

The Politics of Jonsonian Manipulation of Otherness in *The Masque of Queens*

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On February 2, 1609, *The Masque of Queens* was presented before the court of King James I. This masque was composed by Ben Jonson, and Inigo Jones designed the stage settings and the attires for the masquers. In it, the twelve ancient queens, performed by the Queen and her ladies, conquer the twelve Hags who are trying to invoke Hecate to cause chaotic confusion. It is widely held that the use of perspective settings on stage, unlike the other commercial dramas of this era, along with the machines to shift scenes swiftly, gave reality and splendor to the performance of the court masque. As the royal box was always set just in front of the vanishing point on the stage, the King was as a rule shown as the only center of the two worlds, i.e., the real world and that of the masque. Thus we could assume that he was set as the silent connector of the two worlds, and the drama of the masque world might be corresponded to what happened in the real world. Why was it necessary for the composers of the masques, then, to set the King in such a way? How was the correspondence of the two worlds, and moreover, what was its function?

To answer these questions, it is often said that the court masque is a kind of political art that glorifies the King and his policy before the whole court. However, what is the concise meaning of the word “political” in this case? Did it serve only for the King? Or could it serve for any other person in the court? In other words, could we find many kinds of “politics” in the court masques? I would like to solve these questions by analyzing the structure of *The Masque of Queens* and the manipulation of the images of the female gender in it.

I choose this masque as my subject because it is a masque not only performed but also formed to some extent by Queen Anne. According to Jonson, it was the Queen herself who advised him to put a false masque part, or in the other words the anti-masque, before the masque proper to entertain the audience. The Queen also tried to display before the court her own pro-Spanish political inclination by inviting the Spanish ambassador to the performance. This action of hers upset the French ambassador so greatly that the King had to intervene in that dispute. “The Queen used her masques to participate in foreign diplomacy, and she became annoyed with the King when her plans were thwarted” (Wynne-Davies 86). At the same time, “the writers employed for the masques could hardly ignore the major ceremonial brief of such an occasion, which was to celebrate James and his court” (Perry 166). In addition to this, in explaining the Queen’s idea of the invention of anti-masque, Jonson “publicly registers his knowledge that others have done *something* of this sort before, and that it was his responsibility to consult the precedents; and quietly observes that among these precedents was his own masque of the previous year, *The Haddington Masque*” (Dutton 24), and he also puts huge notes which show his sophistication (Evans 235). Jonson celebrates himself by celebrating the Queen and her ideas, using the formal occasion to celebrate the King and his policy.

Thus we might regard this masque as a function with three elements with subjectivity, i.e.,

King James, Queen Anne, and the author Ben Jonson, and this point gives this masque its political dimensions. By analyzing the structure of this masque and the use of gender images in this masque, I hope to demonstrate how this function, i.e., *The Masque of Queens*, works. In this paper, I would like to see the basic structure of this masque first, and then to examine the range of the Hags' images, and finally I would like to discuss the real meaning of the conquest of them by the twelve queens in the masque.

1 The basic structure of *The Masque of Queens*

When we read the script of *The Masque of Queens*, we might point out that the masque could be divided into three parts, i.e., the introductory part, the anti-masque, and the masque proper, and Jonson combines them into a dramaturgical structure. In the introductory part, eleven Hags appear on stage one by one. The scene is the ugly hell, "flaming beneath, smoked unto the top of the roof" (22). The Hags, with rats and ointment pots as their attributes, dance and make great noise with the spindles, timbre, rattles and other instruments in their hands. After this dance they call to their leader, the Dame, to come soon riding on "little Martin", perhaps a demonic animal, for the orgy. They call her three times using charms, making it apparent that they have prepared everything to cause chaotic confusion, and the expectation for her arrival grows.

At the beginning of the anti-masque part, the Dame appears on the stage being "naked armed, barefooted", and "her frock tucked, her hair knotted and folded with vipers; in her hand a torch made of a dead man's arm, lighted; girded with a snake" (87- 89). According to Jonson, "to have made themselves their own decipherers, and each one to have told upon their entrance what they were and whether they would, had been a most piteous hearing, and utterly unworthy any quality of a poem..." (92- 95). She calls out the names of the Hags one by one, i.e., Ignorance, Suspicion, Credulity, Falsehood, Murmur, Malice, Impudence, Slander, Execration, Bitterness, Rage, and Mischief, and she asks them what they have done and brought for this Sabbath. In answering this question, each of them shows what she has brought, from poisonous plants as the mandrake to things like a part of carcass eaten by a raven, a skull, and the fat of an infant. We could say that by this scene the exposition part of this masque turns into the development part.

