BEN JONSON'S USE OF ENGLISH FOLK RITUAL IN THE COURT MASQUES

by

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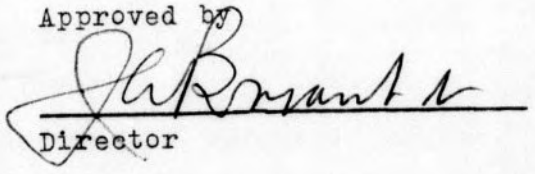

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A chronological study of the court masques of Ben Jonson reveals that he began composing masques using the purely classical elements which were the accepted devices of the day but that about 1610 he began to import elements which appear to have their basis in English folk ritual such as the mummers' play, the sword dance, and the plough play. Further study suggests that by 1616 Jonson had realized the full possibilities of the use of native ludi and from that time on used English elements with increasing confidence, producing a well-integrated series of masques in which classical and native motifs are happily blended. Of the fourteen masques written after 1616, only five lack elements taken from the native ludi. One of these, Lovers Made Men, which was composed for a private entertainment and not for the court, is actually the first English opera, being sung completely in stylo recitativo. Another, News From the New World Discovered in the Moon, cannot be properly termed a masque either but is rather a comic-satiric sketch on the English newsmongers of the day. Jonson's final masque for the court of James I, The Fortunate Isles, is a reworking of a previous masque which was canceled for diplomatic reasons, Neptune's Triumph. The original masque contained elements from native folk ritual in its antimasque, but these were discarded in the new version in favor of an antimasque which is a satire on the Rosicrucians who were then invading

England. In contrast to the other three exceptions, Jonson's last two masques, composed for the court of Charles I, are purely classical in form and content; and it must be asked why Jonson chose to exclude native elements from them. In order to answer this question, one must attempt first to ascertain why Jonson chose to import such nonliterary elements into the classical masque in the first place.

This thesis suggests that Jonson recognized the ritual nature of the masque, which has been pointed out by many scholars, and knew that the archetypal concerns of mankind are revealed in myth and ritual. He demanded that the masque be more than just a spectacular evening's entertainment; he reiterated often his conviction that it should express some central, vital idea. The classical ritual he had been using was too much removed from its source, too stylized, and too literary to impart to the central idea the kind of vitality he desired it to have; and so he turned to the ludi of his own country, which still had emotional assocations for his audience. He imported symbolic figures from these ludi to give life and freshness to his masques in an attempt to forestall the decline of the masque as a literary form. I would suggest that he was successful in this attempt during his time as a masque writer for James I; but when he returned to writing masques for Charles I, after an absence of six years, he found that the degeneracy he feared had taken its toll,

that symbolism had lost its vitality, and that it was no longer possible to write the kind of masques he believed in. Hence, he returned to the beautiful, but dead, classical forms for his last two masques.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

It is the purpose of this thesis to detail Ben Jonson's use of English folk ritual in the court masques and to attempt to analyze why he chose to import such nonliterary material into the masque and how such imported elements were utilized.

The mummers' play and the sword dance, the morris dance, the plough play, and other English ludi were nonliterary in the strictest sense; they had never been written down. Although there are references to them in the records of the civic communities dating from the beginning of the fifteenth century,[1] the earliest text of a folk play we have dates from 1779.[2]

In the Renaissance, when printing was widespread and the plays could have been reproduced easily, there was no interest in them among the literate public. They were considered crude expressions of illiterate peasants by the increasingly class-conscious aristocrat of the Renaissance with his humanistic education in the classics

[1] R. J. E. Tiddy, The Mummers' Play (Oxford, 1923), p. 91. Hereafter cited as Tiddy.

[2] E. K. Chambers, The English Folk Play (Oxford, 1933), p. 104. Hereafter cited as Chambers.

of Greece and Rome. Although the gentleman of Jonson's time was probably very familiar with these ludi and, perhaps, was still emotionally affected by them, he would have left them behind on the other side of that widening rift between classes.[3] Greek and Roman classics, which sprang from the same primitive ritualism as the mummers' play and sword dance, were eminently "literary" because more highly stylized and removed by time and space. Any good poet was expected to have a complete knowledge of the classics and to be able to borrow from them freely, documenting his borrowings with a display of erudition that was often more impressive than the resulting work itself.

Jonson's erudition was widely known; and he could, no doubt, have continued to rely on purely classical sources for his inspiration. However, he began to experiment with the use of native elements, at first tentatively, as in the Masque of Queens in 1609 where they were purely literary borrowings from English treatises on witchcraft. Then, in 1610, in The Speeches at Prince Henry's Barriers, he explored the Arthurian legend, also literary material; but he introduced an element in the resurrection of Chivalry that may reflect an unrecognized influence from the mummers' play. From this time on, hints of influence by the English ludi become more and more prevalent until an indisputable

[3]Tiddy, pp. 91-92.

and obviously conscious use of a mummers' play element occurs in the Irish Masque at Court, 1613-4. Then, in 1616, came Christmas, His Masque which is pure mummery from beginning to end. After that date English folk elements are readily identifiable in all but two of the masques presented in the next eight years, culminating in the clearly ludi-inspired Masque of Owls (1624). Then come three final masques, those of 1625, January 1631, and February 1631, in which no folk ritual elements can be identified.

This development will be traced in more detail in the succeeding chapter, but it is necessary to point out here what is probably obvious from the brief sketch above, that Jonson's use of folk material was not random but progressive until 1625. It will be seen that he became more and more adept at using it as an integral part of the masque. I wish to make this point because W. Todd Furniss, who has fully recognized the ritual nature of the masque and noted Jonson's use of what he terms English "country entertainment traditions,"[4] has failed to recognize the progression noted above. He does not choose to consider the masques in chronological order but

[4]"Ben Jonson's Masques," in Three Studies in the Renaissance, Yale Studies in English, v. 138, ed. B. C. Nangle (New Haven, 1958), p. 129. Hereafter cited as Furniss.

divides them into four main groups: Golden Age, Pastorals, Triumphs, and Combat of Concepts (p. 108). The English elements he mentions, e. g. mumming, sword dance, and morris dance, he relates to the Pastorals which occur here and there throughout the period in which Jonson wrote masques. It will be seen that such elements appear also in some of the masques which he classifies as Golden Age, i.e., The Golden Age Restored, Time Vindicated, The Speeches at Prince Henry's Barriers; some of those which he classifies as Triumphs, i.e., Neptune's Triumph; and some of those which he classifies as Combat of Concepts, i.e. Pleasure Reconciled to Virtue. The appearance of these elements in a masque is determined, in most cases, by the point of the masque's appearance in the chronology rather than its subject matter.

Furniss must be commended for his recognition of many of the English folk elements in the masque though, because of his approach, he was unable to see the progression in the use of these elements. Herford and Simpson, the editors of the definitive edition of Jonson's works,[5] rarely recognize that such elements exist, except in the more obvious cases such as Christmas, His Masque

[5] Ben Jonson, ed. C. H. Herford and Percy and Evelyn Simpson (Oxford, 1925-1952). All citations to Jonson's masques in my text are to Volume VII of Herford and Simpson. Citations from Herford and Simpson's commentary on the masques are from Volume X and will be thus designated, i.e., (X, p.456). Hereafter referred to as Herford and Simpson.

and The Masque of Owls. Enid Welsford,[6] too, largely ignores the evidence of Jonson's use of native ritual as opposed to that embodied in classical sources. In view of her theory that the masque is the end result of a continuous development from primitive ritual, it is particularly surprising that she should not be alert to such evidence.

