

# FANTASY AND THE JONSONIAN MASQUE

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## ABSTRACT

This paper highlights Jonson's portrayal of contemporary psychology of fantasy where absurd ideas vanish and the positive aspects of reality and beauty exist. To portray this "paradoxical" approach to fantasy, Jonson took the help of "masques", which were a popular literary form of Elizabethan period. Apparently, the masque proper was seen to represent fantasy while the anti-masque took the side of reality. However, these roles change as we go deep into the text of *The Masque of Queens* and *The Vision of Delight*. Also, the historical background of writing the masques as a way to praise the 'country order' of King James helps the masques to reside beyond the grip of only amusement and fantasy. The word 'fantasy' has a profound positive place in Jonson's masques: it is by no means a vague or derailed flow of wild dreams. The paper examines *The Masque of Queens* is an expression of 'grotesque' rather than "fearsome". It also explores how the allegorical and historical figures of Heroic Virtue and Fame in masque proper highlight the constructive part of fantasy as well as the fantastic images of *The Vision of Delight* that are funny, entertaining and benevolent. The paper makes a comparative study of Jonson and Shakespeare and shows how Jonson creates anti-masque as 'wayward fantasy', which only threatens the nobler fantasy represented by the stability and order of reason, whereas in Shakespeare anti-masque takes the place of main masque. If fantasy is the storehouse of sensory images then needs reason to distinguish between the merely empty and valid impressions.

## Fantasy and the Jonsonian Masque

For Ben Jonson to justify his exaggerated praise of courtly order in the main masque, it seems to the modern reader, that he must introduce and then dismiss the low-life comedy of the anti-masque. For six years, from 1604 through 1609, Jacobean court masques staged the bodies and the intentions of women. Four masques in those six years claim Queen Anne as patron, actor, and even author: *The Vision of the Twelve Goddesses*, *The Masque of Blackness*, *The Masque of Beauty*, and *The Masque of Queens*. Beginning with Samuel Daniel's *Vision*, escalating through Ben Jonson's *Queens*, masques written in the name of the Queen parade female bodies before the king, staging blackness, martiality, and the history of women's power. Anne herself appears in these productions as producer and star player, providing, according to Daniel and Jonson, not only patronage but representational conceits as well (Schwarz 1900). In addition, Harriett Hawkins states that masque allows Jonson to merge the world of fantasy and the court of James, the ideal with the actual, so that the borderlines between them are obliterated, just as he combines thematic content, action and spectacle in such a way that one cannot be separated or

properly understood without the other. "What Phant'sie tells" gains significance in terms of James's kingdom, for the ideal world of the masque and the historical world of the maskers become mutually dependent (Hawkins, 285-292). Through masque, a popular art form of the period, Jonson reflects the impact of fantasy on human mind. He chose the main masque, a definitive version of masque to emphasize rational imagination and anti-masque to convey "corrupted" and "derailed" figures of imagination".

Apparently, the masques proper seems as to present the world of fantasy while the anti-masque the realistic aspects of life.. But if we examine the masque we will see that the case is totally different. The anti-masque in particular is that part of the whole design, which is concerned with challenging the serious intentions of masque proper, and it is described in terms which emphasize the wild and dream-like qualities of fantasy. In the preface to *The Masque of Queens* Jonson explains that the queen had required of him "a foil, or false masque" and the witches that he introduced were therefore intended to be "a spectacle of strangeness, producing multiplicity of grotesque." Their final dance is described in specific detail:

who at their meetings, do all things contrary to the custome of Men . . . with strange phantastique motions of their heads, and bodyes. (301).

The anti-masque in *The Masque of Queens* represents images from the strange and diseased fantasy<sup>1</sup> of human mind or ‘psyche’ of Elizabethan period (Orgel 131-134). Stephen Orgel analyses how through masque and anti masque Jonson highlights the presence of “evil” and “destructive order” in human mind, and art and society. He says:

The witches are characterized by envy, which alone of all the vices can have no gratification, but feeds on its opposite and is unable to exist without it. Their ultimate threat, however, is a return to chaos: as always to an Elizabethan the villain is disorder, misrule or mutability. They defy not only the order of the natural world, but the rhetorical and stylistic orders as well. They will destroy both the poet’s conception and his means of conceiving it, both the spectacle of the masque (which is already apparent, blazing “thus to offend our eyes”) and the verse through which the poet creates, organizes and controls the word of his poem (Orgel 134).

