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Enter a City Gallant—Clowns in the Jacobean Theater

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Economic growth and social stability in the late sixteenth century brought unprecedented prosperity to the city of London. As Thomas Platter observed in 1599, most of the inhabitants were employed in commerce, and merchants accumulated their wealth. After his accession to the throne, King James generously distributed honors to wealthy merchants and others. Titles became a salable commodity. The sale of honors impaired respect for the titles and aroused bitter feelings and contempt for knighthood and baronetage among citizens. Gentlemen and ladies who suddenly rose to dignity tried to act suitably in their new status and dressed themselves up; yet they often became the subject for laughter. These upstarts were represented in contemporary dramas as ridiculous, contemptuous, and ill-mannered. The fancifully-dressed "city clowns" who came into being in the first decades of the seventeenth century, were found not only on stage but also in and outside of theaters.

Keywords: Jacobean drama, stage clown, city gallant, stage costume

Introduction

England experienced a major social change from the late sixteenth to the early seventeenth century. Due to the political stability and economic growth in the Elizabethan period, imports increased and merchants prospered as well as the middle-class people. These conditions had a significant influence on life style of London citizens.

One of the most popular entertainments for them was theater-going. This paper focuses on stage clowns from the Elizabethan to the Jacobean Periods and discusses how a new type of clown came into being in the first decades of the seventeenth century. Their appearance was most likely related to changes in social situations after the accession of King James I to the throne.

Before discussing the new type of clown, this paper looks back on how stage clowns had changed their dramatic features and performance styles from the late Elizabethan period. And then, it will unfold economic and social situations in and out of theaters, which led dramatists to create a different type of clown who was most suitable to the time.

Clownish Costumes in the Late Sixteenth Century

Rustics in a Court Mask in 1559

It was on the New Year's Eve in 1559 when the Mask of Clowns was performed in front of Queen Elizabeth at Whitehall Palace. The story of the mask is unknown, but the Office of the Revels recorded the maskers'

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costumes. Their half-sleeved coats were made of crimson satin, and their plain hoses were of green damask. And they wore an apron of white gold sarcenet (i.e., fine and soft silk) edged with gold fringe, a broad hat of crimson satin, a mitten of white taffeta, and a pair of shoes of black velvet laced about the ankle. They had a frail and spadeon hand (Feuillerat, 1908, pp. 31, 40).

Since the Middle Ages, fools had been illustrated with a parti-colored suit or long coat, a cockscomb, and a bauble on hand. The maskers' costumes adopted some of these characteristics: the combination of red, yellow and green colors in their dress, and the frail and spade similar to a fool's rod. However, their appearance indicated they were countrymen or farmers.

The torchbearers in the Clowns Mask were named as "hinds", according to the Revels document. *The Oxford English Dictionary* (*OED*) defines the wordas "a farm servant or an agricultural labourer" (*OED*). The torchbearers wore a cassock of red sarcenet and slops of red and yellow plain sarcenet. A cassock is "a loose coat worn by rustics or shepherds" (*OED*), and the Revels inventory dated the 27th April, 1560 seems to show the earliest example of the word "cassock" used in thatmeaning.

The Clowns Mask in 1559 was apparently the first performance that presented the rustic masker to be a fool as a stage character. A clown was "a countryman, rustic, or peasant" in its original meaning, and the word eventually included meanings of ignorance, crassness, or rude manners to define "a fool or jester as a stage character" (*OED*).

Clownish Costumes in the Rose Theater in the 1590s

The Rose was an open-air playhouse built on the south bank of the Thames in 1588. Its owner Philip Henslowe started keeping his *Diary* in 1592 about performances, purchases, and other notes for staging plays in the Rose. In March 1598, he drew lists of costumes and properties stored in the tire-house, and "the Inventory of the Clowns Suits and Hermits Suits, with divers other suits" included two items of clownish costumes (Foakes, 2002, pp. 317-19).

(1) A fool's coat, cap, and bauble;

(2) Five pairs of hose for the clown, and five jerkins for them.

