthcoming 2016).

5. Anne Klink, *Women's Songs in Ancient Greece* (Montreal: McGill-Queens University Press, 2008); John H. Starks, Jr., "Actresses in the Roman World," University of North Carolina dissertation, 2004; and Evelyn Fertl, *Von Musen, Miminen und leichten Mädchen. Die Schauspielerin in der römischen Antike* [Of Muses, mime actresses and prostitutes. The Actress in the Roman theatre] (Vienna: Braumüller, 2005).

6. Hroswit of Gandersheim, *Opera Omnia* ed. Walter Berschin. *Bibliotheca scriptorum Graecorum et Romanorum Teubneriana* (Munich: K. G. Sauer Verlag, 2001). On female performers in the Middle Ages see Kim M. Phillips, *Medieval Maidens: Young Women and Gender in England 1270–1540* (Manchester: University of Manchester Press, 2003).

7. Lynette R. Muir, "Women on the Medieval Stage: The Evidence from France," *Medieval English Theatre* 7 (1985): 107–19, Meg Twycross, "Transvestism in the Mystery Plays," *Medieval English Theatre* 5 (1983): 123–80.

8. Clifford Davidson, "Women and the Medieval Stage," *Women's Studies* 11 (1984): 99–113 at 104. For discussion see Jody Enders, *Death by Drama and other Medieval Urban Legends* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002), 17, and Twycross, "Transvestism," 134. For the French account see Louis Petit de Julleville, *Les Mystères*, 2 vols. (Paris: Hachette, 1880), 2: 32.

9. Muir, "Women on the Medieval Stage," 115.

10. William Tydeman, *The Medieval European Stage 500–1550* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 121–30; Philippe de Mézières, *Philippe de Mézières's Campaign for the Feast of Mary's Presentation*, ed. William Emmett Coleman (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1981); and Susan Udry, "'Putting on the Girls': Mary's Girlhood and the Performance of Monarchical Authority in Philippe de Mézières's Dramatic office for the *Presentation of the Virgin in the Temple*," *European Medieval Drama* 8 (2004): 1–18.

11. John Marshall, "Her virgynes, as many as a man wyllle': Dance and Provenance in Three Late Medieval Plays: *Wisdom, The Killing of the Children, The Conversion of St Paul*," *Leeds Studies in English* 25 (1994): 111–48 at 131.

12. Twycross, "Transvestitism," 132.

13. *The Mary Play from the N-Town Manuscript* ed. Peter Meredith (London: Longman, 1987). See J. A. Tasioulas, "Between doctrine and domesticity: the portrayal of Mary in the N-Town Plays," *Medieval Women in their Communities*, ed. Diane Watt (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997), 222–45 and Katie Norington, *Gender in Medieval Drama* (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2004), 39–44.

14. Theresa Coletti, *Mary Magdalene and the Drama of Saints: Theater, Gender and Religion in Late Medieval England* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004).

15. See Catherine B. C. Thomas, "The Miracle Play at Dunstable," *Modern Language Notes* 32 (1917): 337–44; E. K. Chambers, *The Medieval Stage*, 2 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1903), 2: 380; Clifford Davidson, "Women and the Medieval Stage" *Women's Studies* 11 (1984): 99–113 at 104. For a rich discussion of medieval saints' plays see Catherine Sanok, "Performing Sanctity in Late Medieval England: Parish Guilds, Saint's Plays, and the *Second Nun's Tale*," *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 32 (2002): 269–303.

16. Twycross, "Transvestism," 131; Glynne Wickham, *Early English Stages 1300–1660*, 5 vols. (London: Routledge, 1963), 1: 87. See also *The Receyt of Ladie Kateryne*, ed. Gordon Kipling EETS o.s. 296 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990); and, for further discussion, Gordon Kipling, *Triumph of Honor* (The Hague: Leiden University Press, 1977), 75–90, and Sydney Anglo, *Spectacle, Pageantry, and Early Tudor Policy* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969), 56–97.

17. *A Calendar of Dramatic Records in the Books of the Livery Companies of London*, ed. Jean Robertson and D. J. Gordon (Malone Society Collections 3, 1954), 14. See also Wickham, *Early English Stages*, 1: 272; and Twycross, "Transvestism," 130. "2 maidens" were also paid for appearing in the pageant of our Lady and Saint Elizabeth 1519 and the Pageant of the Lady Mary in 1534. Robertson and Gordon, *A Calendar of Dramatic Records*, 4, 14, 24; and Wickham, *Early English Stages*, 1: 272.