Judith Kegan Gardiner, in her article “Elizabethan Psychology and Burton’s Anatomy of Melancholy” shares her views about the strangeness of Elizabethan psychology which dominates the masques as well. Gardiner says that the psychological tracts of the English Renaissance were “a chaotic jumble of ambiguous or contradictory fact and theory,” often more physiological than psychological. She also refers to Louise C. Turner Forest’s idea that Elizabethan psychology did not exist as a coherent body of belief (Gardiner 373-388). The witches of the Jonsonian masques represent that “strange” and “absurd” flow of human thoughts that are destructive. They remind us of the witches of *Macbeth* and their similar power in Johnson. Their Dame symbolizes the force of chaos when she speaks of her determination to bring about a decaying world:

We must not let our native manners, thus,  
Corrupt with ease. Ill lives not, but in us.  
I hate to see these fructs of a soft peace,  
And curse the piety gives it such increase.  
Let us disturbe it, then; and blast the light;  
Mixe Hell with Heaven; and make Nature fight  
Within her selfe; loose the whole henge of  
Things;  
And cause the Endes runne back into theyr  
Springs (Johnson 288-289).

All the great words of order, ‘peace’, ‘piety’, ‘light’, ‘nature’ are threatened in turn and the intention is to restore the original chaos. The Dame urges the witches to be fatally destructive; the positive power of ‘soft peace’ is never welcomed here. It is a potentially awful presentation of chaotic universe where there is no distinction between heaven and hell. The whole description and its grotesque explicitness suggest that fantasy works here in a way which is beyond control. The witches seem confident about their destructive powers but they do not win over the audience like the characters in *The Alchemist*. The witches in the anti-masque stand for aspects of the perverted mind – ignorance, suspicion, falsehood, malice, impudence, bitterness, rage and mischief. Their allegorical personifications appear one by one in a procession, which reminds us of the procession of the seven deadly sins in *Doctor Faustus*.

Though it is true that the witches act in a strong and boastful way, we cannot ignore their absurdity. The witches are in fact not treated seriously. One of the witches speaks rather like Puck in *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* (Act ii, Scene i) where Puck indulges in giving a list of mischievously absurd activities. The witch resembles Puck as she boasts:

Under a cradle I did creepe’  
By day; and, when the Child was a-sleep,  
At night, I suck’d the breath; and rose,  
And pluck’d the nodding nurse, by the nose.  
(291)

The others also do things like frightening someone by showing a skull, clipping the hair of a dead man, and snatching the morsel out of the mouth of a raven. All these suggest that the activities of the anti-masque are grotesque rather than genuinely fearsome. There is a sense of lightness and craziness in the presentation of the witches. Their worst action is the killing of an infant to devour off

<sup>1</sup>The Holloway Pages: Ben Jonson: Works (1962 Folio): The Masque of Queens [www.Goolescholar.com](http://www.Goolescholar.com) viewed and retrieved on 17<sup>th</sup> May, 2010.

its fat but the satiric detail that it was illicitly begotten at a *church-ale*, is given more attention than the murder itself:

I had a Dagger: what did I with that?  
Kill'd an Infant, to have his fat  
A Piper it got, at *Church-ale*,  
I bad him, again blow Wind i'th'Tail<sup>1</sup>

The anti-masque in *The Masque of Queens* is an expression of wayward fantasy and its futility. The witches do not even realize that their Dame is missing, and it takes three attempts to summon her. Also, six spells to raise the Furies fail. The absurd world of sheer fantasy matches Spencer's description of fantasy in the Castle of Alma where it's uncertain movement linked to buzzing flies. The absurd and learnedly comic presentation of fantasy also reminds us of Burton's description of fantasy in the time of sleep:

In time of sleep this faculty is free and many times conceive strange, stipend, absurd shapes, as in sick men we commonly observe (Burton 182).

The sheer lunacy of the anti-masque in *The Masque of Queens* finds a resonance in Theseus's condemnation of fantasy and imagination in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Here the anti-masque represents excessive fantasy without the touch of reason and judgment. Theseus also talks about the limitless expression of fantasy and condemns it.