They are different kinds of costumes for different kinds of jesters. A fool's set consisted of a traditional coat, cap, and bauble, while the clown's dress was made up of hoses and a jerkin (i.e., a loose coat with or without sleeves), the set of which was similar to the performer's apparel in the Clowns Mask at court.

According to the 1560 Revels inventory, they stored eight sets of costumes for the Clowns Mask, noting the maskers' coats and hoses classified as "not serviceable". That means these clothes could have never been used again in the court performances. There may be a possibility that they were cast out and came in hands of a commercial playing company.

Rustic Clowns in Commercial Theaters in Around 1600

The most popular comedian in the 1580s was *Richard Tarleton*. The drawing dated about 1588 (see Figure 1) illustrates his rustic fashion and atmosphere. According to the *OED*, the word "clown" had a figurative meaning of "a man without refinement or culture" or "an ignorant, rude, uncouth, ill-bred man" from the 1580s, and Tarleton presumably played the role as such. In about two decades after the actor's death, Wright described that he had seen Tarleton play the clown and use no other breeches than such slopes, or slivings (i.e., slips or

cuttings), which were “almost capable of a bushel of wheat, and if they be of sack cloth, they would serve to carry malt to the mill” (Wright, 1601, p. 298). Henry Peacham, too, remembered a stage play in which Tarleton “came like a rogue, in a foul shirt without a band, and in a blue coat with one sleeve, his stockings out at the heels and his head full of straw and feathers” (Peacham, 1638, pp. 210-211). Shabby clothes with large breeches were a trademark of Tarleton.