18. "The Coronation of Anne Boleyn," John Nichols's *The Progresses and Public Processions of Queen Elizabeth. A New Edition of the Early Modern Sources* ed. Elizabeth Goldring, Faith Eales, Elizabeth Clarke and Jayne Elizabeth Archer (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014): Appendix 1; and Tracey Sowerby, "The Coronation of Anne Boleyn," *The Oxford Handbook of Tudor Drama*, ed. Thomas Betteridge and Greg Walker (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 386–401.

19. See Martin Wiggins and Catherine Richardson, *British Drama 1533–1642: A Catalogue*, 5 vols. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 1: 260 and 5: 81. Edward VI's royal entry included a pageant of Saint George, with a girl as the "fair maiden" (1: 158–62).

20. Wiggins and Richardson, *British Drama*, 1: 44–45.

21. George Peele, *The device of the pageant borne before Woolstone Dixi* (London, 1585). See also Wiggins and Richardson, *British Drama*, 2: 343–44. Thames continues: "This gracious good hath God and kinde begun, / for Londons use with help of sailes and ores./ London rejoyce and give thy God the praise:/ For her whose highness lengths thy happy daies."

22. Wiggins and Richardson, *British Drama*, 1: 303–4 at 303; and David Gallo-way, *Records of Early English Drama: Norwich 1540–1642* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1984), 31–42.

23. Twycross, "Transvestitism," 133. Writing about girl performers in the later Stuart courts, Clare McManus makes the point that "it is possible that the youthfulness of Ann Watkins and Alice Egerton granted a degree of impunity similar to that exploited by the earlier children's theatre companies—an impunity less available to those who no longer stood beneath the control of a father, a family or a school." McManus, *Women on the Renaissance Stage*, 186.

24. On women performers in medieval and early modern drama see the work of James Stokes, "Women and Mimesis in Medieval and Renaissance Somerset (and Beyond)," *Comparative Drama* 27 (1993): 176–96; "Women and Performance: Evidence of Universal Cultural Suffrage in Medieval and Early Modern Lincolnshire," *Women Players in England*, ed. Brown and Parolin, 25–44; and "The Ongoing Exploration of Women and Performance in Early Modern England: Evidences, Issues, and Questions," *Shakespeare Bulletin* 33 (2015): 9–31.

25. Stokes, "The Ongoing Exploration of Women and Performance," 32.

26. *Speeches Delivered to her Maiestie this last Progress* (London, 1592) and Wiggins and Richardson, *British Drama*, 3: 190–92; Peter Davidson and Jane Ste-

venson, "Elizabeth I's Reception at Bisham (1592): Elite Women as Writers and Devisers," in *The Progresses, Pageants, and Entertainments of Queen Elizabeth I*, ed. Jayne Archer, Elizabeth Goldring and Sarah Knight (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007): 207–26. Davidson and Stevenson point out that Lady Russell had printed a translation from Latin, John Ponet's *A Way of Reconciliation* (1605) and wrote verses in Latin and Greek.

27. On Lady Russell's status as "deviser" of the entertainment see Davidson and Stevenson, "Elizabeth I's Reception." See also, Alexandra F. Johnson, "The 'Lady of the farme': the context of Lady Russell's *Entertainment of Elizabeth at Bisham*," *Early Theatre* 5 (2002): 71–85; and Elizabeth Zeman Kolkovich, "Lady Russell, Elizabeth I, and Female Political Alliances Through Performance," *ELR* 39 (2009): 290–314.

28. Catherine Sanok, *Her Life Historical. Exemplarity and Female Saints' Lives in Late Medieval England* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007), 163. H. F. Westlake, *The Parish Guilds of Mediaeval England* (London: Macmillan, 1919), 34.

29. William Tydeman, *Theatre in the Middle Ages: Western European Stage Conditions 800–1576* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978), 200.

30. "et de xij d datis puellis tripudantibus in festo dedicacionis (Peterhouse Computus Roll 1429–30), " et de viij d puellis tripudiantibus in festo dedicacionis (Peterhouse Computus Roll 1446–47); "et de viij d puellis tripudiantibus in festo dedicacionis (Peterhouse Computus Roll 1450–51). Alan Nelson, *Records of Early English Drama: Cambridge* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1989), 25, 30, 33.

31. *Records of English Court Music*, ed. Andrew Ashbee, 9 vols. (Snodland, Kent, 1991): 7: 152, 158, discussed in Barbara Ravelhofer, "Dancing at the Court of Queen Elizabeth" in *Queen Elizabeth I: Past and Present*, ed. Christa Jansohn (Münster: Münster Verlag, 2004): 101–16.

32. Adolphus William Ward, *A History of English Dramatic Literature to the Death of Queen Anne*, 2 vols. (New York: Octagon, 1966), 1: 92–93.