If this anti-masque is comedy, it differs from that of Johnson's stage plays in an important respect. In *The Alchemist* we find that the main characters do not believe in the magic they invoke; they only make other people believe and in this way they trick their audience. But in *The Masque of Queens*, the witchcraft fails to create conviction; it is offered as a kind of comic horror and its excess is integral to its effect. The witches of the anti-masque always try to raise some forces of malice:

And, as it drops, I'le speake a charme  
Shall cleave the ground, as low as lies  
Old shrunk-up Chaos; and let it rise,  
Once more, his darke, and reeking head,  
To strike the World, and Nature dead,  
Until my Magic birth be bred. (299).

The witches curse with great ambition, which only confirms their actual failures. The anti-masque becomes an expression of the grotesque world of

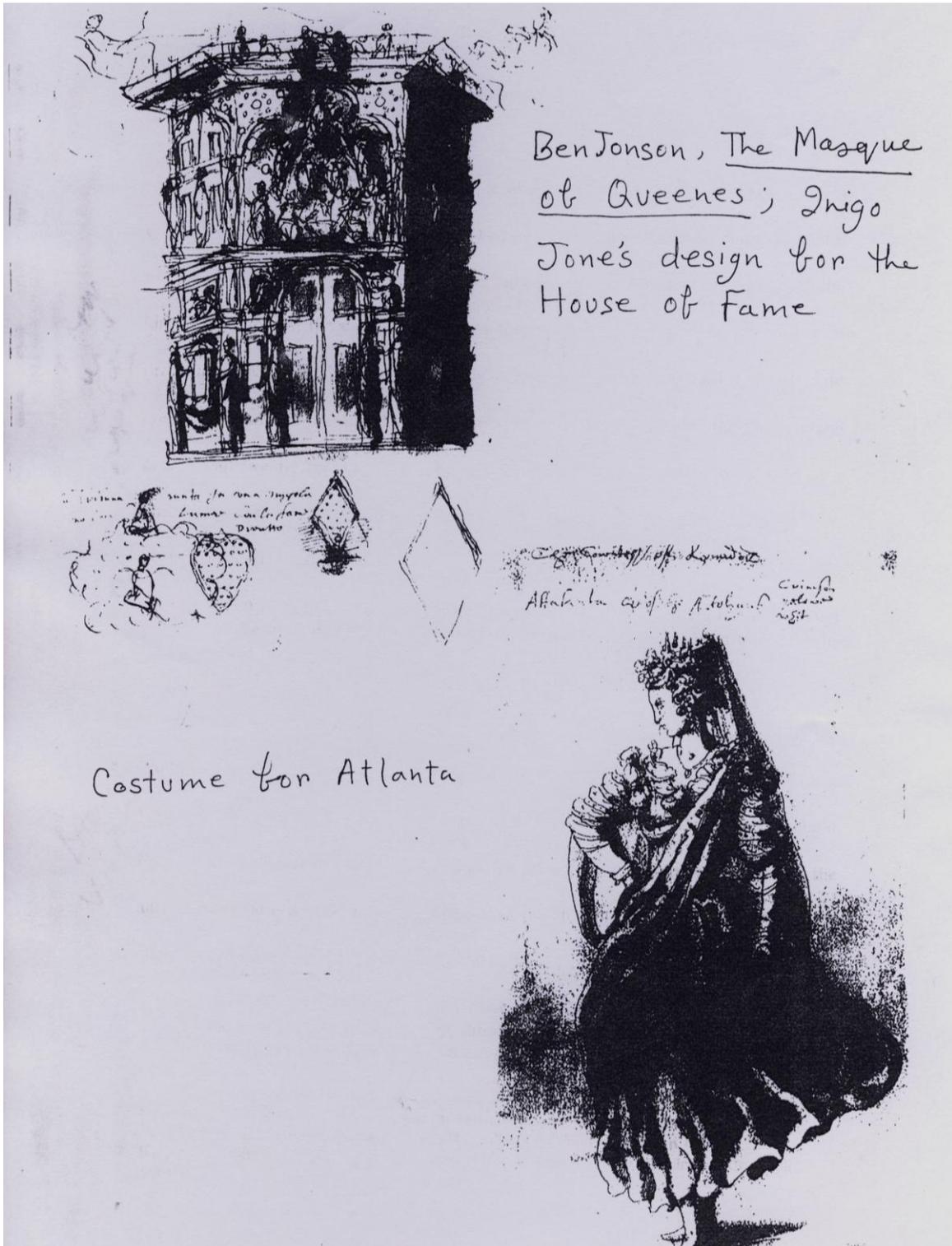
fantasy. They act in a fantastic way to destroy the division between hell and heaven but the scale of the attempt only confirms their actual smallness. The witches increasingly become figures of pure fantasy, whatever be their intended malignity and evil.