Although the masque, as we shall see in Chapter III of this paper, fits the archetypal pattern of primitive ritual, Welsford's attempt to set up an unbroken chain of development from one to another (and it must be no more than an attempt in the light of the many missing links in the chain) is vastly oversimplified. R. J. E. Tiddy's two chapters on popular taste in the development of the drama in The Mummer's Play (pp. 90-137) present a much more cautious and realistic statement of the emergence of drama from primitive ritual, and he deals briefly with the masque on pages 131-132.

Tiddy recognizes Jonson's use of native folk elements though he apparently did not make a close study of the Jonsonian masque. He notes some of the minor evidences to be found and calls particular attention to the two most obvious uses of folk ritual, The Masque of Christmas and The Masque of Owls. Of the former he says that it is here that "the folk intruded most definitely into the literature of culture" (p. 131).

[6] The Court Masque (Cambridge University Press, 1927).

It is interesting to note in what terms Tiddy speaks of Jonson. He says, and I hope to demonstrate that in this instance he is in error, that Jonson "seems to use folk-lore for its decorative charm." He makes the same statement, without qualification, about Shakespeare and Lyly; but in Jonson's case, he goes on to qualify it as follows: "but he uses it very freely indeed and evidently had something of the antiquarian's feeling for it" (p. 136).

The next chapter will be devoted to a chronologic analysis of the masques in order to establish a definite pattern in Jonson's use of folk elements and it will be seen just how freely he did use folk lore. In Chapter III an attempt will be made to determine just what Jonson's purpose was in importing such non-literary elements.

CHAPTER II

CHRONOLOGICAL ANALYSIS OF THE MASQUES

The pattern of Jonson's use of English folk ritual clearly emerges when the masques are considered chronologically. This chapter will be devoted to an analysis of each of the masques, from The Masque of Blackness (1605) to Chloridia (1631), in an effort to demonstrate just what that pattern is.[7]

The Masque of Blackness, which was presented on January 6, 1605 (Twelfth Night), was ordered by Queen Anne, who herself appeared in it. It was Jonson's first court masque although he had previously been employed by various lords to prepare entertainments for the King and Queen during their progress from Edinburgh to London in 1603 and had had a part in London's reception for James I when he rode through the city on the way to open Parliament in 1604. This first of the court masques is rigidly classical in nature, with the only startling touch the appearance of the masquers, among them the Queen, in black face and with "Arms up to the Elbows . . . painted

[7] Ben Jonson, ed. C. H. Herford and Percy and Evelyn Simpson, Vol. VII, is the source of all citations to the texts of the masques included herein.

black."[8] This was a whim of the Queen's[9] and if there is any connection with the widespread use of blackface as disguise in folk mummery, reported by E. K. Chambers,[10] it was not exploited by Jonson.

It is of interest to note that this masque, like many of those that are primarily classical in nature, was copiously and rather pedantically footnoted by Jonson with quotations from and references to both Latin and Greek classics.

Jonson's second court masque, Hymenaei, the Twelfth Night masque of 1606, celebrated the ill-fated marriage of the Earl of Essex and Lady Frances Howard. For this purpose the poet chose "the ritual of an ancient Roman marriage";[11] and his marginal notes are a "running commentary on Roman marriage customs."[12] In other words, Jonson again took great care to show that his "inventions" were "grounded upon antiquitie, and solide learnings."[13]

[8]Herford and Simpson, Vol. X, p. 448.

[9]Welsford, The Court Masque, p. 175.

[10]The English Folk Play, passim.

[11]Herford and Simpson, X, p. 424.

[12]Herford and Simpson, X, p. 467.

[13]Jonson, foreward to Hymenaei, Herford and Simpson, VII, p. 209.

Although the skeleton of folk ritual from which the Roman ritual derived can be seen plainly through the classical flesh of this masque, it is at this point no more than a skeleton, vital to the support of the structure of the masque but rigid and lifeless in itself. The use of the elements of fire and water, adornment with leaves and flowers and colored ribbons, and the clashing of swords are all part of primitive fertility rites[14] and Hymenaei is in itself a fertility rite.

What is probably the most remarkable thing about this masque is that it incorporates the barriers, a test of strength and skill. The barriers were a completely nonliterary form just as the mummers' play and sword dance were, and all three are characterized by having as their chief characteristic a combat. When Jonson placed the barriers in this poetic setting, he did something analogous to placing a nugget of steel in a setting of precious metal.

On Twelfth Night 1608, The Masque of Beautie was presented at court. It was commanded by the Queen as a sequel to the 1605 Masque of Blackness and the two masques are alike in form, rigidly classical and copiously annotated. Again in this performance there were no elements that could be classified as derived directly from the folk.

[14]Welsford, p. 3.

On Shrove Tuesday of the same year, The Haddington Masque was performed in honor of the marriage of the Viscount Haddington and Lady Elizabeth Ratcliffe. The first section of the masque, which has been performed separately and entitled, The Hue and Cry After Cupid (lines 55-175) is the most graceful of Jonson's court offerings to that time. The major portion of this section, lines 85-156, is expanded from the Idyll of Moschus, "Love the Runaway," though Jonson does not note this in his marginalia.[15] In fact, this section of the masque is less heavily annotated than has heretofore been Jonson's custom. In the second part of the masque, which is much more heavily annotated, the nature of the masque as a fertility rite becomes clearer. Vulcan, representing the male principal, calls forth the twelve personified signs of the zodiac which are to insure a happy and fertile marriage. Venus, who represents the female principle, vows that, in gratitude for Vulcan's adornment of her son's triumph, her

> . . . lampe shall burne
> With pure and chastest fire; or never shine,
> But when it mixeth with thy spheare, and mine.
> (ll. 312-314)

As Herford and Simpson point out, Vulcan, "'God of fire and light' supplies the natural heat which makes procreation possible and he meets with a corresponding desire in Venus."[16]

[15]Herford and Simpson, X, p. 487.

[16]X, p. 484.

Jonson's next masque, The Masque of Queens, presented February 2, 1609, is notable for the extensive antimasque which appears before the main business of the masque, which is to celebrate the heroic virtue and fame of Queen Anne. In this antimasque of witches, Jonson drew heavily on English as well as classical treatises on witchcraft. Welsford notes that "this performance is the turning point in the history of the masque, for it marks the acceptance of the antimasque as an integral part of the performance" (p. 183). It is also important because from this point on native English elements appear with more and more frequency in the masques.

The Speeches at Prince Henry's Barriers, presented January 6, 1610, drew heavily on England's own Arthurian legend, and though Jonson included enough classical allusions to satisfy his audience's taste for a display of learning, the masque treats of the past, present, and future glory of England in purely English terms. The Lady of the Lake acts as the presenter who calls both Arthur and Merlin forth. All agree that the court of James I is more splendid than that of Arthur but the Lady of the Lake bemoans the decay of chivalry. Merlin instructs the Lady to call forth Meliadus (Prince Henry). He appears with six companions and Merlin reviews for him the history of his line, pointing out the virtues and faults of his father's predecessors, recalling England's greatest victories, and

concluding with a paen of praise in honor of James, "whose name shall set/ A goal for all posteritie to sweat" (ll. 353-354). Merlin then spies Chivalry "dead as a lethargie" (l. 383) in a cave and through the power of Meliadus' name is able to raise her. She then pays homage to Henry as the knight whose "armour hath so reviv'd/my spirits, and tels me that I am long liv'd/ in his apparance" (ll. 395-397). Next the barriers take place; and then Merlin intervenes to stop battle, pointing out James' peaceful methods as superior to the war-like accomplishments of the kings of old.