33. Theresa Coletti, "Genealogy, Sexuality, and Sacred Power: The Saint Anne Dedication of the Digby *Candlemas Play* and the Killing of the Children of Israel," *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies* 29 (1999): 25–59.

34. Kent Rawlinson, "Hall's Chronicle and the Greenwich Triumphs of 1527," in *The Oxford Handbook of Tudor Drama*, ed. Thomas Betteridge and Greg Walker (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012): 402–28.

35. "Venice: May 1527," *Calendar of State Papers Relating to English Affairs in the Archives of Venice, Volume 4: 1527–1533* (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1871): 56–66.

36. *Hall's Chronicle*, ed. H. Ellis (London: J. Johnson, 1809), 723.

37. Janette Dillon, *The Language of Space in Court Performance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 121. For a detailed discussion of the importance of beautiful hair in the early modern period, see Edith Snook, "Beautiful Hair, Health, and Privilege in Early Modern England," *Journal for Early Modern Cultural Studies* 15 (2015): 22–51.

38. Roy C. Strong, "The Ambassador," in *The Cult of Elizabeth: Elizabethan Portraiture and Pageantry* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1977): 84–110 at 104.

39. Lady Russell's son, Edward (by her first marriage to Sir Edward Hoby of Bisham) married Henry Unton's sister Cecily. As a girl, Henry Unton's mother,

Anne Seymour, composed the influential *Hecatodistichon* (1550) on the death of Marguerite de Navarre, with her sisters. Its publication in France moved Ronsard, Du Bellay and others to produce memorial verses about Marguerite de Navarre.

40. Skiles Howard, *The Politics of Courtly Dancing in Early Modern England* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1998), 23. On Shakespeare and dance, see Alan Brissenden, *Shakespeare and the Dance* (Atlantic Highlands, NJ: Humanities Press, 1981) and Anne Daye, *A Lively Shape of Dauncing: Dances of Shakespeare's Time* (Salisbury, Wiltshire: Dolmetsch Historical Dance Society, 1994); for European contexts, see *Women's Work: Making Dance in Europe Before 1800*, ed. Lynn Matluck Brooks (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2007) and *Dance, Spectacle, and the Body Politick, 1270–1750*, ed. Jennifer Nevile (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2008); on France, see Mark Franko, *Dance as Text: Ideologies of the Baroque Body* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993) and Margaret M. McGowan, *Dance in the Renaissance: European Fashion, French Obsession* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2008); and on England, see Emily F. Winerock, "Reformation and Revelry: The Practices and Politics of Dancing in Early Modern England, c.1550–c.1640," PhD diss., University of Toronto, 2012. On dancing in masques, see Barbara Ravelhofer, *The Early Stuart Masque: Dance, Costume, and Music* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006) and Suzanne Gossett, "'Man-maid, begone!': Women in Masques," *English Literary Renaissance* 18 (1988): 96–113.

41. George Peele, *Anglorum Ferae in The Works of George Peele* ed. A. H. Bullen 2 vols. (London: John C. Nimmo, 1888), 2: 339–56.

42. Sir Thomas Elyot, *The Book of the Governor* (London, 1531), 89.

43. Sir John Davies, *Orchestra, Or a Poem of Dancing* (London, 1596), 126.

44. See Sarah Thesiger, "The Orchestra of Sir John Davies and the Image of the Dance" *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 36 (1973): 277–304, and Katherine Butler, *Music and Elizabethan Court Politics* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2015).

45. Roger Ascham, *The Scholemaster in The Whole Works of Roger Ascham* ed. Rev. Dr. Giles, 3 vols. (London: John Russell Smith, 1864), 3: 139.

46. Juan Luis Vives, *A Very Fruitful and Pleasant Book, Called the Instruction of a Christian Woman*, trans. Richard Hyrde (London, 1585), 27. This passage is discussed in Butler, *Music*, 22–23.

47. John Northbrooke, *A Treatise Wherein Dicing, Dancing, Vaine plaies or Enterludes with other idle pastimes, etc. commonly used on the Sabbath Day* (London: Shakespeare Society, 1953). See also Thesiger, "Orchestra," 280.

48. John Bromyard, *Summa praedicatorum*, trans. G. G. Coulton, *Five Centuries of Religion* vol. 1, 1000–1200 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1923), 535–56; quoted in Tydeman, *The Medieval European Stage*, 260. And two lost anti-Catholic plays from the 1530s, John Bale's *Vita divi Joannis Baptistae* (1534) and James Wedderburn's *The Beheading of John the Baptist* (1539), possibly performed at Trinity College, Cambridge, would have included the dance of Herodias's daughter, as did Nicholas Grimald's *Archipropheta* (1546), which gained the author a place at Christ Church, Oxford. *British Drama*, ed. Wiggins and Richardson, 1: 14, 76, 150–53.