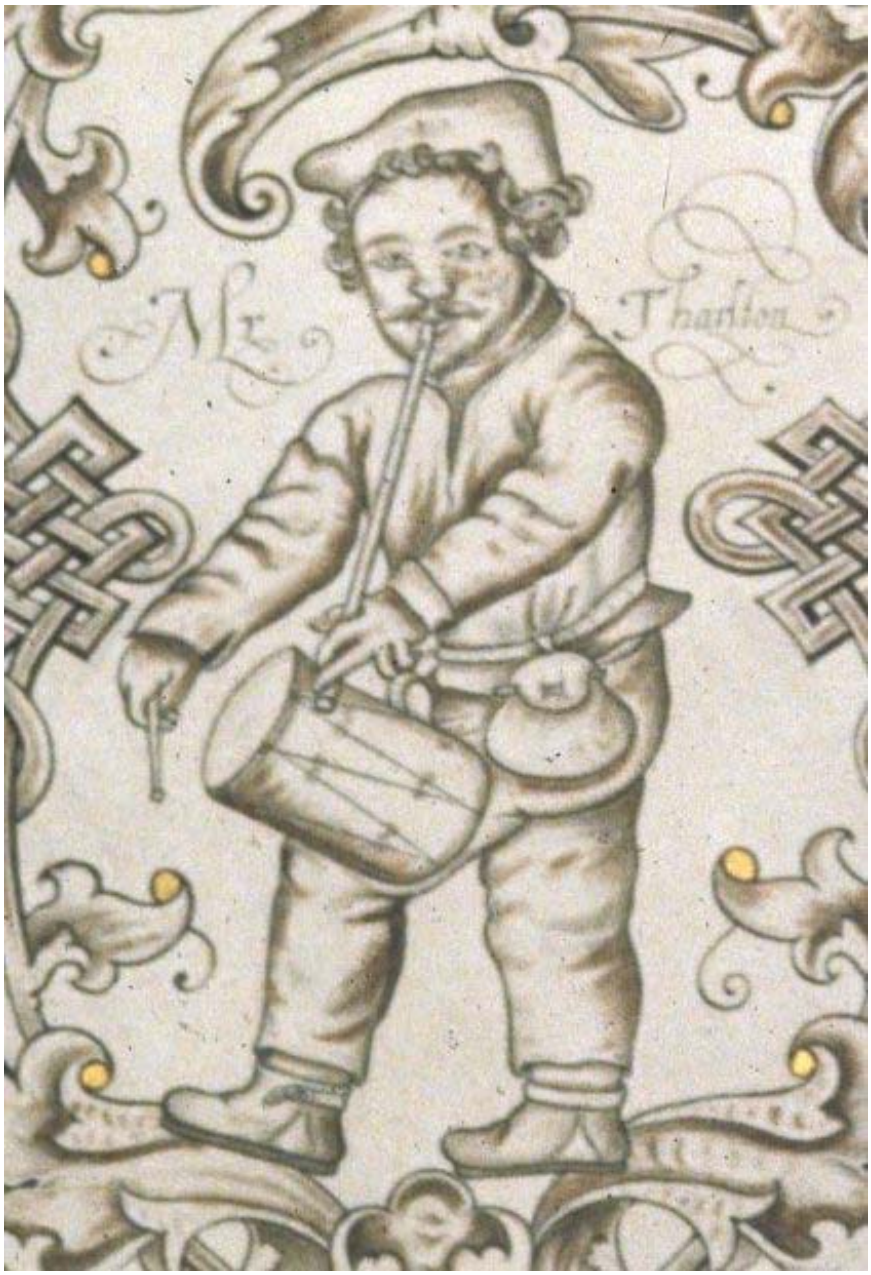

Figure 1. Richard Tarleton with his pipe and tabor from Harley 3885 f.19. (Public domain, c.1588)

After Tarleton’s death in 1588, it was William Kemp who took over the position of the most popular clown of the time. Henslowe entered in his *Diary* on the 22nd August, 1602 that he paid five shillings for buckram cloth to make Kemp’s giant hose (Foakes, 2002, p. 214). Buckram was coarse gummed linen often used for linings,

and if a hose was made of this stiff fabric, it would have been "giant" in shape. Baggy trousers were among the features of clownish costumes, as in the examples of Tarleton and Kemp.

Both comedians seem to have had popularity for their improvisatorial and witty talk. Contemporary historian John Stow wrote that "for a wondrous plentiful pleasant extemporal wit, he (Tarleton) was the wonder of his time" (Stowe, 1631, p. 698). In *Hamlet* written in about 1600, the prince gives direction to the itinerary playing company visiting the Elsinore Castle:

> It offends me to the soul to hear a robustious, periwig-pated fellow tear a passion to tatters, to very rags, to split the ears of the groundlings,… let those that play your clowns speak no more than is set down for them; for there be of them that will themselves laugh to set on some quantity of barren spectators to laugh too. (III.ii.6-8, 29-32)

The words are believed to be what the dramatist had in mind. The reason why Kemp left the Lord Chamberlain's Company in 1599, for which Shakespeare exclusively wrote dramas, was probably related to their different views of performing a play.

Motley Fools in Shakespeare's Plays After 1600

Robert Armin, successor to Kemp as a leading comedian in the Chamberlain's Men, presumably played the fool in *Twelfth Night*, *As You Like It*, and *King Lear*. Feste in *Twelfth Night* is domestic clown in a noble household and says, "I wear not motley in my brain" (I.v.46). "Motley" is a word with the original meaning of "diversified in color, variegated, parti-coloured, or chequerd" (*OED*), and the word came to designate a fool's dress in the 1600s. The *OED* cites the first example of the usage from *As You Like It*, in which Jaques mentions Touchstone: "I met a fool i'th' forest, A motley fool… O noble fool, A worthy fool. Motley's the only wear" (II.vii.12-13, 33-34). A third man in "motley" is the Fool in *King Lear*, who replies to the King, "The one in motley here" (I.iv.122).

The fool in these plays lives in aristocratic society and needs to be clothed on stage as such. Touchstone is called as a "noble" fool, even if his clothes most likely signified his status of a clown with contrasting colors suggested by the word "motley". Their costumes should have been different from those of a vulgar and rustic type of clown. Motley fools apparently opened the door to a new type of clown who came on stage in beautiful and fancy clothes in the first decades of the 1600s.