Then they all begin to invoke Hecate. Here it is made apparent that the Dame is the mere leader of the Hags and she also needs the aid of a superior to fulfill their evil ambition. What the Hags intend to do is made apparent in the following remark of the Dame:

Join now our hearts, we faithful opposites
 To Fame and Glory. Let not these bright nights
 Of honor blaze thus to offend our eyes;
 Show ourselves truly envious, and let rise
 Our wonted rages; do what may beseem
 Such names and natures: Virtue else will deem

Our powers decreased, and think us banished earth,
 No less than heaven. All her antique birth,
 As Justice, Faith, she will restore, and, bold
 Upon our sloth, retrieve her Age of Gold.
 We must not let our native manners thus
 Corrupt with ease. Ill lives not but in us.
 I hate to see these fruits of a soft peace,
 And curse the piety gives it such increase.
 Let us disturb it then, and blast the light;
 Mix hell with heaven, and make Nature fight
 Within herself; loose the whole hinges of things,
 And cause the ends run back into their springs.

(120–37)

She says that they are the enemies of Fame, Glory, Justice, and Faith, and also that they want to stop the restoration of Virtue to the world. They intend to destroy the whole order of things, from that of the nature to that of the body politics supported by Justice and Faith. They want to reverse everything, and turn whole universe into hell by blasting the light.

Although they try hard to invoke Hecate, she does not appear at all. They repeat the charm six times over, and while they are doing so, the Dame dares to wound her own arm to shed blood as a sacrifice to Hecate. After that, they perform a magical dance, in which they do “all things contrary to the custom of men, dancing back to back and hip to hip, their hands joined, and making their circles backward, to the left hand, with strange fantastic motions of their heads and bodies” (329–32). This is the dance of witches itself for the contemporary accusers of witchcraft (Harris 72). Does Hecate appear after all, seeing this sacrifice and dance? The suspense increases. Then, all of a sudden, not Hecate but Heroic Virtue and the House of Fame appear, and the hell and the Hags disappear with a great noise. Their shameless desire to make the world upside down is destroyed both by the intervention of Heroic Virtue, the Perseus-like God, and the twelve ancient queens sitting on the roof of the House of Fame like a pyramid, and thus the climax part begins.

Heroic Virtue proclaims that “at Fame’s loud sound and Virtue’s sight, / [all] dark and envious witchcraft fly the light” (344–45), and the masque part begins. There is no narrator proper in it and all the characters except twelve ancient queens, i.e., all the characters done by the professional actors, explain their identities as well as the situation while the masquers speak nothing. In the remark of Heroic Virtue, i.e., the exposition part of the masque proper, the audiences are told that he is the Good Fame’s father and that he gives her enough strength to conquer the Hags. He is the guardian, and leads and protects Fame and twelve ancient queens who incarnate virtue. Thus he speaks first and then Fame follows. He introduces the twelve queens saying that “[she] to this lesser world and greatest isle / [tonight] sounds Honor, which she would have seen / [in] yond’ bright bevy, each of them a queen” (371–73). The names of the queens are as follows: Penthesilea, Camilla, Thomyris, Artemisia, Berenice, Hypsicratea, Candace, Voadicea, Zenobia, Amalasynda, Valasca, and Bel-Anna. All of them except Bel-Anna are the famous ancient queens, and Heroic Virtue tells the audience that “[these] in their lives, as fortunes, crowned the choice / [of] womankind, and ’gainst all opposite voice, / [made] good to

time, had after death the claim / [to] live eternised in the House of Fame" (386- 89). Bel-Anna is Jonson's coinage for Queen Anne, and she is depicted as follows:

The glories of Bel-Anna so well told,
 Queen of the ocean; how that she alone
 Possessed all virtues, for which one by one
 They were so famed; and wanting then a head
 To form that sweet and gracious pyramid
 Wherein they sit, it being the sovereign place
 Of all that palace, and reserved to grace
 The worthiest queen; these without envy on her,
 In life desired that honor to confer,
 Which with their death no other should enjoy.
 She this embracing with a virtuous joy,
 Far from self-love, as humbling all her worth
 To him that gave it, hath again brought forth
 Their names to memory; and means this night
 To make them once more visible to light,
 And to that light from whence her truth of spirit
 Confesseth all the luster of her merit:

(391- 407)

As she is the most virtuous as well as the humblest of the twelve queens, Bel-Anna is the leader of the queens. She takes no pride in her virtues, and modestly follows Heroic Virtue in silence in spite of her honorable position.

