SQUEAKING CLEOPATRAS?

SHAKESPEARE'S BOY PLAYERS

by

JOY LESLIE GIBSON

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Shakepeare Institute
University of Birmingham
Birmingham
B15 2TT
England

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SYNOPSIS

There are four major questions which are asked and answered in this thesis.

1) What were the experiences that the boys had in every day life?
A discussion on the conditions of life in Elizabethan England, together with suggestions of how the boys acquired the skills they needed. What ages were the boys? This leads to a comparison with boys in Cathedral choirs.

2) What technical help did the writers give to the boys?

An analysis of major speeches from Shakespeare showing the possible, practical breathing patterns.

3) Were the boys able to meet the emotional demands of the parts?

The Elizabethan ideas on femininity are demonstrated and it is shown that subjects specific to a woman's life are not written about. An analysis of speeches from Shakespeare and other dramatists shows that excessive emotional demands were not made on the boy players.

4) What did the Elizabethans actually see when they went to the theatre?

Acting is an illusion and collusion. The costumes of the day helped the boys.as did the the smallness of the parts. Proof that the boys were sucessful.'

Approx: 37,000 words

TO MY FATHER

WILLIAM ALFRED GIBSON

(1881 - 1961)

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My first thanks must be to my supervisor, Dr Russell Jackson, who has been patient and good-humoured throughout. The rest of the staff at the Shakespeare Institute must also be thanked for creating a unique atmosphere where learning is made enjoyable. All research students must be reliant on librarians - to Dr Susan Brock, who put her immense knowledge at my disposal, the librarians of the Shakespeare Centre, and of The Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea, my gratitude. The Deans and Archivists of the Cathedrals mentioned in the text delved into archives for me and I have a special indebtedness to Dr Mayne of Westminster and Alice Oakley of Canterbury. Brian Ayres and Francis Cheetham of the Norfolk Museum Services were informative about Elizabethan architecture, while the Warwick County Record Service were also helpful. The staff of the Victoria and Albert Museum and Christie's, London, provided illustrations. Lynn Darnley of the Royal Shakespeare Company's Voice Department provided some valuable insights. Three actresses discussed their approach to parts, so my thanks must go to Dame Judi Dench, Joanne Pearce and, especially, Harriet Walter.

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... Our Players are not as the players beyond sea, a sort of squirting baudie Comedians, that have whores and common curtizans to playe women's parts, and forbeare no immodest speech or unchaste action that may procure laughter, but our Sceane is more stately furnisht than ever it was in the time of *Roscius* , our representations honorable, and full of gallant resolution....

GOSSON, *Playes connfuted in Five Actions (1582) p.215, quoted Davies p.8.*

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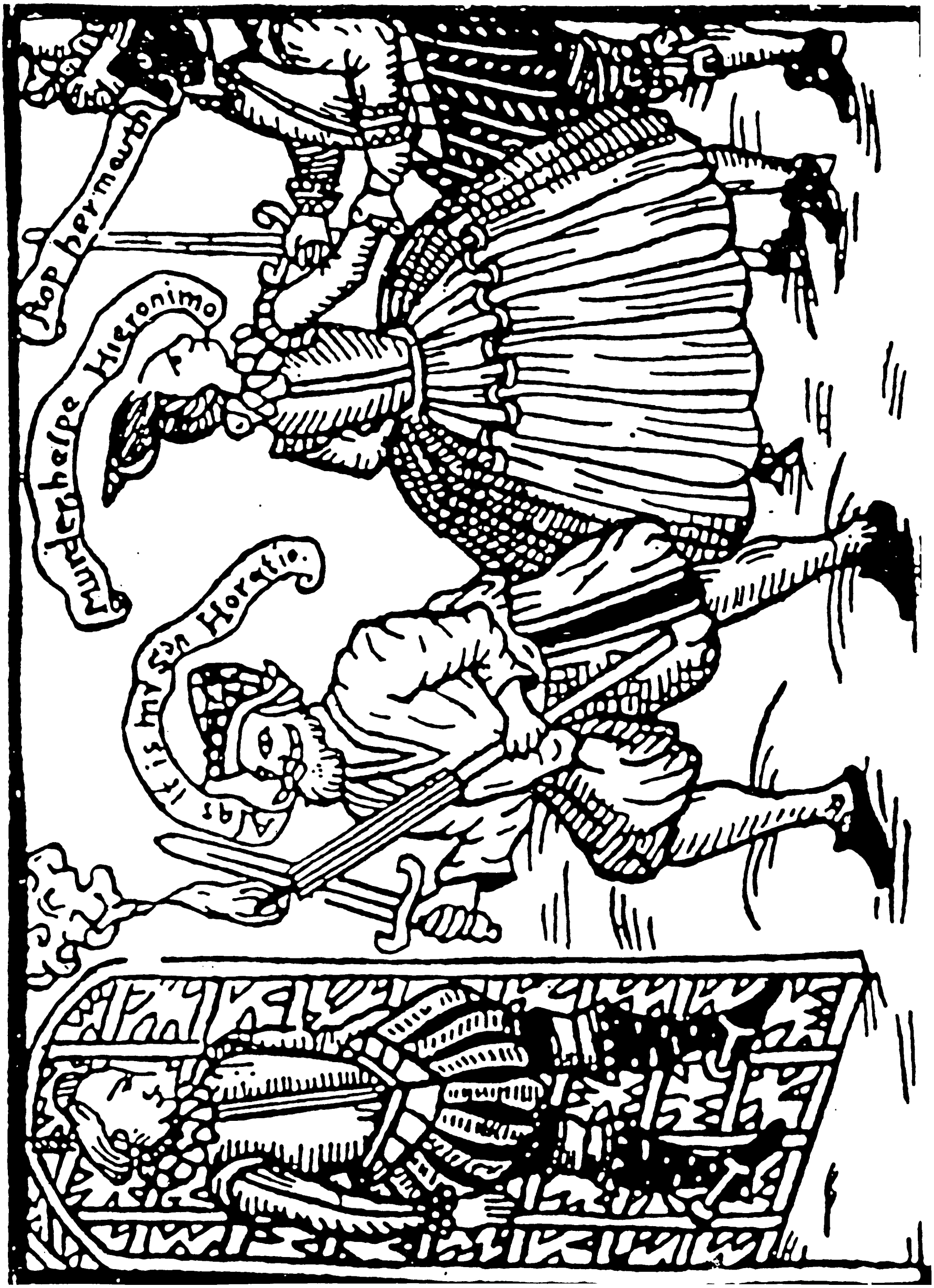

INTRODUCTION

"...the abstracts and brief chronicles..."
Hamlet 2:2.

In writing about Shakespeare's women characters commentators and critics tend to consider them as "real" women, that is they discuss their characters, actions and emotions as if they were living. When examining the comedies in which the heroine disguises herself as a boy some remarks are made about the triple disguise, but only a few critics appear to have looked at the women's roles in Shakespeare and his fellow dramatists from the point of view of the boys who actually created these diverse and multi-faceted parts. For diverse and multi-faceted they are. As Dame Edith Evans told Judith Cook

> From the point of view of an actress, the Shakespearian women are most satisfactory people, for when portrayed they actually seem to feed the artist even when she is giving out the most of herself in performance of her part. They are so true, their nobility, beauty, tenderness, loveliness, lightheartedness, subtlety, provocativeness, passion, vengefulness, worthlessness, stupidity and a hundred more qualities so entirely right from the feminine point of view that they provide a field the most ambitious artist could scarcely hope to cover. (Cook: p 145)

Even though she thought that, Dame Edith would not play Lady Macbeth as she said that there was no explanation as to why she went mad, and younger, perhaps better educated actresses have said (see Rutter: *Clamorous Voices* and in interviews with the writer) that they feel limited in their playing of Shakespeare's women by what a boy could do.

There are two points of view here - one, that the characters are "true"; the other, that the actor has to "fill in" the psychological processes of the character by imagination. Both approaches beg the question: could the boys have acted the parts satisfactorily? It is the contention of this thesis that the boys were properly trained to act effectively and that the emotions of the parts were well within the cognisance of a boy of that period given the different circumstances of his upbringing from a boy of today, and that technically the parts were written so that the boy was not taxed physically. The thesis sets out to answer four questions:

1) What experiences were likely for a boy living in Elizabethan London?

2) How were the boys helped technically?

3) What were the Elizabethan ideas on femininity and love?

4) What did the Elizabethans actually *see* when they went to the theatre?

(Throughout 'Elizabethan' is used to designate the period 1590-1640)

I have assumed that the boys would have been apprenticed around the age of ten as before that a child would not have had sufficient power of voice to have been heard in an open-air theatre. From the scant evidence we have we know that boys played minor parts around the age of thirteen and major parts at fifteen and sixteen (see Section 1). There is no evidence that the boys, unlike stage children today, would have had any formal education once they joined the company, but, from day to day, they would have been involved in the productions, watching, observing, playing pages, fairies, or walking-on. There is no real analogy with any child today though boys in Cathedral choir schools and the children of the Royal Ballet School who work with professionals and perform professionally come near to it. In his *Preface to a Midsummer Night's Dream* (1914) Harley Granville-Barker remarks

> But I expect that the little eyases of that time were as smartly trained in speaking verse as is a crack cathedral choir now in the singing of anthems. (p. 35)

and in a further (1924) essay on the same play, Granville-Barker says that children between the ages of twelve to fifteen are susceptible to training and at fifteen become capable of interpreting character crudely or simply. It is in considering the training of boy choristers that we can deduce the kind of training that the Boy Players would have had, for, as is shown in Section 1, the training in Cathedral Choirs today is virtually the same as it was in the 16th and 17th centuries. The boy players had to be able to sing - they sing in the plays - and the breath control needed to sing is more than valuable in making oneself heard in a theatre.

The boys were helped, too, by the way that the playwrights wrote for them. A large part of this thesis is concerned with the actual mechanics of breath control. In reading all the texts of Shakespeare's plays and some thirty plays of his contemporaries, I have discovered that no more than twenty-eight syllables (about two-and-a-half lines of verse) need be spoken on one breath, a span which is well within the reach of a small-framed boy who is trained to breathe and control his breath. It is not claimed that this span is unique to the boys' speeches. Shakespeare often used fragmented speech to indicate heightened emotions, but in many of the men's speeches a longer phrasing is needed.

Are the emotions expressed by the women characters too complex and too deep for an adolescent to know about? The examination of the emotional range of the parts forms another section of this thesis. The contention is that Shakespeare and his contemporaries wrote with the experience and imagination of a boy of the Elizabethan age in mind. It has been often observed that there are very few mothers in Shakespeare, and very little mothering. It is true that upper-class children of the time saw very little of their parents and mothering was not a necessary attribute of a woman, but Shakespeare is wise enough not to ask his boys to portray a mother-daughter relationship which is complex for both women. It is noticeable, also, that other attributes that are specific to a woman's life - menstruation, pregnancy and childbirth - are not dealt with in any detail (see Section 3). The Elizabethan woman did not, and was not expected, to behave as a present day woman does, and so, this thesis examines the question of what were these expectations by looking to see what the Courtesy Books, especially Castiglione's *The Courtier* (1528), popular in Shakespeare's day, says about behaviour.

The last question to be examined is: what did the Elizabethans actually see when they went to the theatre? All theatre is illusion and collusion, but, again, some of the *mores* of the time actually helped the Boy Players. Women wore men's clothes in spite of the fulminations of some clerics, who are, in their vociferous protestations, more likely to be voicing their own inadequacies than being rational. The examination of this fashion is part of the last section, along with an appraisal of whether the boys were successful, quoting what contemporary material there is, which, though scanty is congratulatory.

There are some issues which through choice or reasons of space have been excluded from the thesis. The most obvious one is that no mention has been made of the Boys' Companies - *The Children of the Chapel Royal* and *The Children of Paul's*. This is partly because it is self-evident that the women's parts written for these boys are very limiting. Few, if any, linger in and haunt the mind as Shakespeare's, Webster's, and Middleton's do. The Boys' Companies' plays are different in tone from those plays written for the Men's Companies and it is arguable that the acting had less insight and truth and was more of the "showing off","clever-clever" variety, needed by the writing, than "holding a mirror up to nature". The other reason for excluding mention of the Boys' Companies is that they have been more than adequately dealt with by H.N.Hillebrand in *The Child Actors* (1926),Michael Shapiro in *Children of the Revels: the Boy Companies of Shakespeare's Time and their Plays* (1977) and Reavley Gair in *The Children of Paul's*(1982).

The other argument which has not been dealt with in the main text is the homo-erotic one discussed by Lisa Jardine in

Still Harping on Daughters (1983) and other feminist critics. It seems appropriate to deal with it here.

The argument bases its premises on the patriarchal nature of Elizabethan society which limited the scope of women and which did not allow them to appear on the stage; that it was considered a disgrace for women to make public exhibitions of themselves. Consequently boys had to play women's parts which led to the theatre being a place where homo-erotic emotions were set loose. That there was considerable contemporary writing on the subject, that some men felt uneasy about seeing boys wearing women's clothes in public is obvious. In the widest sense of the word, the boys were transvestites by necessity, though not wilfully so. Dr John Rainoldes, an Oxford divine, wrote that

> The appareil of women is a great provocation of men to lust and leacherie. A woman's garment being put on a man doeth vehemently touch and moue him with the remembrance and imagination of a thing desirable doth stirr up the desire. (Rainoldes: *Th' Otherthrow of Stage Playes:* 1599: p.97, quoted Jardine: p.9)

Rainoldes castigates the wearing of women's clothes by the boy players as "an occasion of wantoness and lust" and equates this with male prostitution and homosexuality. He has a fine line in hysteria and his polemic tells us more about his homophobic fears than about the actuality of what was seen in the theatre when cross-dressing and uni-sex dressing were accepted facts of the age. Like our own, it was an age which exploited sexual ambiguity as can be seen in its literature. Doubtless in the audience there were

paedophilic and homosexual men and women who went to the theatre to be titillated, for the theatre deals with the erotic, and cross-dressing is part of the erotic. ~~Normally~~ Heterosexual ~~sexed~~ members of an audience take this as part of the entertainment and are not affected by it sexually. Work done by Alan Bray and Alan Macfarlane on Court Records of Assizes and Sessions shows a paucity of indictments for sodomy (four in Essex, for example, from December 1612 to 20 March 1618 and similar numbers for other counties) which seems to show that the clerics were only aiming at a small target. There was also a railing against "effeminate" behaviour. But, in the 16th and 17th centuries this word ~~had the meaning~~ Sometimes meant of being a great lover of women. For example John Donne describes himself as effeminate "because I love women's joy" so it was not homosexual love that was meant, but general sexual license and luxurious living. (see Bray: pp. 70 to 72 and p. 131 for full details)

Feminist critics often express the view that Shakespeare 'degraded' women (cf *The Women's Part: Feminist Criticism*, quoted Jardine p.13), taking Posthumus's speech beginning "Is there no way" as evidence. But this is to impute to Shakespeare what one of his characters says. That he was aware and could express the hatred that men can feel against women who have, or who they think have, betrayed them is part of his ability as a great dramatist, his knowledge of human nature. To deduce from his characters what Shakespeare actually thought is a fruitless task. The tenet that women should be women and that it was sinful for women to wear men's clothes had biblical authority. Rainoldes in a private letter to Thomas Thornton, refusing his invitation to attend three Latin plays at Christ Church, Oxford in 1592, cites the biblical prohibition against 'men in women's raiment'

> Now for myne owne parte in deed I am perswaded that it is vnlawfull because the scripture saythe *a woman shall not weare that which pertaineth to a man, nether shall a man put on womans raiment: for all that do so are abhomination to the lord thy god* (quoted Jardine: p.14)

The whole letter, again, tells us more about Rainoldes than it does about the ordinary playgoer's thoughts. (See Jardine: p.15 onwards for a full analysis of Rainoldes's polemic.)

Today, the estimations concerning the percentage of homosexuality in the population vary but there is no reason to believe that there was a higher proportion of homosexuals in Elizabethan England than today, though, as has been explored in the text, sexual divisions were not so well defined as they are today in this more prurient age. What is more interesting is the question whether Shakespeare exploited homo-eroticism? That seven of his women characters wore men's clothes, creating ~~a~~ double ~~transvestite~~ cross-dressing, is evident. But Julia, Rosalind, Viola and Innogen do so to protect themselves from rape when travelling, as Rosalind points out, but Shakespeare does not make a great issue of it. ~~From this we may assume that it was usual~~ In some circles it may conceivably have been the custom for women to don breeches when travelling. He does sometimes draw attention to the wearing of disguise as when Julia describes what she will wear, and there is also the scene in *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* when she, disguised as Sebastian, talks about dressing up in Julia's clothes. This does have some homo-erotic charge, but the comedy is light and those who enjoy its homo-eroticism may, while other members of the audience can enjoy the high

comedy. Rosalind, in the Epilogue, exploits the ambiguity of the part, but again this is comedy. Portia and Nerissa don male guise, because, until this century women were not allowed to appear in court to plead a case. All very good reasons for the girls to become boys.

Shakespeare certainly writes about the prevailing androgyny of his day, but not, it is submitted, in any salacious way. There is quite a lot of sexual talk and innuendo in his plays and some of it involves his women characters, Desdemona and Iago on the quayside, for example, but most of it is friendly and funny. Except where a character, generally in a state of heightened emotion, as when Posthumus, Iago, Othello and Hamlet rail against the perfidy of women, Shakespeare's women are not treated as sex-objects. That they are treated differently from the way women expect to be treated today is obvious, but today we undervalue the traditional woman's role. As has been said previously and in the general body of the text, aristocratic or moneyed women had the difficult task of running complex households, women of the merchant class helped in their husband's businesses, and the poor worked as domestics. All this activity is shown in the plays of Shakespeare and his contemporaries and the homo-erotic element does not loom large, nor, taking the standards of the day, are women degraded. A case can even be made for the treatment of Katherine in *The Taming of the Shrew* by claiming that Petruccio is only showing Katherine how undesirable her own behaviour is.

These are questions deliberately not dealt with in the ensuing work for what it was always intended to explore was the actual work, practical and imaginative required from the boy players, and the help given them by the dramatists.

They would be a phenomenon to us because we have not their like today. It is obvious that contemporary actresses find the women's characters satisfying to play, though they have, as will be shown, to fill out the parts imaginatively, and in so doing, possibly give the parts a richer interpretation than given by the creators of the parts. That we shall never know. But one of the underlying motives for the thesis was to discover whether the parts could be at least adequately played by adolescent boys of the times whose emotional experiences were different from a boy today and whose training would be more complete than even a child at a stage-school. That the boys were immersed in the texts daily; that they grew up in a permanent company which must have affected their performances; that they were working constantly with the best actors and playwrights who would know their strengths and weaknesses and who accepted and helped them to achieve a professionalism - all this must be. It is difficult for us to appreciate this phenomenon. The audience, too, must have had a degree of influence. Although theatre-going was an activity for all the population a proportion of the audience was well-educated. It was expected that an Elizabethan gentleman would be well-grounded in rhetoric and oratory, appreciate music, and sing or play an instrument. No company of actors would present players who were less skilled than their audience in these fundamental attributes of Elizabethan life, so an emphasis on these qualities in the Boy Player is part of the main body of this work where there is an examination of how this expertise was acquired and what the final result would have been.

SECTION ONE

"...What are they children?..."

Hamlet 2:2.

The convention of boys playing women's parts in Elizabethan and Jacobean drama would be entirely strange to a modern audience. There are performances done by boys' schools where all the parts are taken by boys and performances with all the parts taken by men, but not performances in which a mixture of men and boys take all the adult parts. In asking if the end result was satisfactory when the plays were first performed (as, indeed, it does seem to have been) it is necessary to put aside all our modern expectations and to ask what were adolescent boys like in Elizabethan times? What were the sights and sounds to which the boy would be subjected? What emotions would he be likely to have experienced? Would he have had any education before joining the players?

A child's experience in the early modern period was totally different from that of a child today. Indeed, by our standards there was really no such thing as childhood for children were exposed to the unpleasantnesses of life right from birth. Elizabethan houses for all but the prosperous were very small and there was very little privacy. The houses of the very poor, of course, have not survived, but those of the slightly better off, tradespeople for example, often consisted of one room downstairs and two above, each opening out of the other. (See picture of Pilot's Street, King's Lynn. Figure 1.) As the corridor had not yet been invented, bedrooms, even in the houses of the rich, were

FIG. 1
PILOT STREET, KING'S LYNN
from a brochure of King's Lynn, Norfolk Museum Services

anything but private and the first in the row of bedrooms had to be entered to get to the second and so on. (See plans of Oxburgh, Blickling and Hatfield Figure 2.) This lack of privacy throughout society meant that life was lived publicly. Sexual and bodily functions would be apparent to the observant child and frequent pregnancies, the pain of childbirth without anaesthetics, the cruelty of illness unrelieved by drugs, except for those rich enough to afford opium, was there to be observed. As Keith Thomas says in *Religion and the Decline of Magic*

> Tudor and Stuart Englishmen were, by our standards, exceedingly liable to sickness and premature death...those who survived could anticipate intermittent physical pain...There were periodic waves of influenza, typhus, dysentery and, in the seventeenth century, small pox...most dreaded of all was the bubonic plague (quoted Briggs: p. 13)

and John Donne wrote

> can the other world name so many venemouse, so many consuming, so many monstrous creatures as we can diseases of all these kinds? O miserable abundance! O beggarly riches. (Devotions: 1V Meditations) (Quoted Briggs: p. 23)
> (Donne: ed by Anthony Raspa: Montreal 1975, P. 20)

Death, then, was constantly present in a way not experienced in most Western countries today. Men and women could marry