The masque provides a stage where the disordered fantasy of the anti-masque can be made to submit to the rational imagination of the main masque. In *The Masque of Queens* the insubstantiality of the anti-masque becomes evident when we find that the witches simply disappear and the House of Fake takes the place of the witches. When the hags vanish and the House of Fame appears, it is the contemporary psychology of fantasy that Jonson draws upon; "and the whole face of the Scene altered; scarce suffering the memory of any such thing" (301). The good images produced by fantasy are submitted to memory but the evil ones are allowed to fade away; the way the witches disappear from the scene indicates the work of absolute fantasy. In the middle of the "strange fantastic motions" of the bodies and the heads of the witches a sudden loud music is heard, the witches vanish and the stately House of Fame appears. The substance of architecture replaces the scenery of flickering flames.

And in this way the main masque of Heroic Virtue appears.<sup>2</sup> The nameless witches, only briefly characterized as wicked impulses, are replaced by serious historic figures led by the Queen herself. Since the major business of the masque is to praise the King and the court, the exaggeration of fantasy is an integral part of the masque. But in order to convince, it has to be properly prepared and the preparation increasingly consists of the anti-masque. In *The Masque of Queens* in particular, the glory of the court is apparently threatened by the malice of the witches, but the emptiness of a nightmare is replaced by the true imagination of powerful women rulers. As Puttenham has agreed:

Even so is the phantasticall part of man (if it be not disordered) a representer of the best, most comely and bewtifull images of appearance of things to the soule (Puttenham 35).

<sup>2</sup> For more critical analysis of this debate involving the anti-masque and masque see Richard Allen Grave, *English Dramatist: Ben Jonson* (Basingstoke: Macmillan Education Ltd, 1991), p. 137.



The anti-masque is the means to make a distinction between disordered 'fantasy' and 'beautiful images'. In the masque proper Heroic Virtue and Fame appear along with historical figures. Jonson

here creates allegorical and historical figures to highlight the constructive part of fantasy. Instead of grotesque and corrupted figures of the anti-masque here we find positive portrayal of the characters.

Here Heroic Virtue is a character which stands for universal goodness:

Heroique Virtue sinkes not under length  
Of yeares, or Ages, but is, still, the same,  
While he preserves, as when he got good Fame  
(302).

In the Castle of Alma, “Phantasie”, in the first chamber of the mind is related to memory in the third and here history becomes the collective memory of human virtues. In the anti-masque the hags have appeared as figures, constantly threatening the peace and order of the world whereas in the masque proper we find that the hags having lost all their evil power, have ended up miserably as captives:

And, let loose the Haggs be led, as Captives,  
bound  
Before thyr wheeles, whilst I my trumpet  
sound.<sup>3</sup>

The masque proper presents a positive world before us, appealing also to fantasy but it works in relation now to reason and memory. Here we find the presence of a nobler fantasy and the limitless flow of inferior fantasy has been chained, so that the whole imagination is:

Not only nothing disorderly or confused with any monstrous imaginations or conceits, but very formal (Puttenham, 34).

A masque always differs from ordinary drama because the whole work makes immediate assumptions of fantastic space. The main masque seems a work of absolute fantasy because here we find allegorical and mythological figures in place of witches, that is “actual possibilities, but the main masque is more attached to reality where fantasy works with reason and memory” whereas the witches are related to the operations of “monstrous imaginations”.

In the masque proper, the historical and allegorical figures suggest positive qualities like virtue, fame, honor, glory, pride and grace. In place of the fantasies of a deceased mind, the mental faculties

<sup>3</sup> For more argument in favour of reason and proportion see Richard Dutton *Ben Jonson: To The First Folio* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), p. 99

now work productively together. The historical figures show that fantasy is working with memory. The speeches of allegorical figures of Heroic Virtue and Fame are argumentative sustained so that fantasy seems to exist in association with reason. In the anti-masque, there is a procession of all malicious forces and there is a description of crazy activities but the masque proper presents a graceful picture of all positive qualities. Virtue, honor, chastity, fame, strength symbolized by historical figures create a solid and durable atmosphere.