49. *The Letters of John Chamberlain*, ed. Norman Egbert McClure, 2 vols. (Philadelphia: The American Philosophical Society, 1939), 2: 128.

50. Winwood, *Memorials of the Affairs of Stage in the Reigns of Queen Eliza-*

beth and King James I, 3 vols. (London, 1725), 3: 179; E. K. Chambers, *The Elizabethan Stage*, 4 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1923), 3: 281–83; Stephen Orgel and Roy Strong, *Inigo Jones, The Theatre of the Stuart Court*, 2 vols. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1973), 1: 192.

51. Samuel Daniel, *Tethys' Festival*, in Orgel and Strong, *Inigo Jones*, 1: 191–201.

52. Elizabeth Bengel, *Memoirs of Elizabeth Stuart, Queen of Bohemia*, 2 vols. (London: Longman, Hurst, 1825), 1: 93.

53. Orgel and Strong, *Inigo Jones*, 1: 282. See also Andrew Gurr, *The Shakespearean Stage 1574–1642* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 206.

54. Court masques featuring nymphs include George Peele's "The Arraignment of Paris," Robert White's "Cupid's Banishment," Jonson's "Masque of Beauty," "Pan's Anniversary," and "Chloridia: Rites to Chloris and her Nymphs."

55. Howard makes an important point about dance as a form of discourse: "suggesting both the protean nature of dancing as cultural artifact and the means by which it stimulated a social metamorphosis" (23).

56. On *Romeo and Juliet* and dance, see Philip C. McGuire, "On the Dancing in *Romeo and Juliet*," *Renaissance and Reformation/ Renaissance et Réforme* 5 (1981): 87–97; Brissenden, *Shakespeare and the Dance*, 63–66.

57. William Shakespeare, *Romeo and Juliet*, ed. Jill L. Levenson, Oxford World's Classics (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000).

58. *Romeo and Juliet, First Quarto*, in *Romeo and Juliet*, ed. Levenson, 261–429.

59. John Russell Brown, *Shakespeare and the Theatrical Event* (New York: Palgrave 2002), 57.

60. Juliet is characterized by physical movement elsewhere the play, when she discusses with Friar Laurence the dangers she would happily face in order to marry Romeo: "O, bid me leap, rather than marry Paris, / From off the battlements of yonder tower; / Or walk in thievish ways; or bid me lurk / Where serpents are; chain me with roaring bears" (4.1.77–80).

61. William Shakespeare, *The Tempest*, ed. Stephen Orgel, Oxford World's Classics (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987).

62. See my "Prospero's Girls," *Borrowers and Lenders: the Journal of Shakespeare and Appropriation* 9.1 (2014). <http://www.borrowers.uga.edu/1382/show>; and the Introduction to *The Tempest*, ed. Orgel, 69–87.

63. *The Tempest*, ed. Orgel, 178n.

64. William Shakespeare, *The Winter's Tale*, ed. Stephen Orgel, Oxford World's Classics (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996).

65. Polixenes makes a similar observation: "This is the prettiest low-born lass that ever/ Ran on the greensward. Nothing she does or seems / But smacks of something greater than herself, / Too noble for this place" (4.4.156–59).

66. Orgel and Strong, *Inigo Jones*, 1: 115–20.

67. William Shakespeare, *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, ed. Giorgio Melchiori. The Arden Shakespeare, 3rd Series (Walton-on-Thames: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 2000).

68. Her plan: "let them circle all about / And fairy-like to pinch the unclean knight/ And ask him why, that hour of fairy revel, / In their so sacred paths he dares to tread / In shape profane" (56–59).

69. Whether in white, as her father instructs her (or, in Q1, as she arranges with Fenton), or green, to please her mother.

70. For boys as fairies, see *The Royal Entertainment at Woodstock* (1575); Wiggins and Richardson, *British Drama*, 2: 140; *The Althorp Entertainment* (1603); Wiggins and Richardson, *British Drama*, 5: 46–48.

71. Wiggins and Richardson, *British Drama*, 2: 199–203.

72. Wiggins and Richardson, *British Drama*, 3: 35.

73. Kay Savage suggests that this stage direction, which she classifies as “permissive,” was “penned with touring in mind,” with the idea that a provincial audience, “accustomed to seasonal festivities, might have been more complacent than their metropolitan counterparts”; see “Stage Directions: Valuable Clues in the Exploration of Elizabethan Performance Practice,” *Studies in Theatre and Performance* 28 (2008): 161–82 at 173.

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