Heroic Virtue then salutes King James sitting in the middle of the auditorium, and thus the masque world is connected to the real world. Then Fama Bona [Good Fame] appears on the stage by *machina versatilis*, a revolving machine, and speaks to her father as follows:

Do those renowned queens all utmost rites
 Their states can ask. This is a night of nights.
 In mine own chariots let them crowned ride,
 And mine own birds and beasts in gears applied
 To draw them forth. Unto the first car tie
 Far-sighted eagles, to note Fame's sharp eye.
 Unto the second, griffins, that design
 Swiftness and strength, two other gifts of mine.
 Unto the last, our lions, that imply
 The top of graces, state and majesty.
 And let those hags be led as captives, bound
 Before their wheels whilst I my trumpet sound.

(435- 46)

Following this remark, the masquers descend to the floor and ride on the three triumphant

chariots. Four torchbearers follow each of the first two chariots and four Hags are tied to them. Six torchbearers follow the last one on which Bel-Anna rides, and six Hags are tied to it. While a triumphal music is played they ride these chariots to the stage, which reminds us of an ancient Roman triumph. The ancient twelve queens are the delegates of the King, and they parade in order to honor both the King and their victory. Then a song is sung to lead them into dancing. With the songs and the dances, the masque comes to the conclusion.

In this way, we could say that the first two parts of this masque, i.e., the introductory part and the anti-masque, stand in sharp contrast to the masque proper, i.e., the climax and the conclusion, in many ways. While the twelve Hags speak their evil ambition loudly and perform an odd dance to the strange music, the twelve queens, although never speak, dance gracefully to the beautiful music. While the Hags' appearances reveal their sexual wantonness, those of the queens' show their chastity. Moreover, while the Dame appears on the stage riding on "little Martin", a demonic animal, and conducts Sabbath, Bel-Anna sits on the top of the House of Fame and does nothing but follow Heroic Virtue. Furthermore, while the Hags abhor the peaceful and religious condition of the nation and intend to destroy every order of this world, the queens, by conquering the Hags with the aid of Heroic Virtue and 'Good' Fame, strengthen the power of the King who rules "this lesser world and greatest isle", i.e., England, with the aid of Justice and Faith.

Thus this apparent plot of the conquest of the Hags by the ancient queens simultaneously means the conquest of darkness by light, that of wantonness by chastity, and that of the King's enemy by the King's supporters at the same time. The triumph of the Fame's chariots celebrates the swift intervention of the heavenly power that stops the confusion of the nation, and mocks the miserable state of the defeated Hags. The chariots are their pillories, and everyone can see them suffering punishment and enjoy it. The suspense caused by their demonic rite is turned into a loud laughter in the climax, and the magnificence of Heroic Virtue, Good Fame and twelve queens take the audience to the masque part swiftly. We might also point out that a combination of three devices, i.e., sharp contrast between these two groups, the satirical laughter caused by the defeated Hags, and the absence of the narrator proper, helps the audience feel that they are spontaneously joining the queens, and they are shaped into the implied supporters of the King. Thus at the end of the masque, the hell totally disappears, and the reign of the King with the support of Justice, Faith, Heroic Virtue and Good Fame is celebrated all the more. Then we might ask some questions here: what is the implication of this conquest plot itself, and why was it necessary to compose such a masque and perform it before the whole court at that time? In other words, how could this plot have political implications for the contemporaries? I will answer these questions in the following section.

2 The Hags as the traitors

If we compare *The Masque of Queens* with other contemporary dramas in which witches and devils appear, we might say that the Hags in the masque are figured satirically. They say they can cause great confusion with the aid of Hecate and perform their rite seriously although they can do nothing in reality. They even fail to invoke Hecate, and what they are really able to do is to prepare the Sabbath and to have a strange dance. However, we might also point out that

it is the swift intervention of the heavenly power that stops the rite of the Hags and thus no one can tell what should happen next if it were not for that intervention. The failure of the plot of the Hags is comical, however, the plot itself could be a serious one. The satire is pointed at the failure of such a plot. Then, who are actually laughed at in this masque?