The terms in which Jonson wrote his masques therefore correspond in some respects to the division of the mind in Elizabethan psychology between reason and fantasy. If fantasy is a storehouse of sensory images then it needs reason to distinguish between the merely empty and valid impressions. In the preface to the *Hymenaei* Jonson writes about the masque:

It is a noble and just advantage that the things subjected to understanding have of those which are objected to sense, that the one sort are but momentarie, and merely taking; the other impressing, and lasting: Else the glory of all these solemnities had perish'd like a blaze, and gone out, in the beholders eyes. (209).

In the same preface, he admits that many in the audience would prefer to see the masque as a purely fantastic display and nothing more than that:

And howsoever some may squeamishly crie out, that all endeavour of learning, and sharpness in these transitorie devices especially, where it steps beyond their little, or (let me not wrong 'hem) no braine at all, is superfluous; I am contented, these fastidious stomachs should leave my full tables, and enjoy at home, their cleane emptie trenchers, fittest for such ayrie tasta, where perhaps a few Italian herbs, pick'd up and made into a salad, may find sweeter acceptance, than all, the most nourishing, and sound meates of the world (209).

Ben Jonson's masque is like a well-ordered human mind where fantasy and reason work together. The masque proper of *The Masque of Queens* echoes Puttenham's views of creative fantasy when it aims to show fantasy in relation to reason and memory<sup>3</sup>. The positive world of the main masque symbolizes

the image of a stable mind where all the faculties of a human mind work in a balanced way. In the main masque the exaggerated praise of the court is justified by its conversion into an allegory of wisdom. The anti-masque symbolizes the human mind maddened by disordered fantasy; its chaotic world creates in the audience the demand for a perfect balance of fantasy and reason. Like Burton, Jonson in his anti-masque presents imagination in a morbid state. But this barbarism of limitless fantasy does not exist long. Memory and reason appear and then fantasy starts working with them in a positive way.

In *The Masque of Queens* fantasy works in an implicit way but in *The Vision of Delight* we find it explicitly presented as an actual presence in the performance. The whole atmosphere of *The Vision of Delight* is a dream world of fantastic images that are funny and entertaining and the atmosphere is lighter than in the earlier masque. The appearance of fantasy is grotesque but it is not a destructive force; instead, it appears as a source of laughter.<sup>4</sup>

*The Vision of Delight* is a Christmas Masque where Jonson attempts to account for the traditional Saturnalian license of the season. But he now brings to bear upon this homely motive all his resources of invention and art. *The Vision of Delight* is a true masque but it complies with the spirit of the season and allowing free scope to an emancipated fantasy. It submits “an occasional relaxation of the rigor of the game in the opening verses” and “Delight announces the programme of a charted Epicureanism.”<sup>5</sup> Earth and air and the ingenious brain of man are to furnish forth a joyous variety show, suitable to the exacting appetites and the brief patience of the Court:

Let your shewes be new, as strange,  
Let them oft and sweetly varie;  
Let them haste so to their change  
As the Seers may not tarrie; (463)

In the first anti-masque, “a She Monster delivered of six Burratines, that dance with six pantalones,” immediately enters, with no other prelude or explanation than these verses, and are then

<sup>4</sup>See also Richard Allen Grave *English Dramatist: Ben Jonson* (Basingstoke: Macmillan Education Ltd), pp. 138 – 140.

<sup>5</sup> Ben Jonson, *The Works*. ed. C. H. Herford and Percy Simpson, 8 vols. *The Man and his Work*, vol. ii (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1925), p. 303.

dismissed in favour of the sports of “the humourous Night”.

Night rises and calls upon ‘Phant’sie’ in an eloquent song, to create a distorted phantasmagoria of dreams and darkness:

Breake, Phant’sie, from thy cave of cloud,  
And spread thy purple wings  
Now all thy figures are allowed  
And various shapes of things; (464).

Phant’sie’s speech which follows the genuine anti-masque, is wholly in keeping in its rollicking incoherence with the Phantasms whose dance it introduces:

Bright Night, I obey thee, and am come all thy call,  
But it is no one dreames that can please these all;  
Wherefore I would know that Dreames would delight’em;  
For never was Phant’sie more loth to affright’em (465)

The anti-masque appears in the figure of Fantasy and it is related to dreams in the way that the psychological theorists such as Robert Burton, Carl Gustav Jung, and Sigmund Freud have suggested in their explanation and analysis:

And Phant’sie, I tell you, has dreams that have wings,  
And dreams that have honey, and dreams that have stings;  
Dreames of the Maker, and Dreames of the teller  
Dreames of the kitchen, and Dreames of the Celler:  
Some that are tall, and some that are Dwarfes,  
Some that are halter’d, and some that weare scarffes;  
Some that are proper, and signifie o’thing  
And some another, and some that are nothing  
(465)

The whole domain of absurdity, humor and chaos of Ben Jonson’s masques can also be related with the ‘Carnavalesque’ inaugurated by Mikhail Bakhtin. The presence of the ‘hags’ in Masque of Queens, their absurd and humorous utterances truly ensure a ‘carnival’ where humor and chaos are dominant features.