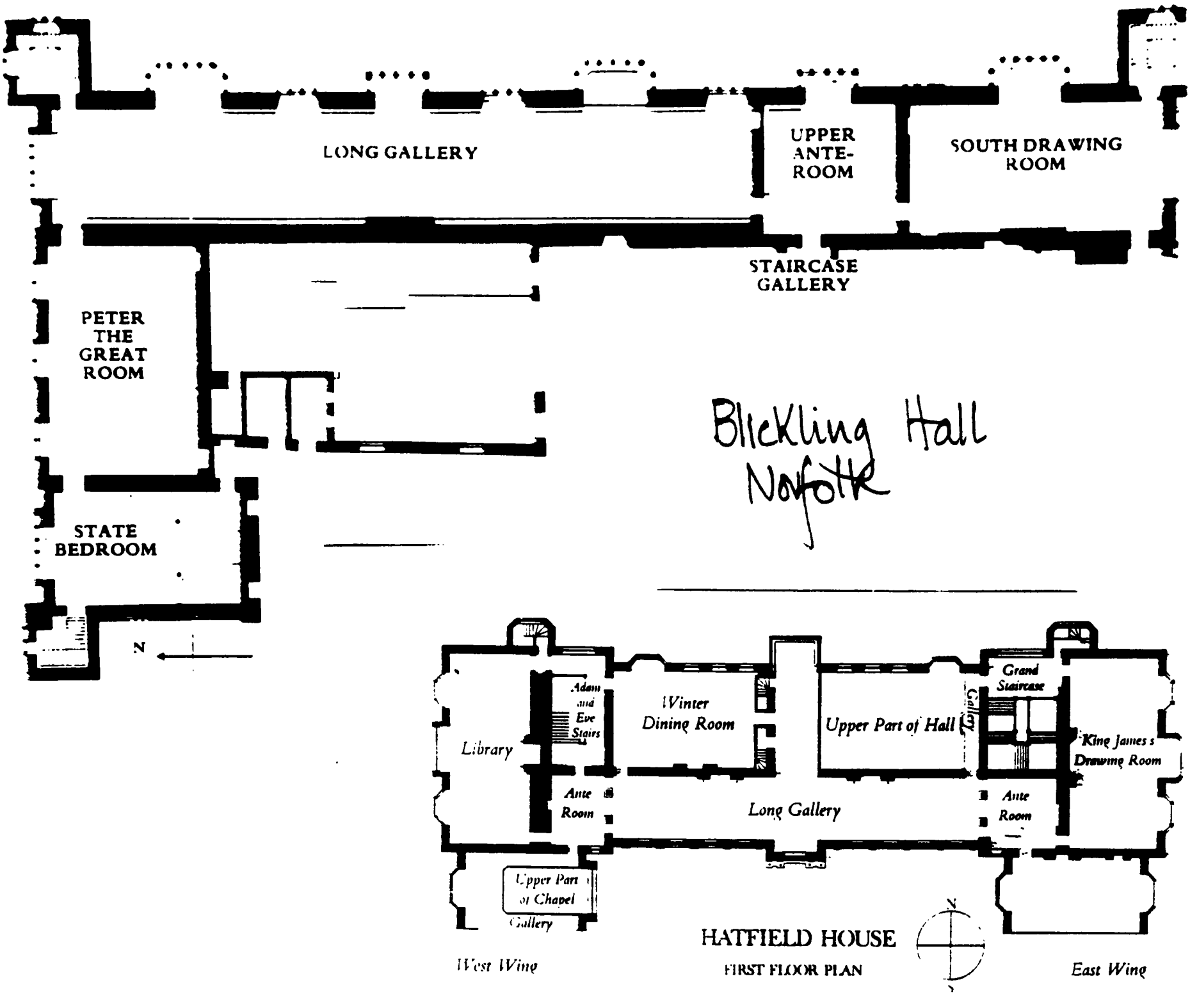

FIG. 2
PLANS OF HATFIELD, BLICKLING AND OXBURGH
from the guide books of the respective Houses

several times in a life, one or other party dying young, and children themselves had an uncertain life span. The city of London was fast expanding (from around 250,000 to over 400,000 in Elizabeth's reign). People were crushed together in small unsanitary dwellings and disease was prevalent, one had to be strong to survive childhood and adolescence, and one's expectation of life was still only another twenty years, if that. This would make life very urgent, something to be lived to the full. Children brought up during the 1939-1945 war had some of this experience , not knowing from one day to the next whether they, or their parents, would survive the bombing. An awareness of the frailty and fragility of life gives it an extra sharpness, a desire to live intensely, to cram into it all one can, for there may not be a tomorrow to do what you wish. An added hazard to life was the extreme danger one could be placed in by the autocratic and cruel State. An implication in treasonable plots, criticisms of the Monarchy, dangerous friends, could all bring the wrath of the State against one, meaning imprisonment, torture and a hideous death. Thomas Kyd, Ben Jonson, Christopher Marlowe, pamphleteers and printers all suffered under this harsh regime. It would be something that would impinge on the boys in the theatre. Executions were public. It is estimated that six thousand people were executed in what is now the Greater London area during Elizabeth's reign, the equivalent of four thousand people *a year* now. (James Sharpe: *The Independent*: 12th March 1993.) These executions were public, as were brandings, whippings, mutilations and standing in the pillory. The cruel sports of bear-baiting and cock-fighting were allowed. The taverns and brothels of the city were in the same district as the open-air theatres, all of which could be observed by the boy players, all of which would add to his understanding of life and which would inform his playing. (For a detailed description of Elizabethan life Louis Wright's *Middle Class Culture in*

Elizabethan Life is invaluable as is Julia Briggs's *This Stage Play World.)*

All Elizabethan children wore skirts until they were seven years old when the boys would be breeched and considered to have entered into manhood. In rich and prosperous families this would be made an occasion and marked with some sort of ceremony. Before this event, though, the boy would have received some sort of education. As our boy player would have to be able to read, and quite difficult poetry at that, he would have had to have gone to at least a petty school which children could join at the age of four. According to Julia Briggs (Briggs:p.109) children learnt to read by reciting the vowels and consonants, and then spelling actual words before they attempted to read. When they could do this they would be taught the catechism by rote, and would have the use of a horn book. This was a wooden frame with a handle with parchment or paper in the middle, covered in transparent horn. On the paper would be written the Our Father in English as well as the Alphabet. When the pupil had mastered this he would go onto the *ABC Book* with the Cathechism from which he would learn the Ten Commandments and the Creed. The other book he would learn from would be the *Primer* which was a book of devotion - psalms, litanies and parts of the Divine Office. He would have been expected to be able to recite these correctly, especially if he wanted to go to Grammar School. At the same time he would also learn to write and to cipher - that is simple arithmetic and how to keep accounts. By the time he was six he would also be learning Latin declensions and conjugations, for Latin was still the language in which scholars wrote and conversed. Much of the learning was still done by rote for the Elizabethans put great store on being able to memorise and to speak well with clarity and

good diction. At eight he would be ready either to take an apprenticeship or go to Grammar School.

Grammar Schools were numerous. In 1577 William Harrison could write in his *Description of England*

> there are not many corporate towns now under the Queen's dominion that hath not one grammar school at the least with a sufficient living for a master and usher appointed to the same. (quoted Briggs p.97)

Conversation between the boys would be in Latin or, perhaps, Greek. Canterbury School regulations stipulated (1541)

> Whatever they are doing, in earnest or in play, they must not speak any language but Latin or Greek. (Thompson: p.303)

In class, the boys were also encouraged to speak English well as Richard Mulcaster, the Headmaster of the Merchant Taylors' School said in his *Elementary English was*

> ...a tongue of itself both deep in conceit and frank in delivery...(Thompson: p.311)

and Mulcaster also encouraged his boys to act Roman plays and also poetry. He also thought that children should recite aloud either iambic verses or elegies, or other such

numbers as loudly as possible with due attention to meaning and variety and

> a voice should find in uttering how harsh and hard, how smooth and sweet it could be.(Thompson: p.311)

Another Headmaster, Brinsley, wrote in his book *Ludus Literarius* (1612) that masters should teach pupils

> to pronounce every matter to the nature of it so much as you can: chiefly where persons or other things are feigned to speak...[he should] cause them to utter every dialogue lively as if they themselves were the persons which did speak in that dialogue....

It is not known whether the boy players went to Grammar School. Certainly they could not have attended the schools longer than a year or two. There is no record of ~~the most~~ the age at which the boys joined a Men's Company, certainly it would not be earlier than eight, for although the actors did not have a Guild the boys were apprenticed to individual actors. The only reference about recruitment into a Men's Company is in Ben Jonson's *A Masque of Christmas* where one of the characters, Venus, a deaf tire-woman, boasts about her son, who is playing the part of Cupid

> Aye, forsooth, he'll say his part, I warrant him, as well as ere a Play boy of 'em all: I could ha'

> had money enough for him, and I would ha' been tempted, an ha' let him out by the week to the King's Players. Master *Burbage* has been about and about with me; so has old *Mr Heminges* too; They ha' need of him...(Worthen:p.135)

There is, however, no indication of what age Venus's son was. Another reference to the age of a boy player is also by Ben Jonson, in his poem on the death of Solomon Pavy one of the Children of St Paul's

> Yeeres he numbered scarse thirteene
> When *Fates* turn'd cruell,
> Yet three fill'd *Zodiackes* had he beene
> The stages jewell:
> And did act (what now we mone)
> Old men so duely,
> As, sooth, the *Parcae* though him one.
> (Jonson: Works:vol.8.p.77)

This verse states that Pavy had been acting since he was ten years old. It seems unlikely that a child of eight would have sufficient vocal power to play in an open air theatre and that ten, or even later, would be a suitable recruiting age for the Men's Companies. Apprenticeships could be entered into at any age and to any guild, for it was not obligatory to practise the trade of your Guild - Ben Jonson, for example, was a bricklayer. According to Stephen Orgel in *Call me Ganymede* William Condell, son of Henry Condell, was apprenticed to a haberdasher: Robert Armin, the first Feste, was a goldsmith's apprentice, his Master being Iohn Louyson, and John Lowin, another actor, was also apprenticed to a goldsmith: John Heminges was a grocer. William

Trigg, who was well-known for his portrayal of women's parts, claimed in the Lord Mayor's Court that he was apprenticed to Heminges in 1626 for twelve years: John Wright and Stephen Hammerton were both apprenticed to William Blagrave, who partly owned the King's Revels Company. The *Calendar of State Papers, Domestic, London, 1633-1634* records a boy player who,

> ...has gone with this company up and down the country playing stage plays these two years last past. His father promised his master, Edward Whiting, that he should serve him seven years.

Another document states

> Item, it is likewise...agreed by and between the said parties that whereas by general consent of all the whole company, all the children are bound to the said Martin Slater for the term of three years. He the said Martin Slater doth by these presents bind himself to the residue of the company in the sum of forty pounds sterling that he shall not wrong or injure the residue of the said company in the parting with or putting away any one or more of the young men or lads to any persons, or otherwise without the special consent and full agreement of his fellow sharers, except the term of his or their apprenticeship be fully paid. (Greenstreet, *New Shakespeare Society Transactions, 1887-92* Part 3, p.276, quoted Mann)

So, a young player would be under the tutelage of an older, established actor, living with him, and in daily contact with the company of which his Master was a fellow-sharer. He would watch the company at work continuously, and be called upon to appear himself, first in walk-on parts, and then as his training in voice, dance, singing and the skills of acting grew would take the lesser then the more important parts. It is not known how many boy actors were in each company, but the total number must have been very small. There are rarely more than four women's parts in Renaissance plays, so probably six or seven boys were apprenticed to each company and so only two or three hundred boys in the whole period in which they were used. In Henslowe's Diaries there are references to Thomas Dowton who had two boys apprenticed to him. In 1599 and 1600, Henslowe refers to Dowton's bigger boy and later on refers to Thomas Dowton's boy, Thomas Parsons

> lent unto Thomas Dowton the 5 of June 1600 to buy a suit for his boy in the play of Cupid and Psyche the sum of £2. (Henslowe's Diaries: ed.1961.p.22)

John Rice, an actor listed in the First Folio was John Heminges's boy and was skilful enough to be chosen to act before James 1.

That the relationship between Master and boy could be a good one is evident from the will of Augustine Phillips who left to his apprentice James Sands forty shillings and some musical instruments, while his other apprentice also got forty shillings as well as a white taffeta doublet and some mouse-coloured velvet hose.

There is, of course no way a child today could experience this way of life, the education laws prevent it. The nearest modern equivalent is the children at the Royal Ballet School who are taught by ex-dancers and who have a special relationship with the Company through appearing in productions, or boys at a Cathedral choir school who, again, are taught by professional musicians and are expected to be professional themselves.

The question of how old the boys were is an intriguing one, and one that cannot be finally answered. We know the ages of two apprentices for Lowin was sixteen or seventeen, while Arthur Savill was fourteen years old when he entered into his eight-year apprenticeship, but it is not known what parts they were engaged to play. T.J.King in *Casting Shakespeare's Plays* observes

> Baptismal records survive for three boy actors with the King's Men, and this evidence indicates the age at which these boys play female roles and the ages at which these same boys first act male roles. For example, John Honyman was baptized on 7th February 1613; he plays Domitill (113 lines) in RA (*The Roman Actor*), licensed on 11th October 1626; he plays Sophia (484 lines) in Pict (*The Picture*), licensed on 8th June 1629; he plays Clarinda (499 lines) in DF (1629)(*The Deserving Favourite*). Thereafter Honyman plays adult male roles...(King: p.19)

Assuming that boys stopped playing women's roles when their voices broke then finding out at what age this happened could be another indication of the age of a boy player.

Boys' voices broke at a different age from now when thirteen is the average age, though even today there are exceptions. In the 1980s the boy soprano, Aled Jones, sang professionally in a soprano voice until he was seventeen. He said, in an interview on BBC1, Summer 1992, that his voice never broke but just slid down lower. Master Ernest Lough, who recorded "O for the Wings of a Dove" and other records with the Temple Church in the late 1920s sang treble until he was seventeen(interview on Channel 4, January 1994). It seems, too, that when a boy's voice first breaks he has the choice of remaining in the higher register or going immediately to the lower, more manly tones, a choice most boys prefer. A trained boy can be more adept at doing this than a boy who does not sing professionally. Boys' voices have broken at different times in different ages, eighteen was the normal age in Victorian times. Schubert sang soprano until he was eighteen, the age at which the voices of the choirboys of the Chapel Royal in the early eighteenth century broke. In the late fifteenth century boys of Edward IV's choir were sent to University at eighteen *if their voices had broken*

> And when any of these children come to xviij years of age, and their voices change he cannot be preferred in this chapel. (quoted Wulstan: p.240)

In the 1560s the archives of Durham Cathedral state that the boys' voices were breaking around fifteen to sixteen, while at Chichester the voices broke at sixteen. The oral tradition at Winchester and Norwich is "much later than now", while at Canterbury, Thomas Bull and Alexander Henley stayed eight years in the choir, from 1561 to 1569, which if we assume an age of seven to eight when they arrived (the

age boys left petty school) then they would have been around sixteen when their voices broke.

Gustav Leonhardt, co-director of Telefunken's Bach Cantata Cycle, quoted in *The Independent*, 22nd March 1993, blames the early breaking of boys' voices today on a high-protein diet and MacDonalds! In an age which ate comparatively little protein to what is eaten today boys' voices broke later. One further point: a woman was not allowed to divorce her husband for impotence until he had reached the age of eighteen for it was not considered likely that he would have, to use the delicate Elizabethan phrase, enough ink in his pen until then. (cf the divorce of Frances Howard and the Earl of Essex: and Ann Jenalie Cook's discussion: pp.20/21) Summing up, I think it can be reasonably stated that the average boy player would not embark upon minor women's roles until he was thirteen, would play leads at fifteen to sixteen and maybe until he was eighteen.

As the boys were required to sing in the plays they would have had professional training in singing, certainly the boys of Paul's did, and the adult companies would not wish that their boys would be less brilliant than them. Thomas Gainesford writes in *The Rich Cabinet* (London, 1616)

> Players have many times, many excellent qualities: as dancing, activitie, musicke, *song*, elloqution, ability of body, memory, vigilancy, skill of weapon, pregnancy of wit and such like. (quoted Austern: p.15: my italics)

Musical education in English choir schools has always been exceptionally good and the English have been noted for their bright, clear voices from medieval times. As was quoted from a proverb by Ornithoparcus in his *Micrologus* of 1517

> Galli cantant, Italiae capriant, Germani ululant, Anglici jubilant (Wulstan: p.218)
>
> [The French sing, the Italians warble, the Germans howl, the English are jubilant - my trans]

Wulstan points out the vocal sound produced in the 16th century (except in present day Cathedral choirs which were untainted by contact with Continental operatic conditions) would be totally different in vocal colour to the sound produced today. He writes

> To compare the tone quality of even comparatively recent times to that of our own times can be hazardous; the vague notion that the modern 'Handelian' choral society is singing in a tradition directly connected with Baroque style is manifestly wrong..... For example, female contraltos were virtually unknown in England until their introduction by Mendelssohn; and only in Arne's day had women sopranos displaced boys' voices in the chorus. (Wulstan: p.219)

Wulstan concludes that the male alto had been without rivals, and if this conclusion is applied to boy actors it can be conjectured that boys' voices were trained to be high

and clear and their training in singing resembling that of a choirboy today.

> The tone of both boys' and male alto voices have been the subject of recent change, but here these changes are almost certainly a reversion towards earlier tonal qualities.....The preference for boys' and male alto voices seem to have been more widespread in England than elsewhere. (Wulstan: p.220)

Wulstan also points out that

> In normal vocal production laryngeal action can be regarded as primary, and the modificatory processes in respect of resonance as secondary. (Wulstan: p.220)

So what is known about both the laryngeal action and resonance in voice production in Shakespeare's England? Again it is necessary to see what was happening musically, which, as Wulstan says can only be adduced (p.220). He opines that the employment of higher registers can only be the result of a certain amount of training and that boys can be trained to use a head voice as well as a chest voice - these terms are used by the tenth century Arabic scholar al-Farabi. The chest voice, the *voce di petto*, has an upper limit of *D* or *E* flat while in using a head tone, the *voce di testo*, the voice can be stretched an octave above normal. Amplification of sound takes place in the cavities of the head (very little resonance is produced in the chest) and there is considerable flexibility between laryngeal and

resonance registers which means that a trained boy could produce a very varied range of tones by easing tension as the voice ascends. It has been found that male counter-tenors or altos can choose to sing either in the head i.e. alto register, or in a bass register, examples being the renowned Alfred Deller and James Bowman who was originally a choirboy at New College, Oxford. Andrew Smith, writing about Bowman remarks that

> ... a male alto produces high notes by using the larynx in such a way that only part of the total length of the vocal chords can vibrate, the resulting clear, bright sound being focused into the various resonating chambers of the skull. In theory, every developed male should be able to make some noise at high pitch without the need of surgery. (*The Independent*, 22nd March, 1993)

Smith goes on to say that

> The difference between a bass singing falsetto and a genuine counter tenor is one of tone production, X-rays showing that the larynx vibrates in exactly the same way for both voices. Although he is no match in terms of volume for a dramatic tenor, Bowman's voice will carry even in the quietest passages because of its focus. (same source)

Bowman is now in his middle years, but the techniques he uses can be used for boys' voices, and the young Russian singer, Slava Kagan Payli, who sings in a higher register

than Bowman (though he, too, can also sing bass) refers to himself as a male soprano and shows that a high voice can be maintained and prolonged. The Italian theorist Zacconi(1592) said that a voice should be neither forced nor slow but that the throat should be kept open so that rapid passages could be sung with ease (Wulstan: p.232) and the vowels, in English Renaissance music, were made with the tongue, as in speech, which helped to produce a dramatic tone in higher frequencies. Maffei (1562) (quoted Wulstan, p.229) says that the mouth should not be opened more than with reasoning with friends and that the tongue should be in contact with the lower teeth and a forward jaw position also enhances the high tone making for brilliance. This is apparent in the glass windows of the Beauchamp Chapel of St Mary's, Warwick where the Angel musicians and singers , heralding the Blessed Virgin Mary are shown using a lateral opening of the mouth and the natural jaw position prevalent in 16th century England, and which is the same used in Cathedral choirs today

> The head voice was used by English trebles without shrillness and the agility needed to sing polyphonic music means that a light flexible tone was required. (Wulstan: pp. 241/2)

Writing in 1636, Charles Butler in *Principles of Musick* describes five voices - treble, mean, counter-tenor or male alto, tenor and bass. Two voices belong to boys

> The Mean is so called, because it is a middling or mean high part between the Countertenor (the highest part of a man) and the Treble (the highest

> part of a boy or woman:) and therefor may be sung by a mean voice.
>
> The Treble is so called because his notes are placed (for the most part) in the third septenari octave, ie. the third octave, from Gamut, or the Treble clefs: and is to be sung with a high clear sweet voice. (quoted Wulstan: p.234)
>
> *(The top treble note in the third septenari is the same as a modern B flat. Wulstan p.234)*

George Guest, choirmaster at St John's College, Cambridge, writing in *Early Music* says

> to sing top notes one needs to take big breaths, to throw one's shoulders back, and to adopt something of the poise of an all-in wrestler.(*The Independent*, 22nd March, 1993)

Guest trained his boys to sing a three-octave range from B flat or D below middle C to the G above top C saying that it helped the boys to have much bigger, more dramatic voices.

Early manuscripts of choirs, such as are found in the *Northumberland Household Book* list both mean and treble voices and, judging from a correspondence between Henry VIII and Wolsey in 1518 there was great rivalry in getting good boy singers (Wolsey had ten boy singers, against Northumberland's five or six). Whether Henry acquired the desired boy or not his choir was noted for its great singing, the secretary to the Venetian ambassador, Sagudino, said that the King's choristers were "more divine than

human" and Wulstan says (p.239) that the Magnificat written by Cornish (one of the composers of the *Eton Choirbook*) needed a breathtaking display of vocal agility by both trebles and means, while a high mean voice was prevalent in much Jacobean music. From both modern and Renaissance examples it can be seen that it is possible for both men and boys to sing in high, clear and sweet voices: that great thought and care was taken in producing voices of spectacular ability for the choirs of noblemen and the court in Renaissance times and that voice production differed very little then from now, the English always being renowned for their light, clear, high singing, still prevalent in Cathedral choirs today. As was said previously, to keep in competition with the Boys' Companies, and to maintain popularity, the boys in the Men's Companies would have been expected to sing as well as their counterparts in the Boys' Companies, who were trained singers of exceptional skill.

But the primary duty of a boy player would be to speak verse and prose well. To do this he would have to be able to breathe properly. Cecily Berry writes

> We know we need a good supply of breath to give voice power, resonance and flexibility. We know we need its power when working in large spaces. We know we need it when working on classical text where the thoughts are long and often span a number of lines; where, if we break that span we do not quite honour the meaning, or cannot quite twist the pay-off line in a way we want to get the full comedy value out of a speech. (Berry: pp. 25/26).

Berry goes on to say

> The further we go in integration of breath and thought - and by thought I mean the utterance of character charged with whatever feelings he may have - we begin to experience how the thought itself is moving, and the quality of the thought becomes active. We see that how we share the breath is how we share the thought. (Berry: p.26)

These ideas of Berry's would be even more important in an open-air theatre, with no microphones, when this ability to breathe properly would be paramount. For the words would take an even more important position in a theatre without much scenery, no lighting effects and little rehearsal time. The actors would not have the whole play in front of them to study for in Elizabethan times they were only given their own parts and cues. This meant that until the play had been rehearsed several times the motivation (as it is called nowadays) of the characters would be a mystery, so the speaking of the words would be required from the actors to convey both plot and characterisation. Shorter rehearsal time and shorter runs of plays than now would also mean that there was less time to consider psychological reasons for the characters' behaviour. This does not necessarily mean that the characters were not subtly represented, but that the outlines must have been broader and greater weight put on the speaking of the verse. The modern director, Sir Peter Hall, says that correct speaking of the verse reveals the text: actors must keep to the iambic pentameter, marking the caesura, that break somewhere near the middle of a line, and pausing at the ends of lines - if all this is done then the sense becomes apparent. He tells his actors

> The weight runs on to the end of the line where the verb usually is. At the end of the line without a full stop, you get the expectancy of what is coming at the caesura in the next line, so make toward that. Breathe where there is a full stop - at the end of the line, or in the caesura breaks; sometimes you'll have to take an imperceptible breath in between. (Lowen: p.27)

Hall, by the way, always uses the First Folio text as he considers this nearest the punctuation that Shakespeare intended. He also says

> It may need a beat, an elision, but every single line in Shakespeare will scan. Your [the actors] business is to find and keep as close to the five beats of the iambic pentameter as possible and then decide on what's right for you in terms of emphasis and colour. (Lowen: p.26)

He concedes that

> It is tricky to hold in balance both the 'mathematics' of the verse and the emotion and thought behind it.....but like jazz "you can do anything you like with it, once you have found the beat". (Lowen: p.xv)

He admonished his actors during rehearsals of *Antony and Cleopatra*

> Key words must be reconciled with the beat...Find the beat, the ongoing rhythm: then you can do anything.....I beg you, don't see this as a frightful imprisonment: it's the very opposite, it frees you, and the new discipline will add to your strength. (Lowen: p.29)

His actors agreed with him, Tim Pigott-Smith saying

> By following the scansion, you'll find the sense and the emotion works for itself. You don't have to pump it out. (Lowen: p.30)

Dame Judi Dench says

> You work at it, work at it and suddenly it becomes part of you which you never lose. (Lowen: p.30)

John Barton agrees with Hall

> You breathe at the end of the verse lines. I myself believe that in Shakespeare's later verse it is still right more often than not to phrase with the verse line....I think such verse is in part naturalistic writing by Shakespeare...it works. It's been said that's one reason why blank verse was so popular in Elizabethan theatres

> - that it made life easier for the actors. (Barton: p.36)

Shakespeare's actors mainly working in verse would have discovered, naturally, what modern directors and actors have to find out by trial and error. The iambic pentameter is the most natural verse rhythm there is corresponding both to natural speech and to our heart beat . A boy working with an adult company would be with accomplished verse-speakers and would, daily, be hearing this natural and dynamic verse, which, as Hall points out, reveals its meaning by its very construction. The characterisation is there, within the rhythm and the pulse of the verse, which Shakespeare cleverly adapts to the characteristics of the part he is engaged with at that particular moment of the play. As Patsy Rodenberg puts it "The sense is always twinned with the sound". (Rodenberg: p.17)

To quote Hall again

> Every time there's a full stop, there should be a change of tone...on a half-line cue, both the metre and the tone of the previous speaker must be taken over.... (Lowen: p.103)

George.T.Wright thinks that the iambic pentameter is

> Long enough to accommodate a good mouthful of English words, long enough too to require most of its line to break their phrasing somewhere, it

> also resists the tendency to break in half. In fact, it *cannot* do so. A midline pause, wherever it appears, leaves two stressed syllables on one side and three on the other. For iambic pentameter, however highly patterned its syntax, is by nature assymetrical- like human speech. (Wright:p.5)

On the next page he continues

> What makes it [iambic pentameter] even more specific is its uncanny capacity to vary the metrical norm without fundamentally violating it. (Wright:p.6)

Given then that the boys could speak the verse, as Hall says, correctly, and the fact that Shakespeare never expected the boys to speak in long phrases(see Section 2), can we be sure that their actual voices were capable of being heard in the open-air theatres of the day? The boys in the Boys' Companies performed indoors, as, of course, Shakespeare's boys did in the winter at Blackfriars, but could they be heard in the Globe itself? There is no comparison today, of course, but if boy singers in Mozart's *The Magic Flute* or as Miles in Benjamin Britten's *The Turn of the Screw* singing at the vast Coliseum or at the Royal Opera House (each holding over two thousand people) can make themselves heard then we may surmise that the Elizabethan boy could make himself heard.

