

THEATRE AND
GOVERNMENT UNDER THE
EARLY STUARTS

EDITED BY

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CHAPTER I

Introduction: theatre and government under the early Stuarts

J. R. Mulryne

Something scarcely less than a revolution has taken place in recent years in political readings of Shakespeare and of his Stuart contemporaries and successors. The revolution, like most revolutions, has not been bloodless. Possibly its most obvious aspect, in particular to those not directly involved, has been the academic hard knocks that have been exchanged between those who have taken up front-line positions. Attacks and counter-attacks signal in academic matters more than the normal growth of scholarly knowledge: questions of value and ideology are involved. Some participants have seen in the debate over Stuart drama nothing less than the reflection of a changing cultural awareness, one that offers the opportunity to bring about practical change, in teaching strategies, in institutional structures, even in society itself. Others have distanced themselves from these aims, and rejected the implied value-judgements, while not being unaffected by the new perspectives. Again like most revolutions, this revolution has conserved a good deal, despite signals in some quarters to the contrary.

Some ten or twelve years after the first studies in what came to be known as 'new historicist' and 'cultural materialist' interpretation seemed an opportune moment to bring together a collection of essays by established scholars that, while not being methodologically committed, would draw on and advance recent interpretation. It also seemed appropriate that the invited essays, though they could not be comprehensive, should nevertheless address a wide range of theatre texts, broadly defined, across the whole period between the accession of James I and the Civil War. Readers of the volume will, we hope, be stimulated by contributions that seek to offer a current interpretation of political theatre, in its various forms, over one of the most debated periods of English history.

Setting a political context for Renaissance plays has been

common practice, especially in the field of Shakespeare studies, since early this century, and before. Yet the terms in which the discussion is conducted have significantly changed, and in two distinct though related ways. The first has been the emergence of genuinely interdisciplinary work between scholars trained in departments of history and those from departments of literature and theatre, with influential contributions from philosophy and the social sciences. From the perspective of literature departments, it is tempting to see this development as a symptom of that crisis of English which sends teachers of a methodologically restricted discipline in search of new fields to practise in. It is true that some scholars have so regarded it, and departmental boundaries have been patrolled, trespass alleged, and a perhaps even higher level of mutual doubt entertained. Yet at best a genuine re-orientation of scholarly interest has taken place, a change from within, and the results have been impressive.

This institutional realignment derives from a theoretic re-positioning which though logically prior may be seen as the second of the major developments. To write of setting a political 'context' (or 'background') for seventeenth-century plays is to employ a language inappropriate to the newer scholarship. Theatre is now seen crucially as agent, and not or not merely reflection, of the events and issues of its time, a culturally and politically active receiver and transmitter of social energies.¹ To use Jonathan Goldberg's formula: 'language [including theatre] and politics are mutually constitutive . . . society shapes and is shaped by the possibilities in its language and discursive practice'.² Such a stance has been anticipated, if not theoretically formulated, by scholars such as G. K. Hunter and J. W. Lever,³ but has now become an altogether more conscious assumption. The outcome has been a shift of focus that is also by implication a theoretic revaluation. As Don Wayne phrases it, stressing the politically active role of theatre:

These texts are now being studied in relation to a broader range of representational strategies of legitimation or contestation in Elizabethan and Jacobean culture. In such criticism the figure of *Power* has displaced that of the *Idea* which was the essential constituent of Renaissance scholarship in Tillyard's generation.⁴

Readers of the present collection may note that, considered superficially in institutional terms, the new directions of scholarly practice are only partially reflected: Simon Adams alone among our contributors teaches in a department of history, while the others come

from academic training in literature and theatre. Yet, at a more serious level, the essays collected here do respond to the new emphases: in stressing political effect more than literary or theatrical 'quality', in consciously extending the boundaries of the canon, in evaluating the cultural influence of censorship and control, in the leading attention given to previously marginal forms such as masque and civic pageantry, and in the manner in which, and the extent to which, historical evidence is assessed and deployed. The essays are on the surface non-theoretical, but they assume in their methods and their interests many of the conclusions of recent theory. If they largely avoid the allusiveness of some new historicist writing, they share many of its assumptions about the social role of theatre. In both regards, they may be seen as situated within one sector of a British more than an American development of the recent scholarship of Renaissance drama.⁵