Situations Surrounding Theaters

The situations surrounding the theaters and theater-goers changed considerably in the late Elizabethan period. This chapter discusses how prosperity of the city had influence on people's fashion and entertainments. The atmosphere of the time was an essential factor that affected creation of a new type of clown.

Economic Situation and Fashion Consciousness in the Late Sixteenth Century

At the beginning of the sixteenth century, the population of London was around 40,000 to 50,000, and it increased to about four times in a century due to domestic and foreign circumstances (Flinn, 1981, pp. 68-69). With growing export of woolen cloths, country landowners enclosed their land to keep a larger number of sheep, which caused farmers to flow to London to find their way of living. The situation in the Low Countries also influenced demographic growth of London. The Spanish dominance of the Low Countries led to making a civil war, and England offered protection to Protestants. Many of them crossed the Channel for religious freedom.

Among the Flemish migrants were many skilled craftsmen, who brought England soft and light worsted cloths. The worsted became the chief product of exports and brought further wealth to the country.

London was the center of trades and achieved greater prosperity than any other cities. Thomas Platter, German traveler, observed in 1599: "the city of London is so populous and excellent in crafts and merchants, citizens, and so prosperous", and "most of the inhabitants are employed in commerce; they buy, sell, and trade in all the corners of the globe" (Williams, 1937, pp. 156-57). In this affluent city, the number of people increased, who enjoyed themselves wearing fashionable and expensive clothes. Philip Stubbes railed in the introduction to *The Anatomy of Abuses*: "Doe not both men and women… goe attired in Silkes, Velvets Damasks, Sattens, and what not els? Which are attire only for the Nobility and Gentrie, and not for the other at any hand" (Stubbes, 1583, p. xii). In the previous year of its publication, the Lord Mayor and Common Council issued "Regulations Recommended for the Apparel of London Apprentices", because "luxury having greatly prevailed in the city amongst people of all degrees, but in particular among Apprentices, in their apparel" (Hughes & Larkin, 1969, Vol. 2, pp. 512-514). According to the issue,

> No Apprentice what so ever should presume:
>
> (1) To wear no doublets but what were made of canvas, fustian, sack-cloth, English leather, or woolen cloth, and without being enriched with any manner of gold, silver, or silk;
>
> (2) To wear little breeches, of the same stuffs as the doublets, and without being stitched, laced, or bordered (Hughes & Larkin, 1969, Vol. 2, pp. 512-514).

The citation helps to see that apprentices most likely wore what was prohibited.

Fashion-conscious people beyond their degree existed in other classes. William Harrison witnessed: "fantastical folly of our nation, even from the courtier to the carter, is such that no form of apparel liked us longer than the first garment is in the wearing" and "the fickle-headed tailors… devise the Spanish, French, the High Almain (German), Turkish, or Morisco (Moorish) fashion" (Harrison, 1577, pp. 145-148).

Extreme keenness on fashion seems to have been continued for decades. Fynes Moryson observed in 1617: "there is no fit difference made of degrees, for very Bankrouts (Bankrupts), Players, and Cutpurses, goeapparrelled like Gentlemen", and "the Taylors and Shopkeepers daily invent fantasticall fashions, and people suffer themselves to be abused by the English Merchants, who nourishing this generall folly of their Countrymen" (Moryson, 1617, pp. 151-154).

People paid to mercers, tailors, haberdashers, hosiers, shoe-makers, or goldsmiths to dress up themselves, which contributed directly to prosperity of merchants and the city. Commercial theaters attracted these fashion-conscious people more than any other places, as play-going was one of the most popular entertainments at that time.

Theaters in London

The first commercial playhouse named "the Theater" had a three-story open-air structure. After its construction in 1576 in the northern suburbs of London, similar design of theaters, the Rose, Globe, and Curtain, were successively built also in the suburbs. Thomas Platter, who supposedly visited the Curtain, described its paying system:

> Anyone who remains on the level standing pays only one English penny: But if he wants to sit, he is let in at a further door, and there he gives another penny. If he desires to sit on a cushion in the most comfortable place of all, where he not only sees everything well, but can also be seen, then he gives yet another English penny at another door. (Williams, 1937, p. 157).