SECTION TWO

"...trippingly on the tongue..."

Hamlet 3;2.

It is not known how Shakespeare punctuated his plays. Actors and directors who declare that "we must get back to Shakespeare's own punctuation" are speaking nonsense; what they should be concerned with is analysing the pulse, the dynamic of speeches, forgetting the punctuation imposed by editors. The director Peter Brook in both *The Empty Space* and *The Shifting Point* argues that Shakespeare's verse is a rich and agile instrument where the rhythm is paramount. He points out that when Shakespeare changes rhythm then he changes thought, and in switching from verse to prose he gives instructions to the actor and director to change pace as well as thought. To Brook the pattern of the words upon the page is symbolic of the changes that Shakespeare wants. Here it is contended that, although Shakespeare wrote in the iambic pentameter, he knew that each character had his or her own pace of speaking right only for that character, and to find this pulse, this rhythm is essential to the characterisation of that character, and the very nature of the iambic pentameter means that it is highly adaptable to this use. To take an example. In *Romeo and Juliet* there are two speeches which have to be spoken quickly and lightly - one, Mercutio's Queen Mab speech, the other, "Gallop apace you fiery footed steeds" where Juliet speaks of her impatienceto be united with Romeo. Mercutio's speech needs exceptional breath control, its dynamic insisting on a rapid pace, unstressed rhythm with every word telling, otherwise it becomes a tiring list of images, to which it is difficult to listen.

[In this and subsequent speeches, breaths are marked * and for reasons of space speeches will not necessarily be quoted in full, but the argument applies to every speech of every woman character in the canon]

[R & J:1:4]

MERCUTIO
* She is the fairies' midwife and she comes
In shape no bigger than an Agate stone
On the forefinger of an alderman
Drawn with a team of little atomi
Athwart men's noses as they lie asleep
*Her wagon spokes made of long spinners' legs
The cover of wings of grasshoppers
Her traces of moonshine's wat'ry beams
Her collars of the smallest spider web
Her whip of cricket's bone the lash of film
* Her wagoner a small grey-coated gnat
Not half so big as a round little worm
Pricked from the lazy finger of a maid
* Her chariot is an empty hazelnut
Made by the joiner sqirrel or old grub
Time out 'o mind the fairies' coachmakers
*And in this state she gallops night by night
Through lovers' brains and then they dream of love
O'er courtiers' knees that dream on curtsies
straight
O'er ladies' lips who straight on kisses dream
Which oft the angry Mab with blisters plagues
Because their breaths with sweetmeats tainted are
*Sometimes she gallops o'er a lawyer' lip
And then dreams he of smelling out a suit
And sometime comes she with a tithe-pig's tail
Tickling a parson's nose as he lies asleep

Then dreams he of another benefice
* Sometimes she driveth o'er a soldier's neck
And then dreams he of cutting foreign throats
Of breaches, ambuscados Spanish blades
Of healths five fathoms deep and then anon
Drums in his ear at which he starts and wakes
And being thus frighted swears a prayer or two
And sleeps again * this is that very Mab
That plaits the manes of horses in the night
And bakes the elf-locks in foul sluttish hairs
Which once untangled much misfortune bodes
This is the hag when maids lie on their backs
That presses them and learns them first to bear
Making them women of good carriage.....

The phrases are long, need sustained breath control and a dynamic which is fast and light. Compare this with Juliet's speech. The boy actor would be able to take breaths at the end of lines, as well as at the caesura, but above all the dynamic is far more leisurely - the boy has time to breath, to lean back as it were on the verse.He is fully supported.

[R & J: 3:2]

JULIET
*Gallop apace you fiery-footed steeds
Towards *Phoebus* lodging,*such a wagoner
As *Phaetan* would whip you to the west
And bring in the cloudy night immediately*
Spread thy close curtain love-performing night
That runaway's eyes may wink *and *Romeo*
Leap to these arms untalkt of and unseen*

Lovers can see to do their amorous rites
And by their own beauties. or if loue be blind
It best agrees with night * come civil night
Thou sober-suited matron all in black*
And learn me how to lose a winning match
Playd for a pair of stainless maidenhoods*
Hood my unmanned blood bating in my cheeks
With thy black mantle till strange love grown bold
Think true love acted simple modesty
Come night come *Romeo* come thou day in night*
For thou wilt lie upon the wings of night
Whiter than new snow upon a raven's back*
Come gentle night come loving black-browed night
Give me my *Romeo** and when I shall die
Take him and cut him out in little stars*
And he will make the face of heaven so fine
That* all the world will be in love with night
And pay no worship to the garish Sun*
O I have bought the mansion of a love
But not possessed it and though I am sold
Not yet enjoyed*so tedious is this day
As is the night before some festival*
To an impatient child that hath new robes
And may not wear them.

A sensitive reading aloud of this speech will discover that though it expresses extreme impatience it has to be spoken at a more leisurely speed than the Mercutio speech. It is a contention of this thesis that Shakespeare never gave his boy players any speeches that were not within the breath span of a trained boy's voice - about twenty-eight syllables seems to be the longest phrase he expected to be spoken on one breath: that the construction of the boys' speeches is more fragmented than that of the men's speeches, more subordinate clauses, more lists, and that the dynamic

of the verse is gentler, less immediate, more leisurely. *What a player has to do is ignore all punctuation and go for the rhythm, the dynamic, the pulse of the verse and he will find that the breaths come at easy, natural intervals for the thought and the beat go together.*

This speech, too, shows other characteristics in writing which Shakespeare used to help his boy player to give an effective reading of his part. He used imagery that was very much within a young person's understanding. The child waiting impatiently for a party, longing to wear new clothes. His use of consonants to create a mood is very apparent in this speech and helps to give it its urgency without hurrying the speaker. For example the use of 'w' and a hard 'c' in

> Such a waggoner
> As Phaeton would whip you to the west
> And bring in cloudy night immediately
> Spread thy close curtain, love-performing night,
> That runaways' eyes may wink.

and again

For thou wilt lie upon the wings of night
Whiter than new snow on a raven's back

where the 'ws' force the thought and pace onwards while the 'n' sounds give a liquidity to the speech.

To strengthen the argument, a study of the speeches of Viola and Sebastian in *Twelfth Night* reveals the same disparity in dynamic though presumably the speeches would have been spoken by a boy and young man of similar build, the characters being twins "born within the hour".

[TN: 4:2]

SEBASTIAN
This is the air that is the glorious sun*
This pearl she gave me I do feel't and see't
And though 'tis wonder that enwraps me thus
Yet 'tis not madness.* Where's Antonio then?*
I could not find him at the Elephant
Yet there he was and there I found this credit
That he did range the town to seek me out.*
His counsel now might do me golden service
For though my soul disputes well with my sense
That this might be some happy error but no madness
*Yet doth this accident and flood of fortune
So far exceed all instance all discourse
That I am ready to distrust mine eyes
And wrangle with my reason that * persuades me
To any other trust but that I am mad
Or else the lady's mad.* Yet if 'twere so
She could not sway her house command her followers
Take and give back affairs and their dispatch
With such smooth discreet and stable bearing
As I perceive she does.*

Compare this with Viola's speech

[TN 2:5]

VIOLA

A blank my lord. She never told her love
But let concealment like a worm i'th'blood
Feed on her damask cheek.* She pined in thought*
And with a green and yellow melancholy
She sat like patience on a monument
Smiling at grief.* Was not this love indeed?
We men may say more swear more but indeed
Our shows are more than will* for still we prove
Much in our vows but little in our love.

An altogether more gentle dynamic, more suited to a young boy's capacity and with the liquid sounding 'm's and 'n's helping to shape the sense.

But, of course, Shakespeare wrote children's parts as well as women's parts and by looking at two of these, Arthur, in *King John*, and Mote,in *Love's Labour's Lost* perhaps more can be learnt about the breathing patterns created for boys, and show how a boy with a trained voice would be able to follow Shakespeare's carefully crafted verse easily.

[KJ: 4:1]

ARTHUR

Have you the heart* When your head did but ache
I knit my handkerchief about your brows
The best I had * a princess wrought it me
And I did never ask it you again *

And with my hand at midnight held your head *
And like the watchful minutes to the hour
Still and anon cheered up the heavy time
Saying * 'What lack you?' and 'Where lies your grief'?
Or * 'What good love may I perform for you?'
*Many a poor man's son would have lain still
And ne'er have spoke a loving word to you *
But you at your sick service had a prince.*
Nay you may think my love was crafty love
And called it cunning. Do an if you will*
If heaven be pleased that you will use me ill
Why then you must.* Will you put out mine eyes
These eyes that never did nor never shall
So much as frown on you?

This speech again shows Shakespeare's expert handling of sounds to make thoughts expressive. The repeated 'h' sounds give a quietness and the 'l' sounds a tenderness to this speech.

Mote in *Love's Labour's Lost* speaks prose, but still in short, manageable phrases as is shown in this his longest speech.

[LLL;3;1]

MOTE
* No my complete master *but to jig off a tune at the tongue's end canary to it with your feet * humour it with turning up your eyelids * sigh a note and sing a note sometimes through the throat as if you swallowed love with singing love *

> sometime through the nose as if you snuffed up love by smelling love with your hat penthouse - like o'er the shop of your eyes * with your arms crossed on your thin-belly doublet like a rabbit on a spit * or your hands in your pocket like a man after the old painting * and keep not too long in one tune but a snip and away. * These are complements these are humours these betray nice wenches * that would be betrayed without these * and make them men of note - do you note ? *men* - that are most affected to these.

In this speech we find one characteristic that appears in many of Shakespeare's speeches for women characters - the list. A series of short, but leisurely phrases such as the list of flowers in speeches by Ophelia, Gertrude, Perdita and the Queen in *Cymbeline*, Ophelia's naming of Hamlet's characteristics in "O what a noble mind", Olivia naming her beauties, though this is a device which is not only exclusive to them.

Looking at the speeches written for Shakespeare's women characters we find similar patterns of speech. Of course, today's actresses phrase the speeches in their own way, and being larger, having bigger rib cages they do not need to take as many breaths as the smaller boy actors would, and every actress has her own pattern of breathing, but in the following speeches it will be seen that it is possible to break the blank verse, or the prose up into small phrases, capable of being spoken by a boy *without destroying the sense*, indeed the speeches seem to demand to be so fragmented. And it is noticeable that as Shakespeare's verse became more supple, more complex, so his use of subordinate clauses, ideas expressed in parentheses becomes

more and more prevalent, especially in the women's speeches, so that a late charaacter such as Innogen or Volumnia while speaking the most complex of thoughts does so in short phrases, while the earlier women tend to speak in more regular verse. It seems too that, particularly in the earlier plays, the verse for the women's parts is very accented, again giving the maximum help to the boy player. One early example is Julia in *Two Gentlemen of Verona* whose speeches have a heavy beat

[TGV: 1:2]

JULIA
*Nay would I were so angered with the same *
O hateful hands, to tear such loving words *
Injurious wasps, to feed upon such sweet honey
And kill the bees that yield it with your stings.
*I'll kiss each several paper for amends. *
Look, here is writ 'Kind Julia'* - unkind Julia
As in revenge of thy ingratitude *
I throw my name against the bruising stones
Trampling contemptuously on thy disdain. *
And here is writ 'Love-wounded Proteus'*
Poor wounded name my bosom as a bed
Shall lodge thee till thy wound be thoroughly
healed*
And thus I search it with a sovereign kiss
But twice or thrice was 'Proteus written down *
Be calm good wind blow not a word away
Till I have found each letter in the letter
Except mine own name * That some whirlwind bear
Upon a ragged fearful hanging rock
And throw it thence into the raging sea. *
O here in one line is his name twice writ *

'Poor forlorn Proteus' 'passionate Proteus
'To the sweet Julia' * that I'll tear away
And yet I will not sith so prettily
He couples it to his complaining names. *
Thus will I fold them one upon another
Now kiss embrace contend do what you will.

In *The Comedy of Errors* the verse is even more regular - one of the scenes (Act 2:scene 1) between Adriana and Luciana being in couplets while Adriana's long speech in scene 2 being both heavily accented and breaking easily into two-lined sections.

[COE: 2:2]

ADRIANA
*Ay ay Antipholus look strange and frown
Some other mistress hath thy sweet aspects.*
I am not Adriana nor thy wife. *
The time was once when thou unurged wouldst vow
That never words were music to thine ear *
That never object pleasing in thy eye *
That never touch well welcome to thy hand *
That never meat sweet-savoured in thy taste
Unless I spake or looked or touched or carved to thee.*
How comes it now my husband O how comes it
That thou art then estranged from thyself *
Thy 'self' I call it being strange to me
*That undividable incorporate
Am better than thy dear self's better part. *
Ah do not tear away thyself from me
For know my love* as easy mayst thou fall
A drop of water in the breaking gulf *

And take unmingled thence that drop again
Without addition or diminishing *
As take from me thyself and not me too. *....

Even this early in his plays Shakespeare had forged a pattern of writing that aided his boys - short phrases, lists and a heavy beat.

In the main the women's parts are very short, another aid for the boy as he would not have to be on stage for great lengths of time and would be able to rest and recuperate his voice between scenes - but one part stretches over four plays, that of Queen Margaret in *I Henry VI, The First Part of the Contention of the Two Famous Houses of York and Lancaster (2 Henry VI), The True Tragedy of Richard Duke of York (3 Henry VI)* and *The Tragedy of Richard III.* It is both an unsympathetic part and one that needs great skill for it starts with Margaret as a young girl, proceeds through her middle-age into the harridan of *Richard III.* Shakespears gives all the aid he can to his young player.

[FP:1:2]

QUEEN MARGARET
My Lord of Suffolk say is this the guise?
Is this the fashion in the court of England?*
Is this the government of Britain's isle *
Is this the royalty of Albion's king? *
What shall King Henry be a pupil still
Under the surly Gloucester's governance? *
Am I a queen in title and in style

And must be made subject to a duke? *
I tell thee Pole * when in the city Tours
Thou rann'st in honour of my love
And stol'st away the ladies' hearts of France *
I thought King Henry had resembled thee
In courage courtship and proportion. *
But all his mind is bent to holiness*
To number Ave-Maries on his beads. *
His champions are the prophets and apostles *
His weapons holy saws of sacred wit *
His study is his tilt-yard and his loves
Are brazen images of canonized saints. *
I would the college of the cardinals
Would choose him Pope * and carry him to Rome
And set the triple crown upon his head
That were a state fit for his holiness.

Even as her thought becomes more complex and the verse more assured, the same simplicity of breathing maintains

[RDY:1:4]

QUEEN MARGARET
*Brave warriors, Clifford and Northumberland *
Come make him stand upon this molehill hill *
That wrought at mountains with outstretched arm
Yet parted but the shadow with his hand. *
What was it you that would be England's King? *
Was't you that revelled in our Parliament
And made preachment of your high descent? *
Where are your mess of sons to back you now? *
The wanton Edward and the lusty George? *

And where's that valiant crookback prodigy
Dickie, your boy that * with his grumbling voice
Was wont to cheer his dad in mutinies? *
Or with the rest where is your darling Rutland? *
Look York I stained this napkin with the blood
That valiant Clifford * with his rapier's point
Made issue from the bosom of thy boy. *
And if thine eyes can water for his death
I give thee this to dry thy cheeks withal. *....

and in her final play *Richard III*, although Shakespeare's verse is becoming less line-stopped, that is the phrases are riding over the end of lines, the rhythm and thought are still fairly simple to what is to follow.

[RIII:1:3]

QUEEN MARGARET
*And leave thee out? Stay, dog, for thou shalt
hear me.*
If heaven have any grievous plague in store
Exceeding those that I can wish upon thee *
O let them keep it till thy sins be ripe *
And then hurl down their indignation
Upon thee the troubler of the world's peace. *
The worm of conscience still begnaw thy soul
Thy friends suspect for traitors while thou liv'st *
And take deep traitors for thy dearest friends.
*No sleep close up that deadly eye of thine *
Unless it be while some tormenting dream
Affrights thee with a hell of ugly devils. *
Thou elvish-marked abortive rooting hog *

Thou that was sealed in thy nativity
The slave of nature and the son of hell*
Thou slander of thy heavy mother's womb
Thou loathed issue of thy father's loins
Thou rag of honour * thou detested.....

By the time he wrote *The Merchant of Venice* Shakespeare had learnt to write from half line to half line, that is the pause at the end of the line is less pronounced and the sense of the sentences can run from the caesura to either the caesura in the second line after, or to the end of the line. Portia's speech shows this

[MV:3:1]

PORTIA
I pray you tarry. Pause a day or two
Before you hazard for in choosing wrong
I lose your company. * Therefore forbear awhile
There's something tells me - but it is not love -
I would not lose you * and you know yourself
Hate counsels not in such quality. *
But lest you should not understand me well *
And yet a maiden has no tongue but thought *
I would detain you here some month or two
Before you venture for me. * I could teach you
How to choose right but then I am forsworn. *
So will I never be so may you miss me
But if you do you'll make me wish a sin
That I had been forsworn * Beshrew your eyes
They have o'er looked and divided me
One half of me is yours, the other half yours *
Mine own I would say but if mine, then yours

And so all yours * O these naughty times
Puts bars between owners and their rights
And so though yours not yours * Prove it so
Let fortune go to hell for it not I.
I speak too long but *'tis to piece the time
To eke it and to draw it out in length
To stay you from election.

Here the alliteration greatly helps the mood of the speech, where each emotion Portia undergoes has its own pattern and speed. Portia is one of the comedy heroines who speaks prose as well as verse, and here again, Shakespeare takes care that the lines are within a boy's capacity. The sentences are broken into short phrases, and phrases contain no more than twenty-six syllables, the equivalent to two-and-a-half lines of blank verse.

[MV:1:1]

PORTIA
*If to do were as easy to know what were good to do chapels had been churches and poor man's cottages prince's palaces. * It is a good divine that follows his own instructions. * I can easier teach twenty what were good to be done than * be one of the twenty to follow mine own teaching. *The brain may devise laws for the blood but a hot temper leaps o'er a cold decree.* Such a hare is madness the youth to skip o'er the meshes of good counsel the cripple. * But this reasoning is not in the fashion to choose to choose me a husband.* O me the word 'choose'! I may neither choose who I would nor refuse who I dislike * so is the will of

a living daughter curbed by the will of a dead father, * is it not hard Nerissa that I cannot choose one nor refuse none?

Another prose example is that of Beatrice in *Much Ado About Nothing*

[MAN:4:2]

BEATRICE
*Princes and counties * Surely a princely testimony, a goodly count, Count Comfit. a sweet gallant surely. * O that I were a man for his sake * But manhood is melted into courtesies valour into compliment * and men are only turned into toungue and trim ones too. He is now as valiant as Hercules that only tells a lie and swears it. *I cannot be a man with wishing therefore I will die a woman with grieving.

and Rosalind in *As You Like It* who also speaks mainly in prose

[AYLI: Epilogue]

ROSALIND
*It is not the fashion to see the lady the epilogue but * it is no more unhandsome than to see the lord the prologue. * If it be true that a good wine needs no bush 'tis true that a good play needs no epilogue.* Yet to good wine they

do use good bushes and good plays prove the better by the help of good epilogues. * What a case am I in then * that am neither a good epilogue nor cannot insinuate with you in the behalf of a good play * I am not furnished like a beggar therefore to beg will not become me * My way is to conjure you and I'll begin with the women * I charge you O women for the love you bear to men to like as much of this play as please you * And I charge you O men for the love you bear to women * as I perceive by you simpering none of you hates them * that between you and the play may please * If I were a woman I would kiss as many of you that had beards that pleased me * complexions that liked me and breaths that I defied not. And I am sure as many as have good beards or goodfaces or sweet breaths will for my kind offer *when I make curtsey bid me farewell.

In prose, as in verse, Shakespeare follows a similar pattern of lists, subordinate clauses and a highly rhythmical prose. Indeed both these two speeches could, without much difficulty be transposed into verse, so consistent is the metre.

Turning to the tragedies, where women play a far less important role, their parts being, in the main, subordinate to the men, the verse takes on a more measured pace and dynamic and becomes very flexible. This, of course, helps the boy player, and his set speeches become akin to arias in opera. In *Hamlet* both Ophelia and Gertrude have what may be described as set pieces. Ophelia's is at the end of the 'Nunnery' scene and is the one used in the Appendix to show

how various editors have interpreted speeches by punctuation. Here it is punctuated by breath:

[HAMLET:3:1]

OPHELIA
*O what a noble mind is here o'erthrown *
The courtier's soldier's scholar's eye tongue
sword
Th'expectancy and the rose of the fair state *
The glass of fashion and the mould of form
Th'observed of all observers quite quite down *
And I of ladies most deject and wretched
That sucked the honey of his music vows *
Now see that noble and most sovereign reason
Like sweet bells jangled out of tune and harsh*
That unmatched form and feature of blown youth
Blasted with ecstasy * O woe is me
To see what I have seen see what I see!

This is written in perfectly regular two-line sections and a measured dynamic.

Gertrude's long speech 'There is a willow' is more complex, but again we see the regular features which pervade the boy players' speeches; a list , the two to two-and-a-half line span and subordinate clauses, and a leisurely pace, which is also helped by the liquid, soft consonants of 'l' and 'm' and 'n' as well as by the long vowel sounds 'ee', 'ai' and 'oh' and 'oo'.