First of all, how is the Hags' plot described in this masque, and what is said about it? How do the Hags themselves describe their plot? It is apparent from the above-mentioned remark of the Dame that they intend to disturb the peaceful and religious condition of the country. She also says that they come "fraught with spite / [to] overthrow the glory of this night" (100- 1), and by this reference to the occasion of this masque itself, she makes it apparent that it is the present state of England under King James that would be attacked by them. We might also realize they intend to destroy not only the order of one country but also that of whole universe, if we take into consideration the notion of the correspondence between macro cosmos and micro cosmos. Thus they might "set the elements at wars, / [made] midnight see the sun, and day the stars" (213- 4), and they would make the world totally upside down. In short, what they intend to do is not a mere crime but a treason, and it is possible that even the assassination of the head of the body politic, i.e., regicide, should be included in their plot. The range of the Hags' ambition, the miraculous discovery of their plot, along with their anger against the present condition of England, strongly remind us of a traitorous plot which nearly happened in the real world four years before, i.e., the Gunpowder Plot.

It is said that the several English Catholics planned the Gunpowder Plot at the instigation of the Jesuits, and they intended to blow up Parliament on November 5, 1605. It was the opening day of the second session of the first English Parliament under King James, and in his opening speech of this Parliament the King said that the internal as well as external peace, i.e., the union of England and Scotland, and the peace treaty with Spain, would be two of the most important issues to be discussed. Moreover, the King was brought up under strong influence of Calvinism and promoted Protestant religion. In addition to this, the King himself described Jesuits in his book as the seducers who instigate and intervene in such internal conflict of one country like Irish rebellion to England in the process of Counter-Reformation. King James also said that the Pope himself corrupts many people to rebel against their monarchs and thus loves bloodshed, and warned English Catholics not to rebel against him at the instigation of such a monster, and also to tell the magistrates if they hear such news about Catholic rebellion after the Gunpowder Plot (King James VI & I 92- 93). Thus by 1609, a fierce controversy about the allegiance of Catholics to the Protestant monarch had already begun between the King and the Roman Church, and under the influence of this controversy many satirical works against Catholicism were written (Donne xix- xxvii).

To hate the fruit of peace and religious state is therefore to loath the King himself as well as his policy. To "blast the light", or blasting Parliament along with the King, the Queen, and the leading statesmen, is a high treason. They would cause such a great confusion in the whole realm of King James in order to convert the people to Catholicism. We might also say that to be dependent on Hecate who won't appear even to help her followers, is to be dependent on the Pope in this vein. We might not forget that it was the King himself that discovered the Gunpowder Plot by decoding a mysterious letter and thus intervened to stop it. Thus we could find correspondence between the actual Plot and that of the Hags in the masque world in many

ways. Moreover, Frances Doran points out as follows:

[the] Gunpowder Plot, to whatever extent it existed in the minds of those executed for it and in the discourses describing and lamenting it, was, for the most part, a conspiracy of men against men... Yet the anti-Catholic discourses that proliferated after the plot was discovered often represented the problem of Catholicism as that of female empowerment and gender inversion. While women were not often blamed outright for the Gunpowder Plot, female figures, abstract and particular, crop up frequently in Jacobean discussions of the threat Catholics and Catholicism offer to England.

(Doran 45)

We might conclude here that the plot of the Hags, especially the use of the word “blast”, could strongly remind the audience of the Gunpowder Plot. Moreover, by the ‘verbal’ devices to show the King as the connector of the two worlds, i.e., the speech of Heroic Virtue to praise directly the King in the auditorium and the reference to the occasion of the masque made by the Dame, the audience is led to connect the plot in the masque world to that in the real one. The rage of the Hags towards the king who rules the country with the assistance of Justice and Faith in the masque world, which reminds us of the famous image of King James as the second Solomon, is actually the rage towards the King himself. At the same time, it was well known that the King had an inclination towards witchcraft and thus it is natural for the Hags to hate him. The King was famous as the author of *Daemonologie* and strongly refuted those people like Reginald Scot who denied the existence of witches in his book, and Ben Jonson quoted it in some of his footnotes of the printed script of *The Masque of Queens*. In addition, it was said that the King was attacked for several times by witches, hired by those who stood against the King’s policy, and barely escaped their evil tricks in miraculous ways. Thus, we could point out that the Hags are totally marginalized in both worlds. They are characters with Otherness and thus their banishment is justified. Their appearance as dirty, old, furious and base women is the signifier of their Otherness.