Other open-air theaters were presumably operated in a similar way.

On the other hand, there are records of indoor theaters existed in the 1570s. Most of them were built or adapted within existing buildings in the city. The Blackfriars and Whitefriars Theaters were respectively established in the former friaries, for example. These indoor theaters adopted adifferent paying system from open-air playhouses. To enter the groundling of the Blackfriars, people had to pay six pence, which was six times higher than that in the Curtain, and another six pence was needed to sit on a bench. In the galleries there was a private room for the privileged, but the more fashionable playgoers could choose to sit over the stage or on the stage if they pay two more shillings (Chambers, 1945, Vol. 2, p. 359).

In the beginning of the seventeenth century, plays performed in open-air playhouses and those in indoor theaters became different. One of the factors that seems to have been affected was the higher fees for indoor theaters, which invited elect group of audience, and their taste was different from that of groundlings who paid a penny in open-air playhouses.

Another factor was their location. Open-air playhouses were gathered in two suburban areas; the Theater, Curtain, Fortune, and Red Bull were built in north of the City, and in the south bank of the Thames were the Swan, Hope, Globe, and Rose. On the other hand, the indoor Blackfriars, Whitefriars, Phoenix, and Salisbury Courttheaters were all located in the western part of London, which contributed to differentiation of plays performed there.

While Queen Elizabeth used several royal palaces as her residence, King James settled in Whitehall Palace, and many aristocrats followed the way. They built their residences along the Strand leading to the Whitehall and Westminster. It is to be noted that “by the 1630s, more than three-quarters of peers had permanent or semi-permanent residences in or around London” (Orlin, 2000, pp. 273-275). And it was on the Strand that Robert Cecil established the New Exchange in 1609 in competition to the Royal Exchange situated in Cornhill, the center of the City. The Strand and the surrounding area of the New Exchange became known as “town”. In Ben Jonson’s comedy *Epicoene* which was first performed within a year of the opening of New Exchange, a knight named Sir Amorous La Fool boasted that he had a lodging in the Strand and watched ladies go to the China houses or the Exchange (I.iii.32-33). The New Exchange attracted not only wealthy gentlemen, ladies, and peers, but also students of the Inns of Court. The four Inns were also situated in the west of the city. The students who were mostly sons of country gentlemen, merchants, or peers enjoyed watching plays in the afternoon, as their studies at the Inns were scheduled in the morning.

Those literary and well-off people gathered in the indoor theaters, and their tastes had significant influence on performances in the first decades of the seventeenth century. The next chapter will discuss characteristics of plays and audiences in two different types of theaters.

Plays and Audiences in Theaters

In Open-Air Playhouses

While indoor theaters attracted wealthy audiences, open-air playhouses "were mostly frequented by citizens and the meaner sort of people", as James Wright referred to the Fortune and the Red Bull in *Historia Historinic* (Wright, 1699, p. 5). Spectators favored jigs, fighting, horseplay, and any kind of sorcery or devils (Sturgess, 1987, p. 4). In *The Devil and His Dame* performed at the Rose in 1600, Robin Good-fellow appeared in a suit of leather, with his face and hands colored russet, and a flail in hand. And in *The Devil's Charter* at the Globe in 1607, Lucifer came out from under the stage "with a red face crowned imperial riding upon a lion, or dragon", with the effect of fiery exhalations and lightening thunder (IV.i sd.).

Samuel Pepys entered Thomas Killigrew's experience in his diary in 1662. Killigrew used to go to the Red Bull in his childhood, and remembered that the man cried to the boys, "Who will go in and be a devil upon the stage, and so get to see (the) play". Bentley assumed that it would have been in 1620-1625 (Bentley, 1968, Vol.6, p. 243).