[HAMLET: 4:7]

GERTRUDE
*There is a willow grows aslant a brook
That shows his hoar leaves in the glassy stream. *
Therewith fantastic garlands did she make
Of crow-flowers nettles daisies and long purples
That * liberal shepherds give a grosser name
But our cold maids do dead men's fingers call them
*There on the pendant boughs her crownet weeds
Clamb'ring to hang * an envious sliver broke
When down the weedy trophies and herself
Flee in the weeping brook her clothes spread wide
*And mermaid-like a while they bore her up
Which time she chanted snatches of old tunes *
As one incapable of her own distress
Or like a creature native and endued
Unto that element * but long it could not be *
Till that her garments heavy with their drink
Pulled the poor wretch from her melodious lay
To muddy death.

Compare this to Claudius where the dynamic is faster

[HAMLET: 3:3]

KING CLAUDIUS
*O my offence is rank it smells to heaven
It hath the primal eldest curse upon't
A brother's murder pray I cannot
Though inclination be as sharp as will
My stronger guilt defeats my strong intent *

And like a man to double business bound
I stand in pause where I shall first begin
And both neglect * What if this cursed hand
Were thicker than itself with brother's blood
Is there not rain enough in the sweet heavens
To wash it white as snow* whereto serves mercy
But to confront the visage of offence
And what's in prayer but this twofold force
To be forestalled ere we come to fall
Or pardoned being down then I'll look up *
My fault is passed but O what form of prayer
Can serve my turn * 'Forgive me my foul murder?'*
That cannot be since I am still possessed
Of those effects for which I did the murder
My crown mine own ambition and my queen....

Here we can hear a different, more urgent, feel from that used for the speeches of Ophelia and Gertrude. All three speeches express passionate feelings, but the women's speeches have a more stately rhythm. Perhaps to argue from a large male part may, it could be argued, unfair, but this contention can also be applied to minor male parts. For instance, consider this speech from *Twelfth Night*

[TN:5:1]

ANTONIO

*Orsino noble sir
Be pleased that I shake off these names you give me
Antonio never yet was thief or pirate
Though I confess on base and ground enough
Orsino's enemy * A witchcraft drew me hither
That most ingrateful boy there by your side
From the rude sea's enraged and foamy mouth

I did redeem a wreck past hope he was
His life I gave him and did thereto add
My love without retention or restraint
All his in dedication *For his sake
Did I expose myself pure for his love
Into the danger of this adverse town
Drew to defend him when he was beset
Where being apprehended his false cunning
Not meaning to partake with me in danger *
Taught him to face me out of his acquaintance
And grew a twenty years' removed thing
While one would wink denied me my own purse
Which I had recommended to his use
Not half an hour before.

where the beat is urgent, the phrases long, needing sustained breath to maintain both thought and pace.

Compare these two speeches with the fragmented words of Cressida

[TC:3:2]

CRESSIDA
*Hard to seem won but I was won my lord
With the first glance that ever * pardon me
If I confess much you will play the tyrant *
I love you now but till now not so much
But I might master it * In faith I lie*
My thoughts were like unbridled children grown
Too headstrong for their mother* See we fools
Why have I blabbed? Who shall be true to us

When we are so unsecret to ourselves?*
But thou I loved you well I wooed you not*
And yet in good faith I wished myself a man
Or that we women had men's privilege
Of speaking first * Sweet bid me hold my tongue
For in this rapture I shall surely speak
The thing I shall repent * See see your silence
Cunning in dumbness in my weakness draws
My soul of counsel from me stop my mouth.

or Isabella in *Measure for Measure*

[MM:2:4]

ISABELLA
*To whom should I complain? Did I tell this
Who would believe me * O perilous mouths
That bear in them one and the self-same tongue
Either of condemnation or aproof *
Bidding the law make curtsy to their will
Hooking both right and wrong to th'appetite
To follow as it draws * I'll to my brother*
Though he hath fall'n by prompture of the blood
Yet hath he in him such a mind of honour
That * had he twenty heads to tender down
On twenty bloody blocks he'd yield them up*
Before his sister should her body stoop
To such abhorred pollution.*
Then Isabel live chaste and brother die*
More than our brother is our chastity*
I'll tell him yet of Angelo's request
And fit his mind to death for his soul's rest.

These two speeches, totally different in emotion and pace yet still have in common a fragmented structure, short, easily managed phrases, one thought piling on top of another, a list, in fact, of short, pungent ideas that can be punctuated by breaths. With Desdemona, too, we find the same kind of construction. Before the Senate, she declares

[OTH:1:3]

DESDEMONA
*That I did love the Moor to live with him
My downright violence and storm of fortunes
May trumpet to the world * My heart's subdued
Even to the very quality of my lord *
I saw Othello's visage in my mind
And * to his honours and his valiant parts
Did I my soul and fortunes consecrate
So that dear lords * if he be left behind
A moth of peace and he go to the war*
The rites for why I love him are bereft me
And I a heavy interim shall support
By his dear absence * Let me go with him.

Here, again, Shakespeare helps his young protagonist with sound. Using the liquid 'l' and the softness of 'n's and 'm's to express Desdemona's love, he contrasts these sounds with harder ones, such as 'r' and 'd' to show her determination.

The same short phrases used by Desdemona mark Helena's speeches in *All's Well That End's Well*

[AWTEW: 1:1]

HELENA

¥O were that all I think not on my father
And these great tears grace his remembrance more
Than those I shed for him * What was he like
I have forgot him * My imagination
Carries no favour in't but Bertram's
I am undone * There is no living none
If Bertram be away * 'Twere all one
That I should love a bright particular star
And think to wed it * he is so above me
In his bright radiance and collateral light
Must I be comforted not in his sphere *
Th'ambition in my love thus plagues itself
The hind that would be mated by the lion
Must die for love * 'Twas pretty though a plague
To see him every hour * to sit and draw
His arched brows his hawking eye his curls
In our heart's table * heart too capable
Of every line and trick of his sweet favour *
But now he's gone and my idolatrous fancy
Must sanctify his relics.

Goneril in *King Lear* is arguably the most vigorous of the three sisters. Her speech to Lear is full of pulsating energy, which Shakespeare creates by using the hissing consonant 's' and short, sharp words in sucession, as in "In rank and not-to-be-endured riots" where the hard consonants thrust the thought forward.

[KL: 1:4]

GONERIL
*Not only sir this your all-licensed fool
But other of your insolent retinue
Do hourly carp and quarrel * breaking forth
In rank and not-to-be-endured riots * Sir
I had thought by making this well known unto you
To have found safe redress * but now grow fearful
By what yourself too late have spoke and done
That you protect this course * and put it on
By your allowance which if you should the fault
Would not scape censure * nor the redress sleep
Which in the tender of wholesome weal
Might in their working do you that offence
Which else were shame * that then necessity
Will call discreet proceeding

and also though Cordelia's speech is more gracious, it still breaks into manageable fragments

[KL: 4:3]

CORDELIA
*Alack tis he * why he was met even now
As mad as the vexed sea sing aloud
Crowned with rank fumitor and furrow-weeds *
With burdocks hemlock nettles cuckoo-flowers
Darnel and all the idle weeds that grow
In our sustaining corn * A century send forth
Search every acre in the high-grown field
And bring him to our eye * What can man's wisdom
In the restoring his bereaved sense

He that helps him take all my outward worth.

Lady Macbeth has some of the longest and most complex speeches, yet, again, the phrasing is well within a boy's capacity. There is only space for one example, but examination of all her speeches will discover the same pattern of breathing.

[MAC: 1: 4]

LADY MACBETH

.....*The raven himself is hoarse
That croaks the fatal entrance of Duncan
Under my battlements * Come you spirits
That tend on mortal thoughts unsex me here
And fill me from the crown to the toe top-full
Of direst cruelty * Make thick my blood
Stop up th'access and passage of remorse
That * no compunctious visitings of nature
Shake my fell purpose nor keep peace between
Th'effect of it * Come to my woman's breasts
And take my milk for gall you murd'ring ministers*
Wherever in your sightless substances
You wait on nature's mischief * come thick night
And pall thee in the dunnest smoke of hell
That my keen knife see not the wound it makes *
Nor heaven peep through the blanket of the dark
To cry 'Hold hold'.

The hard 'c's juxtaposed with the murmuring 'm's help to convey the sinister quality of this speech.

Looking at Cleopatra's speeches again we find short phrases, lists, or short questions, as in

[AC:1:5]

CLEOPATRA

* O Charmian
Where think'st thou he is now?Stands he or sits he
Or does he walk? Or is he on his horse? *
O happy horse to bear the weight of Antony
Do bravely horse for wot'st thou whom thou mov'st
*The demi-Atlas of the earth.....

or later in the play

[AC: 5:2]

CLEOPATRA
*O Caesar what a wounding shame is this
That thou * vouchsafing here to visit me
Doing the honour of thy lordliness
To one so meek * that mine own servant should
Parcel the sum of my disgraces by
Addition of his envy * Say good Caesar
That I some lady trifles have reserved*
Immoment toys things of such dignity
As we greet modern friends withal*and say
Some nobler token I have kept apart
For Livia and Octavia to induce
Their mediation* must I be unfolded
With one that I have bred* thy gods it smites me
Beneath the fall I have.

where the thought is more sustained but still broken up.

Volumnia in *Coriolanus* is a most complex part and she has several really long speeches which, it might be supposed, make the role a difficult one for a boy player to act, but, again, Shakespeare helps his boy with manageable, short phrasing.

[COR: 5:3]

VOLUMNIA
* Should we be silent and not speak our raiment
And the state of bodies would bewray what life
We had led since thy exile * think with thyself
How more unfortunate that all living women
Are we come hither* since that thy sight which
should
Make our eyes flow with joy hearts dance with
comforts *
Constrains them weep and shake with fears and
sorrows*
Making the mother wife and child to see
The son husband and the father tearing
His country's bowels out * and to poor we
Thine enmity's most capital * Thou barr'st us
Our prayers to the gods which is our comfort
That all but we enjoy * for how can we
Alas how can we for our country pray
Whereto we are bound * Alack or we must lose
The country our dear nurse or else thy person
Our comfort in the country.....

Katherine's long speech at the end of *The Taming of the Shrew* again allows plenty of time and space to breathe, the pulse being quite leisurely and many of the lines end-stopped while another long and taxing speech, Hermione's in the Trial scene, though intricate is really divided into manageable sections and phrases as, again, Shakespeare gives the player time to breathe. To quote from the end of the speech

[WT: 3:2]

HERMIONE

* For life I prize it
As I weigh grief which I would spare * for honour
'Tis a derivative from me to mine
And only that I stand for * I appeal
To your own conscience before Polixenes
Came to your court how I was in your grace *
How merited I to be so * since he came
With what encounter so uncurrent I
Have strained t'appear thus * If one jot beyond
The bound of honour or in act or will
That way inclining * hardened be the hearts
Of all that hear me, and my near'st kin
Cry 'Fie' upon my grave.

The last heroine to be considered is Innogen, whose thoughts are so externalised that all her sentences are convoluted, expressed in many phrases that could be difficult to actually say, but, remembering Hall's dictum that the verse will do the work if it is properly acknowledged, and if the actor breathes in the accepted phrases, then the speech falls into place and is simple to act.

[CYM: 3:2]

INNOGEN

* O for a horse with wings hear'st thou Pisanio?
He is at Milford Haven read and tell me
How far 'tis thither * If one of mean affairs
May plod it in a week why may not I
Glide thither in a day? * Then true Pisanio
Who long'st like me to see thy lord who longst *
O let me bate but not like me yet long'st
But in a fainter kind * O not like me
For mine's beyond beyond say and speak thick *
Love's counsellor should fill the bores of hearing
To the smothering of the sense * How far it is
To this same blessed Milford * And by the' way
Tell me how Wales was made so happy as
T'inherit such a haven * But first of all *
How we may steal from hence and for the gap
That we shall make in time from our hence-going
Till our return to excuse * but first how get
hence
Why should excuse be born or ere begot?
We'll talk of that hereafter * prithee speak
How many score of miles may we well ride
'Twixt hour and hour?

And in the same play the Queen also has speeches that can be comfortably broken up into short phrases.

In examining these, the most important speeches written for the boy player, it can be seen that Shakespeare was aware of the limitations of his boys; understanding that they would be unable to sustain long phrases and great speed, he gives

them the dynamic they need. In all thirty-seven plays it seems impossible to find any speech that cannot be broken up, fragmented, into short, perfectly understandable phrases; there is an amplitude and leisure in the writing of these speeches which is helpful to the young actor, as is the skilful and sensitive using of speech sounds which help the emotion, an idea which is further explored in the next two sections. It is also significant that the parts themselves are much shorter than the leading parts for men. Always the boys have time to rest their voices. It is rare for two difficult scenes involving a boy player to follow one after the other; even Lady Macbeth, one of the most complex of the boys' parts, has frequent rests. Although she appears in three difficult scenes near together (Act 1:5, Act 1:7 and Act 2:2) she does have about a page in between each scene and then, of course, her part dwindles until the sleep-walking scene. Rosalind, the longest women's part in the canon, is off stage for scene after scene, although when on stage her scenes tend to be long. Desdemona is absent for a major part of the play although she is kept in our minds by the plotting against her. Hermione is absent for most of the second half of the play, and even the eponymous heroines Juliet and Cleopatra have long waits between scenes. Portia is absent during the Venice scenes, until the trial, while Viola plays no part in the plot against Malvolio. All in all, Shakespeare took care of his boy players, placing on them no burden that was not easily overcome by them, undoubtedly talented as they were. This analysis of the technical skill needed to play these parts shows that there is nothing in them that a well-trained, able adolescent boy could not accomplish.

SECTION THREE

"...the whirlwind of your passion..."

Hamlet 3:2.

What the boys had to convey, of course, by means of voice, costume and gesture was a truthful portrayal of what it was to be a woman of that period, what ideal the Renaissance woman was, for though the boys had the words given them, it was up to them to fill out these parts and make them real. What then were the Elizabethan ideas about femininity and beauty?

A woman had to be circumspect. From the Middle Ages onward there had been the so-called courtesy books to tell women what the ideal woman should be like. From the *Menagier de Paris*, to Castiglione, women were entreated to be good housewives, look after their men, and to behave modestly. The Menagier tells his fifteen-year-old wife that, among other things she must "keep him in clean linen, for that is your business" (Borstein: p. 56). Castiglione's *The Courtier*, perhaps, had the most influence on the Elizabethans, the first translation by Sir Thoman Hoby being published in 1561. Three years later *The Governor*, by Sir Thomass Elyot, and Roger Ascham's *The Schoolmaster* were other books that laid down good behaviour for both men and women and which imitated or recommended Castiglione's work. His influence on Sir Philip Sydney, Ben Jonson and William Shakespeare is well known. Castiglione is quite explicit

in his ideas on gesture and behaviour where women were concerned. He advocated an "uncontrived simplicity" and "simple and natural gestures". He preferred women not to wear make-up, thinking a heavy one unnecessary,

> Surely you realize how much more graceful a woman is who, if indeed she wishes to do so, paints herself so sparingly and so little that whoever looks at her is unsure whether she is made-up or not, in comparison with one whose face is so encrusted that she seems to be wearing a mask and who dare not laugh for fear of causing it to crack.....(p.86)

He liked artlessness, too, in displaying good features, such as lovely teeth or beautiful hands, thinking this should not be done openly, but skilfully, and sparingly, so as to arouse a desire to see more of them. And he says

> Surely, too, you have sometimes noticed when a woman, passing along the street on her way perhaps to church, happens, in play or for some other reason, to raise just enough of her skirts to reveal her foot and often a little of her leg as well. Does it not strike you as a truly graceful sight if she is seen just at that moment, delightfully feminine, showing velvet ribbons and pretty stockings? (p.87)

(This could be an effective piece of business for Beatrice-Joanna in the first scene of *The Changeling*.)

Castiglione goes on to praise behaviour in which

> affectation is avoided or hidden; and now you can see how incompatible it is with gracefulness and how it robs of charm every movement of the body or of the soul (p.87)

Later on Castiglione differentiates between the behaviour of men and women

> ...for although they have in common some qualities, which are as necessary to the man as to the woman, there are yet others befitting a woman rather than a man, and others again which befit a man but which a woman should regard as completely foreign to her...but, above all, I hold that a woman should in no way resemble a man as regards her ways, her manners, words, gestures and bearing. Thus just as it is fitting that a man should display a certain robust and sturdy manliness, so it is well for a woman to have a certain soft and delicate tenderness, with an air of feminine sweetness in her every movement, which, in her going or staying and whatsoever she does, always makes her appear a woman. (p.211)

A good woman has to

> ...shun affectation: to be naturally graceful: to be well-mannered, clever and prudent: to be neither proud, envious or evil-tongued, nor vain,

> contentious or clumsy....She must also be more circumspect and at greater pains to avoid giving an excuse for someone to speak ill of her; she should not only be beyond reproach but also beyond even suspicion, for a woman lacks a man's resources when it comes to defending herself. (p.211)

This then is the pattern of gentle womanhood that the boy player has to emulate. It is, of course, similar to the one that Kate, in the *Taming of the Shrew*, also pronounces. One point that should be stressed is the naturalness of behaviour and of make-up. Women should speak quietly, too - the pert woman was deprecated. As King Lear puts it

> .....Her voice was ever soft
> Gentle and low, an excellent thing in woman.
> [KL: 3:])

Beatrice is reproved for her pert speech, Benedick exclaiming

> O God, sir, here's a dish I love not. I cannot endure my Lady Tongue

and Katherine was called "Kate the cursed" because of her shrewish tongue, while Coriolanus praises his wife as "My gracious silence".

Women were expected to be obedient, first to their fathers and then, upon marriage, to their husbands. So the ideal woman is graceful, quiet and decorative, qualities which would be expected in a boy actor and which would not be difficult for him to realise as he, too, would be under obedience to his master, would be expected to be graceful and, presumably, not have any great opinions of his own.

But women have a physical life which is entirely different from that of a man, something to which a boy would not have access. The events in her life which make her a woman are menstruation, pregnancy, miscarriages and childbirth. How do the playwrights of the early modern period deal with these? Menstruation is, of course, never discussed: Shakespeare makes one mention in the *The Tempest* ("and as leaky as unstanched wench" 1:1) but only in passing. Nothing is ever said about how a woman feels then but this is common to all literature (except, perhaps, pornography, and the Bible) until the present day. Even now, it is not a subject which is dealt with in the theatre, only in novels. Yet it is central to a woman's life. There are pregnant women in the plays - Helena (*All's Well That Ends Well*) has to achieve pregnancy before Bertram will acknowledge her as a wife, and, by the means of the bed trick, she does. This is treated as comedy, and the pregnancy is at the end of the play and not discussed. Julietta is pregnant in *Measure for Measure* but this is a plot device and her pregnancy is not a matter of detail. The Duchess of Malfi is also pregnant and her condition does give rise to an interesting scene. Bosola suspects her pregnancy but cannot be sure because she is wearing a loose-bodice gown which disguises it. He sets a trap for her

[D of M; 2;1]

BOSOLA

I have a present for your Grace.

DUCHESS

For me, sir?

BOSOLA

Apricocks, Madam.

DUCHESS

O sir, where are they?

I have heard of none to-year.

BOSOLA (aside)

Good, her colour rises

and she eats them greedily and discusses them while Bosola muses

BOSOLA

.....How greedily she eats them!

A whirlwind strike off these bawd farthingales,

For, but for that, and the loose bodied gown,

I should have discover'd apparently

The young springal cutting a caper in her belly.

The Duchess becomes ill and sick from the apricots and Bosola's suspicions are proved.

Again there is no discussion about her condition and she goes on to have at least one other child without any mention of pregnancy or its inconveniences. Hermione in *The Winter's Tale* is also with child but again, except for a little weariness, does not seem to suffer from her condition. Both Perdita's birth and Marina's take place off-stage - Thaisa dies but Hermoine has to stand trial. In the eight or nine productions which I have seen, only one Hermione, Samantha Bond,in the RSC's 1992/3 production has shown any of the soreness and weakness of the aftermath of childbirth. Most Hermiones seem totally unaffected by their experience, so a boy player could do likewise. It can be argued that these experiences have no place on the stage, and,indeed, in the theatre dramatists are still reticent about them, but not, of course, on television where pregnancy, miscarriages and childbirth are often depicted in graphic detail.

One of the most important things to happen to a woman is for her to fall in love,indeed, a later poet, Lord Byron, claimed that it was "woman's whole existence" (*Don Juan* : st.194) and there is a lot of falling in love in Shakespeare's plays. But is it love as it is experienced by people in real life? Nowadays, particularly in novels and on television, love, sexual love, is very explicit. Even on the stage nakedness and salacious sexual gestures are allowed. Shakespeare, obviously, even if the conventions of the time allowed it, could not show naked boys in love scenes for it would immediately have destroyed the illusion that they were women. Verbally, however, he need not have had such restrictions. It could be argued that he did not wish to write about such subjects, and, indeed, it is mainly women writers who write about them, while Shakespeare was unwilling or unable to write about the intimate life of a woman. However he was interested in

dynastic matters and the consequences of childbirth and pregnancy.

Childbirth leads to motherhood. Would this be easy for a boy to act? He would, of course, have known a mother (unless she had died in childbirth) or a substitute mother, a step-mother perhaps, or, when he was apprenticed, his Master's wife. Elizabethan children, however, did not experience the affection that children in the main, have today. Royal children had their own households from a very early age, with servants befitting their rank, all run by a Governor or Governess, seeing their parents but little. This was also true of the aristocracy. Mothering was not a quality that was much appreciated in those times and this is reflected in the plays. Mothers have a subordinate part and it could be argued that this not only reflects the period but also because boys played the women's parts. We do not see the Duchess of Malfi with her children, though she has an affecting speech about them as she dies. We do have Hermione and Lady MacDuff, and both these scenes are charming but show little of the difficult side of being a mother. Elizabeth Woodville has a scene mourning the incarceration of her children, but, again, this is not specifically about mothering. There are no scenes where a child is petted, played with, taught to read, is naughty, cannot sleep, is teething - all of which make up the different aspects of being a good mother. It is significant that there are hardly any mothers of girls. Juliet's mother is an exception, and that relationship could hardly be called a good one. Juliet does have a surrogate mother in the Nurse, but as the play progresses she treats her more and more like a servant, giving her orders that no one would dare to give a mother. Again, it can be argued that Shakespeare had no knowledge of, or wish to write about

such matters, but the absence of mothering does make the women's parts easier for the boys to act.

There are two mothers of sons who do play a prominent part in their plays - Gertrude and Volumnia. In the scenes between Hamlet and his mother she is the victim of his vituperation and has to react to his scorn. She is not the instigator and the momentum of the scene is his, she has to respond, an easier situation to act than if she had the dominant role. Volumnia *is* dominant, it is her chief characteristic. She is bold, outspoken and opinionated, all qualities which any actor would relish, and which would give great scope to a boy for strong emotions are easier to act than subtle ones.

What many of the women do in Shakespeare's plays is fall in love, an emotion experienced by both sexes and at any age. Even children fall in love. Elizabethan love poetry is among the most erotic. The three strands which influence it and the age's attitudes to love come from the French troubadour tradition, from the Italian sonnet and from the newly discovered *Symposium* of Plato. Each of these has a distinct and different aspect to offer. The troubadour songs were long familiar in England as a result of the Angevin Empire in the twelfth century. Indeed, Henry II's Queen, Eleanor, set up a court of troubadours in her dukedom of Aquitaine, and her third son, the Coeur de Lion, was himself a troubadour. The songs of the troubadours were in two veins - the courtly, where the lady was worshipped but not touched, and the erotic, which dealt in a pleasant strain of bawdy. (For a detailed discussion of Elizabethan love poetry see J.B. Broadbent's *Poetic Love*).