At the same time, we might notice that the Hags of this masque never tell lies nor speak equivocally. They talk about their evil ambition straightly and never try to hide their malicious feelings. This might seem strange to some extent, as it was often said that the Jesuits equivocated to seduce people into conversion and rebellion (Wills 9). Moreover, as we have a vivid and dreadful example of human corruption by equivocal speech of witches in Shakespeare’s *Macbeth*, the absence of it in this masque might seem unusual. If we consider that the Hags are talking only among themselves, however, we could conclude that it is not so strange. There is no necessity for them to speak equivocally, because they are not trying to corrupt others at that time. Instead of that, they are trying to attain their evil ambition all by themselves, and they need no human agent like Macbeth even to do regicide. They want to intervene directly in the human affairs with the aid of some Satanic power from the outside, and after this invasion, they would rule the whole world all by themselves.

In addition to this, we should remember what Stephen Orgel points out about the speech of the Dame. Firstly, Orgel pays attention to the many run-on lines where syntactically no pause is possible on the rhyme word, e.g., “[let] not these bright nights / [of] honor blaze” (121– 2), and “let rise / [our] wonted rages” (123– 4), and argues that “[it] is not simply that the witch speaks in

run - on lines which tend to minimize the ordering effect of the rhymes, but that time after time the operative rhythmic unit of the verse is not represented by one line of a couplet" (Orgel 135). This pattern, however, changes to another in the middle of this speech. According to Orgel,

[but] as the harangue continues — "Ill lives not, but in us" — the movement alters: the spoken and printed texts, the submerged and apparent rhythmic patterns, cease to conflict; the lines become end-stopped, the couplets heroic. For at this point the Dame abruptly changes her methods, shifting her rhetoric from insinuation, subversion of language, and exhortation through a kind of infernal jingoism, to a rhetoric of direct statement and unqualified attack. The shift, in short, is from the rhetoric of propaganda to that of open warfare. The Dame now uses the couplet form to emphasize her points, the rhymes to stress the demands of the syntax.

(Orgel 136)

Anthony Harris also points out that the speech act of the Dame and the Hags, especially the irregular rhythm of their speeches, stands in sharp contrast with "the stately heroic couplets of the speeches of Fame and Virtue" (Harris 75). Thus we might regard that the Hags and the Dame show themselves not as witches who use ambiguous words to corrupt human beings, but as self-conscious rebels.

In this way, the distinction between the Hags and the other characters is all the more strengthened and there is no one standing in the middle way, thus the contrast between virtue and vice is very sharp. Good personages are always good in this masque world. Evil personages are always evil and there is no possibility that they become virtuous, thus they deserve only severe punishment. As the Hags have talked about their plot lengthily and loudly before the heavenly intervention and shown themselves as the devil's incarnation, no one would dare to sympathize with their miserable condition at the end of this masque. In other words, by making the contrast between virtue and vice so strikingly, Ben Jonson justifies the conquest of the Hags and even tried to cause a satirical laughter. The immediate disappearance of the hell itself along with the Hags at the sight of Heroic Virtue and the House of Fame is nothing but a comedy for the members of the pro-King group. Thus we might say that this is not only a masque full of grace, but also a masque full of warlike spirit against the enemy of the King and satirical laughter. Thus the audience are invited to "[help], help all tongues to celebrate this wonder" (481) in the opening song of the conclusion part. It is not a mere chance that the attire and appearance of Heroic Virtue is like Perseus, a mythical hero who conquered even Medusa, and this masque is concluded with this triumphal song:

Who, Virtue, can thy power forget
 That sees these live and triumph yet?
 Th' Assyrian pomp, the Persian pride,
 Greeks' glory, and the Romans', died;
 And who yet imitate
 Their noises, tarry the same fate.
 Force greatness all the glorious ways
 You can, it soon decays,

But so good Fame shall never:
Her triumphs, as their causes, are forever [sic].

(517-26)

At the same time, a question arises here: why is it the queens, not the heroes and the King himself, who conquer the monstrous Hags in the masque? We could answer this question simply by pointing out that this is the masque starring the Queen herself. However, is this the only answer for the question? It might not be so, because this answer has nothing to do with the explanation of the range of possibility given to Ben Jonson by this “women conquer women” plot. Thus, I would demonstrate this point in the next section by examining the image of the “queens”.