The revival of Chivalry bears strong resemblance to the act of resurrection in primitive folk ritual and the resemblance is further enforced by a study of extant mummer's plays in which St. George (the personification of chivalry) announces that he was held prisoner in a cave.[17] St. George is, as Chambers points out, the most prominent character in the mummers' play;[18] and he can be either the victor in the mock battle which forms the central action in the ritual or he can be the vanquished combatant who is resurrected. The fact that Jonson has Merlin mention St. George three times while recounting the past glories of England lends support to this inter-

[17] See the Belfast and Cornwall plays in Tiddy, The Mummers' Play, pp. 141, 144.

[18] Chambers, p. 170.

pretation; but it is probable that the identification at this point was unconscious on Jonson's part.

For his next masque, Oberon, The Faery Prince, performed January 1, 1611, Jonson reverted to his reliance on classical sources. The only English elements that can be clearly recognized are three references to Arthur and a reference to the "countrey Faery,/ that doth haunt the harth, or dairy" (ll. 418-419). This probably refers to Robin Goodfellow. There is also one bit of nonsense verse in the masque which is reminiscent of the mummers' play nonsense which Tiddy refers to as topsy-turvy patter (p. 84). The Satyrs fall "sodainely into this catch:

> Buzz, quoth the blue Flie,
> Hum, quoth the Bee:
> Buzz, and hum, they crie,
> And so doe wee.
> In his eare, in his nose,
> Thus, doe you see?
> He eat the dormouse,
> Else it was hee. (ll. 209-217).

In an interesting note to this masque, Herford and Simpson describe three costumes possibly intended by Inigo Jones for the nation of the Faies, but they point out that the identification of the designs is doubtful (X,p.525). The designs are of particular concern here because it is possible that they represent three characters in the mummers' play: The Turk or Saracen, who probably became the conventional representation of the ritual enemy about the time

of the crusades; The Dragon, who was another conventional enemy, probably also imported about the time of the crusades with the St. George legend;[19] and St. George, himself, the conventional representation of the hero. The drawings depict one figure in a "fantastic turban and plume, a tie with long ends like wattles, a jerkin with dolphins on the shoulders, a long leaf-shaped apron, and trunk hose." The second has a "hood like a spiny dragon's head, sleeves and cloak like snail-shells, with horns on his knees and heels." The other figure has a "hood and cap with plumes, short wings over his shoulders, a cloak reaching to his knees in front and falling to the ground behind and boots with peaks turned over at the tops"; and this identification is not as clear as the two preceding ones. However, it is not unlikely that the wings are meant to indicate sainthood; and it is certainly true that both the Turk and the Dragon, when they appear, are always seen in the mummers' play as opponents of St. George. The juxtaposition seems likely.

In Love Freed from Ignorance, February 3, 1611, there are two antagonists, the Sphynx (Ignorance) and Love, just as there are in most of the mummers' plays. The Sphynx indulges in considerable vaunting, e.g.,

> Now, go take him up, & beare him
> To the cliffe, where I wil teare him
> Peece-meale, and give each a part
> Of his raw, and bleeding heart. (ll.250-253)

[19] Chambers, p. 171.

Similar threats are made in many of the mummers' plays and it is in the tradition of the sacrifice in primitive ritual in which the sacrificial animal was divided into small portions and distributed over as wide an area as possible to insure widespread fertility.

Love Restored, given Twelfth Night 1612, is the most unabashedly English piece Jonson had written to that time. Although Plutus, "the god of money," and Cupid both appear, the dominant character is the garrulous and good natured Robin Goodfellow. Robin is able, by virtue of the King's presence, to recall Cupid from the "cold Region" where he has been banished by Plutus and where he has "almost frozen to death" (ll. 185-187). Cupid in turn banishes Plutus. The masque is full of references to old English games and the Masquerado mentions the "Morrice-dance" in his first speech. M. W. Latham notes that only one other writer of the period equalled Jonson's reproduction of the "spirit in which Robin Goodfellow was regarded and the personality with which he was invested."[20]

A Challenge to Tilt, at a Marriage is a slight piece, all in prose, which was presented on the occasion of the marriage of the Earl of Somerset and Lady Frances Howard on December 26, 1613. The combatants in the tilt

[20]Minor White Latham, The Elizabethan Fairies: The Fairies of Folklore and The Fairies of Shakespeare (New York: Columbia University Press, 1930), p. 230. The other writer referred to is Samuel Rowlands in More Knaves Yet?

are champions of Eros and Anteros who are presented as antagonists, each vaunting his power and challenging the other to combat.

The Irish Masque at Court is the first of a number of masques, to appear at intervals from this time on, in which Jonson makes use of types of members of the lower levels of society for comic purposes. This masque, presented twice because of its popularity, December 29, 1613 and January 3, 1614, centers around a group of Irish footmen who come to court to assure the King that he is beloved in Ireland. An obvious mummers' play element[21] occurs just after the footmen dance when they cry "Now roome for our mayshters(h). Roome for our mayshters(h)" (ll. 138-139) to introduce the dance of the gentlemen masquers.

The Golden Age Restor'd, to which Herford and Simpson give a probable date of January 6 and 8, 1615 (X, p. 552), may owe something to folk ritual; but like all the preceding masques, with the exception of the mummers' play element just mentioned in The Irish Masque, the relationship is difficult to establish. There are two presenters, Iron Age and Pallas. The former calls up the Evils; Avarice, Fraude, Slander, Corruption, Ambition, Pride, Scorne, Force, Rapine, Trecherie, Folly, and Ignorance, who perform the antimasque. Iron Age vaunts his power and threatens to ruin Jove and heaven. Pallas,

[21]Chambers, p. 16.

by showing her shield, makes Iron Age and the Evils "perish," saying "Die all, that can remain of you, but stone/ And that be seen a while, and then be none" (ll. 75-76). She then calls up Astraea and the Golden Age. There is also a resurrection in the masque though it is not the antagonists who are resurrected but the souls of the poets in Elysian who are wakened by Pallas and asked to "sustaine" the Golden Age with their presence (ll. 130-131).

Another element which the masque has in common with folk ritual is the Earthly Paradise theme which Tiddy and Chambers both agree came into folk ritual from the early fourteenth-century anti-monastic satire of The Land of Cokayne.[22] The theme is expressed in all cases in pleasurable violations of the natural order. In this masque:

> Then earth unplough'd shall yeeld her crop,
> Pure honey from the oake shall drop,
> The fountaine shall runne milke:
> The thistle shall the lilly beare,
> And every bramble roses wear,
> And every worme make silke. (ll. 163-168)

The garrulous Mercury in Mercurie Vindicated from The Alchemists at Court is a purely English comic character despite his classical name. This masque, probably performed on January 1, 1616, and again on January 6, celebrates the superiority of nature over art, the elegantly garbed masquers representing the former while the latter is repre-

[22] Chambers, p. 49; Tiddy, p. 116.

sented by an antimasque of deformed creatures. There are no readily identifiable folk ritual elements in the masque.

If identification of folk ritual elements in the masque heretofore mentioned is uncertain, there is no doubt about the derivation of Christmas, His Masque, produced during the Christmas season of 1616. Tiddy notes that the "whole masque is nothing more than an elaboration of the sword-dance, and it contains certain characters which are more frequently found in the Mummers' Play proper than in the sword-dance plays and others which are personification of the appurtenances of the mummers" (p. 131). Herford and Simpson agree (X, p. 559). Chambers qualifies his agreement insofar as the characterization of Christmas himself is concerned. He speculates that Christmas as a father figure with sons and daughters may have come into the mummers' play from Jonson's masque instead of the debt being in the other direction (p. 193-4).