The open-air theaters were outmoded and on the decline in the Stuart period. The Rose was deconstructed in 1606. The Queen Anne's Company moved from the open-air Red Bull to the indoor Phoenix and Cockpit in 1617. There remains no record of performance in the Curtain and the Fortune after the closure due to plague in 1625. The Globe, which was reconstructed in 1614 after being burned down in the previous year, was the only open-air playhouse that ran steadily until 1642 when all the theaters were closed in London.

InIndoor Theaters

While the open-air playhouses were declining, indoor theaters were gaining increasing popularity among the wealthy classes including peers, gentries, gentlemen and ladies, and also students. And people who belonged to the classes were remarkably growing in number after the accession of King James. In the first four months of his reign, the number of knights had risen almost three-hold compared to that in the Elizabethan period. Furthermore, the King allowed the sale of knighthood and admitted the right of nomination among courtiers (Stone, 1967, pp. 41-52). Possibilities for country gentries or citizens to become Sirs widened, but at the same time, the status of gentleman became dubious. These situations were depicted in contemporary dramas as ridiculous, contemptuous, or deplorable.

Eastward Hoe performed at the Blackfriars in 1605 is a comedy about a goldsmith family in London. His wife insists that one of their daughters, Gertrude, should marry above her rank. Gertrude decidedly says, "I must be a lady: …your stammel petticoat with two guards, the buffin gown with the tuftaffety cape, and the velvet lace. I must be a lady, and I will be a lady. I like... to line a grogram gown clean through with velvet, tolerable" (I.ii.15-20). She successfully gets married to a knight who bought his knighthood despite of his low birth and mean estate.

Stammel and buffin were coarse woolen cloths, and grogram was a coarse fabric of silk, of mohair and wool, or of these mixed with silk (*OED*). Philip Henslowe entered in his *Diary* a number of stammel and buffin petticoats or capes as pledges in his pawnbroking business. These were textiles mainly used for the middle-class dresses, although Gertrude believes she could be a lady if she put on a silk cape over her buffin gown.

In *The Gull's Hornbook* published in 1609, Thomas Dekker ironically ridicules a credulous man who came to London from the countryside. The writer advises the "gull" how to behave in the St. Paul's, a tavern, and a playhouse. He writes:

> You may publish your suit, in what manner you affect most, either with the slide of your cloak from the one shoulder—and then you must... suddenly snatch at the middle of the inside, if it be taffeta at the least, and so by that means your costly lining is betrayed. (Dekker, 1609, p. 40)

According to *The Hornbook*, "the best and most essential parts of a gallant" are "good clothes, a proportional leg, white hand, the Persian lock, and a tolerable beard", and they are perfectly revealed in a playhouse, when sitting on a stool on the stage (Dekker, 1609, pp. 60-61).

People enjoyed playgoing to see the play and to be seen as well. A squire of Norfolk named Fitzdottrel, in *The Devil Is an Ass*, plans to go to the Blackfriars, wearing a cloak worth 50 pounds: "I will sit i' the view, salute all my acquaintance, Rise up between the acts, let fall my cloak, Publish a handsome man, and a rich suit... The ladies ask who's that?" (I.vi.28-37). "Dottrel", in his name, is a species of plover bird with the image of apparent simplicity because it allows to be approached and taken (*OED*). The play was performed in the theater by the King's Men in 1616.

There seem to have been both male and female "Fitzdottrels", as is shown in *The City Madame*. In this play that had also been performed in the Blackfriars, a wealthy merchant's daughter confesses her desire to be in "the private box ta'en up at a new play, for me and my retinue; a fresh habit, of a fashion never seen before, to draw the gallants' eyes, that sit on the stage, upon me" (II.ii.162-165).

The word "gallant" had referred to a man of fashion and pleasure, or a bold and spirited gentleman since the late fourteenth century, but in the sixteenth century it had the meaning of a man "suited to fashionable society, indulging in social gaiety or display (*OED*)". In *Purchas His Pilgrimage*, the Anglican cleric laments: "the Gull-gallants of our days, to whom I could wish, … that they would leave this usurped Gallantry to those true owners, and resume spirits truly English" (Purchas, 1619, the Ninth Booke, Chap.II, p. 898). It was the time when clownish gallants appeared on stage of London commercial theaters.