Her lover takes her in his arms
And in a great bed they lie alone;
Fair Yoland straight does kiss him then
As freely in half the bed they lie!
God, how sweet is the name of love!
I never thought to feel its pain. (quoted Broadbent: p.24)

Or

When my wooing brought me naught
On the ground I laid her straight
Lifted up her pretty dress
And seeing her white nakedness
Burned all the more
And taught her love's lore;
Nor did she say me nay
But delighted in the play (Broadbent: p.25)

or more violently

When my plea has brought me nought
By the waist I seize her, by her shining fleash,
Lift up her skirt
And her white petticoat....(quoted Broadbent: p.24)

The Italian sonnet form used extensively by Wyatt, Sydney and Spenser had a more stately and courtly feeling about love, passionate not sexual, and Shakespeare's marvellous sonnets blend passion and sexuality equally, but the

sexuality is not graphic and only implicitly erotic, though in *Venus and Adonis* he has some lyrically graphic passages. Plato's *Symposium* is a discussion on love in which the finest form of love is considered to be a spiritual passion between two men. This is considered higher than the love of men for women, which is pleasurable, but mainly necessary for procreation. This, it is contended, made the idea of love totally different to the Elizabethans from the ideas we have today. There was a fluidity about sexuality so that Shakespeare, if we treat the *Sonnets* as being written from experience, could love both a dark lady and have someone who was "the master/mistress of his passion". The terms homosexual, bi-sexual and heterosexual are not Elizabethan but the invention of a more prurient, less sexually open age.

Elizabethan love poetry is among the most erotic. From John Donne's

> Licence my roaving hands, and let them go,
> Before, behind, between, above, below.
> O my America! my new-found-land,
> My kingdome, safliest when with one man man'd
> (*Going to Bed*)

to Christopher Marlowe's

> And oftentimes into her bosom flew,
> And about her naked neck his bare arms threw,
> And laid his childish head upon her breast,
> And with still panting rock'd, there took his rest.
> (*Hero and Leander*)

and

> Even as delicious meat is to the taste,
> So was his neck in touching, and surpass'd
> The white of Pelops' shoulder. I could tell ye
> How smooth his breast was, and how white his belly,
> And whose immortal fingers did imprint
> That heavenly path with many a curious dint,
> That runs along his back.....
>
> *(Hero and Leander)*

Compare this with the meeting of Romeo with Juliet, which is stately

[R & J:1:5]

> ROMEO
> If I profane with my unworthiest hand
> This holy shrine, the gentler sin is this:
> My lips, two blushing pilgrims, ready stand
> To smooth that rough touch with a tender kiss.
>
> JULIET
> *Good pilgrim, you do wrong your hand too much,
> Which mannerly devotion shows in this.
> *For saints have hands that pilgrims' hands do touch,
> And palm to palm is holy palmers' kiss.
>
> ROMEO
> Have not saints lips, and holy palmers, too?

JULIET

*Ay, pilgrim, lips that they must use in prayer

ROMEO

O then, dear saint, let lips do what hands do:
They pray;grant thou,lest faith turn to
despair.

JULIET

*Saints do not move,though grant for prayers' sake.

ROMEO

Then move not while my prayers' effect I take.

(He kisses her)

Thus from my lips, by thine my sin is purged.

JULIET

*Then have my lips the sin that they have took.

ROMEO

Sin from my lips? O trespass sweetly urged!
Give me my sin again.

This is very stylised. The first fourteen lines are a sonnet and the whole imagery stiff and stately. An intelligent boy would have no difficulty in acting this,particularly as the sounds used by Shakespeare, the 's's and 'p's giving a restrictive feel to the whole piece. An adolescent boy might find the Donne or Marlowe poems embarrassing as they would be outside his experience. In the next scene, the Balcony scene, the language is more natural, but still the love is expressed in cool, formalised verse and , of course, the lovers cannot express their love

physically for they are prevented by the balcony from touching. When Juliet, having married Romeo, waits for him to come to her bed, again, although her emotion is urgent and passionate, it is expressed in metaphors that a boy could easily understand, even using the simile of a child waiting impatiently for a party to express her longing. We do not see the lovers in bed but only witness Romeo's departure from Juliet's chamber. This is the only time we see them alone and together, for when they meet again Juliet is "dead".

The same restriction is also placed on Antony and Cleopatra, those other two great, tragic lovers. The only time they are alone is after the battle when he upbraids her. The part of Cleopatra is always one of the parts which it is claimed could not be convincingly played by a boy. Closer examination shows that, although difficult, the part is not necessarily any more difficult to play than the other heroines, for Cleopatra is a consummate actress. Even when alone with her maidens she is always acting a part, and she keeps Antony enthralled by her capriciousness as she shows when talking about him to Charmian in Act 1 scene 3. She consistently changes her mood from scene to scene and the whole part is a feast of acting - she is never sincere. Even her death is done in the "high Roman fashion" alien to her own culture. When she expresses her feelings for Antony, again, like Juliet, she employs metaphor entirely, and the patern of her sounds is never consistent, each speech taking on a peculiar sound of its own.

[A & C: 1:5]

CLEOPATRA * O, Charmian,

Where think'st thou he is now?Stands he or sits he
Or does he walk? Or is he on his horse?
*O happy horse, to bear the weight of Antony!
Do bravely, horse for wot'st thou whom thou mov'st?
*The demi-Atlas of this earth the arm
And burgonet of men he's speaking now,
Or murmuring* 'Where's my serpent of old Nile?' -
For so he calls me now I feed myself
With most delicious poison* think on me,
That am with Phoebus' amorous pinches black,
And wrinkled deep in time.....

There is a certain amount of *double entendre* here with the talk of horses, but well within the capacity of a boy. Cleopatra never actually describes Antony other than in metaphor and in a stylised way. Shakespeare could write of sex, as is shown in the *Sonnets* and his narrative verse,but here, in portraying someone who was notorious for her sexuality, all is far removed from any mention of sex or the sexual beauty of her grizzled lover.

The lovers in the comedies use wit and humour to set up a barrier to physical and sexual love. Three of the heroines (Rosalind, Viola and Julia) adopt boy's clothes to woo their loves, Helena and Innogen spend most of the play away from their husbands, and the men in *Love's Labour's Lost* shelter behind a vow of celibacy, so the language, though witty, is not sexually explicit. The wooing of Katherine and Petruchio though contains some bawdy talk

[TS: 2:1]

KATHERINE

*If I be waspish, best beware my sting.

PETRUCCIO
My remedy is then to pluck it out.

KATHERINE
*Ay, if the fool could find where it lies.

PETRUCCIO
Who knows not where a wasp does wear his sting?
In his tail.

KATHERINE
* In his tongue.

PETRUCCIO
What, with my tongue in your tail.....

This is schoolboy smut and well within the comprehension of a boy. There is, of course, much bawdy talk in Shakespeare, but it is mainly between male characters, joking among themselves. E.A.M. Colman posits the theory that Shakespeare divides his characters into bawdy and non-bawdy types (for full discussion see Colman: Chapters 4 and 5) and only a few of the women characters come into the second category. Even when lascivious lines are given to the women characters, such as the Nurse in *Romeo and Juliet*, they are, anyway, more effective if they are not pointed, and said with innocent sincerity.

One of the most sexually aware plays is *Othello*. In the first scene, Iago's language is very direct about Desdemona

and Othello, and Desdemona, herself, in the Senate scene is frank about her reasons for marrying Othello

[OTH: 1:3]

DESDEMONA
*That I did love the Moor to live with him,
My downright violence and storm of fortunes
May trumpet to the world* My heart's subdued
Even to the very quality of my lord*
I saw Othello's visage in his mind,
And* to his honours and his valiant parts
Did I my soul and fortunes consecrate
So that dear lords* if I be left behind,
A moth of peace and he go to the war*
The rites for why I love him are bereft me,
And I a heavy interim shall support
By his dear absence.* Let me go with him.

But, looking at this speech carefully, though it is full of love, again it is stylised, there is no mention of physical passion. Desdemona loves Othello for his mind, his valour and his honours: she does not want to be left behind because of her great love, but she does not mention sex, and this makes the expression of her passion far easier for a boy, without the experience of sex, to act. Children, adolescents, can know about love and, at that age, they are prone to hero-worship. A boy player can easily relate this expression of love to the love he might have felt for someone he admires intensely. Shakespeare also allows his women characters to talk about sex (or, in the idiom of the day, virginity) seriously as he does Helena, a doctors daughter in *All's Well that Ends Well her conversation with*

Parolles (Act1:scene 1) need not necessarily be considered salacious.

Being jilted is one of the most painful things that can occur to anyone, and though Shakespeare's heroines are often uncertain about the outcome of their love affairs being actually jilted is something that rarely happens , and when it does, causes far less pain than in real life. Julia in *Two Gentlemen of Verona* is jilted, but she is remarkably calm about it, the greatest expression of grief being "but it hath been the longest night/That ee'r I watched, and the most heaviest" and in a later scene just crying "Alas" and then explains to Proteus (disguised as his page, Sebastian) what Julia must be feeling thus displacing the pain.

[TGV: 4:4]

JULIA
*Because methinks that she loved you as well
As you do love your lady Silvia.
*She dreams on him that has forgot her love;
You dote on her that cares not for your love.
*'Tis pity love should be so contrary,
And thinking on it makes me cry 'Alas'.....

Here the passion, the love, is entirely removed from immediacy. Julia/Sebastian speaks not of herself, but in character as the page Sebastian, thus the boy can remove himself from raw passion and speak entirely in character. It can be argued that Julia is perhaps a reticent character and can only express her passion implicitly, but in other

ways she is impetuous: again, it is possible that in this early, young man's play, Shakespeare did not feel confident in relaying female passion. Whichever argument is preferred it makes the scene easier to act. Viola in *Twelfth Night* is in a similar position. Disguised as a boy, serving her love as his page, she is forced to woo her beautiful rival. But does she really complain or express her hurt? When she does express her feelings she externalises them and pretends it happened to her sister who never told her love. The poetry, somehow, excludes the pain and the intriguing situation lessens it. The boy playing the part does not have to express a raw emotion, it is all removed and well within a boy's imagination. Helena in *Midsummer Night's Dream* is also jilted by Demetrius, but here, Shakespeare plays it for comedy. Although Helena is distressed, again she expresses her distress in metaphor and her scene with Hermia is in rhyming couplets which give a somewhat jaunty air to it. And the lines are very funny, and the distress that the two girls experience in the woods is high comedy and an audience cannot take the hurt seriously. If the play were to be taken seriously it would be a very bitter drama indeed, but Shakespeare relies on expert timing, rhyme and fantastical events to steer the play away from anything but comedy. This strategy might not have anything to do with boys playing the women's parts, Shakespeare might have written the play just the same if he had had actresses, but, nonetheless, this stylisation does help actors inexperienced, perhaps, in love and sex.

Troilus and Cressida, another pair of lovers, show the difference between the writing for a man and a boy player. What do we know about Cressida, what do the lines tell us? A Trojan, her father a prisoner in the Greek camp, she is left under the protection of her dubious uncle, Pandar. She seems to have no woman friend or maid. A boy player

would understand this type of loneliness, as, probably, he would be living away from his family, in the house of his Master, an alien. He would be able to relate to Cressida's alienation and her eagerness for love. She is at an age, like the boy, when hero-worship is merging into love, and her witty lines about the returning heroes express this. She has some worldly wisdom though, and Shakespeare makes her cautious in her love

[T & C 1:2]

CRESSIDA
...*Words vows gifts tears and love's full sacrifice
He offers in another's enterprise;
*But more in Troilus thousandfold I see
Than in the glass of Pandar's praise may be.
Yet I hold off. * Women are angels, wooing;
Things won are done. Joy's soul lies in the doing.
*That she beloved knows naught that knows not this:
Men prize the thing ungained more than it is.
*That she was never yet that ever knew
Love got so sweet as when desire did sue.
*Therefore this maxim out of love I teach:
Achievment is command; ungained beseech.
*Then though my hearts contents firm love doth bear,
Nothing of that shall from mine eyes appear.

This speech, in rhyming couplets, discusses very coolly what a woman's part is in love - to hold back, not to give in. It is very reasoned, not in the least passionate, and well within the emotional range of a boy. Contrast this with the more passionate utterance of Troilus.

[T & C: 3:2]

TROILUS
I am giddy. Expectation whirls me round.
Th'imaginary relish is so sweet
That it enchants my sense. What will it be
When that the wat'ry palates taste indeed
Love's thrice reputed nectar? Death, I fear me,
Swooning destruction, or some joy too fine,
Too subtle-potent, tuned too sharp in sweetness
For the capacity of my ruder powers.
I fear it much, and do fear besides
That I shall lose distinction in my joys,
As doth a battle when they charge on heaps
The enemy flying.

This is visceral, raw passion. The contrast between this expression of love and Cressida's is great and vividly shows that Shakespeare expected more from his grown-up actors than he did from his boys. Troilus expresses the sharpness and the depth of love, while Cressida is coolly calculating, as she is when she actually meets Troilus (same scene: speech starting "Hard I seem to be won"). The images she uses are ones that a boy would understand. He would have seen, possibly experienced, what he considered tyrannical behavour (children can think their parents and teachers too harsh) and he would know about mothers and unbridled children. He would know about not speaking first and would probably know that sometimes being honest and speaking out could be detrimental to one's well-being. (It is also interesting to note that the comedy heroines often change into men's clothes so that they do have the privilege of men in being able to woo).

What happens when the lovers are parted? Troilus. apparently, does nothing to save Cressida from becoming a hostage to the Greeks which must leave her feeling even less protected, and, for once, she lets go: but children do know loss, and an Elizabethan child would have experienced loss more than a modern child. Cressida expresses her pain in Act 4, scene 5 in words understandable by a boy.

It is a truism to say that there is no such thing as a happy marriage in Shakespeare, and, ~~the most troubled, it is, of course, so~~ they are indeed far from common. Two very troubled marriages are those of Othello and Desdemona and Innogen and Posthumus. Desdemona at the beginning of the play is very forthright and in her first scene is outspoken, but the words are almost ceremonial in dynamic; the scene is a state occasion and throughout the play she keeps a certain sense of ceremonial in her speeches. She expresses the most pain in a scene with Emilia

[OTH:4:2]

DESDEMONA

I ha' none. Do not talk to me, Emilia.
I cannot weep, nor answers have I none
But what should go by water.

In her final scene with Emilia she again expresses no emotion which it would not, necessarily. be easy for a boy to understand and express, but Shakespeare here makes it possible to play the scene as if Desdemona had suddenly

become a little girl again,in these scenes, very young and unsophisticated.

Of all Shakespeare's heroines, Innogen has some of the most difficult scenes to play. She can be played very young, but she has a determination about her that also makes her very strong. Again, these are emotions that a boy would know about, and she always externalises her emotions, even in the very difficult scene when she wakes to find her (supposedly) husband's corpse beside her

[CYM: 4:2]

INNOGEN
*Yes, sir, to Milford Haven. Which is the way?
I thank you. By yon bush? Pray how far thither?
*'Ods pitykins, can it be six mile yet?
I have gone all night. 'Faith I'll down and sleep.
*But soft, no bedfellow! O gods and goddesses!
These flowers are like the pleasures of the world,
This bloody man the care on't. * I hope I dream,
For so I thought I was a cavekeeper,
And cook to honest creatures.* But 'tis not so.
'Twas but a bolt of nothing, shot of nothing.
Which the brain makes of fumes.* Our very eyes
Are sometimes like our judgements blind.Good faith
I tremble still with fear;* but if there be
Yet left in heaven as small a drop of pity
As a wren's eye, feared gods, a part of it!
*The dream's here still Even when I wake it is
Without me as within me; not imagined but felt.
*A headless man? The garments of Posthumus?
I know the shape of's leg this is his hand,
*His foot Mercurial his Martial thigh,

The brawns of Hercules* but his Jovial face -
Murder in heaven how? 'Tis gone. Pisanio,
All curses madded Hecuba gave the Greeks,
And mine to boot, be darted on thee* thou
Conspired with that irregular devil Cloten,
Hath here cut off my lord. * to write and read
Be henceforth treacherous damned Pisanio
Hath with his forged letters* damned Pisanio
From this most bravest vessel of the world
Struck the main-top* O Posthumous alas
Where is thy head?Where's that?Ay me,where's that
*Pisanio might have killed thee at the heart.
And left thy head on*how should this be? Pisanio?
'Tis he and Cloten malice and lucre in them
Have laid this woe here* O tis pregnantpregnant!
*The drug he gave me, which he said was precious
And cordial to me have I not found it
Murd'rous to th' senses? * That confirms it home
This is Pisanio's deed and Cloten * O,
Give colour to my pale cheek with thy blood,
That we the horrider may seem to those
Which chance to find us!* O my lord my lord!

This is a very curious speech. Here is a newly wedded Princess who has been parted from her husband, and has eagerly made a perilous journey to meet him again. She wakes up and sees what she thinks is his headless corpse beside her. It is a difficult scene to act, as two recent Innogens, Geraldine James and Harriet Walter agree, but how carefully Shakespeare paces it. The first few lines are dreamlike - waking from sleep, Innogen not sure where she is. The discovery of the body is still dreamlike - Innogen still between waking and sleeping. She then realises that she is awake and believes that the body is Posthumus's. Does she express any heartfelt emotion?

Does she say what she *feels* like? No, she describes Posthumus in several metaphors and then vents her rage on Pisanio and Cloten, whom she blames for Posthumus's death. Now, for a boy player this would be quite easy to act, for we all know that waking/sleeping feeling; the actual realisation of the death is extremely stylised, and rage is an emotion learnt about very early on - even babies have rage in their repertoire. Only the last cry denotes any real anguish, and would put little strain on a talented boy. The whole speech is similar to an aria in an opera seria where the passion is externalised and formalised. Here, again, Shakespeare skilfully manipulates the sounds - the soft 'n's and 'l's of the dream-like beginning, contrast with harder, more explosive sounds later on.

The same comment could be expressed about the Macbeths. There need be no eroticism between them. That Lady Macbeth is strong-willed and has an influence over her husband is obvious, but again, this is not a difficult emotion for a boy to simulate - he had probably observed domineering women - but she does have some lines which would not be altogether easy for a boy, such as

[MAC:1:7]

LADY MACBETH
.....*I have given suck, and know
How tender 'tis to love the babe that milks me.
*I would, while it was smiling in my face;
Have plucked my nipple from his boneless gums
And dashed the brains out.....

Now, it can be objected that a boy would not know the emotion behind these lines, but actors often work by observation and imagination - it is just not necessary to experience a lifetime all the emotions needed to act all parts. This after all is not a situation that a present-day actress would know. She could be childless, but have to use her imagination to produce the horror of these lines. Although Lady Macbeth is not a simple part to act convincingly, for anyone,again, Shakespeare helps his boy actor all the way through, with images he could understand, which would excite his imagination and to which he would respond.

Rape is one of the most traumatic experiences that can happen to anyone. How does Shakespeare deal with this? One of the reasons given by his comedy heroines for dressing as a boy is that they will not be raped. "Beauty provoketh thieves sooner than gold" as Rosalind says, and in a later play *The Jovisal Crew* we do see two girls being accosted by a young gallant. But not in Shakespeare. There is one rape, that of Lavinia in *Titus Andronicus*, but, because she is speechless we have no idea what her feelings are for she cannot express them. Spanish contemporaries Lope de Vega (who in *Fuente Ovejuna* expresses the fear of rape so terrifyingly) and Calderon de la Barca did deal with it but then they had actresses to act for them.

Turning now to what are called character parts, it could be argued that both the Nurse in *Romeo and Juliet*, Mistress Quickly and Doll Tearsheet would be unactable by boys. But we know that one boy, Soloman Pavy, could act old men extremely skilfully, so an old lady would also be within the capacity of an able boy. For the other two characters the boy could rely on observation for the theatres were in the

same district as the stews and taverns which he would pass on his way to work. The Death of Falstaff is a difficult speech to do, but death was very prevalent in those times and something a boy could have experienced.

There are daughters with fathers in the play, but mostly these men require obedience from their siblings, something well within the experience of an adolescent. Juliet's speech on her return from Friar Laurence's cell expresses what obedient children are expected to feel.

In *King Lear* there are three daughters, two who become evil and the other the ~~spoilt~~ good daughter. Goneril and Regan are utterly repellent, hypocritical, cruel and deceiving. They are almost caricatures and can be acted in a flat, hard way, on one note, though much more can be found in the parts. Evil is always easier to portray than goodness, though Cordelia, the youngest daughter is, though good, a far deeper drawn character. She is, however, to use a colloquial phrase, a chip off the old block, in that she has many of her father's characteristics. She is obstinate, as he is, as is shown in the first scene and, like Lear, she has authority as shown in the Awakening scene.

Innogen is a princess, with both a father, with whom she is at variance, and a stepmother, whom she loathes and sees through. This cannot be counted as a true mother and daughter relationship and the enmity between the two makes them more rivals for the King's love than relations. The Queen, one of the most enjoyable parts to act as she combines treachery with excellent poetry, is too

transparently obvious in her villainy, and Innogen, as has been stated before, externalises her emotions to such an extent that they, though very affecting, are experienced as it were, through a filter. Is, then, the contention that Shakespeare wrote these parts with the capabilities of the boys who were acting them correct? It is difficult today not to see these characters as fully rounded women as we are used to actresses imaginatively adding effects that fill out the characters, inventing sub-text to maintain subtle and complete interpretations. But even if the parts are read straight off the page and acted by people with little emotional experience they are still exciting to watch. A modern actress may see Ophelia's central dilemma as not having a mother, or the key to Beatrice is that she is an orphan but these are not necessary interpretations, other actresses find different emphases for their portrayals. What can be maintained is that Shakespeare wrote the parts within the emotional reference terms of a boy of his day. By using metaphors which the boy would understand, by omitting direct expression of passion, by externalising emotions, he made acting them detached and stylised. At the same time, the language and dynamic of the verse drives the emotion externally, underpinning the emotions. Sir John Gielgud talking to students on TV, 1993, maintained that the verse does it all for you. This is not to say that other actors do not embellish the verse with emotion, but that the language is paramount - the Elizabethans went to hear a play, not to see it. The skilled boys, doubtless well trained in speaking the verse, or even,just by the daily hearing it well-spoken by the older actors, and the author himself, would be able to convey the somewhat limited emotions, couched in images they would understand. By our standards it all might seem somewhat stylised, but Shakespeare does write the boys' speeches in this way, so that they become rather like arias in an opera, a convention that can, and does, move an audience. To help them express

these emotions, the boys had the iambic pentameter which as George.T.Wright says

> ...can lend gravity, dignity, portentiousness, even grandeur to statements and utterances...it usually conveys a sense of complex understanding, as if the speakers of such lines were aware of more than they ever quite say, or if these were more in their speeches than even they were aware of. If the language of everyday life or even the language of other forms of poetry seems usually to leave untouched, unsounded, certain depths of human experience, iambic pentameter has seemed for centuries of poets and listeners the poetic form most likely to reach these depths and to make their resonances audible.(Wright: p.5)

And one can also add that the very sounds Shakespeare uses help to express the emotion of the parts. Peter Hall remarks

> ...Shakespeare expresses everything by what he *says*. His characters have an ability to describe and illustrate what they are feeling *as* they are feeling it. So his actors have to give the impression of creating the text while they experience the emotion. This is hard; and has nothing to do with naturalistic acting, where feeling is always paramount...(Hall: p.345)

This, though, may be hard for modern actors, but it was customary for Elizabethan actors and so the boys, used to

the language, trained in externalising emotions would be able to convey those written about in their parts. Especially, as, when we examine the parts in detail, we find that much is not explained about the women characters. Psychologically there are omissions: the women's parts are very much random, they do in the scene what is dramatically effective without, necessarily, those actions making up a consistent person (though, admittedly, few people are consistent all the time). This means that each scene has to be played for the merits in it, and the boy would not have the task that modern actresses have of presenting a lucid sound character, which made acting a much easier task for the boy.