Specifically, Christmas is the presenter and calls out in turn and describes his ten sons and daughters just as the foreman in the sword-dance calls out and describes the participants. Among the children are Misrule and Gamboll, who are, as Tiddy points out, "the customary doubles of the Fool" (p. 131); Mumming, himself, carrying the Christmas box which is passed around during the Quete of the Mummers' play; and Minc'd Pie, one of the daughters, who is a widespread figure in the mummers' play[23] though as a male

[23]Chambers, p. 22, 33.

figure. Misrule, Father Christmas tells the audience is "Tom of Bosomes Inne" (p. 196), and Chambers notes that the sword dance Fool is often called Tom (p. 125).

Herford and Simpson note that since this masque is really a mumming and therefore did not involve the courtiers themselves in its presentation, there are no records in the State Papers of the preparations necessary for it. Apparently there are no eyewitness accounts available either since Herford and Simpson fail to print any as is their usual practice. This is unfortunate because we cannot know for certain what form the dance performed in the masque takes. We do know that the mummers "march about once" and this is reminiscent of the sword dance also.

Christmas' Epilogue is especially interesting because it is nothing but a Quete with a new twist. Instead of taking up a collection among the audience of courtiers, Christmas advises the King that he should see that the "knights, o' the Shop" spend some of "their pelfe" to provide Christmas entertainment for the court. In line 284, Christmas uses the word "ac-ativitie," which is, as Herford and Simpson point out, "a term specially associated with the Mummers' Play and means feats of gymnastics, tumbling, and dancing" (X, p. 565).

Phantasy's delightful nonsense in The Vision of Delight, which was performed on January 6 and 19, 1617, is a perfect example of the topsy-turvy talk of the

mummers' Fool:

> And who can report what offence it would be
> For a Squirrell to see a Dog clime a tree?
> If a Dreame should come in now, to make you afeard,
> With a Windmill on his head, and bells at his beard;
> Would you streight weare your spectacles,
> here at your toes,
> And your boots o' your browes, and your
> spurs o' your nose? (ll. 77-82)

Phantasy goes on like this for some sixty lines. Compare this nonsense with the following from the Weston-sub-Edge mummers' play:

> In comes the grid iron, if you can't agree
> I'm the justice, bring um to me.
> As I was going along, as I was standing still,
> I saw a wooden church built on a wooden hill,
> Nineteen leather bells a going without a clapper
> That made me wonder what was the matter.[24]

Lovers Made Men, which was presented the following February at the house of Lord Hay, was part of an elaborate entertainment for the Baron de la Tour, ambassador extraordinary for the Court of France and is notable as the "first English opera."[25] Completely set to music by Nicholas Lanier, the whole masque is sung stylo recitativo.

The Lovers in the masque have been ferried across the Styx by Charon because they appear to have died of love. The Fates assure Mercury (wit) that they are not dead but only think they are because of what they have suffered from love. They are then revived by a drink from Lethe's stream which makes them forget all past loves. Cupid appears and

[24]Tiddy, p. 167.

[25]Herford and Simpson, X, p. 566.

contends with Mercury for the Lovers until a compromise is reached and it is decided that "they still shall love, and love with wit" (l. 219).

There are many features of Jonson's next masque that seem clearly traceable to the folk plays. Pleasure Reconciled to Virtue was presented on Twelfth Night 1618 and began with a call for "Roome, roome, make roome for ye bouncing belly" (l. 13) by the chorus. This is the beginning of a 23 line stanza introducing Comus and detailing his attributes as belly god, devoted to the sensual pleasures.

This hymn of sensuality is followed by a speech in prose by the bearer of Hercules' bowl. His speech is an example of the license that was permitted servants during Saturnalia, as he himself mentions in lines 41-44:

> I know it is now such a time as the saturnalls for all the world, that every man stands under the eaves of his owne hat; & sings what please him, that's the ryte, & ye libertie of it.

His relationship to Hercules as a servant is stated in line 66-68:

> . . . for I that carry Hercules Bowle i' the service may see doble by my place: for I have drunk like a frogge to day.

This kind of impudence is also found in the mummers' play, notably in the speeches of the Doctor's servant during the Cure:

> Doctor: Bring me my spy glass, Mr. John Finney.
> John Finney: Fetch it yerself, sir.
> Doctor: What's that, you saucy young rascal?
> John Finney: Oh, I fetch it, sir. There it is, sir.

Doctor: What's throw it down there for?
John Finney: Ah, for thee to pick it up again, sir.
Doctor: What's that, you saucy young rascal.[26]

The speech of the bowl-bearer is followed by an antimasque; and then Hercules, himself, appears on the scene. He condemns the rites to Comus and is violently angry at finding his cup "brought in to fill ye druncken Orgies up" (l. 98). At a word from him, the grove which is the scene of the orgy vanishes and Pleasure and Vertue appear seated on a mountain. The chorus sings to Hercules, asking him to rest from his labors; and while he is asleep, the second antimasque appears of twelve boys who were reported by an eyewitness to be dressed like frogs.[27] They are referred to by Jonson as "Pigmees" and they dance around the recumbent Hercules vaunting:

> how shall I kill him? hurle him 'gainst the Moone,
> & break him in small portions? give to Greece
> his braine, & every tract of earth a peece?
> (ll. 142-144).

Here is again the division of the sacrifice; but as in Love Freed from Ignorance, the sacrifice is forestalled. Hercules awakens and his tormentors all flee.

The same eyewitness mentioned above records that the masquers entered wearing black masques.[28] This practice was, of course, a traditional part of the old disguisings. As Tiddy points out, "that the identity of the figures

[26]See Weston-sub-Edge play in Tiddy, p. 165.

[27]Welsford, p. 206.

[28]Herford and Simpson, X, p. 584.

should not be clearly known was of the very essence of the early ritual play. The blackened faces, the masks, the mummery were designed with this object, and in the north and in Cornwall the mummers are still actually known as 'guisers'" (p. 75).

For the Honour of Wales was designed as an anti-masque to add to Pleasure Reconciled to Virtue at its second performance. It contains a combat of sorts between two Welshmen, one threatening to give the other a "knocke upon your pate" (ll. 102, 103) and the other replying "yow will go nere to hazard a thumbe and a fowrefinger of your best hand, if yow knocke him here" (ll. 107-109). Whether the combat takes place is unclear. Shortly after the above speeches, the Welshman who has been menaced with the threat of a knock on the pate says:

> this knocke o' my pate has knock aull my wits out o' my braines, I thinke, and turne my reason out of doores. Believe it, I will rub, and breake your s'ins for this, I will not come so high as your head, but I will take your nose in my way, very sufficiently. (ll. 121-126).

But a few lines further on he indicates that his opponent only "offer[ed] to knock my pate in the hearing of aull these" (ll. 137-138).

On January 17 and February 29, 1620, Jonson gave the court News From the New World Discovered in the Moon which is an extended comic sketch rather than a masque. Although it ends in a calling forth of masquers to dance before the king, their appearance is poorly integrated

with the main business of the entertainment, which is a rather long satire on newsmongers. There are no discernible folk ritual elements involved.

The next masque, Pan's Anniversary, is quite a different story. It probably contains a greater variety of easily recognizable borrowings from the mummers' play and sword dance than any of the masques. The dates are uncertain, but there is reason to believe that it was performed in honor of King James' birthday, June 19, 1620.[29]

The masque is in the form of a celebration of the rites of Pan and it opens with nymphs strewing flowers about. They are accompanied by an old Shepherd who is carrying a censor and perfumes. As they complete their business, the Priests of Pan are revealed on stage in the midst of their duties. This scene is interrupted by a Fencer who comes in flourishing his sword and calling for "Roome." He describes himself as a "Sonne of the sword" and vaunts his prowess and that of his countrymen, the "bold Boyes of Boeotia." He concludes with a challenge to the Arcadians (followers of Pan) to a dancing contest (ll. 52-60).