Appearance of a City Clown

Greene's TuQuoque, or The City Gallant by John Cooke was performed at the Red Bull theater, with Thomas Greene acting the role. It became a big hit, as the title page reads "it hath beene divers times acted by the Queenes Majesties Servuants" (Cooke, 1614, title-page).

The woodcut on the title page looks to illustrate Greene in the role of Bartholomew Bubble (see Figure 2). Bubble, who is a usurer's nephew, becomes his heir after his uncle's death. When his status suddenly changes from a servant to a gentleman, Bubble plans to make himself a gallant, buying new clothes, joining games, and wooing a lady. Eventually he runs out of money and becomes a servant again.

Bubble often utters, "Tuquoque. To you Sir", because he thinks "it is needful a gentleman should speak Latin sometimes". However, he never uses the words appropriately. On becoming a gallant, his first thought is to clothe himself properly and order "seven ells of horse-flesh-colored taffeta, nine yards of yellow satin, and eight yards of orange tawny velvet" (D2). Although taffeta, satin, and velvet are expensive silk, the combination of horse-flesh, yellow, and orange-tawny colors is characteristic of a fool's dress and is not suitable for a gentleman.

The woodcut shows a "stylish" gallant, but the design of his slashed doublet with large buttons, the sleeves, and round hoses is apparently taken from a backgammon game board. Besides, the style of his clothes dates back to the period of Henry VIII's reign. A cod-piece, that is a shaped covering attached to the middle front of men's hoses, was common in the middle of the sixteenth century and out of fashion toward the end of the century. The large cloth bag Bubble hanging from his girdle also symbolizes a fool that we find in the illustrations of contemporary famous clowns, such as Richard Tarleton and Robert Armin. We cannot say the figure was on stage as illustrated in the woodcut, but the fashion of Bubble most likely looked odd and far from that of a proper gentleman in the eyes of audiences. After he goes bankrupt, Bubble comes back in a blue coat as a servant. The contrasting costumes for a gallant and servant show effectively the rise and fall of Bubble's status.

Figure 2. Title-page woodcut of Greene's *TuQuoque, or The City Gallant*. (London, 1614)

A similar character appears in *The Honest Whore Part 2* (Dekker, 1630). Matheo, a prodigal gentleman, says, "I have plaied a Gentlemans part with my Tailor, for I owe him for the making of it.… To keep the fashion; it's your onely fashion now of your best ranke of Gallants" (F3). Bubble, too, planned to "run to the taylor's, the haberdasher's, the sempster's, the cutler's, the perfumer's, and to all-trades whatsoever, that belong to the making-up of a gentleman". In these plays, a gentleman is regarded as a role to play rather than social status with dignity. It seems that every man could play the role only if he could afford to do it.

Bubble wishes to be a gentleman wearing expensive clothes, but he lacks manners and thoughts as his status requires him to have, which causes laughter from the audience. He is a new type of clown different from Tarleton and Kemp dressed as a rural countryman with torn clothes and straw on the head. The clownish gallantor "a city clown" appeared on stage in the prosperous city where the hierarchical class structure was being undermined.

Court Entertainments and Social Mobility

As is stated above, people were enthusiastic about fashion and entertainments in London, and the royal family and courtiers were no exception. King James appointed the late Lord Chamberlain's Men as the King's Players within a half year after he ascended the throne. The Worcester's Men was taken into the patronage of Queen Anne, and the Lord Admiral's into the service of Prince Henry successively. The royal family did not only enjoy watching dramas, but the Queen and Princes also enjoyed performing in court masques.