3 What do the twelve queens really do in *The Masque of Queens*?

Now we should remember the names of the twelve ancient queens of *The Masque of Queens* again. Eleven of them are the famous ancient queens praised by classical authors: the Amazon queen Penthesilea, Queen Camilla of Volscia, Thomyris of Scythia, Artemisia, Queen Berenice of Egypt, Asian queen Hypsicratea, Queen Candace of Ethiopia, Queen Voadicea (Boadicea) of Britain, Queen Zenobia of Palmyra, Queen Amalasueta of Goth, and Queen Valasca of Bohemia. Ladies of the court played these roles, and Queen Anne played the role of the twelfth queen, Bel-Anna, whom Ben Jonson especially made for her. They are women and helped by their guardian, Heroic Virtue, to intervene in the affairs of the masque world, and they are also placed within King James’ control by the submission of Heroic Virtue to the King.

At the same time, they are figures with virtue of their own from the beginning. Heroic Virtue himself depicts the twelve queens using such words like “brave”, “victorious”, “chaste”, “virtuous”, “wise and warlike” and “bold”, as well as words that praise their beauty and we might also say that it is basically their virtue that destroys the whole hell. Thus they at first seem to be the perfect opposite of the Hags, however, we could point out that there is a hidden similarity between them. This similarity is caused by the subversive nature of the queens as well as the Hags, and if we take this point into consideration, we should say that the “women conquer women” plot of this masque is not the mere device to glorify the Queen and mock the traitorous Catholics.

We could point out that a queen is a woman as well as a monarch, and these two aspects of the queen often caused great problems in the patriarchal order. For example, what is the position of a man who marries a queen? He is one of her subjects as well as her husband. The theory of king’s two bodies gave contemporaries some answers, however, it is obvious that a queen could be the sovereign as well as an exceptional person in a patriarchal society, who could break the order of it from within. She might be a much more subversive person than the base women like the Hags because of her social status as the top of the hierarchy. However, we can find no possibility of such subversion in the script of *The Masque of Queens*, as Ben Jonson carefully erases such traces by depicting Bel-Anna, the leader of the queens, as the most virtuous as well as the humblest of them all in the explanation of Heroic Virtue. Thus the spontaneous obedience of the queens to the authority of the King is stressed here, and as Bel-Anna is a double of Queen

Anne in the masque world, the Queen is also placed “securely within the King’s control” (Wynne-Davies 84). Thus, according to Heroic Virtue,

To you, most royal and most happy king,
 Of whom Fame’s house in every part doth ring
 For every virtue, but can give no increase,
 Not through her loudest trumpet blaze your peace;
 To you, that cherish every great example
 Contracted in yourself, and being so ample
 A field of honor, cannot but embrace
 A spectacle so full of love and grace
 Unto your court, where every princely dame
 Contends to be as bounteous of her fame
 To others as her life was good to her.
 For by their lives they only did confer
 Good on themselves, but by their fame, to yours,
 And every age the benefit endures.

(408–21)

Some warlike queens are included in the above-mentioned list of the names, and I would like to focus my discussion on the representations of Boadicea and Penthesilea. As they were often depicted as notorious examples of unruly women with abnormal sexuality in those days, and thus they are similar to the Hags to some extent in this point, I think another process of “the taming of the shrew”, or, the taming of Otherness, could be found there.

Firstly, I might point out that by making Boadicea, Penthesilea and other queens of the same rank, Ben Jonson presents them as the glorious, virtuous and humble queens who voluntarily submit to a higher authority. However, I should add to this that the contemporary image of Boadicea was totally opposite to this representation by Jonson. According to Jodi Mikalachki, contemporary image of Boadicea was as follows:

[the] fear of collapsing into such grotesquely feminized savagery is Boadicea’s legacy to early modern English nationalism. Emblematic of the ancient female savagery haunting native origins, her uprising represented the rejection of everything masculine, civilized, and Roman that the English thought to integrate into national history.

(Mikalachki 15–16)

The difference between Jonsonian representation of Boadicea and that of hers as a savage queen, who dared to commit atrocities in war and even to cut dead men’s phalluses — an image widely held by the contemporaries — , is too striking for us to neglect the presence of Jonson’s intention. It is true that the image of Boadicea was sometimes used to depict and honor Queen Elizabeth (Crawford 358–9); however, neither humbleness nor obedience was mentioned in such cases. On the contrary, the brave spirit of Boadicea to protect her own country was the core of such glorious representation, and thus to present her with such female virtue like modesty, humbleness and obedience is quite uncommon. I might point out here that by creating and

presenting such a totally uncommon image of Boadicea, Jonson could imply the following two things at the same time to praise King James.