The description of the dream world of fantastic images is however intended to be funny and

absurd. One can say that the role of fantasy is constructive in *The Vision of Delight* because it does not threaten. It is fantastic but at the same time it is healthily positive. When in the spirit of celebration Night summons Fantasy to appear, it reminds us of the fantastic description of The Castle of Alma in *The Faerie Queen*:

It must have bloud, and nought of fleame;  
(464)

The anti-masque of the witches has presented a sordid world of destructive force that failed to create an impact; the witches threatened to release horror but had quietly vanished. The anti-masque of Fantasy sounds by contrast very funny and grotesque:

With a chanine and a trouble-bed following at  
th'heelles,  
And will they not cry then, the world runs a  
wheelles:  
As for example, a belly, and no face,  
With the bill of a Shoveler, may here come in  
place;  
The haunches of Drum, with the feet of a pot,  
And the tayle of a Kentish man to it; why not?  
Yet would I take the stars to be cruell,  
If the Crab, and the Ropemaker ever fight  
duell,  
On any dependence, be it right, be it wrong.  
But mum; a thread may be drawn out too long.  
(464-465)

The whole description is grotesque and weird but it remains the work of blood and sanguine, not melancholy. The images that reduce humanity to strange shapes are almost like the images of one of the Deadly Sins in *The Faerie Queen*, with the body reduced to a belly with the back of the greedy wading bird, the shoveller. The result is not however the kind of moral disquiet we find in *The Faerie Queen* but rather a critical hangover. Moral threats become simply a kind of temporary nightmare reduced to laughter in retrospect.

Fancy is not here a purely antagonistic power, belonging wholly to the anti-masque. After playing the leading part, she banishes the incoherent phantasms, and remains to preside sympathetically over the masque proper. Fantasy produces ideal images of nature, not distorted now but seen as a vision appearing before their time. The vision of the spring is ecstatically described by Wonder:

The wealth of Nature here, or Art? It shows  
As if Favonius, father of the Spring,  
Who, in the Verdant Meads doth reigne sole  
king  
Had rowsd him here, and shooke his feathers,  
wet  
With purple swelling Nectar? And had let  
The sweet and fruitfull dew fall on the ground  
To force out all the flowers that might be  
found  
Or a Minerva with her needle had  
Th' enamoured earth with all her riches clad,  
And made the downy Zephire as he flew  
Still to be followed with Springs best hue?  
(468)

So, through Fantasy the spring appears in the midst of actual winter. The work of fantasy is to intensify nature and correct its 'errors' as Sidney required of poetry. Fantasy possesses magical power which can transfer art in nature and nature in art. Fantasy introduces the bower and a perpetual stream and is therefore the means to recognize the truth of nature and find the images to express the fundamental vigor of the court. The figure of Wonder then responds to this nobler form of fantasy which replaces the drunken distortions of the anti-masque.

The major device in *The Vision of Delight* is the summoning of the spring in the middle of winter and Wonder's pleasure is like Jonson's in "To Penshurst":

Whence it is that the ayre so sudden cleares,  
And all things in a moment turne so milde?  
Whose breath or beams, have got proud earth  
with child  
Of all treasure that great Nature's worth,  
And makes her every minute to bring forth?  
(469)

Here Spring symbolizes the golden age, source of health and virtue as well as the nobility and greatness of the court. In *The Vision of Delight* fantasy always works as a benevolent force, not the threatening force of *The Masque of Queens* but much closer to the sense of fantasy which we find in Puttenham. Here we see an interrelation between fantasy and reality when the figure of fantasy glorifies the king and compares his presence with the perpetual vigour and beauty of nature:

Behold a king  
Whose presence maketh this perpetuall

Spring  
 The glories of which Spring grow in that  
 Bower,  
 And are the marks and beauties of his power.  
 (469)