The gains and limitations of the newer scholarship have been described and assessed elsewhere,⁶ so that no more than a summary is appropriate here. Certain directions of interest have quite clearly emerged. The left-of-centre stance of critics contributing to the movement known as cultural materialism derives from the work of their mentors, Christopher Hill and Raymond Williams. With the shift of emphasis in their writing from idea to power (in Wayne's terms) has gone an increased stress on economic as well as political factors in social experience, and on the power-relations of gender politics. Marxist readings of historical process, with the human subject constructed by economic and ideological forces, have replaced more traditional understandings of human identity. There has been a readiness in much of the newer criticism to extrapolate from Stuart political theatre models and lessons applicable to the modern world, and equally a readiness to read back twentieth-century experience into the political and theatrical life of the seventeenth century. These approaches have been justified both by claims about the incipient modernity of Stuart mentalities, and by deconstructionist theories of reading; they may also be seen to sit easily alongside directorial practices in twentieth-century theatre. Among modern dramatists, Brecht has become the chosen theorist by whose light Stuart political drama has come to be read, both by reason of his own creative interest in the theatre of the period, and by reason of the theory and practice of alienation, differentiating our experience from the past while engaging us with it. All of this has

been underpinned by explorations of the analogies to be drawn between political and theatrical display. Here in particular the concerns of cultural materialism and new historicism converge, with critics of both schools interpreting the conflicts inherent in the theory and practice of Stuart absolutism. New historicists have in general identified in political practices strategies of containment which, while admitting subversive tendencies, have also neutralised them; the alternative stress on unresolved conflict has tended to appear in the work of cultural materialists. Yet the separation of the two approaches should not be too rigidly insisted upon: the emphasis of some of Stephen Greenblatt's recent new-historicist writing, for example, while continuing to acknowledge the strategies of containment, nevertheless lays stress on the contingency of texts seen as 'the sites of institutional and ideological contestation'.⁷

The stimulus of this work to new thinking about Stuart drama, even among those who refuse any of the new labels, has been enormous, especially as it follows a period of relative decline in the interpretation of Renaissance theatre, at least outside Shakespeare. There have been losses, perhaps, as Walter Cohen has remarked,⁸ in the nuanced interpretation of the detail of theatre texts; the readiness to emphasise explanatory matrices (in life or in theatre) has on occasion caused the interpreter to lose sight of subtlety, uncertainty, change-of-mind and muddle. The displacement of providentialist and essentialist readings of history has sometimes led only to the imposition of equally determinist models. A. D. Nuttall argues that Marxism may be considered the 'most spectacular version of essentialism in modern times', and Marxist explanations have been to the fore in discussion of Stuart theatre and politics.⁹ Whether we accept Nuttall's assessment or turn it down – and it applies more straightforwardly, he would agree, to British critics such as Jonathan Dollimore than to Americans like Louis Montrose or Stephen Greenblatt – there can be little doubt that the newer scholarship will need to come to terms even more thoroughly with a nuanced 'close reading' of theatre texts, along the way to realising its full potential. It will have to adapt also (the point is not entirely a separate one) to the specifically performance characteristics of theatre texts, and not only from a theoretical standpoint, where significant gains have been made. Misunderstood Brechtianism in the modern theatre has sometimes undervalued emotion, and there are indications of a similar tendency in the newer criticism.¹⁰ Most

significantly, some recovery may be needed of a more thoroughly comprehensive and re-balanced sense of the intellectual and imaginative culture of the period. The wish to displace conservative stereotypes, broadly Christian-humanist and elitist in derivation, has resulted in an unwarranted foregrounding of politically and religiously subversive views. We have been helped to see close up, and with greater clarity, some of the grain of people's lives, in the economic sphere and in gender politics especially; in recent criticism the underprivileged, the marginal and the unusual (even the bizarre) have been acknowledged. Some re-emphasis may now be required on some of the less conflictual elements in social and political experience, from faith and charity to loyalty and altruism. The profit-and-loss account of the newer scholarship shows a healthy credit balance, and one that is drawn on in this volume; but here and elsewhere there are signs that a newer revisionism is needed and under way.