The Shepherd greets his challenge contemptuously and the Fencer calls in his men, naming and describing them one at a time as in the sword-dance. They include the Tinker of Thebes, who "with his kettle will make all Arcadia ring of him" (ll. 71-72). He is described as

29 Herford and Simpson, X, p. 604.

a "man of metall" and thus resembles the ubiquitous figure in the mummers' play who vaunts:

> My head is made of iron
> My body is made of steel
> My arms and legs of beaten brass;
> No man can make me feel.[30]

The "Foreman" (a sword-dance term) of the Boetians is the Tooth-Drawer. Tooth-drawing is an elaboration of the Cure in the mummers' play and examples of it appear over a fairly wide area of England.[31] It is also, interestingly enough, part of Austrian folk ritual.[32] The Fencer vaunts the Tooth-Drawer's ability:

> if there be but a bitter tooth in the company, it may be called out at a twitch; he does command any mans teeth out of his head upon the point of his Poynard; or tickles them forth with his ryding rod: He drawes teeth a horse-back in full speed. (ll. 88-92).

The doctor who pulls the tooth in the mummers' play also vaunts his prowess before proceeding to the tooth-drawing.

Other participants called in by the Fencer include the Juggler, who is much like the mummers' Fool; the Corn-cutter, to care for the dancers' feet; the Bellowes-mender who looks after "all their lungs"; and the Tinder-box man, who "strikes new fire into them at every turne, and where he spies any brave sparke that is in danger to goe out,

[30] See normalized text of mummers' play, Chambers, p.7.

[31] Chambers, p. 57.

[32] Chambers, p. 204.

plie him with a match presently" (ll. 104-118). All of the last three have some of the attributes of the mummers' play Doctor. The other characters seem to be Jonson's own and satirize court figures: the Clock-keeper, the Politician, the Prophet, the Taylour, the Scribe, and the Philosopher. Not mentioned in the text but referred to in the Exchequer documents dealing with the costs of the masque is the Hobby Horse.[33]

Following a dance by the Fencer and his company that may have resembled the sword-dance, the Shepherd warns them of the displeasure of the audience at their presumption and banishes them, threatening more severe punishment if the intrusion is repeated. The true rites then take place in which the relationship of the king, Pan, and Christ is subtly implied. Pan, who embodies both the king and Christ, is celebrated as the source of all plenty, insuring fertile flocks and good crops.

The Fencer again breaks into the rites, calling for room and vaunting the prowess of his "bold Bloods" (l.230). The Shepherd in anger replies: "They have their punishment with their fact/ They shall be sheepe." (ll. 239-240) and apparently transforms them as indicated. The Fencer begs for mercy and is spared, the antimasquers perform their last dance, and the Shepherd closes the masque with another Hymn to Pan.

[33]Herford and Simpson, X, p. 605.

There are a number of references to folk ritual in The Gypsies Metamorphosed, performed August 3 and 5 and September 9, 1621, though they are not among the main elements in the masque. There is a call for "Roome" as the masquers come upon the scene. The country folk, who appear in the masque following the telling of fortunes by the gypsies, speak of morris dancers, fools, and hobby horses as well as characters from the Robin-Hood plays; but the chief elements of the masque are drawn from the literature of canting.[34]

In The Masque of Augurs, January 6, and May 6, 1622, the antimasquers in the court buttery-hatch play an entertainment for the king. There is a reference to giving "roome" (l. 225) and Van-goose promises that he shall bring on Turks and Tartars for the masque. This latter may refer to the Turk that frequently served as either Agonist or Antagonist in the mummers' play, as previously noted. Another character replies that he does not like "the great Turke, nor the Tartar, their names are somewhat too big for the Roome" (ll. 245-246).

The formal part of this masque is heavily annotated with classical references supporting the text and there are no elements which can be definitely identified as derived from folk ritual. There is a form of resurrection

[34]Herford and Simpson, X, p. 615.

in the masque when Apollo calls forth his sons, Linus, Orpheus, Branchus, and Idmon, "From your immortall Graves; where sleep, not death, / Yet bindes your powers" (ll.288-289). It is implied that the sons are thus raised by the king's influence. This device is similar to that used in the raising of Chivalry in The Speeches at Prince Henry's Barriers.

One of the most intriguing references to folk ritual comes in Time Vindicated to Himselfe and To His Honors, performed on January 19, 1623. In the opening passage Eares describes Kronos (Saturn) as "One of their Gods, and eates up his owne children" (l. 28). Nose replies: "A Fencer, and do's travell with a sith [scythe] in stead of a long-sword." The reference here to the Fencer in the sword dance and mummers' play seems obvious. What makes it particularly interesting is its connection with Kronos' devouring of his own children since in only one extant mummers' play, from Bearsted in Kent, is there identification of the Antagonist and Agonist as father and son.[35]

Tiddy was apparently unfamiliar with the Bearsted play mentioned above since he makes no mention of it and it is not included in his own collection of the plays. This was unfortunate because it would have born out his contention that "sometimes the hero's antagonist was conceived of as the hero's own son, and this, if it be the

[35]Chambers, p. 40.

case, is an undeniable relic of old ritual" (p. 75). Jonson's reference discussed above seems to support this conclusion also and it may indicate that such a relationship between Antagonist and Agonist was much commoner in the folk plays of Jonson's time, which unfortunately have been lost to us. The oldest version of any actual village play that is available to us, as Chambers points out, is the Revesby play with its text dated October 20, 1779 (p. 104), over one hundred and fifty years after the date of Jonson's masque.

The identification of this reference with English folk ritual is further enforced by the two succeeding lines of the masque in which Eies remarks that Kronos "Hath beene oft call'd from it, / To be their Lord of Misrule" (ll. 31-32). Shortly afterward there is a discussion of the topsy-turvydom of Saturnalia:

> Eares: When men might doe, and talk all that they list.
> Eies: Slaves of their lords.
> Nose: The servants of their masters.
> Eares: And subjects of their Soveraigne. (ll. 43-46)

This element is also common to the mummers' play, as pointed out previously.

Chronomastix,[36] the antagonist of Time, enters the masque at this point and vaunts his ability to make Time "quake and shake" (l. 76). At this point he notices

[36]For a discussion of Chronomastix as a satire on George Wither see Herford and Simpson, X, pp. 651-654.

Fame who has come to announce the approach of Time and he woos her and is rejected in a passage reminiscent of the Fool's wooing in the Plough plays. The lady (Fame) replies to his blandishments:

> Away, I know thee not, wretched imposter,
> Creature of glory, Mountebank of witte,
> Selfe-loving Braggart, Fame doth sound no trumpet
> To such vaine, empty fooles. (11. 96-99)

In the text of the Bassingham Plough Play, the Lady replies to the wooing:

> To gain my love it will not do,
> You speak too Clownish for too woo;
> Therefore out of my sight be gone,
> A witty man, or I'l have none.

and later in the play:

> Away, away from me be gone![37]

Chronomastix, unable to win Fame, calls in his followers who adore him and carry him from the scene. After these false rites, Eies, Ears, and Nose, who are collectively referred to as the Curious, demand of Fame that Time entertain them by turning the world "the heeles upward/ And sing a rare blacke Sanctus, on his head/ Of all things out of order" (11. 221-223), another reference to the topsy-turvydom associated with Saturnalia and, as Welsford notes, with Shrovetide in England (pp. 12-13). Fame points up this resemblance when she says "These are fit freedomes/ For lawlesse Prentices, on a Shrove tuesday" (11. 254-255).