SECTION FOUR

"...shall say her mind freely..."

Hamlet 2:2.

Having looked at Shakespeare's heroines it is now proposed to look at parts written by other writers for the boy players. The parts chosen are among the most demanding and most difficult for a boy, or, indeed, an actress to perform. They are colourful and demand a whole range of emotions. The plays will cover the whole period of Elizabethan and Jacobean drama, starting with *Arden of Faversham* and ending with James Shirley's play, *Hyde Park*, performed in 1632.

Although there is no recorded performance of *Arden of Faversham* in Shakespeare's time, the play was registered in 1592 and between then and 1633 there were two more Quarto editions. It is not known for which company it was written, but it has been presumed that it is one of the Pembroke plays, performed by that company. What is certain is that the part of Alice is one of the most complex of all the women's parts. It is not, of course, necessary to have committed a murder to be able to act it and, as it was found when examining the parts Shakespeare wrote, most of the emotions expressed by the boy players could be related to emotions that they would have understood. Alice is an arch deceiver: she pretends to love her husband while being in lust with the younger Mosby. Boys can know about pretence and deception, but can they know

about lust? Not perhaps lust for another person, but they can know about wanting something excessively. But does Alice express her feelings for Mosby passionately? She reproaches him for not loving her as much as she loves him, but in completely non-sexual terms

[as before, where the boy could take breaths is indicated by *]

[AF: 1]

ALICE
*Is this the end of all thy solemn oaths?
Is this the fruit thy reconcilement bud?
*Have I for this given thee so many favours
Incurr'd my husband's hate, and, out alas
*Made shipwreck of my honour for thy sake?
And dost thou say 'henceforward know me not'?
*Remember when I lock'd thee in my closet
What were thy words and mine? * Did we not both
Decree to murder Arden in the night?
*The heavens can witness and the world can tell,
Before I saw that falsehood look of thine,
*'Fore I was tangled with thy 'ticing speech,
Arden to me was dearer than my soul
And shall be still * Base peasant get thee gone,
And boast not thy conquest over me
Gotten by witchcraft and mere sorcery
*For what hast thou to countenance my love
Being descended of a noble house
*And match'd already with a gentleman

Whose servant thou may'st be? * And so farewell.

Hardly passion - anger, self-deception and pride are the characteristics of this speech and these are emotions that can be felt by adolescents.

Alice spends much of the play plotting her husband's death - again plotting is something that children indulge in, and the boys would be competing with each other for parts, so, doubtless, much manoeuvring went on to obtain them. So the boy playing Alice would have this to which he could relate.

Alice is absent from the next scenes of the play and only reappears in scene eight where she again reproaches Mosby

[AF:8]

ALICE

*Ay, now I see, and too soon find it true
Which often hath been told me by my friends
That* Mosby loves me not but for my wealth
Which too incredulous I ne'er believed
*Nay, hear me speak, Mosby, a word or two
I'll bite my tongue if it speak bitterly
*Look on me, Mosby, or I'll kill myself
Nothing shall hide me from thy stormy look
*If thou cry war there is no peace for me
I will do penance for offending thee

And burn this prayerbook* where I here use
The holy word that had converted me
*See Mosby I will tear away the leaves
And all the leaves * and in this golden cover
Shall thy sweet phrases and thy letters dwell
*And thereon will I chiefly meditate
And hold no other sect but such devotion
*Wilt thou not look? Is all thy love overwhelm'd?
Wilt thou not hear? What malice stops thine ears?
*Why speaks thou not? What silence ties thy
tongue?
*Thou hast been sighted as the eagle is
And heard as quickly as the fearful hare
*And spoke as smoothly as an orator
When I have bid thee hear or see or speak
*And art thou sensible in none of these?
*Weigh all thy good turns with this little fault
And I deserve not Mosby's muddy looks
*A fount once troubled is not thickened still
Be clear again, I'll neer more trouble thee.

Here we find the characteristics that were found in Shakespeare's writing for boys: an emotional situation they could understand by relating it to one with which they would be familiar (a child pleading with its mother for her attention); a list of questions to make for easy breathing; and imagery and metaphor that a child would understand. Also a skilful use of sound, where liquid sounds are used to express love and are contrasted with the explosive sounds of the 't' and 'p' when Alice is angry.

Again, in the same scene, Alice uses other metaphors that are charming and easily understood by a boy

ALICE

*Sweet Mosby is as gentle as a king
And I too blind to judge him otherwise
*Flowers do sometimes spring in fallow lands
Weeds in gardens, roses grow on thorns
*So whatsoe'er my Mosby's father was
Himself is valued gentle by his worth.

Here is another instance where soft sounds are used when love is being expressed.

Although Alice is the instigator of the plot to kill her husband she has very little to say or do in the actual performing of the deed and she expresses little grief or repentance - it is all very stylised and formal, indeed, insipid, and she goes to her death uttering pieties. Even her speech in scene fourteen rejecting Mosby has none of the passion or eloquence of, say, Vittoria Corombona in *The White Devil* . Alice is not consistently drawn as she seems to be a different person in each scene. The play is full of instant emotion, and her character does not really hang together; it has to be played pragmatically from scene to scene, using just the emotions in that scene for effect which is easier than sustaining a complex and consistent character throughout the play.

The women in Webster's plays are arguably the most complex in the whole canon of Renaissance drama. They are certainly among the most eloquent, having powerful, dramatic speeches, but, on examination it can be shown that the emotions in these speeches are simple,it is their

cumalative effect and the circumstances which surround the women which make for complexity and darkness. Both the Duchess of Malfi and Vittoria Corombona are essentially victims. It is true that the Duchess, herself, sets off the chain of events that ends in her death, but she is a suffering, passive figure rather than an active one, the same argument being sustainable over Corombona. The Duchess is one of the few women characters who have young children and the motherhood could be difficult for a boy actor to portray. But do we see the children? Are there any scenes between her and her children, do we see her playing with them, or teaching them to read? It could be argued that this is not relevant to the play, but the fact that her children are base-born does matter to the plot of the play and it seems also to be an essential part of the Duchess's character for she speaks of them when she dies. One of the most difficult scenes for a boy to act is that in which the Duchess tells Antonio of her love, but even here the emotions are stylised. Antonio is always aware that he is a servant and the Duchess deals with him courteously and obliquely, with little explicit passion. Her most direct speech is more to reassure him than to declare great love

[D of M: 1:2]

DUCHESS
*The misery of us that are born great
We are forc'd to woo because none dare woo us*
And as a tyrant doubles with his words
And fearfully equivocates * so we
Are forc'd to express our violent passions
In riddles and in dreams* and leave the path
Of simple virtue which was never made

To seem the thing it is not * Go, go brag
You have left me heartless mine is in your bosom
I hope 'twill multiply love there * You do tremble
Make not your heart so dead a piece of flesh
To fear more than to love me * Sir be confident
What is't distracts you? This is flesh and blood
sir
*'Tis not the figure cut in alabaster
Kneels at my husband's tomb * Awake awake man
I do here put off all vain ceremony
And only do appear to you, a young widow *
That claims you for her husband and like a widow
I use but half a blush in't.

In her next speech she uses a metaphor that would be more than understandable to a child

.....This you should have begg'd now*
I have seen children oft eat sweetmeats thus
As fearful to devour them too soon.

and the two of them depart to a chaste bed. This scene would cause no embarrassment to a boy and could be played easily by one. The subsequent sorrows she endures with a stoicism and dignity and superb poetry which help the boy actor transmit the emotions, as in her death scene:

[D of M:4:2]

DUCHESS

*What would it pleasure me to have my throat cut

With diamonds or to be smothered
With cassia * or to be shot with pearls *
I know death hath ten thousand several doors
For men to take their exits * and 'tis found
They go on such strange geometrical hinges
You may open them both ways * any way for Heaven sake
So I were out of your whispering. * Tell my brother
That I perceive death now I am well awake
Best gift is * they can give or I can take
* I would fain put off my last woman's fault
I would not be tedious to you.

This is stately, fantastical with just a hint of petulance in 'any way for Heaven sake? So I were out of your whispering'. A great set piece, an aria, a speech that would be affecting because of its language, and which can be spoken with extreme simplicity.

Throughout the play the Duchess is serene and gentle whatever happens to her, the words do much of the work in realising her character, and, it could be maintained that just to say the words clearly and rhythmically would just be enough to give an effective performance.

Vittoria Corombona in *The White Devil* is a more passionate creature altogether, but even she has her passive moments, especially in the erotic scenes which make them all the more true to life. Erotic they are, but, again, there is a stylisation about them which would help the boy actor. The scene where she is seduced by Brachiano is clever in its conception.

[TWD:1:2]

BRACHIANO

.....Let me into your bosom happy lady
Pour out instead of eloquence my vows;
Loose me not madam, for if you forgo me
I am lost eternally.

VITTORIA

*Sir in the way of pity
I wish you heart-whole.

BRACHIANO

You are a sweet physician.

VITTORIA

*Sure sir a loathed cruelty in ladies
Is as to doctors many funerals
*It takes away their credit

BRACHIANO

Excellent creature.
We call the cruel fair, what name for you
That are so merciful?

ZANCHE

: See how they close.

FLAMINEO

Most happy union.

CORNELIA

*My fears are fall'n upon me, O my heart!
My son the pander now I find our house
Sinking to ruin * Earthquakes leave behind

Where thy have tyrannized iron or lead or stone
*But woe to ruin violent lust leaves none.

BRACHIANO
What value is this jewel?

VITTORIA
*'Tis the ornament
Of a weak fortune.

BRACHIANO
In sooth I'll have it; nay I will but change
My jewel for your jewel.

FLAMINEO
Excellent,
His jewel for her jewel; well put in Duke.

BRACHIANO
Nay let me see you wear it.

VITTORIA
*Here sir?

BRACHIANO
Nay lower, you shall wear my jewel lower.

The eroticism in this scene is produced more by the bystanders than by the lovers themselves, who are almost ceremonial in their behaviour. In the Michael Benthall production, 1945, Brachiano put his dagger in the low slung girdle worn by Vittoria and then pressed it between her legs which added to the eroticism, though this was not specifically indicated in the text. Vittoria then tells of a dream, which, by symbolism, tells the Duke of her desire

to be entirely Brachiano's and her wish that neither her husband nor his Duchess stand in the way.

Vittoria is then absent from the stage until the Third Act, the scene of her arraignment, where she has little to say until her defence which is broken into three speeches. These have some striking phrases, and, again, show Webster's mastery in producing images and sounds to create passion, rather than expecting the boy player to produce the passion himself. The last metaphor is graphically everyday and well understood by a boy.

[TWD:3:2]

VITTORIA
.....*for your names
Of whore and murd'ress they proceed from you
*As if a man should spit against the wind
The filth returns in's face.

Vittoria's longest speech, one of great anger, is, again, full of wonderful, understandable imagery. It has a driving pulse and rhythm, hissing 's' sounds, all of which helps the player.

[TWD: 4:2]

VITTORIA
*What have I gain'd by thee but infamy?
*Thou hast stain'd the spotless honour of my house

And frightened thence noble society
Like those which* sick o'th'palsy and retain
Ill-scenting foxes 'bout them* are still shunn'd
By those of choicer nostrils
*What do you call this house?
Is this your palace? Did not the judge style it
A house of penitant whores?* Who sent me to it?
Who hath the honour to advance Vittoria
To this incontinent college?* Is't not you?
Is't not your high preferment?* Go, go brag
How many ladies you have undone like me
*Fare you well sir let me hear no more of you
*I had a limb corrupted to an ulcer
But I have cut it off *and now I'll go
Weeping to heaven on crutches *For your gifts
I will return them all * and I do wish
That I could make you full executor
To all my sins * O that I could toss myself
Into a grave as quickly * for all thou art worth
I'll shed one tear more - I'll burst first.

Looking at this speech carefully it is obvious that the anger and sorrow in the speech is expressed by images understood by a young person - the foxes for example. Also the image of the ulcer and the severed, corrupted limb would have been easily comprehended at a time when old and wounded soldiers were begging in the streets. The final words sound just like a child, who suffering from some seeming injustice cries out "You'll be sorry when I'm dead!"

The White Devil has other interesting women's parts besides Vittoria, the mother Cornelia for example. She is a

"rant", vigorous in her condemnation of her son's behaviour. A one-dimensional character at the beginning, with some exciting speeches to utter, she eventually goes mad, with Ophelia overtones. Another older woman in a Webster play is Leonora in *The Devil's Law Case-book*, called by Webster a "Tragecomedy". Leonora is the mother of two children of marriageable age, and she is a schemer, and is full of hate, defiance and anger. All strong emotions for a young player to portray. She has some fine lines to say and though the part is vivid, it is not a long one, so, again within the capabilities of a boy. The heroines Jolenta and Angiolella, though put into some interesting situations, are stereotypical young women and present no difficulties in the acting.

In all three plays Webster has a nice line in maids - Cariola, Zanche and Winifred are among the most striking characters he portrayed, and, although the parts are small, they really offer an actor some dramatic and interesting situations. Both Zanche and Winifred belong to the pert maid category, while Cariola in *The White Devil* is a paler character having only a showy death to compensate her for a dull part. In many ways, Webster's women are easier to act than Shakespeare's for they lack the rounded humanity with which he endowed his parts. The line of Webster's women is more obvious, and they have defined characteristics instead of subtlety: there is, also, a taint about his plays, a corruption that would intrigue the boys in that unhealthy state of the imagination, called by John Keats in his Preface to *Endymion* (1818) as the "space of life between, in which the soul is in ferment", that all adolescents seem to go through.

Thomas Middleton's women are tainted, too. In *The Changeling* (written with William Rowley) we have a play crackling with sex. The heroine Beatrice-Joanna is a spoilt, capricious girl, who is not far-sighted enough to realise the consequences of her actions. If she wants something she must have it, and until now her indulgent father has seen that she has it. But, when she falls in love with Alsemero after she has been betrothed to Piracquo she is unable to extricate herself from the situation without impugning her own and her father's honour. She expresses a wish for Piracquo's death to the infatuated but ugly de Flores, who kills her fiance, thus putting Joanna into his power. Beatrice-Joanna, herself, though exciting sexuality in the men around her, is curiously inexpressive of sex herself, saying, for example

[TC: 1:1]

BEATRICE
*Nay, good sir, be not so violent * with speed
I cannot render satisfaction
Unto the dear companion to my soul
Virginity * whom I thus long have lived with
And part with it so rude and suddenly
* Can such friends divide never to meet again
Without a solemn farewell?

and when she speaks of her love it is, like Shakespeare's heroines, in metaphor, rather than directly

[TC: 2:1]

BEATRICE
..*Methinks I love now with the eyes of judgement

And see the way to merit clearly see it
*A true deserver like a diamond sparkles
In darkness you may see him * that's in absence
Which is the greatest darkness falls on love
*Yet he best discerned then
With intellectual eyesight.

Even in the scene where she and Alsemero declare their love there is a detachment about them both. Beatrice-Joanna declares

[TC: 2:2]

BEATRICE
*How happy were this meeting this embrace
If it were free from envy* This poor kiss
It has an enemy a hateful one
That wishes poison to't * How well were I now
If there were none such name known as Piracquo
*Nor such tie as the command of parents
I should be but too much blessed.

ALSEMERO
One good service
Would strike off both your fears, and I'll go near
it too
Since you are distressed. Remove the cause,
The command ceases: so there's two fears blown out
With one and the same blast.

BEATRICE
*Pray let me find you sir
What might that service be so strangely happy.

ALSEMERO
The honourablest piece of man, valour.
I'll send a challenge to Piracquo instantly.

BEATRICE
*How call you that extinguishing of fear
When 'tis the only way of keeping it flaming
*Are not you ventured in the action
That's all my joys and comforts * Pray no more sir
Say you prevailed you're danger's and not mine
then
*The law would claim you from me or obscurity
Be made a grave to bury you alive
*I'm glad these thoughts come forth O keep not one
Of this condition sir * Here was a course
Found to bring sorrow on her way to death
*The tears would ne'er ha'dried till dust had
choked 'em
Blood-guiltiness becomes a fouler visage
[Aside] * And now I think on one I was too blame
I ha' marred so good a market with my scorn
*'T had been done questionless *the ugliest
creature
Creation framed for some use Yet to see
I could not mark so much where it should be!

The talk is of arrangements not of feeling and Beatrice-Joanna shows no tenderness in her love, she is considering what to do to get her wish without imperilling herself or Alsemero. This passionless, practical scene is contrasted with the sexual emotion expressed by de Flores

[TC:2:2]

DE FLORES

O my blood!
Methinks I feel her in mine arms already,
Her wanton fingers combing out this beard,
And, being pleased, praising this bad face.
Hunger and pleasure, they'll commend sometimes
Slovenly dishes, and feed heartily on 'em.
Some women are odd feeders.....

Here is really expressed the difference between the writing for the men and for the boys; whereas both men and women speak in a stylised language, with metaphors doing most of the emotional work, sometimes, as in this speech and that of Troilus mentioned in the previous section, the men speak in a carnal and specific manner, which the women characters do not. Their passion is always expressed in metaphor.

Again de Flores speaks openly

[TC:3:4]

DE FLORES
Yes, my fair murdr'ress. Do you urge me,
Though thou writ'st 'maid', thou whore in thy affection?
'Twas changed from thy first love, and that's a kind

Of whoredom in my heart; and he's changed now
To bring thy second on, thy Alsemero,
Whom (by all sweets that ever darkness tasted)
If I enjoy thee not, thou ne'er enjoy'st:
I'll blast the hopes and joys of marriage -
Ill confess all; my life I rate at nothing.

This is a vivid, coarse, sexual speech, full of appetite, far removed from what the boy player chastely utters. In the sub-plot Antonio also speaks a directly sexual speech, the like of which is not given to the female characters

[TC: 3:3]

ANTONIO
What should I fear,
Having all joys about me? Do you [but] smile,
And love shall play the wanton on your lip,
Meet and retire, retire and meet again;
Look you but cheerfully,.....

In the 'potion' scene between Beatrice-Joanna and her maid Diaphanta although the talk is about wedding nights and sex it is far from racy and Beatrice-Joanna seems genuinely shocked by the sentiments expressed by Diaphanta

[TC:4:1]

BEATRICE
*Art thou a maid,and talk'st so to a maid?

You leave a blushing business behind,
Beshrew your heart for't!

when all Diaphanta has done is speak of the joys of matrimony and their talk is mainly of modesty and virginity. It is hardly a sexually explicit scene, and well within the knowledge of even an unsophisticated boy. A more difficult scene on the same subject is in Beaumont and Fletcher's *A Maid's Tragedy* which is far racier. It is similar to smutty, schoolboy humour that is often found in plays written exclusively for boys' companies for which Beaumont and Fletcher also wrote a number of plays. The scene is amusing, and has a certain piquancy, being both bawdy and delicate. Evadne assumes that the maid, Dula, is drunk and repudiates her for her lack of modesty, but again, there is nothing in the scene that could in any way be described as dificult for a boy to say, Dula's most sexy speech being

[TMT: 2:1]

DULA
*Nay now I'll keep it till the trick leave me
*A dozen wanton words put in your head
Will make you livelier in your husband's bed.

Amintor speaks in a different way about his sexual adventures

[TMT:2:1]

AMINTOR
.....Why shak'st thou so? Away my idle fears,

Yonder she is, the lustre of whose eye,
Can blot away the sad remembrance
Of all these things - oh my Evadne spare
That tender body, let it not take cold
The vapors of the night shall not fall here,
To bed my love, Hymen will punish us
For being slack performers of his rights
Cam'st thou to call me?

EVADNE

No.

AMINTOR

Come, come, my love
And let us lose ourselves to one another,
Why art thou up so long?

EVADNE

I am not well.

AMINTOR

To bed, then, let me wind thee in these arms
Till I have banished sickness.

and a little later on in the scene, while she speaks in metaphors, Amintor is more direct

EVADNE

* You hear right
*I sooner will find out the beds of snakes
And with my youthful blood warm their cold flesh
*Letting them curl themselves about my limbs
Than sleep one night with thee * this is not
fained

Nor sounds it like the coyness of a bride.

AMINTOR
Is flesh so earthly to endure all this?
Are these the joys of marriage? Hymen keep
This story (that will make succeeding youth
Neglect thy ceremonies) from all ears.
Let it not rise up for thy shame and mine
To after ages, we will scorn thy laws
If thou no better bless them; touch the heart
Of her that thou hast sent me, or the world
Shall know: there's not an altar that will smoke
In praise of thee: we will adopt us sons
Then virtue shall inherit and hot blood;
If we do lust, we'll take the next we meet,
Serving ourselves as other creatures do,
And never take note of the female more
Nor of her issue.....

Later on Amintor cries

I'll drag thee to my bed, and make thy tongue
Undo this wicked oath, or on thy flesh
I'll print a thousand wounds to let out life.

while she coolly replies

I fear thee not do what thou darst to me
Every ill sounding word or threatening look
Thou shewest to me will be reveng'd at full.

Throughout this scene Evadne bravely defends herself and the nearest she gets to real passion is in this speech

*Alas Amintor thinkst thou I forbeare
To sleepe with thee because I have put on
A maiden strictness* look upon these cheeks
And thou shalt find the hot and rising blood
Unapt for such a vow * no in this heart
There dwells as much desire * and as much will
To put that wished act is practise * as ever yet
Was known to woman and they have shown both
*But it was folly of thy youth
To think this beauty to what hand soe'er
It shall be cold, shall stoop to any second
*I do enjoy the best and in that height
Have sworn to stand or die you guess the man.

Again, this is a speech which the boy could relate to his own experience - wanting something but refusing to have it because he wants something better. This is a difficult scene to act for anyone, but the emotions are simply stated and substitutes can be imagined for those that might not come naturally within a boy's experience.. Later on, when Evadne takes her revenge on the king, again her principal emotions are disgust and anger, something that adolescents are capable of feeling and transmitting.

One action that would not necessarily be something that a boy, or ideed a mature actor, would know about is incest. Two plays that deal with this are John Ford's *'Tis Pity She's A Whore* and Thomas Middleton's *Women Beware Women*. In *'Tis Pity*, again we find the emotion is all expressed by Giovanni. Annabella is strangely unresponsive to her

brother's lust. After some conversation that would be quite normal between a brother and sister, slightly teasing, perhaps too flattering she asks

[TPSW:1:3]

ANNABELLA
*Do you mock me or flatter me?

and when he proffers his dagger she asks if he is in earnest,and when he declares his lust she cries

*Forbid it my just fears
If this be true 'twere fitter I were dead

and after further pleading from him she consents with charm and sweetness

ANNABELLA
*Live thou hast won
The field and never fought* what thou hast urged
My captive heart had long resolv'd
*I blush to tell thee but I'll tell thee now
*For every sigh that thou hast spent for me
I have sigh'd ten *for every tear, shed twenty
*And not so much for that I loved as that
I durst not say I loved * nor scarcely think it

GIOVANNI
Let not this music be a dream, ye gods
For pity's sake, I beg you!