II

Within the newer scholarship, as outside it, the political plays of Shakespeare have continued to receive overwhelming critical and theatrical attention. Partly for this reason, we have not included separate discussion of Shakespeare in the chapters that follow. It may therefore be appropriate to offer at this point some brief commentary and assessment.

Shakespeare criticism over the last five years, according to R. S. White's summary, has undergone, like Stuart theatre generally, what he calls an 'unprecedented re-definition'. What once looked like the impending marginalisation of Shakespeare, understood as a 'canonical' and 'arch-conservative' writer, has been deflected instead into the presentation of 'a much more progressive figure'.¹¹ This newer account, testimony as much as anything to the resilience of Shakespeare as cultural icon, takes its departure from the displacement (itself by now thoroughly traditional) of E. M. W. Tilliard's account of the dramatist as orthodox political theorist. Yet a progressive Shakespeare seems to run counter to much in the plays, and there is a good deal to be said for the historian Blair Worden's view of Shakespeare conducting his political analyses from *within* rather than in opposition to contemporary prejudices and perceptions. Worden sees providentialism, so central a preoccupation of

both supporters and detractors of a conservative Shakespeare, as an occasional rather than a dominant feature of the playwright's thinking. He shows him accepting monarchy as the normal – and sanctioned – form of government, as well as sharing contemporary fears of insurrection and a contemporary distaste for extreme religious attitudes. The plays could only have been written, Worden argues, in an age which was also the age of Machiavelli, and of an incipient Tacitean, non-providentialist, reading of history. Yet Shakespeare's *œuvre*, he says, 'shows none of the self-conscious and risky preoccupation with the new politics and the new history to be found in Jonson or Chapman or Daniel'.¹² This balanced account, persuasive as it is, may nevertheless be limited by a tendency to regard the plays as documents, rather than as agents in a socio-political process. Margot Heinemann takes the more inclusive view when, for example, she reads *Richard II* as inviting its audience to search for answers to the insoluble questions of royal authority: 'it is not the answer', she writes, 'but the question that subverts'. 'The drama', she adds, 'gives people images to think with.'¹³ Such images render the plays subversive in effect, if subversion is understood as a conscious awareness of the fictions and suppressions of rule, with the potential, at least, of stimulating political change.

One outcome of the reinterpretation of Shakespeare and politics has been the interest recently taken in such plays as the three parts of *Henry VI*, where earlier dismissal of the plays' failure as formal structures has been converted into admiration for 'realistic' non-coherence and bleakness of word and action. *King John*, too, has been re-evaluated, with its corrosive view of the king in office and its exposure of the venal motives that lead to war, of the ignoble behaviour of church and state, and of the patriotism that if it triumphs does so in circumstances and through language that set question marks over against traditional values; Deborah Warner's celebrated production for the Royal Shakespeare Company exactly caught the instabilities, potentially anarchic, of the play's portrayal of political motivation and action.¹⁴ The second tetralogy of histories, frequently performed in this century, has recently undergone its own re-emphasis. In a moment of crisis in the 1590s, *Richard II* was censored (or so it appears) for raising questions of deposition and succession too directly; but the self-undermining of kingship is now most often played as continuous, not momentary. Henry V in criticism and performance is now seen not as hero-king, but as one

agonising over matters of legitimacy, and uncomfortably addressing the issue of national solidarity when vulnerably exposed in war. Most of all, the *Henry IV* plays disquietingly picture the conflicts of value that surround monarchic rule, personal, chivalric and in the initiation and conduct of battle. The second part in particular provides just those images to think with that, while a censor might have difficulty in identifying passages to excise, nevertheless may be interpreted as implicitly subversive. Whether in Whitehall or Gloucestershire, the questioning of established pieties is insistent, and the play's innovative dramaturgy, what Trevor Nunn identified as its subtle and disturbing rhythms, its Chekhovian scenic structures, makes its own case by means of the subversion of expected theatre forms. ² *Henry IV*, to use Stephen Greenblatt's words, 'seems to be testing and confirming a dark and disturbing hypothesis about the nature of monarchical power in England: that its moral authority rests upon a hypocrisy so deep that the hypocrites themselves believe it'.¹⁵ If the Admiral's Men lost out in the inter-theatre rivalry of the years when Shakespeare was writing his histories, it may now be argued it was because the genius of their opponents' principal dramatist was not merely in some undifferentiated sense more creatively ample, but more acutely and disturbingly political.