[37] Chambers, pp. 93-94.

The remainder of the masque is devoted to the true rites in which votaries celebrate the alliance of Time and Love and the glory of the court. Folk elements are lacking in this part of the masque.

Jonson's next masque was designed for presentation on Twelfth Night 1624 and was an expression of the popular relief that Prince Charles had not taken a Spanish bride as expected. Because of diplomatic difficulties with the Spanish ambassador, the masque, Neptune's Triumph for the Returne of Albion was never presented, though the Quarto, printed in anticipation of the event, carries the notation that it was "Celebrated in a Masque at the Court on the Twelfth Night. 1624."[38]

In the antimasque that precedes the celebration of Charles' (Albion's) safe return, there is an argument between the Poet and the Cooke about the value of antimasques. The Poet refuses to provide one and so the Cooke takes on the challenge and, together with a Child, serves as presenter. Together they describe and call forth the antimasquers, who emerge from a large cooking pot. The Poet and the Cooke appear again near the end of the masque and the Cooke calls forth another antimasque, this time of sailors.

The last of Jonson's masquesto show obvious influence from the folk is The Masque of Owls, presented before Prince Charles at Kenilworth on August 19, 1624.

[38]Herford and Simpson, VII, p. 677.

There is actually only one speaking character in the masque, the Ghost of Captain Coxe, who enters mounted on his hobby-horse and calling for room. The long speech is rimed and is pure doggerel, as the following example illustrates:

> These then that we present
> With a most loyall intent
> And (as the Author saith)
> No ill meaning to the Catholique faith,
> Are not so much beasts, as Fowles,
> But a very Nest of Owles,
> And naturall, so thrive I,
> I found them in the Ivy,
> A think that though I blundred at,
> It may in time be wondered at,
> If the place but affords
> Any store of lucky birds,
> As I make 'em to flush
> Each Owle out of his bush. (ll. 66-79)

This is the beginning of the Captain's presentation of six figures apparently dressed as owls with "horn'd heads" (l. 92) and coats of feathers. Herford and Simpson believe they were "rustic actors who danced out as Captain Coxe sprung them one by one upon the company" (X, p. 700). It has also been suggested that they were only blocks of wood dressed or painted as described and the Captain produced them and held them up as he described them.[39] Both of these methods are used in folk ritual. The former method of presentation has been discussed elsewhere. The latter occurs in many extant folk plays, usually in connection with the character Johnny Jacks or Little Johnny Jack or Little Saucy Jack who appears in the Quete asking for money to feed his family. The family, which he displays

[39]Herford and Simpson, X, p. 700.

to the audience, is represented by dolls which he carries strapped to his back.[40]

Jonson wrote three more masques, The Fortunate Isles (1625), Love's Triumph Through Callipolis (January, 1631) and Chloridia (February, 1631). The Fortunate Isles is primarily a reworking of the abortive masque of 1624, Neptune's Triumph, and celebrates the union of Prince Charles with Henrietta Maria of France. Love's Triumph Through Callipolis is the first of the only two masques Jonson was to write for the court of Charles I and it exalts the affection of Charles and Henrietta Maria as an example of ideal heroic love with the King appearing as chief masquer. In Chloridia, the Queen returned the compliment and appeared as the goddess Chloris who is able to banish storm and strife and bring Spring, an attribute she shares with the King. None of these last three masques contains any recognizable borrowings from English folk ritual. A possible reason for this will be suggested in the next chapter.

To review the pattern of the appearance of English folks ritual elements in Jonson's masques, then, we can see that the earliest masques were completely classical in form and use of symbol. English elements first appeared in The Masque of Queens, 1609, in the description of the witches, but they are borrowed from contemporary litera-

[40]See Tiddy, examples from Gloucestershire, p. 183; Hampshire, pp. 188, 191, 194, 198; Sussex, pp. 202, 205.

ture on the subject and have no connection with folk ritual. More English elements began to creep into the masques from this time on, including references to the Arthurian legend, which forms the whole framework of The Speeches at Prince Henry's Barriers (1610), and to Robin Goodfellow, that purely English sprite depicted in Love Restored, (1612). Possible folk ritual influence may be pointed out in most of the masques after 1610, but it is only with The Irish Masque at Court (1614) that a small but undisputable borrowing from the mummers' play can be identified in the masquers' cry for "Roome!" Jonson's use of ritual elements is firmly established in Christmas, His Masque (1616) and, with only two exceptions, Lovers Made Men (which was not written for the court and which was entirely set to music in the Italian style) and News From the New World Discovered in the Moon (which was in reality a satiric-comic sketch rather than a masque), such elements are easily identifiable in all the masques written during the next eight years, terminating with the Masque of Owls (1624). This is not to say that there is a consistently steady increase in folk elements from one masque to the next during this period but that on the whole there is an obvious movement toward the effective use of elements from native ludi. Jonson's last three masques, as previously noted, are bare of such elements.

CHAPTER III

SIGNIFICANCE OF JONSON'S USE OF NATIVE RITUAL ELEMENTS

When the pattern has been established, an attempt must be made to explain it. The questions to be asked are two: first, why did Jonson infuse native folk elements into what was accepted as a vehicle for classical learning; and, second, why did he abandon his effort in the last three masques? In order to propose an answer to these questions, we must first look more closely into the nature of the masque itself.

It has been said earlier that the masque is ritual in nature. On this point scholars are agreed, but there has been little discussion of how really close to the primitive ritual form the masque is when stripped to its essentials. Its central idea is always a conflict which can be most simply expressed as a combat between the forces of order and those of disorder. As Delora Cunningham aptly puts it, "The forces of chaos must be defeated before the representatives of order can be displayed to complete the contrast" (p. 112)".[41] Jonson accomplishes this displacement of vice by virtue in many ways, sometimes by a change of setting, as in the Masque of Queens, sometimes merely

[41] "The Jonsonian Masque as a Literary Form," ELH, XXII (1955), 108-124. Hereafter referred to as Cunningham.

by driving the representative or representatives of disorder from the scene as in Pan's Anniversary, and sometimes by the transformation of individuals as in The Gypsies Metamorphosed. The result is the same in each case.

Such a combat is the very essence of primitive folk ritual. It is a combat between Life and Death, Summer and Winter, Light and Darkness, Fertility and Sterility. The good, the vital principle must overcome the evil, the exhausted principle. But, as F. M. Cornford notes, the emphasis of the ritual is not that the evil forces must be defeated and expelled, but that they must be replaced by the good.[42] This emphasis, too, runs through the masques, as exemplified in Pallas' speech in The Golden Age Restor'd in which she drives out the Iron Age with its attendant evils, Avarice, Fraud, Slander, Ambition, Pride, Scorne, Force, Rapine, Treachery, Folly, and Ignorance, and ushers in the Golden Age and Astraea:

> So change, and perish, scarcely knowing, how,
> That 'gainst the gods doe take so vaine a vow:
> And think to equall with your mortall dates,
> Their lives that are obnoxious to no fates.
> 'Twas time to appeare, and let their follies see
> 'Gainst whom they fought, and with what destinee.
> Die all, that can remaine of you, but stone,
> And that be seene a while, and then be none.
> Now, now, descend, you both belov'd of Jove,
> And of the good on earth no lesse the love,
> Descend you long wish'd, and wanted paire,
> And as your softer times divide the aire,
> So shake all clouds off, with your golden haire
> For spight is spent; the iron age is fled,
> And, with her power on earth, her name is dead.
> (ll. 69-83)

[42] The Origin of Attic Comedy (Cambridge, 1934), p. 54. Hereafter referred to as Cornford.