ANNABELLA

*On my knees
Brother even by our mother's dust I charge you
*Do not betray me to your mirth or hate
Love me or kill me brother

GIOVANNI

On my knees
Sister even by my mother's dust I charge you
Do not betray me to your mirth or hate;
Love me or kill me, sister.

This is all in a fine, heroic vein which can be acted full out, it is affective, slightly false emotion, rhetoric rather than true emotion and so is all the more easy to act.

The Lady in *The Second Maiden's Tragedy* is another woman who is distinguished by her chastity and gravitas (a quality also possessed by Shakespeare's women). Defending her chastity even unto death, again she is the central figure around whom deep passions surge, but she, herself,remains a still centre. She does, though, feel anger and the scene between her and her husband portrays her in a fine rage as she chides him with being weak, and tries to stiffen his resolution by using a fine line in rhetoric and heroic speech. It is a wonderful effect, that can be spoken full-out and with great, but affecting simplicity.

[TSMT:3:3]

THE LADY

*Sir, you do nothing there's no valour in you
*Y'are the worst friend to a lady in affliction
That ever love made his companion
*For honour's sake dispatch me thy own thoughts
Should stir thee to this act more than my weakness
The sufferer should not do't * I speak thy part
Dull and forgetful man and all to help thee
*Is it thy mind to have me seized upon
*And borne with violence to the tyrant's bed
There forced unto the lust of all his days?

It is, of course, very unlikely that a boy would be in the position of wanting to be killed for chastity's sake, but he would understand about being in a situation where almost anything else would be desirable than to face up to what is the consequence of a wrong act - all children know that dread - and anger is a strong emotion which is easy to act. Later on, when The Lady is a ghost the contrast in acting styles needed would not be beyond a skilful boy.

All these parts have been in tragedies,and, in many ways, tragedy is easier to act than comedy, which depends on expert timing and great co-operation with your fellow actors, so now it is proposed to look at three comedies: *The Alchemist* by Ben Jonson, *The Roaring Girl* by Middleton and Dekker, and finally *Hyde Park* by James Shirley.

In performances of *The Alchemist*, Dol Common seems to be very involved in the action and to take part in many scenes, but, in fact, she only appears in nine of the twenty-seven scenes. She has few long speeches, though those she does have are full of energy,spirit and explosive sounds.

[TA: 1:1]

DOL

.....*S'death, you abominable pair of stinkards
Leave off your barking and grow one again
*Or by the light that shines I'll cut your throats
*I'll not be made a prey unto the marshal
For ne'er a snarling dog-bolt o' you both
*Ha' you together cozened all this while
And all the world and * shall it now be said
You've made most courteous shift to cozen
yourselves?
*You will accuse him? You will bring him in
Within the statue who shall take your word?
A whorseson upstart apocryphal captain
Whom not a puritan in Blackfriars will trust
So much as for a feather* and you too
Will give the cause forsooth? *You will insult
And claim a primacy in the divisions
You must be chief *As if you only had
The powder to project with *And the work
Were not begun out of equality
*The venture tripartite all things in common
Without priority? *'Sdeath you perpetual curs
Fall to your couples again and cozen kindly
*And heartily and lovingly as you should
And lose not the beginning of a term
Or *by this hand I shall grow factious too
And take my part and quit you.

This is a great speech to perform, for it is both forceful and scornful, not very subtle. Dol's part has much business for her to perform, which would mean good timing and precision, but all possible for a well-trained boy

The Roaring Girle.

OR

Moll Cut-Purſe.

As it hath lately beene Acted on the Fortune-ſtage by *the Prince his Players.*

Written by *T. Middleton* and *T. Dekkar.*

Printed at *London* for *Thomas Archer*, and are to be ſold at his ſhop in Popes head-pallace, neere the Royall Exchange. 1611.

FIG. 3
MOLL CUTPURSE
Title page of *The Roaring Girl* by Thomas Middleton and Thomas Dekker: 1611 edition: printed Thomas Archer.

to act. The "Fairy Queen" scenes are perhaps the most difficult to sustain, for they must not dive into slapstick but be kept on the edge of high comedy, again depending on good team-work, where the boy would get full co-operation from his fellow actors. Here, he must pick up his cues rapidly and feed the other characters without really initiating any of the action.

Moll Cutpurse, in *The Roaring Girl*, is another character that can be played on technique alone. There is little intensity about her, though she shows wit and honesty. She is a catalyst who reveals to the other characters their essential shoddiness, something that would be appealing to a teenage boy. In many ways she resembles Shakespeare's heroines who combine integrity, gravitas and larkiness. From the point of view of this study, she is also one of the heroines who changes her dress. In her first scene [Act 2:1] she wears a *saveguard*, a kind of petticoat or apron, rather like the skirt worn when riding sidesaddle, together with a jerkin: at other times she appears in men's clothes and in the last scene she comes masked and, possibly, in women's clothes, for what she wears is not specified in this scene, though the action and the epilogue lend themselves to being spoken in women's clothes. Middleton and Dekker are here having fun with the convention of the boy actor, playing it to the hilt. *The Roaring Girl*, too, is one of the plays that has more than three women's parts in it, for besides Moll we have the conventional heroine, the love-lorn yet wilful, Mary Fitz-Allard as well as three merchant's wives, who have little to do but play an amusing scene flirting with the gallants. It could be said that this play gives an excellent example of how the boys were carefully trained and had small parts written for them before they tackled major roles. (Figure 3)

The last play to be considered is *Hyde Park* by James Shirley in which the normal three women characters appear (excluding walk-on parts). Compared with the two previous plays, the women's parts in *Hyde Park* are far more subtle and need considerably more skill in acting than do either Dol or Moll. It is also in a different *genre* being more akin to Restoration comedy than the more robust Elizabethan city plays: for one thing, the characters are of a different class. Whereas in tragedies the boys would have to observe the manners of the aristocracy and in city comedies that of the merchant class, here we have a group of people who today we would call upper middle class, a class that was rapidly emerging. *Hyde Park* is a comedy of manners and so has to be played lightly with an exquisite technique. The women characters are not put into broad comedy, like Dol, but they have scenes in which melancholy plays a part, and the attempted seduction of Julietta is a scene to be played with utter delicacy. It could be argued that a boy would, perhaps, not be able to play such a scene, but, doubtless, he had seen women being flirted with and seduced, and, as an attractive, boy might have been subjected to attempted seduction by members of either sex. Nonetheless, it must have been well suited to young people for it was revived by the young male company, Beeston's Boys, officially known as The King and Queen's Young Company, in 1639.

In looking closely at these, the most demanding of the women's parts outside the Shakespeare canon, it can be seen that, again, the boys' parts rarely contain anything to which a boy could not relate to his own experience, if he were quick-witted and had excellent powers of observation.

Are the chief characteristics portrayed by the women in both Shakepeare's and his contemporaries' plays particularly feminine? That there is little of the experiences that are peculiar to a woman's existence is obvious. Whether it is the reluctance of the writers to write about such subjects or whether it was the convention of the time not to portray these really does not matter, for in either case it made the acting of these parts easier for the boys. Emotion was stylised then, but the writing of the men's parts does embrace carnality and coarseness, subjects not found in the women's parts where the sexual talk is more jokey and light. As has been pointed out, there is no lack of sensuality and frank expression in the poetry of the time, but this is rarely expressed on the stage where there is reticence about, and stylisation of, emotions. With the heightened language,which used sounds to express feeling, the use of metaphor to portray emotions, with images well within a boy's understanding,the illusion of well-rounded, complete women was created in the theatre, and accepted there. A modern actress will find that, psychologically, these parts do not necessarily work, but the parts were, as has been seen, tailored to a boy's capabilities and experience. As Harriet Walter says

> I find it curious to think that as a modern actress my opportunities have been determined by the limitations of two or three generations of Elizabethan boy players " (Rutter p.xxiv and in interview with writer, 1993)

although Walter does admit that these boys must have been very skilful.

Many of the heroines, too, have many of the characteristics that, traditionally, are considered to be masculine ones. They are brave, outspoken, think independently and do not define themselves by the men to whom they are either related or whom they love. They are spirited and rarely downtrodden, all of which would have helped a boy playing the parts.

SECTION FIVE

"...Do the boys carry it away?..."
Hamlet 2.2.

What then did the Elizabethans actually see when they went to the playhouse? Their expectations and responses would be totally different from those of a modern audience. They were, it is contended, more concerned with what they heard rather than what they saw. The magnificent and metaphorical language was paramount, not only in furthering the plot, revealing character but also in describing the scene. They expected to be dazzled by the language, whereas in more visual ages, such as the Victorian and ours, audiences expect to be dazzled by what they see, to expect action as well as dialogue (like the man who said during a performance of *King Lear*, RSC Stratford, 1993, "The trouble with this play is that the dialogue holds up the action"). The Victorians were masterly at scenic effects, but in our age film and television, where action is as, if not more, important than dialogue, have raised our visual expectations so that we now expect, in the theatre whole swimming pools to be built on stage, helicopters to fly in, and, for scene-changes, scenery to dissolve into other scenery by electronic means. Shakespeare, however, does it very economically in words

> In fair Verona where we lay our scene (*Romeo and Juliet*)

> Berkeley Castle call you this? *(Richard II)*
>
> What news on the Rialto? *(Merchant of Venice)*

or if he wants to paint a more poetic change

> But look, the morn in russet mantle clad
> Walks o'er the dew of yon high eastern hill.
> *(Hamlet)*

So the impact on the audiences was not predominantly a visual one, but an aural one. This would also affect how they regarded the players, for they would be more interested in what the players said, rather than how they looked. There was litle, or no scenery, and though the clothes would be appropriate to the characters, there is no evidence that they were designed for each play. The greatest impact was made by the players themselves.

Audiences and actors collude in a performance. The audience is aware of itself as an audience, and each individual member of the audience knows himself as being a part of that audience and also being himself. As part of that audience he can become bigger than himself, catching fire from his fellows to experience deeper emotions than he would if he were alone. A member of a present-day audience has had the experience, when watching a film, of laughing (or weeping) copiously, but when seeing that film on television, sitting alone, although the emotion of joy or sadness is felt, it is not expressed openly, nor felt so

deeply. In the theatre the audience has the duty to respond. Actors talk about "a good house", that is one that has responded to all the points that the actors wished to make, whereas "a bad house" is one that has not made any response. Actors need our collusion. In *The Psychology of the Imagination*, Jean-Paul Sartre describes what he sees when watching the music-hall artiste, Franconay, doing an impression of Maurice Chevalier. He recognises the imitation, realising that Franconay has produced an image of Maurice Chevalier, and Sartre compares the two, the audience compares the two, using their recollections of Chevalier to do so. They have a consciousness of the imitation. As Sartre writes:

> A consciouness is through and through a synthesis, completely withdrawn into itself: it is only at the very heart of this internal synthesis that it can join itself to another preceding or succeeding consciousness by an act of retention or protention. Moreover, if one consciouness is to act on another, it must be retained and re-created by the consciousness on which it is to act. There are no passivities, but internal assimilations and disintegrations at the very heart of an intentional synthesis which is transparent to itself. One consciousness is not the cause of another: it motivates it. (Sartre: p. 27)

So, when an audience watches, it is constantly aware of both the person (in this case Franconay) and the person she is imitating (Maurice Chevalier). But Franconay can never

actually *be* Chevalier, she is female, she has not his body nor his voice, nor his presence, his own unigue persona. She is both herself and Chevalier, and also she is her other self, who is watching what she is doing. She is using her imagination to re-create in her audience's collective mind its own, individual recollections of Chevalier. But Franconay was doing an imitation of a well-known entertainer. An actor does something different. He is creating an imaginary character, and in the case of a new play by Shakespeare, a character of which the first audience had no knowledge. The experience of seeing a new play is totally different from that of seeing a play with which one is familiar and about which one can say "That is not my idea of Claudius". So the audiences of Shakespeare's plays would have no pre-conception of what the actor was trying to portray (except, of course, in revivals) though the costume might have indicated class, profession or trade, and a particular actor might be known for playing a particular type of part (for instance, Robert Armin was noted for playing a sadly comic character). So we have an audience that is full of expectation about the characters, not distracted by visual complexity, aware both of itself as audience and itself as a collection of individuals, watching a play in which the actors were telling a story by revealing characters who were part both of Shakespeare's consciousness and also of their own. At the same time, the players were aware of what they were doing, responding to the audience's reactions, and editing their performances to suit that audience which made (and makes) for a complex, multi-layered experience. So our boy player was taking part in something that was mainly happening in people's minds, who had come to the theatre to be entertained, and were willing to do their part by entering into the collusion that what they were seeing was real, though they knew that the reality was only happening within their imaginations. There were no effects to distract and alienate, there were only the words and the

acting. The audience and players all deciding to agree that they were seeing something real, in this case a woman, though, on another level, they were well aware that "she" was a boy, much as a present day audience colludes with the singer playing Octavian in *Der Rosenkavalier* that she is a boy who then pretends to be a girl, as does, also, Cherubino in *The Marriage of Figaro.*

But something else is also happening. The actors and audience are also colluding with the writer, to believe in his vision and, thus, making something greater than was actually written on the page. The philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein expressed it musically. He pointed out (in a lecture at Cambridge, circa 1930, quoted Monk, p. 302) that

> the relation between a musical score and a performance cannot be grasped causally (as though we find, mysteriously, that a certain score *causes* us to play in a certain way), nor can the rules that connect the two be exhaustively described - for, given a certain interpretation, *any* playing can be made to accord with the score. Eventually, we just have to '*see* the rule in the relations between playing and score'. If we cannot see it, no amount of explanation is going to make it comprehensible; if we can see, then there comes a point at which explanations are superfluous - we do not need any kind of 'fundamental' explanation.

To apply this argument to the Elizabethan theatre, it can be said that the audience and boy players, colluding in what was 'belief', and having such superb words to deal with,

were agreeing with each other that the 'fundamental' explanation, (to use Wittgenstein's word) was superfluous, and that what they were doing and watching transcended any reality, producing a greater truth about which there are no logical explanations. But there was a boy's body present, and identity is tied up with physical attributes. Could a boy really convincingly portray a woman? This entails looking at what the Elizabethans thought about sexuality. In today's prurient society people are labelled by their sexuality - heterosexual, homosexual and bi-sexual. These terms would mean nothing to the Elizabethans, in fact, were not in current use. Men could, and did, have passionate friendships which might or might not be sexually expressed. Hamlet's speech to Horatio is a fictional representation of this type of friendship, but the relationship is not overtly sexual. Some of Shakespeare's sonnets show an ambiguity about sex, and the young men and young women of the plays show great affection towards each other. The hugger-mugger sleeping arrangements of even the rich (corridors had not been invented, bedrooms led out of each other) made bodies very familiar and less an object of salacious inquiry. The clothes minimised sexual differences as well. As has been shown, the cult of women wearing men's clothes was prevalent throughout the period and so the sexual differences would be blurred. A boy actor portraying a girl who was wearing men's clothes would be more believably that to an age used to women wearing men's clothes. As nowadays, walking along a street, it is sometimes difficult to tell young men from young women when they both wear jeans, T-shirts, trainers and have long hair, so the sexual differences in the Elizabethan age were similarly blurred. Add to that, the fact that the audience was used to this type of identity-change in plays and romances, meant that the master-mistress figure of the boy player would be entirely credible. There would be doubt in the audience's mind that this was a girl being portrayed on the stage, a reality of the imagination,

FIG.4
SIR FRANCIS DRAKE
Unknown Artist: circa 1580/5: National Portrait Gallery: 4032.

FIG.5
SIR WALTER RALEIGH
Unknown Artist: 1588: National Portrait Gallery: 3914.

a different experience, and one entered into willingly, from seeing a real girl, just as King Lear or Hamlet are a real king and a real prince imaginatively,but not actually. The truth of the imagination is what the theatre deals in and in entering its doors that is what the audience colludes in with the actors.

The Elizabethan idea of what constituted feminine beauty and attractiveness was different from the Western ideal today of long legs, slim but rounded body and bosom. The clothes made a shape which was, on top at least, the same for men and women. The padded doublet concealed rather than revealed and only men showed a shapely calf. In court dress only a modest amount of bosom was shown, and while a fair skin, gold hair and blue eyes were admired, a boy as well as a woman could have these.

Costume, then, was a great help to the boys. Because of the sumptuary laws, the type of dress people could wear was prescribed so, walking down the street, one should have been able to tell to which profession and class a person belonged although, because the laws were not always obeyed, especially by the rich, emerging merchant class, mistakes could occur. For the players this was an advantage for their audiences would be able to place a character as soon as he entered. The players' wardrobes were extensive and rich as is shown by records made by Henslowe in his Diaries. The poet George Gascoigne writes of a well-dressed man:

... his bonnet, buttoned with gold,
His comely cape, begarded all with gay,
His bombast hose,with linings manifold,

FIG.6
UNKNOWN LADY/BLACK DOUBLET
Unknown Artist: circa 1560: National Portrait Gallery: 96

FIG.7
QUEEN ELIZABETH I
Unknown Artist: circa 1575: National Portrait Gallery: 2082

His knit silk socks and all his quaint array
(English Renaissance Poetry p. 30)

and in *Elegie X1X (Going to Bed:* Donne, p 107) refers to a woman's "spangled breastplate", a "busk" and a "wyerie Coronet", and it can be supposed that the players, again, would not wish to be outshone by their audience and would dress appropriately for their characters, using rich silks, taffetas and velvets for the upper-class characters and appropriately more modest materials for less privileged parts. As has been said, the costume would help the boy player, for the doublet, lace collar and ruff were common to both sexes, and similar hats were worn by both men and women. The doublet which covered the top half of the body, equivalent to today's jacket,was worn by both sexes as can be seen in the portraits of Sir Francis Drake, circa 1580-85, National Portrait Gallery, No.4032,(Fig.4),Sir Walter Raleigh, circa 1588, NPG:No.3914 (Fig.5) and that of the Unknown Lady, circa 1566, NPG No.96 (Fig.6). There are portraits and miniatures of the Queen herself in similar clothes, for example NPG No.2082 (Fig.7). In *The Roaring Girl* (as has been noted previously) where Moll wears both male and female dress, the doublet seems to have been worn either with her breeches or her skirt.(Fig. 3, frontispiece to the Play, printed 1611). The more elaborate court dress, with the stylised farthingale and lower-cut neck would be more difficult for a boy to wear, as it was more revealing of the female form. However, looking at the Portrait of Mary Fitton, circa 1600, artist unknown, (Fig.8)it can be seen that the neckline was not excessively low cut and the stiffened V-shaped basque would have a flattening effect on the breasts and stomach, indeed this was commented upon by Stephen Gosson in *Pleasant Quippes for Upstart Newfangled Gentlewoman* 1596.

FIG.8
MARY FITTON
Unknown Artist: Private Collection

The baudie buske that keeps down flat
The bed wherein the babe should breed

and, it might be added, the breasts on which he should feed!

The miniatures also show several examples of the high, beaver hat. Fig. 9 shows a Young Woman by Oliver, circa 1590 (Victoria and Albert Museum P21-1975) wearing an identical collar and hat to the Three Brothers Browne, by Isaac Oliver, 1598, Burghley House Preservation Trust, (Fig.10) and Oliver's The Unknown Melancholy Man, circa 1590-95, (owned by Her Majesty the Queen, (Fig.11), while Hilliard's Unknown Lady, date unknown, V & A, P.26-1975, (Fig.12) wears a smaller, more feminine version. Elaborate ruffs worn by men and women are also similar in shape as can be seen in the Hilliard miniatures of the Unknown Lady ,Private Collection, (Fig.13a) and Sir Walter Raleigh, NPG.4106, (Fig. 13b) both circa 1585. Sir Walter is wearing the bonnet which was also worn by women (Fig.6)

Under, nether garments, or small clothes, were common to both sexes, the smock being the main undergarment, generally made in linen and of the same design for both sexes, though upper-class people would have more elaborate sleeves. In Ben Jonson's *Every Man in His Humour* there is a scene where a man wears a woman's smock without causing comment while she washes his shirt. The smock was worn in bed by both sexes, as witness the incident when Somerset romped with the Princess Elizabeth in her bedroom. So when Peter Stally-brass asks in *Erotic Politics* (Essay on 'Transvestism and the body beneath: speculation on the boy actor': pp.64/83) what the audience saw when a boy undressed the answer is an

FIG.9
UNKNOWN WOMAN/ANDROGYNOUS
Isaac Oliver: circa 1590: Victoria and Albert Museum: P.21-1975

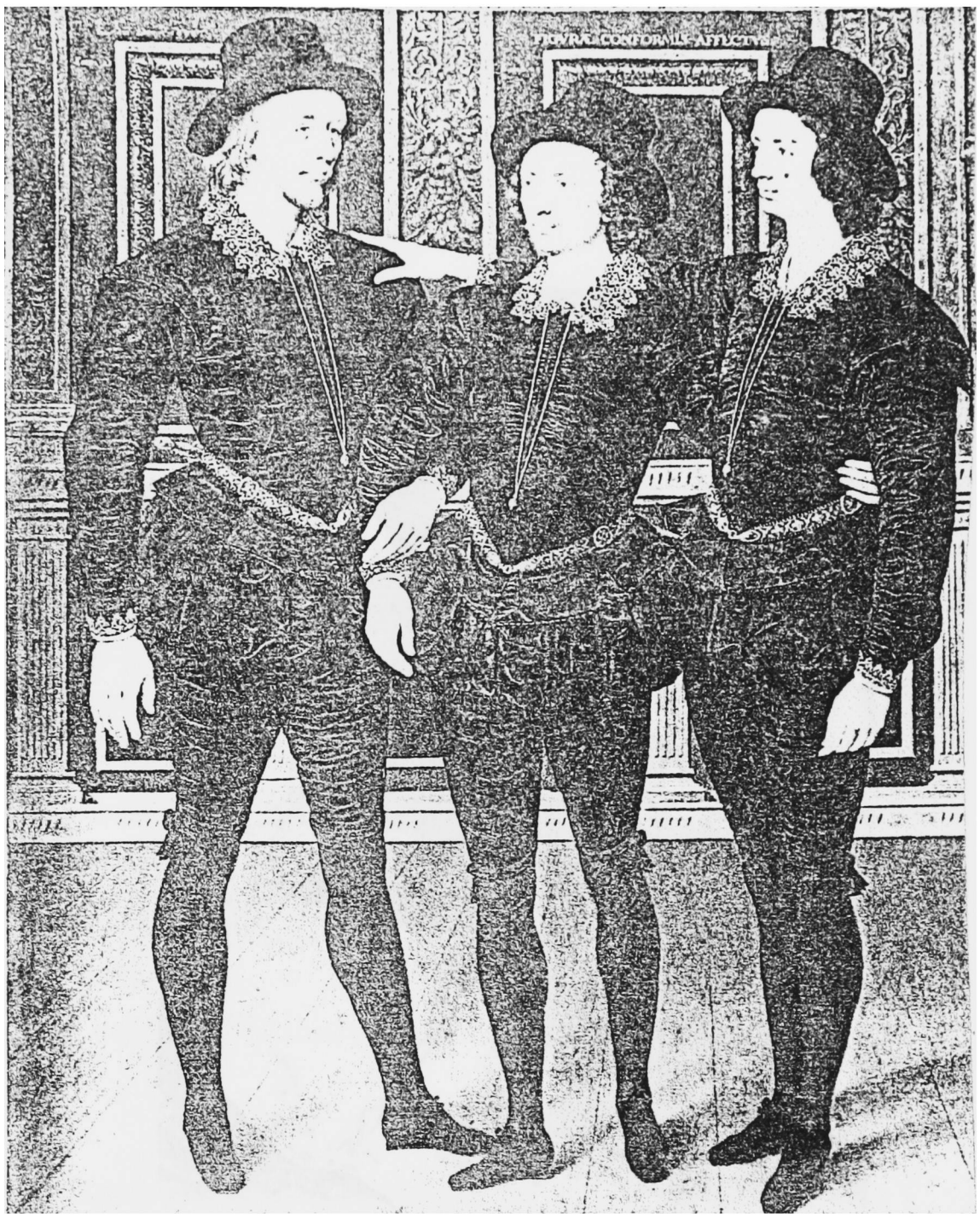

FIG. 10
BROTHERS BROWN
Isaac Oliver: Burghley House Preservation Trust.