Firstly, he could imply that there is a great difference between the Roman rule of Britain and that of King James by omitting the savage Boadicea. Her representation as a savage queen has the effect to justify Roman conquest of Britain as the process of civilization though with much bloodshed, while the obedient image of Boadicea displays King James ruling the realm not with violence but with the support of Justice and Faith.

Secondly, by showing Boadicea's submission to King James, he could appeal to the common memory of peaceful succession of the throne from a queen to a king, i.e., from Elizabeth to James, as the starting point of the happy days. Queen Elizabeth's celibacy let many contemporaries attack on her with abuses with strong sexual connotations even before the beginning of her reign, while she actively used her marital negotiations along with the image of "Virgin Queen" as political weapons to silence the opposition and to secure her political leadership. Thus we can say not only her celibacy but also her gender might seem to have certain connections with constitutional instability for many of her contemporaries. By showing the submission of Boadicea, an ancient British warrior queen who tried to save her country from the invasion — this point of Boadicea strongly reminds us of Queen Elizabeth — , Jonson celebrates the stable reign of King James, and Jonsonian Boadicea puts her sovereignty down at the King's foot.

Penthesilea is another character that might bring back the memory of Elizabeth, who was sometimes depicted as an Amazon queen. It is pointed out that contemporary image of Penthesilea had two sides. On one side she is a famous queen who assisted the Trojans, the founders of ancient Rome as well as the ancient Britain, and on the other side she is notorious as the Amazon queen. According to Simon Shepherds, contemporary notion of the notorious Amazons is as follows:

[the] refusal of obedience is at the core of Elizabethan distress about Amazons...Most people who write about Amazons mention that they mated for a limited period each year, and then partitioned the progeny, returning the males and retaining the girls. What is clearly most disturbing is their hostility to men. This is the detail that is most obsessively elaborated. These are women not committed to the ideal of the family and yet at the same time very capable of surviving and governing themselves. In almost every way feasible they are hateful to Elizabethan and Jacobean patriarchal concepts.

(Shepherds 14)

However, we could find no mentioning of such subversive inclination in the description of Penthesilea. Or, we might say that, by mentioning her briefly as "the brave Amazon", Jonson presents neither side of her image positively and only presents her as one of the humble and obedient queens. The erasure of Otherness as well as the memory of Queen Elizabeth might be pointed out as the effect of this image of Penthesilea.

Here we should pay attention to what Heroic Virtue says about the twelve queens in introducing them to the audience. In that speech, he calls the names of the eleven queens one by one, with short phrases to praise them, while he gives long speech to praise the virtue of Bel-Anna. By introducing the eleven queens in that way, we might point out here, Heroic Virtue

says almost nothing about them. At the same time, in his lengthy description of Bel-Anna, he says nothing but her modesty and obedience. Thus the twelve queens retain neither subjectivity nor sovereignty, and they are shown as blank sheets on which Heroic Virtue could write anything. The traces of Otherness that the ancient warrior queens might have had are totally erased by this manipulation from the beginning and the possibility of the subversion of patriarchal order that might be caused by their position also disappears in the process of this masque.

By displaying humble queens who lack even subjectivity and sovereignty, Ben Jonson totally erases unruliness and abnormal sexuality, i.e., Otherness, from them. Only the Hags bear such base Otherness, and they are to be banished from the masque world. Moreover, by figuring the Hags and the Dame similar to Catholics in England who tried to rise in insurrection against the King from within with the aid of Hecate, i.e., the Pope, from outside, Jonson turns the simple plot of conquest of the enemy of the King into a structure firmly based on dramaturgy. The enemy from within tries to implode the realm of the King with the help of darker outside power, and to extinguish the light by the invasion of darkness, thus the distinction between virtue and vice at first seems to be nearly obscured. Then the order is recovered and triumphantly upheld by the conquest done by the queens.

This dramaturgy is supported by the sharp contrast between the talkativeness of the Hags and the silence of the queens. It was natural for the Queen and her ladies who played the role to keep silence, because they were masquers. However, if we interpret their appearance on stage as a tableau vivant of a catalogue of good women, we could point out a grave effect of their silence. Such lists are often shown in the conduct books written by men with biographies of "good" women and sometimes even with their words, so that an internal contradiction within such books cannot be avoided. Pamela Joseph Benson points out one such example in discussing the nature of *The Instruction Of a Christian Woman*, a conduct book written by Juan Luis Vives in 1529. According to Benson,

[the] examples themselves provide an alternative system of female conduct on which women could model themselves that goes directly contrary to the conduct Vives wishes to recommend...Vives has weakened his own authority by allowing the ancient world to speak contrary to him. Whether a woman, or the man providing education to her, restricts herself to Vives's mode now depends on her confidence in his judgment.