The histories fall just outside the period dealt with in this volume, but they form the basis of political thought on which Shakespeare's later theatre builds. A play such as *Measure for Measure* has recently been given political readings emphasising the uses and abuses of power, and *Troilus and Cressida*, always interpreted as a disquieting play, morally, philosophically and politically, has received performances, such as those by Manfred Wekwerth and Joachim Tenschert for the Berliner Ensemble (Edinburgh, 1987) or by Howard Davies for the Royal Shakespeare Company (Stratford-upon-Avon, 1985), that lay stress on social and political failure. The tragedies, considered in a political perspective, have received something of a similar re-direction. *Coriolanus* has been much discussed. The play evidently provides a model of a society where the sinews that should hold it together have become overstretched to the point of rupture, and where the alternative modes of authority, hierarchic and representative, that in a late Renaissance state must be reconciled if the society is to be viable, are each disabled by flaws, personal and structural, at the heart. Jonathan Dollimore has shown how the *virtus* Coriolanus so strenuously seeks is ambiguously a matter of

personal essence and derivative from the values of *realpolitik*; the implication is 'the radically contingent nature not just of personal identity but, inseparably, of the present historical conjuncture'.¹⁶ Stanley Cavell confirms Dollimore's insight, seeing the play as questioning the most basic understandings out of which the *polis* is constructed.¹⁷ If *Coriolanus* is politically contemporary, it is so, not or not primarily because of references, veiled or open, to corn riots or to individual players on the political scene, nor does its value lie in forecasting the approaching Revolution (though its pre-vision of the unhappily irresolute condition of the Revolution's later stages would have made it then a remarkably current piece). Rather it provides, again, a country of the mind that audiences may explore in the construction of their own, potentially subversive, political awareness.

Other tragedies construct equally disturbing political worlds. *King Lear* invites its audiences to imagine a time when division, not integration, characterises political and family life, where kingly and paternal want of intelligent feeling are intensified to the point of madness, and where reconciliation cannot practically accommodate the destructive forces. If we say that, considered politically, all this serves as tribute, by inversion, to the integrative ideals of James's commonwealth, we ignore the overwhelmingly *disintegrative* force of the play experience, overlook its disruption of state, family, reason, even the discourse of theatre itself (language, costume, stage-perspective) and confine to moral and political platitude what the audience's imagination receives as experiential truth. We overlook also the Jacobean audience's recognition, unconscious or aware, of the current parallels, however partial and qualified, of tyrant king, unfeeling father, corrupt judge.¹⁸ Margot Heinemann has emphasised the social dimension of the play's exploration of disorder:

The central focus is on the horror of a society divided between extremes of rich and poor, greed and starvation, the powerful and the powerless, robes and rags, and the impossibility of real justice and security in such a world.¹⁹

Read in this way, the tragedy's effect is the enlargement of consciousness that in a repressive state is politically unwelcome, and in a state selectively and intermittently repressive, such as James's, is resisted by authority only when too acutely specific for comfort (the history of Shakespeare production in the formerly communist European countries offers an instructive parallel).²⁰ The greater

works of theatre, in the seventeenth century as today, both inform popular consciousness and influence as well as ride the stream of history.

It may seem that other Shakespearean tragedies can only with some strain be considered political. Patently, issues of perception, of affection and malice, sit at the heart of *Othello*, though even here a testing of the values of soldiership, the values that in considerable degree underprop the nation state, offers a political perspective. *Julius Caesar* and *Antony and Cleopatra* more directly address questions of government. In the former, too, the place of rhetoric in public life, and the perils of opinion and rumour, invite an audience to see events in the contemporary world in a newly conscious way; Richard Wilson shows how through allusion to 'the radical subversiveness of carnival' the play mimics a crucial juncture in the precarious cultural reconstruction of the absolutist state.²¹ In the latter the displacement of attention is not so much historic and geographical as evaluative: which loyalties are ultimate, and which provisional? Jonathan Dollimore shows how only a mistaken reading of *Antony and Cleopatra* can perceive love and *virtus* as simple antagonists: 'the language of desire', he writes, 'far from transcending the power relations which structure this society, is wholly in-formed by them'.²² The play's extraordinary dramaturgy, as now understood through interpretation and performance, expresses theatrically the unstable mutuality of desire and political power.