In *The Masque of Queens* fantasy works in a dualistic way. At first it appears as a form of malignity. Then the evil power of wayward fantasy disappears when reason appears in the form of Heroic Virtue and Fame. But in *The Vision of Delight* there is no malicious authority to curse the positive sources of life. Nature is celebrated here as a source of perpetual energy, and the court is glorified as a healthy place. Fantasy is therefore creative figure in this masque, the source of whole version – both the dream of images of the introduction and the spring landscape of the masque proper. The two parts of the entertainment correspond clearly to the two identities of fantasy itself. The wayward humor of the dream world is associated with night but there is also a waking fantasy, related to the daytime and the vision of the constant spring which is a gift of a virtuous court. Jonson's masques identify serious fantasy with creative resources of the mind intent on great actions and achievements, in the manner that Puttenham suggests:

and of this sorte of phantasie are all good Poets, noble Captains strategimatique, all cunning artificiers and engineers, all Legislators polititiens and Counselluors of estate, in whose exercise the inventive part is most employed and is to the sound and true judgment of man most needful (Puttenham 35).

Jonson's optimism in his masques and their claims for the power of the court to transform reality might be contrasted with Shakespeare's use of the form in *The Tempest*. There the masque presented to honour the betrothal of Ferdinand and Miranda is interrupted by a grotesque noise and vanishes from sight as the thought of Caliban's plot to destroy him comes into Prospero's mind. It is as though the main masque and anti-masque are put in reverse order and the noble fantasy of Ceres and the goddesses is defeated by the brutal reality of Caliban's insurrection.

For Ben Jonson the forces of disorder are the power of wayward fantasy which threatens the stability and order of the reason. For Shakespeare in *The Tempest* the forces of disorder are the reality

that cuts short the masque. In the betrothal masque the goddesses of the Rainbow and Juno appear with all their majestic beauty. They sing and praise the happy marriage of Ferdinand and Miranda:

Honour, riches, marriage blessing  
 Long continuance, and increasing,  
 Hourly joys be still upon you.  
 (Shakespeare 106-108)

The negative forces are manifestly Cupid and Venus who might trouble the good order of the betrothal with the violence of passion but they have returned to Cyprus. It seems at first therefore as though there is to be no anti-masque and all move forward to the final dance. In place of the courtiers who would normally be the participants in the masques are spirits:

Spirits, which by mine art  
 I have from their confines called to enact  
 My present fancies.  
 (Shakespeare 120-121)

Yet at the climax of the performance, everything disappears with the strange noises that usually accompany the ending of the anti-masque:

Prospero starts suddenly and speaks  
 After which, to a strange hollow and  
 Confused noise, they heavily vanish  
 (Shakespeare 131)

The 'confused noise' destroys the music which has accompanied the dance and the disappearance of the figurers is like the vanishing of the actors in an anti-masque; in the main masque the participants always leave the stage in grand and orderly fashion. The presenters of the masque have therefore behaved like the figures of the anti-masque and they are replaced, admittedly only in Prospero's own mind at first, by thoughts of Stephano, Trinculo and Caliban and their plot against the king of the island. The scene ends in fact with the three villains performing their dance caught in a marsh outside the cell and pursued finally by a magic hunt of which they are quarry. In effect they serve as an anti-masque which has replaced the main masque and which follows rather than precedes it.

What is the point of this Shakespearean reorganization of the Jonsonian masque? In a play where the magic and learning of Prospero has first

of all produced the loss of his throne, the arts on which the masque depends have now to be made subordinate to actually winning it back. The vision of glory celebrated by Jonson becomes in *The Tempest* rather an image of transience of earthly power; the banqueting halls and towers of the court itself become temporary scenery:

Like the baseless fabric of this vision  
The cloud-topped towers, the gorgeous  
palaces,  
The solemn temples, the great globe itself,  
Yea, all which it inherit, shall dissolve.  
(Shakespeare 138)

The business of government, the constant need to preserve order, becomes itself here a kind of fantasy constantly trying to control the invasive realities of violence, disorder and greed. That constant threat is however now made the work of comic characters, readily defeated by Prospero's wisdom. Yet, it is that wild and gleeful disorder which disrupts and drives from the stage the primacy of the golden fantasy of Prospero's masque. In *The Tempest* statecraft replaces stagecraft as the means of controlling the excessive hopes of the fantasy in the Jonsonian masque.

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