(Benson 179)

In order to reduce the twelve queens' independence in accordance with contemporary "virtue" of women, i.e., modesty, obedience, and silence, it was necessary for Jonson to make them silent and under guidance of Heroic Virtue. The queens, including Boadicea and Penthesilea, who are noted for their great military power, are no longer sovereigns who incarnate heroic virtue. Instead, they are now tamed and become female virtue incarnate. We could say that here double process of the taming of Otherness, or unruliness, from within the patriarchal society are woven into this "women conquer women" plot. Both unruly women at the bottom of the society and the virtuous queens at the top are silenced to glorify the King's hegemony in this "women conquer women" plot starring the Queen.

We should not forget that in the dance of the conclusion, the queens "graphically disposed

into letters, and honoring the name of the most sweet and ingenious prince, Charles, Duke of York” (506–7). This is the last manipulation of the female gender in this whole masque, and Jonson finally shows his judgment to include the women into the patriarchal order again. By honoring the younger prince in that way, the queens celebrate the happy future of Stuart royal family. In the process of this celebration of the next generation, the queens are strongly gendered as women and mothers, and included into the family system again, stripped of their sovereignty. We might regard this as a mechanism to display the victory of patriarchal order in the climax of the conclusion part of the masque. Thus we could finally conclude here that continuous manipulation of the female gender to the end of the masque as well as the figuration of the queens and the Hags turn the display of the queens naturally into even more glorious display of the double process of “taming of Otherness” done by the King in this masque, and thus the patriarchal order under King James is recovered and celebrated all the more in the end of *The Masque of Queens*.

Conclusion

Now I think the preparation to answer the questions that I raised in the introductory part of this paper is complete. What are the political dimensions of *The Masque of Queens*, and how do they work?

On the surface, the masque celebrates the safe deliverance of the nation from the Gunpowder Plot through the glorious display of the conquest of the Hags by the twelve ancient queens. Thus on the performance level, the Queen is glorified above all in the court theater though the core of the celebration is the national deliverance from the threat of Catholics. Though she keeps silence on the stage, the Queen is nevertheless the center of the performance and she tried to use this dominance as a political weapon that enables her to participate in diplomatic matters. On this level, the task of Ben Jonson is to elaborate the glorification of the Queen and he successfully performs it by figuring her and her ladies into the twelve ancient queens well known for their virtue.

At the same time, Jonson uses this very device to glorify her in combination with other devices that display the female virtue of the queens so as not to concentrate the audience’s attention to the Queen on the stage. He omits the negative side of the representation of the warrior queens and shapes them as the female virtue itself on the performance level as well as that of the speech, and by stressing the obedience of the queens, he wipes the trace of sovereignty as well as subjectivity out from them. Thus the queens of this masque are the King’s mere delegates in the masque world, and conquer the Hags who strongly bear Otherness in place of the King who does not appear on stage of the masque.

A patriarchal hierarchy is displayed before the audience again and again in this masque, and we might point out that it is its physical dimension of this masque that makes the hierarchy visible. The dance near the end of the masque is a good example of this point. Though it is obvious that the dancing bodies of the masquers, along with the gorgeous attires and splendid settings, gave strong impression to the audience, even the emotion caused by this physical dimension, as we have seen, could be turned into the praise of that hierarchy if they notice the Prince’s name composed by the movement of the masquers. With the aid of the speeches of the

good characters along with the emotion caused by the performance and the dance, the King is finally shown to dominate not only the real world but also the masque world.

Thus we could say that the political dimension of *The Masque of Queens* apparently contains two issues, the politics of the real world that supports the nation, and that of gender that supports the invisible patriarchal hierarchy. The two active elements of the function named *The Masque of queens*, i.e., the King and the Queen, combined these two issues and rivaled each other to attain their aims. As the third invisible element of this function, Ben Jonson combines these two issues into the simple “women conquer women” plot. We could therefore point out that, as the author of the masques, Jonson was deeply involved in the invention of the frameworks to grasp the many kinds of problems concerning the patriarchal order of the nation for the contemporaries, and we might well regard this as the third political dimension of *The Masque of Queens*.

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