FIG. 11
MELANCHOLY MAN
Isaac Oliver: circa 1590/5: owned by H.M. the Queen.

opaque linen garment which would totally diguise his figure and he would have no need of the prosthetics that Stallybrass thinks inevitable. What is called a nightgown (e.g. in *Macbeth* and Desdemona in *Othello*) was, again, the same for both sexes, being a night version of the medieval gown, which was still worn in the day by the elderly and old-fashioned, such as Lord Burghley, NPG.2184,(Fig.14), so again, the boy would be wearing garments to which he was accustomed.

In any case, androgyny was endemic in Elizabethan and Jacobean society. Not only does the literature of the time have as a theme men disguising themselves as women and women as men, women often wore men's clothes in real life. At certain times, it was exceptionally fashionable so to do,particularly in the 1590s and at the beginning of James I's reign. The real life Moll Frith was a notorious example, but the young *elegantes* of the day also took on male disguise and young men and boys, besides the players, wore long hair and what are now called uni-sex clothes.

Dr John Rainoldes, a leading Oxford Divine, wrote in *The Overthrow of Stage-Playes*

> The appareil of women (on boys) is a great provocation of men to lust and lecherie

and further

> A womans garment being put on a man doth vehemently touch and move him with the remembrance and imagination of a woman; and the imagination of a thing desirable doth stir up desire.

Often, looking at portraits and miniatures it is difficult to see who is male and who is female. The Unknown Woman already mentioned as being in clothes indistinguishable from a man's (Fig.9) is only one of several androgynous portraits. Turning to portraits of men, Fig. 15 shows an Unknown Young Man, (painted by Nicholas Hilliard, V & A. P4-1974) but in his bonnet, ruff and yellow doublet he might easily be a woman, as could the Unknown Man circa 1590 (Fig.16 artist and location unknown, shown in Ashelford, p.67) and Ludwig Philip, V & A. P28-1975, (Fig.17), as well as the Gentleman, painted by Oliver, Private Collection, (Fig.18). None of these can be described as manly men, each having faces that are androgynous, and which could easily pass as a woman's. The man/woman and the woman/man was prevalent and accepted at this time as part of life, though the more hysterical and puritan element in society, of course, vilified it.

George Gascoigne wrote of women

> What be they? women? masking in mens weedes?
> With dutchkin dublets, and Ierkins iaggde?
> With high copt hattes, and fethers flaunt a flaunt?
> They be so sure even *Wo* to *Men* in dede. (*The Steel Glass (1576), English Reprints, vol 5:1896:* pp. 82/3)

FIG. 12
UNKNOWN LADY/HAT
Nicholas Hilliard: circa 1602: Victoria and Albert Museum: P26-1975.

That young men and boys could appear convincingly as women is shown by this poem

As once in blacke I disrespected walkt,
Where glittering courtiers in their Tissues
stalkt,
I cast by chance my melancholy eye
Upon a woman (as I thought) past by.
But when I viewed her ruffe, and beaver reard
As if *Priapus*-like she would have feared
The ravenous *Harpyes* from the clustred grape
Then I began much to distrust her shape;
When viewing curiously, away she slipt,
And in the fount her whited hand she dipt,
The angry water as if wrong'd thereby,
Ranne murmuring thence a second touch to fly,
At which away she stalkes, and as she goes
She viewes the situation of each rose;
And having higher rays'd her gowne, she gazd
Upon her crimson stocking which amazd
Blusht at her open impudence, and sent
Reflection to her cheeke, for punishment.
As thus I stood the Gardiner chaunce to passe,
My friend (quoth I) what is that stately lasse?
A maide of honour Sir, said he, and goes
Leaving a riddle, was enough to pose
The crafty *Oedipus* for I could see
Nor mayde, nor honour, sure noe honesty.
(The Metaphysical Poets: 1957: quoted Jardine, p10)

If this poem is looked at closely, it can be seen that the writer was initially convinced that the person he saw was a young woman, but it is only with thought that he decided that it was not. He is not at the theatre and so is not in

FIG. 13a
UNKNOWN LADY/RUFF
Nicholas Hilliard: Private Collection: picture by permission
Christie Images

FIG. 13b
SIR WALTER RALEIGH
Nicholas Hilliard: circa 1595: National Portrait Gallery: 4106.

the state of wishing to suspend belief and enter into the conspiracy that actors create, but still he gives credit to the ~~transvestite~~ cross-dresser that he appears to be a woman. It is, also, interesting to note that the young person is similarly attired to the Unknown Young Woman of Fig 10 with his/her lace collar and high Beaver hat.

Although Linda Woodbridge (to whom I am indebted for much of the material on this subject) argues that "the transvestite movement was quiescent during the 1590s and early 1600s" (Woodbridge: p.141) because there is no factual literature of that time which censures it, she has not taken into consideration the visual evidence found in portraits and miniatures showing women were wearing similar clothes to men nor the plays which were produced then. *As You Like It* and *Twelfth Night*, for example, were both produced in the early 1600s. On this evidence it must be concluded that the wearing of androgynous clothing was a fairly constant fashion throughout the whole period, that is from the 1570s when Geoffrey Fenton published *Monophylo* with its myths of androgyny: the 1580s, the time of both *The Old Arcadia* by Philip Sydney with its many ~~tranvestites~~ cross-dressers, and Lodge's *Rosalynde*: the 1590s, and the early 1600s, with Shakespeare's ~~transvestite~~ cross-dressed heroines, together with the work of numerous other dramatists which lasted, at least, until the 1630s.

Besides the Gascoigne poem quoted above from 1576, other writers found the wearing of men's clothes by women distasteful. Philip Stubbes, writing in 1583 mentions that women wore

FIG. 14
LORD BURLEIGH
attributed: A. van Brounckhorst: circa 1560/70: National Portrait Gallery: 2184

> dublets and Jerkins as men have heer, buttoned up the brest, and made with wings, welts, and pinions on the shoulder points, as man's apparel is
> (*Anatomy of Abuses*: quoted Beth Rose: p 51)

and Richard Niccols wrote in 1614

> T'is strange to see a Mermaide, you will say,
> Yet not so strange, as that I saw to day,
> One part of that which 'boue the waters rise,
> Is woman, th' other fish, or fishers lies.
> One part of this was man or I mistooke...
> The head is mans, I iudge by hat and haire,
> And by the band and doublet it doth weare,
> The bodie should be mans, what doth it need?
> Had it a codpiece, 'twere a man indeed.
> (*The Furies*)

The church was not far behind in condemning the wearing of men's garments by women, having the authority of *Leviticus* behind it. In 1619, John Williams published a sermon on apparel saying that God had

> diuided male and female, but the deuill hath ioyn'd them, the *mulier formosa*, is now become *mulier monstrosa superne*, halfe man halfe woman...
> (quoted Woodbridge: p.142)

What had particularly raised his ire was that women actually attended church in men's clothes

FIG. 15
YOUNG MAN/YELLOW DOUBLET
Nicholas Hilliard: Victoria and Albert Museum: P4-1975.

FIG. 16
YOUNG MAN
Artist and Location unknown: Ashelford p. 67.

FIG. 17
LUDWIG PHILIP
Peter Oliver: circa 1620: Victoria and Albert Museum: P28-1975.

FIG. 18
YOUNG MAN/RUFF
Isaac Oliver: date unknown: Private Collection: picture by permission Christie Images

> For a woman therefore to come vnto Church ....halfe male, and halfe female...lifting vp towards his throne *two plaister'd eyes* and a *polled head*...in *Sattin* (I warrant you) unstead of sackcloth....standing most manly upon her *points*, by wagging a *Feather* to defie the *World*, and carrying a *dagger*...to enter God's house, as if it were a Play-house....(quoted Woodbridge: p.142)

The juxtaposition of Church and Play-house is interesting - is Williams inferring that it is all right for women to wear man's apparel at the Playhouse and in the streets to protect themselves or not?

Nor was the invective confined to the clergy. No less a person than James 1 was concerned as is shown by this letter

> Yesterday the bishop of London called together all his Clergie about this towne, and told them he had expresse commaundment from the King to will them inveigh vehemently and bitterly in theyre sermons, against the insolence of our women, and theyre wearing of brode brimmd hats, pointed doublets,theyre haire cut short or shorne, and some of them stillettaes or poinards.....(John Chamberlain, 25th January, 1620)

More polemical even than this were the two pamphlets *Hic Mulier* and *Haec Vir* which were also published in 1620. Although overtly concerned with the place of women in society the pamphlets also are concerned with the wearing of

men's clothes by women, condemned in the first pamphlet as degrading to women, but upheld in the second as expressing their need for recognition and equality. Part of the argument concerns the wearing of men's clothes by women who walked abroad in broad-brimmed hats with feathers, doublet unbutton'd to reveal breasts, short hair and

> "...naked, lasciuious, bawdy Bosome", *Leaden-Hall* Dagger" and "High-way Pistoll...(Woodbridge: p.146)

It seems, too, that wearing men's dress was not confined only to the upper classs, but that women of every social class indulged in it and it served to gloss over the hierarchial nature of society which defined not only gender but class.

Men, too, were castigated for their effeminate dress, blurring the difference between the sexes even more. William Prynne writing in *Histrio-Mastix, The Player's Scourge or Actor's Tragedy*, 1632, writes

> For whence is it that many of our gentry are lately degenerates into a more than Sardanapalian effeminacy; that they are now so fanatastic in their apparel, so womanish in their frizzled periwigs, love-locks, and long effeminate powdered pounced hair; so mimical in their gestures; so effeminate in their lives, so player-loke in their deportment, so amorous in their embracements.....is it not principally from their

> resort to plays, to masques, and such-like antic, apish pastimes.....

For the boy player the wearing of men's dress would impose an interesting problem, for he would be impersonating a woman in man's dress which would, or should, affect the way he walked and moved for gesture is very largely the outcome of dress, so certain clothes, certain styles impose movement, either because ways of moving are impossible in the chosen clothes, or the gestures are adopted to show off decorative features of the costume or the wearer. For example, the Elizabethan man standing with his hand on his hip displays his short circular cloak to perfection: ladies with beautiful hands, like the Queen, rested them languidly over the edge of the farthingale. The heavy skirts of the period, which were held out on frames, would demand a sedate walk taken with small steps and this movement would be imposed on the boy player. Royal Shakespeare Company actor Kenn Saberton told the writer that when he played Celia in *As You Like It* he learnt to walk in an entirely different way when wearing a long dress. The boning of the garments, too, helps to support breath. John Dobson, principal tenor at the Royal Opera House, says that he and other tenors often wear a whalebone belt to support their frame and control their breathing.

Gesture was something to be studied. As Castiglione writes in *The Book of the Courtier*

> If I remember rightly, my dear Count, it seems to me that you have repeated several times this evening that the courtier has to imbue with grace his movements, his gestures, his way of doing

> things and in short, his every action. (Castiglione: p.65)

and later on

> I say that if anyone is to acquire grace...he should start young and learn the principles from the best teachers.....anyone who wants to be a good pupil must not only do things well but must also make a constant effort to imitate and, if possible, exactly reproduce his master.(Castglione: p.66)

Anyone interested in the meaning of gestures had books to study, such as *Chironomia* and *Chirilogia* by Bulwer which show the correct gestures for different emotions. Whether these were used by the actors is not established, nor is it certain to whom these books were addressed, but they were there if the actors needed them. Far from being stylised, these gestures are ones that have obviously been observed by the author and his illustrator. Writers on gesture in the Renaissance stress that gestures, external actions, must always proceed from the internal feeling and emotion and be true to them. In the unsubtle atmosphere of the outdoor theatres gestures would have much to do in projecting the emotions expressed by the verse, though too flamboyant gestures were probably frowned upon by Shakespeare (cf Hamlet's advice to the Players) though the padded costumes would dictate that the gestures were ample. Looking at small, static pictures, it is difficult to see how the gestures would flow, but in 1951 and 1952, B.L.Joseph conducted two experiments with the actor Bernard Miles and his Company in the first Mermaid theatre which was a small

space in Miles's back garden in St John's Wood. In his book *Elizabethan Acting*, Joseph gives a description of these performances and showed how sometimes the actors used gestures spontaneously that were later found in the diagrams of *Chironomia* and *Chirilogia*, and at other times the gestures were taken directly from the illustrations in the book. Joseph writes

> It is certain that the 'actions' described by such writers as Bulwer can be used validly and stirringly by modern actors as 'the projection of some inner experience'....The gestures... seemed to arise naturally from the verse. (Joseph: p.47)

The critics of the day seemed to find nothing unusual in the gestures used by the company, *The Times* commenting that the gestures 'were not stilted" and J.C. Trewin (p. 55) said that 'It seemed perfectly normal' while Roy Walker wrote

> Their acting was greatly helped rather than hindered by dramatically significant movement that often communicated a sensation of watching Elizabethan performers and speech that at least invited us to share imaginative and emotional ordeals that were not conceived in the idiom of modern experience. Retrospective analysis can catch Mr Miles in the stance familiar from old prints, slightly bent forward with one leg advanced and knees flexed, and identify the finger-count 'the swift, the slow, the subtle, etc.', as a rhetorical figure, but at the time one

> was primarily aware of the dramatic effect. (Joseph: p.55)

Whether the boys actually used gesture books is not known, but, as these gestures were codified, it can be presumed that they were the current gestures in use on the stage and in life which the boys would learn and imitate from the seasoned actors in the company, as Castiglione advised, so that, along with appropriate dress, they would be able to move well and expressively in whatever part they were given. Doubt has been cast as to whether these gestures would lead to restricted and somewhat stylised acting, which would be unnatural. But gestures on the stage have to be larger than those in real life and, like ballet dancers who have to have assimilated their steps before they can express themselves, so the Elizabethan actor could learn gestures and make them his own, make them look natural.

That the boys were successful is obvious. A society which enjoyed going to the theatre (six thousand people out of a population of around three hundred thousand could have gone every day the theatres were opened) who had high standards of speech and singing would not, it may be supposed, have tolerated bad acting. Although there is little comment on the actual acting of the boys, indeed little comment on acting at all, what there is is commendatory. That boys could deceive by their appearances has been shown by the poem on page 136 and the polemics concerning the evil of their appearing at all. There are, however, some pieces of early dramatic criticism which praise the boys' acting. Henry Jackson of Corpus Christi College, Oxford saw the King's Men play *Othello* in 1610. In a letter he writes

> - At vero Desdemona illa apud nos a marito occisa, quanquam optime semper causam egit, interfecta tamen magis movebat; cum in lecto decumbens spectantium misericordiam ipso vultu imploraret. - (Salgado: p.30)

> (- In truth, that famous Desdemona who was killed in front of us by her husband, acted her whole part excellently, but surpassed herself when she was actually killed, being yet more moving, for when she fell back upon the bed she implored pity from the spectators by her very face.- my trans.)

Although Jackson does not mention the age of the boy, it is obvious that he was much moved and thoroughly convinced as he refers to the actor throughout as "her".

Another testimony to the boys' abilities is that of Thomas Platter who came from Switzerland, saw *Julius Caesar* in 1599 and commented

> ....at the end of the comedy, they danced as was their custom, very elegantly: two people in men's clothes and two in women's, combining wonderfully with each other....(Salgado: p.18)

Thomas Coryate in *Crudeties* (1611) says about a visit to Italy that

> I saw women acte, I thing I never saw before...and they performed it with as good a grace, action, gesture and whatsoever convenient for a Player, as ever I saw any masculine Actor. (Coryate: p.247: quoted Robertson Davies: p.34)

Thomas Heywood in *An Apology for Actors* (1608) while seeming not entirely to approve of boy actors nonetheless pays an unstated compliment to their skill

> To see our youths attired in the habit of women, who knows not what their intents be? who cannot distinguish them by their names, assuredly knowing they are but to represent such a lady, at such a tyme appoynted? (Robertson Davies: p.11)

None of these comments does anything but assume the skill of the players, and have clearly been impressed by it. Today, it might be thought odd that such a convention should be tolerated, but, as has been shown, the Elizabethan theatre not only accepted it, but worked within it. The women's parts are, when looked at from the point of view of a boy, not the necessarily psychologically rounded women, for the emotions can be acted in a simple way. Peter Brook in *The Empty Space* tells of an experience he had of giving Goneril's speech, "Sir, I love you" to someone who had never read *King Lear*.

> She read it very simply - the speech itself emerged full of eloquence and charm. I then explained that it was supposed to be the speech of a wicked woman and suggested her reading every

> word for hypocrisy. She tried to do so, and the audience saw what a hard unnatural wrestling with the simple music of the words was involved when she sought to act to a definition....The words are those of a lady of style and breeding accustomed to expressing herself in public, someone with ease and social aplomb. As for clues to her character, only the facade is presented and this, we see, is eloquent and attractive.(Brook:pp16/17)

What Brook is saying here is that actors should forget the critical encrustrations that the parts have accrued, and try to read the parts as if they were new-minted, as, indeed, the creators of the parts had to do. Then it is found that the way the parts are written technically, the rather simple but strong emotions which they express are within the capabilities of an imaginative boy who was also a fully trained professional. As well, the boys had the wonderful flexible medium of the iambic pentameter. This would help them in expressing emotion for, as Peter Hall points out:

> Shakespeare constantly heightens emotions by creating unexpected irregularities in the verse. He writes against the verse, yet always preserves it. It is about to break and never quite does....Out of these breathtaking irregularities, the actor can express extreme feeling. (Hall:p.233)

As has been shown, Shakespeare's women speak simply in his earlier plays, and as their emotions become stronger, so the verse becomes more fragmented, less regular. All this was a great help to the boy in realising his part.

If there is further confirmation that a boy of fifteen or so could convincingly play a woman's part, there is evidence in this century. Laurence Olivier started his acting career with a talented amateur company belonging to All Saints', Margaret Street, where he had previously been a choirboy. Olivier played Katherine in *The Taming of the Shrew* in a company remarkable in that the boys acted with men, Olivier's Petruchio being Father Geoffrey Heald. *The Shrew* was given both in London, and as the Birthday Performance at the old theatre in Stratford-upon-Avon on 23rd April 1922, *just a month before Olivier's fifteenth birthday.* Ellen Terry, who saw one of the London performances, commented that she had never seen Kate played better by a woman except Ada Rehan. Dame Sybil Thorndike, another member of the audience, said that Olivier was never overshadowed by his Petruchio, and that "Larry was really wonderful, the best Shrew I ever saw". The actor Laurence Naismith, also in the cast agrees, saying

> "Larry was born to act. He had the presence. What I remember about his Kate was his complete naturalness....He was a very unattractive boy, lean and bony, with very skinny legs. And yet the moment he put on those dresses his image and bearing changed completely. He really became a young girl."(quoted Cottrell: p.28)

Olivier was an actor of genius , but what he did, that is, really became a young girl in his own mind, and in the mind of his audiences is something, I submit, that the boys of Shakespeare's day could, and did, accomplish.

APPENDIX

PUNCTUATION OF OPHELIA'S SPEECH

HAMLET ACT 3, scene 1

'O, What a Noble Mind'

QUARTO 1603, Quarto Facsimile, Oxford, 1965

Ofe. Great God of Heaven, what a quicke change is this?
The Courtier, Scholler, Souldier, all in him.
All dafht and fplinterd thence, O woe is me,
To a feene what I haue feene, fee what I fee. *exit.*

QUARTO 1604, San Marino, California 1964

Oph. O what a noble mind is heere orethrowne!
The Courtiers, fouldiers, fschollers, eye, tongue, fword,
Th'expectation, and Rofe of the faire ftate,
The glaffe of fafhion, and the moulde of forme,
Th'obferu'd of all obferuers, quite quite downe,
And I of Ladies moft deiect and wretched,
That fuckt the honny of his mufickt vowes;
Now fee what noble and moft foueraigne reafon
Like fweet bells iangled out of time, and harfh

That vnmatcht forme, and ftature of blowne youth
Blafted with extacie, o woe is mee
T'haue feene, fee what I fee. *Exit.*

FIRST FOLIO, 1623, Facsimile, 1923

OPHE. O what a Noble minde is heere o're-throwne?
The Courtiers, Soldiers, Schollers: Eye, tongue, fword
Th'expectanfie and Rofe of the faire State
The glaffe of Fashion, and the mould of Forme,
Th'obferv'd of all Obferuers, quite, quite downe.
Have I of ladies moft deiect and wretched,
That fuck'd the Honie of his Muficke vowes:
Now fee that Noble, and moft Soueraigne Reafon,
Like fweet Bels iangled out of tune, and harfh
That vnmatch'd Forme and Feature of blowne youth,
Blafted with extafie. Oh woe is me,
T'have feene what I haue feene: fee what I fee.

CAMBRIDGE SHAKESPEARE, Cambridge, 1948

Ophelia . O, what a noble mind is here o'erthrown!
The courtier's, soldier's, scholar's, eye, tongue, sword,
Th' expectancy and rose of the fair state,
The glass of fashion, and the mould of form,
Th'observed of all observers, quite quite down,
And I of ladies most deject and wretched,
That sucked the honey of his music vows,
Now see that noble and most sovereign reason
Like sweet bells jangled, out of tune and harsh,
That unmatched form and feature of blown youth,

Blasted with ecstasy! O, woe is me!
T'have seen what I have seen, see what I see! *(she prays*

THE PELICAN SHAKESPEARE, Baltimore 1957, revised 1960

OPHELIA. O, what a noble mind is here o'erthrown!
The courtier's, soldier's, eye, tongue, sword,
Th' expectancy and rose of the fair state,
The glass of fashion and the mould of form,
Th'observed of all observers, quite, quite, down!
And I,of ladies most deject and wretched,
That sucked the honey of his music vows,
Now see that noble and most sovereign reason
Like sweet bells jangled, out of time and harsh,
That unmatched form and feature of blown youth
Blasted with ecstasy. O, woe is me
T'have seen what I have seen, see what I see!

OXFORD SHAKESPEARE,first published 1988, edition used 1991

OPHELIA
O what a noble mind is here o'erthrown!
The courtier's, soldier's, scholar's eye,tongue, sword,
Th'expectancy and rose of the fair state,
The glass of fashion and the mould of form,
Th'observed of all observers, quite, quite, down !
And I, of ladies most deject and wretched,
That sucked the honey of his music vows,
Now see that noble and most sovereign reason
Like sweet bells jangled out of tune and harsh:

That unmatched form and feature of blown youth
Blasted with ecstasy. O woe is me,
T'have seen what I have seen, see what I see!

PUNCTUATED FOR SPEAKING

OPHELIA

*O what a noble mind is here o'erthrown *
The courtiers soldiers scholars eye tongue sword
Th'expectancy and rose of the fair state *
The glass of fashion and the mould of form
Th'observed of all observers quite quite down *
And I of ladies most deject and wretched
That sucked the honey of his music vows *
Now see that noble and most sovereign reason
Like sweet bells jangled out of tune and harsh*
That unmatched form and feature of blown youth
Blasted with ecstasy * O woe is me
T'have seen what I have seen see what I see.

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