In the late Elizabethan period, the court entertainment relied on the play rather than the masque, the main reason of which was economy. However, in the Jacobean court, the elaborate and expensive spectacle was revived. *The Vision of the Twelve Goddesses* was performed at Hampton Court on the last night of the first New Year season in King James'reign. It was the Queen's masque in which Anne played the role of Pallas, and among the performers were the ladies of Derby, Harford, Suffolk, and Bedford. Dudley Carleton wrote to his friend John Chamberlain a week after he watched the masque:

> Their attire was like, loose mantles and petticoats, but of different colors, the stuffs embroidered satins and cloth of gold and silver… Only Pallas had a trick by herself; for her clothes were not so much below the knee but that we might see a woman had both feet and legs, which I never knew before. She had a pair of buskins set with rich stones, a helmet full of jewels, and her whole attire embossed with jewels of several fashions. (Green, 6: 21).

The Queen's masque in the next year was *The Mask of Blackness*. Carleton described it with confused feelings in a letter to Chamberlain:

> The presentation of the mask at the first drawing of the traverse was very fair and their apparel rich, but too light and courtesanlike. Their black faces and hands, which were painted and bare up the elbows, was a very loathsome sight and I am sorry that strangers should see our court so strangely disguised. The Spanish and Venetian ambassadors were both there and most of the French about the town. (Green, 7: 6)

E. K. Chambers estimated the average cost of the masques in James's court at about 2,000 pounds (Chambers, 1945, 1: 210-212), while Sturgess wrote *The Mask of Blackness* which cost 3,000 pounds (Sturgess, 1987, p. 165). It should be noted that these figures do not include the items for the performers' costumes. The maskers were expected to dress and bedeck themselves with jewels. According to Chambers, in *The Twelve Goddesses*, Queen Anne wore 100,000 pounds worth of jewels and the other ladies 20,000 pounds worth.

Keenness on the court entertainments continued to the height at the marriage between Princess Elizabeth and Frederic the Elector Palatine in 1613. During the years 1611-1612, the number of plays performed at the court increased to 40, compared to 23 in the years 1604-1605 (Collections, 1986, p. xxi). Chamberlain wrote in February 1613: “this extreme cost and riches makes us all poore” (Green, 72: 48).

Large expenditure was not made only on revels and costumes, but also on royal wardrobe. The King ordered 65 suits in 1603-1604 and 41 in 1613-1614 (Lennox & Mirabella, 2015, p. 26). Prestwich stated that in the first five years of James’s reign the average expense on wardrobe soared to 36,377 pounds a year, while in the last four years of Elizabeth’s it was 9,535 pounds (Prestwich, 1966, pp. 228-229).

The King was apparently unconscientious about spending. And he was generous in distributing honors, as it was a practical means of overcoming the shortage of his finances. In the first four months of the reign, James bestowed knighthood on about 900 people. He did not only nominate a large number of knights by himself, but distributed the right of nomination among his courtiers, which caused knighthood a salable object. In 1611, the King created a new dignity of baronet for sale. Sir Paul Baying, a wealthy merchant in London, payed 1,500 pounds for obtaining baronetage (Stone, 1967, p. 44). And in 1615, James eventually took a step to consent a direct sale of peerage, granting the nomination to his courtiers.

Stone cited the words of the Marquis of Newcastle: “so many beggarly people (were) made great Lords and Ladies in title that were not able to keep up the dignity of it” (Stone, 1967, p. 56). The sale of honors undermined the class structure and impaired respect for the titles. It created bitter feelings and contempt for knighthood and baronetage among citizens, which had been well reflected in contemporary dramas.

Conclusion

Economic growth and social stability in the late sixteenth century brought unprecedented prosperity to the city of London. After his accession to the throne, King James was generous with distributionof honors. Wealthy merchants and gentries could receive knighthood, baronetage, or even peerage in exchange for money. Titles became a salable commodity.

Gentlemen and ladies who suddenly rose to dignity tried to dress themselves appropriately and to be suitable to their new status; yet their effort was often thwarted to make themselves the subject for laughter. These upstarts were represented in contemporary dramas as ridiculous and contemptuous, lacking manners and thoughts as required by their status.

The fancifully-dressed “city clowns” were different from those jesters of the late Elizabethan period who adopted a rustic manner in torn clothes or giant hoses. This new type of clown which was found not only on stage but also among theater-goers seems to have sprung up in the age of inflation of honors.

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