Primitive ritual honored and propitiated a god who was present in a dual sense; he both observed the rites and participated in them. In the court masque, the King serves this function. He is both the approving observer of the rites in his honor and a participant, in that the triumphant virtues personified in the masque are embodied in him. This is exemplified in Pan's Anniversary in which Pan, to whom the rites are dedicated, represents Pan, Christ, and the King, all in one figure. The divine powers of the King are thus stressed as in the third hymn in the masque. The Shepherd who is directing the rites approaches the King and addresses him as follows:

> Great Pan, the Father of our peace, and pleasure,
> Who giv'st us all this leasure,
> Heare what thy hallowd troope of Herdsmen pray
> For this their Holy-day,
> And how their vows to Thee, They in Lycaeum pay.
>
> So may our Ewes receive the mounting Rammes,
> And wee bring thee the earliest of our Lambes:
> So may the first of all our fells be thine,
> And both the beestning of our Goates, and Kine:
> As thou our folds dost still secure
> And keep'st our fountaines sweet and pure,
> Driv'st hence the Wolfe, the Tode, the Brock,
> Or other vermine from the flock.
> That wee preserv'd by Thee, and thou observ'd by is,
> May both live safe in shade of thy lov'd Maenalus.
> (ll. 255-269)

One should note here the stress on the ability of the King, as Great Pan, to insure fertility, for it is that same ability of Pan, as Dionysius, or the slain king generally, which is the chief concern of primitive ritual.

The masques also resemble folk ritual in the presence of the profaners of the rite, those unwelcome intruders whom Cornford refers to as Imposters or Alazones and describes as "impudent and absurd pretenders" (p. 140). The Fencer in Pan's Anniversary and Chronomastix in Time Vindicated are both excellent examples of this type of character.

Other parallels to primitive ritual could be pointed out. For example, a case might be made for the identification of the masquers' dance with members of the opposite sex in their audience and the ritual marriage that was a part of folk ritual. Consider Cupid's call for the masquers to choose their partners in Lovers Made Men:

> Goe, take the Ladies forth, and talk,
> And touch, and taste too: Ghosts can walke.
> 'Twixt eyes, tongues, hands, the mutual strife
> Is bred, that tries the truth of life.
> They doe, indeed, like dead men move,
> That thinke they live, and not in love:
> (ll. 175-180)

Consider also the call of Prometheus and Nature for the dance in Mercurie Vindicated:

> Nature: 'Tis forme allures.
> Then move, the Ladies here are store.
> Prometheus: Nature is motions mother, as she is your's.
> Chorus: The spring, whence order flowes,
> that all directs,
> And knits the causes with th'effects.
> (ll. 240-244)

Ritual marriage is also implied within the text of the masques. This can also be illustrated by Mercurie Vindicated in which Prometheus and Nature appear together at the end

of the masque, representing the principle of order, as divine parents of the masquers. In Pleasure Reconciled to Virtue, Pleasure and Virtue are united; and in The Haddington Masque, which celebrates a marriage, the theme is worked out through emphasis on the marital relationship of Vulcan and Venus.

Modern scholars recognize that all drama is rooted in myth and ritual, and this recognition is largely the result of the studies of the Cambridge School of Classical Anthropologists.[43] Cornford, who is one of that group, in discussing the origin of tragedy and comedy, has made a convincing case for his assumption that "the ritual drama behind each was essentially the same in content, though not necessarily performed at the same season of the year." (p. 195). Whatever the common root, at some point in the development an important distinction arose, and this distinction bears directly on our attempt to determine the nature of the masque.

In tragedy, as Aristotle insists, "The persons in the play do not go through the action in order to give a representation of their characters, but they include the representation for the sake of the action."[44] In comedy, on the other hand, as Cornford points out, character is all-important (pp. 197-198). If we examine Jonson's masques

[43]Francis Fergusson, The Idea of a Theatre (Princeton, 1949), p. 22. Hereafter cited as Fergusson.

[44]Quoted in Cornford, p. 195.

in the light of this distinction, we see that in them as in tragedy, the emphasis is on action, the working out of a central idea, rather than on character as in comedy. Examination will prove that this is true even in the case of the stock comic characters which are brought into the anti-masques. They may function as comic characters in entertaining the audience but they are most important for the way they contribute to the working out of the central action of the masque.

The fact that the masque shares the characteristic discussed above with tragedy does not allow us to conclude that the masque is primarily tragic. Further examination reveals that the masques also share one very important characteristic of comedy: the progression from disorder to order. We must then conclude with Cunningham that the "masques cannot be forced into the mold of regular drama--it is a form having its own purposes and conventions" (p. 110).

It is important, therefore, to determine, if we can, what Jonson conceived the masque to be. An examination of some of his statements on drama in general and on the masque in particular is helpful in determining this point. In his Epistle Dedicatory to the Sister Universities, he speaks of the poet as one who "comes forth the interpreter, and arbiter of nature, a teacher of things divine, no lesse then humane, a master in manners; and can alone (or with a

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few) effect the business of man-kind."[45]

This belief in the almost superhuman powers of the poet to create a microcosm is further illustrated in his foreward to the Entertainment at Fen-Church, written for James I coronation. He states that in his design for the triumphal arch he has succeeded in expressing not only "state and magnificence . . . but the very site, fabricke, strength, policie, dignitie, and affections of the Citie were all laid downe to life."[46]

Jonson's determination that the masque must reflect and comment on the great and essential concerns of mankind, the basic problems and truths, and not merely be a spectacle in honor of a specific occasion is stated in the foreward to Hymenaei when he stipulates that "though their voyce be taught to sound to present occasions, their sense, or doth, or should alwayes lay hold on more remov'd mysteries" (ll. 17-19). Because of this belief, Jonson insisted that the masques be not a collection of independent parts loosely connected by a chronology but a unified whole devoted to the working out of one central idea. This is clearly expressed in the foreword to the Fen-Church entertainment, previously cited above:

> The nature and propertie of these Devices being, to present alwaies some one entire bodie, or figure,

[45] Herford and Simpson, V, p. 17.

[46] Herford and Simpson, VII, p. 90.

> consisting of distinct members, and each of those expressing it selfe, in the owne active spheare, yet all, with that generall harmonie so connexed, and disposed, as no one little part can be missing to the illustration of the whole: where also is to be noted, that the Symboles used, are not, neither ought to be, simply Heiroglyphickes, Emblemes, or Impreses, but a mixed character, partaking somewhat of all, and peculiarly apted to these more magnificent Inventions: wherein, the garments and ensignes deliver the nature of the person, and the word the present office. (ll. 247-259).

This concern echoes Aristotle's dictum that in drama as "in the other imitative arts, the imitation is one when the object imitated is one, so the plot, being an imitation of an action, must imitate one action and that a whole."[47] Furthermore, this conception of the masque actually embodies the whole Aristotlean idea as it is demonstrated in Roman Catholicism where the "symbols" in the mass do not merely refer to a thing but actually become the thing they represent; that is, the bread of the Mass becomes the body of Christ and the wine becomes His blood. In other words, the symbol is transmuted; in context it cannot be separated from or considered apart from the quality or thing it represents.

Cunningham's statement that Jonson's masques are "a form of dramatic entertainment in which the logical working out of a central idea or device provides the action" (p. 108) is only partly true because she reduces the masque by considering it purely as "dramatic entertainment." Welsford makes the same error when she states of masques in

[47]Fergusson, p. 243.

general that the masque writer employs imitation as a means of expressing the significance of present events, and in so doing he differs from the dramatist and other imitative artists. . . . The masque emphasizes quite simply the joyous meaning of the present."[48] Her error lies in not distinguishing between Jonson and other writers of masques of the day who were interested merely in creating spectacles for the fleeting amusement of the court.

Jonson was quite insistent that such was not his purpose, and in the foreward to Hymenaei, cited above, he discusses at some length the sharp division he makes between the sensual appeal of the masque, inherent in the spectacle, which is "momentarie, and merely taking" and the intellectual appeal which is "impressing, and lasting." The spectacle is the body of the masque but the idea is the soul of the masque, and it is the soul that survives when the body perishes: "And, though bodies oft-times have the ill luck to be sensually preferr'd, they find afterwards, the good fortune (when soules live) to be utterly forgotten" (ll. 1-10). This is the basis for his famous quarrel with Inigo Jones.

Though neither Cunningham nor Welsford seemed to have grasped the full significance of the masque as it was conceived by Jonson, both are aware of his genius for unifying all its elements. Welsford says that "under his sway

[48] The Court Masque, p. 373.

poet, architect, musician, and dancing-master worked together in harmony, and gave to the masque a very real artistic value" (p. 169). Cunningham notes that each element of the masque is expressed for itself and at the same time is harmonized with each other member so that the whole is unified and complete in itself (p. 108).

In the quotation from the Fen-Church entertainment, it was noted that Jonson saw the use of symbols as a major unifying and vivifying device. In the masques, it is primarily the characters themselves that serve as symbols, their significance reinforced by their dress and the objects which are associated with them. Cunningham states that the characters in the masque are non-dramatic, "primarily means of illustrating the general device" (p. 112). Allan Gilbert notes in his foreward to The Symbolic Persons in the Masques of Ben Jonson[49] that Jonson was concerned that these symbolic figures be as expressive as possible. To make them so, he often piled attribute on attribute in the belief that "if a variety of attributes is given, the better-informed spectators will catch the meaning of at least some of them and thus will identify the quality symbolized" (p. 5).

It would be more exact to say that the idea generated the necessary symbols, which in turn attracted the identifying attributes to themselves. Thus, it was not a mechanical

[49]Durham: Duke University Press, 1948.

or purely technical process, as Gilbert appears to imply, but rather the result of natural growth. In other words, the masque might be compared to a plant that puts up its central shoot (the idea) and then develops branches (symbolic characters) and leaves (their attributes) along the central stem in natural order. Though the stem can live without its branches and leaves, its identity is more readily established when they are present. The leaves and branches, on the other hand, cannot exist at all without the central stem which supports them and brings them sustenance. Don Cameron Allen comes closer to this idea in his article, "Ben Jonson and the Hieroglyphics,"[50] when he states that these symbolic characters together with their garments are "hieroglyphics and impreses which the spoken line elucidates (italics mine). The whole is a speaking picture or a living emblem" (p. 295).

To summarize the main points made in the examination of Jonson's conception of the masque, it can be stated that he believed the masque should be the expression of one central, vital idea and that all the parts should contribute to and aid in the development of that idea. When we apply this to our question regarding Jonson's use of folk ritual, some tentative answers can be given.

[50] Philological Quarterly, XVIII (July 1939), 290-300.

It can be suggested first, that Jonson became aware as he worked with the form of the masque that the ritual embodied in it was the real life of the masque, that the archetypal concerns which he wished to express were most fully expressed in the context of ritual. It is interesting to note that he frequently spoke of the masque as being "celebrated." The title-pages of the quartos of Hymenaei, The Haddington Masque, The Masque of Queens, Neptune's Triumph and The Fortunate Isles all carry the notation that they were "celebrated" or were in "celebration" of an event. In the forewords to The Haddington Masque, Hymenaei, and Chloridia reference is made to the celebration of the masques. These instances are those which come most readily to notice and there are undoubtedly many others that would appear on close examination. The word, of course, implies the ritual nature of the masque. One celebrates a rite or a Mass, but one does not celebrate a play or a poem. Somehow the word fits the masque and Jonson seems to have used it perfectly naturally, perhaps unconscious of its implications, perhaps not.

However that may be, we can theorize that Jonson gradually became aware that the classical ritual he had been using was too far removed from its source and too stylized, too literary, to evoke the desired response from his audience. He knew that the courtiers were still acquainted with their native ludi, which had even been introduced into the court in the reign of Elizabeth, just

past, and that of her predecessors. Perhaps he hoped that, as Fergusson theorizes might have been the case in Aristotle's time, "the audience had a free use of reason without having lost the habits of feeling, and the modes of awareness, associated with the ancient tribal religion" (p. 245). If such were the case, the introduction of native elements might have an emotional impact on his audience, if only subconsciously, and thus reinforce and clarify the meaning of the masque.

This use of folk ritual would fall into the pattern of Jonson's use of symbol both to unify the masque and to restore health and vigor to the central idea. Most of the courtiers were familiar enough with Cesare Ripa's Iconologia, published in 1611, to recognize with a feeling of intellectual complacency the classical symbolic figures used by Jonson and the other masque writers of the day, but their response to symbolic figures imported from the English ludi would be anything but intellectual. In fact, the importation may have been regarded with decidedly mixed feelings by Jonson's audience; but whatever the response, it would have to have been an emotional one.

The following development of this use of folk elements is proposed. Jonson began composing masques using the purely classical elements which were the accepted devices of his day. He gradually became aware that the life of the masque centered around its ritual nature.

At this point, about 1610, elements which appear to have their basis in English folk ritual appear and their ambiguity may be explained either by the fact that they were the result of unconscious association or by the fact that they were tentative uses by a writer who would himself have considered such elements nonliterary and would have hesitated to corrupt the classical form. Then, about 1616 Jonson appears to have realized the full possibilities of the use of native ludi and from that time to have used native elements with increasing confidence, producing a well-integrated series of masques in which classical and native motifs are happily blended, complementing one another.

That leaves us with the three final masques and an attempt to explain why native elements are so conspicuously absent. The first of the three, The Fortunate Isles, presents little difficulty because it was merely a reworking of the masque. Neptune's Triumph which had contained a number of native folk elements in its antimasque. The new antimasque composed for The Fortunate Isles does not contain any elements readily identifiable as taken from the folk, but it is centered around a satirical treatment of the Rosicrucians, who were invading England about this time and so is concerned with a contemporary English event. Its main characters are also purely English: Skelton, the English poet, and Scogan, an author and friend of Chaucer.

The last two masques, written for the court of Charles I, are quite another story. They are both purely classical in form and symbol. The first is a celebration of heroic love, a topic which was of great interest to Queen Henrietta Maria, who brought with her from France all the conventions of neo-Platonic love. The theme of the second and final masque for Charles' court was, as Jonson notes, dictated by the Queen. Jonson seems to have had little freedom in the working out of either masque, but there were perhaps other reasons for his adherence to convention in both masques.

Gilbert notes that "when symbolism began to lose its vitality, such masques as [Jonson] believed in could no longer be written" (p. 28). It would seem probable that in the six years that had elapsed between The Masque of Owls and Love's Triumph this was what had happened at last, and that it was Jonson's earlier recognition of this loss of vitality in symbolism that had prompted him to attempt to forestall the decline of the masque by the importation of fresh life from the native English folk ludi that flourished in England during his lifetime. In keeping with an earlier analogy, one can say that Jonson stripped the dead branches and leaves of classical symbolism from his plants, watered them with a fresh English imagination, and produced a vigorous new growth of native

symbols that gave life and freshness to his masques and slowed, if it did not halt, the decline of the masque as a literary form.

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