Some commentators have thought the Last Plays more royalist and orthodox than their precursors. But if Peter Greenaway's *Prospero's Books*, at one extreme, can construe *The Tempest* as a visual tapestry of Renaissance commonplace, other interpretations (Peter Brook's *La Tempête*, Yukio Ninagawa's Japanese adaptation) recognise the unsettling questions of authority, as well as of reason, creativity and illusion, of which a Jacobean audience would have been aware. Paul Brown has written a challenging interpretation of the play as 'a limit text in which the characteristic operations of colonialist discourse may be discerned – as an instrument of exploitation, a register of beleaguerment and a site of radical ambivalence'.²³ More, *The Winter's Tale* patently sets question marks beside royal behaviour, even if it also offers a visionary future. Glynne Wickham and others have identified specific connections between these plays, as well as *Cymbeline* and *Two Noble Kinsmen*, and events at court.²⁴ There is more reason still to connect *Henry VIII*

with court auspices.²⁵ Yet the objection to seeing the plays as no more than a confirmation of court values is not merely Sir Henry Wotton's grumpy remark that *Henry VIII's* mimicry of court practices was 'sufficient in truth within a while to make Greatness very familiar, if not ridiculous',²⁶ perceptive as that remark is about the perils of demystification in a hierarchical society. The subject-matter of the plays overtly charts royal mismanagement and self-blame as much as, or more than, achievement, and so potentially invites subversive construction.

This account differs in its emphasis from some of the best-known new historicist readings of the political plays. Leonard Tennenhouse sees pre-revolutionary drama as largely 'a vehicle for disseminating court ideology'.²⁷ Stephen Greenblatt, brilliantly articulate in describing the contradictions of absolutist culture, nonetheless emphasises its powers of containment. Greenblatt's perceptions and stances are underpinned by a rehearsal of the dilemmas of self-fashioning that render the individual's attempts at creating a stable subjectivity at best temporary and at worst self-cancelling. Authority, sacred or secular, is rooted, Greenblatt tells us, in a contradiction of its own most cherished ideals: 'the charismatic authority of the king, like that of the stage, depends upon falsification'.²⁸ But he adds:

It is precisely because of the English form of absolutist theatricality that Shakespeare's drama, written for a theatre subject to state censorship, can be so relentlessly subversive: the form itself, as a primary expression of Renaissance power, helps to contain the radical doubts it continually provokes.²⁹

The calculus is a nice one, between audience credulity and audience scepticism; and performance, not only in theatre history but originally, could be decisive.³⁰ The lesson of history is that the centre could not hold. In the real world, the closure of the theatres was not just a practical event but a cultural one, and one the proleptic seeds of which were sown long before. Shakespeare criticism of the last few years has made us aware of the plays' political function in mirroring as well as influencing the unstable world of its time; if the stress has arguably fallen too heavily on the plays' oppositional effects, this has been a necessary corrective for which the counterbalancing awareness of the integrative if imperilled ideals to which the plays pay tribute is now being re-supplied.

III

Stephen Greenblatt has contrasted with the tense balance of Shakespeare's political plays what he describes as 'the unequivocal, unambiguous celebrations of royal power with which the period abounds'. These celebrations – masques, royal entries, progress entertainments and the like – have, he says, 'no theatrical force and have long since fallen into oblivion'.³¹ In an obvious sense he is right; with scarcely an exception, the masques and entertainments have not been revived, thus failing to participate in what Greenblatt calls the *energeia* of revival.³² But their lack of 'theatrical force' may nevertheless consort with political significance of a more complex kind than Greenblatt allows. The social simplifications to which he points – a homogeneous, elite, audience, an apparent common participation in royalist fantasy – conceal strains and contradictions to which masquing texts and masquing occasions testify. The relation of anti-masque to masque (a creative strategy to which Ben Jonson was early led) bears a certain resemblance to the subversions that yet affirm royal authority in Greenblatt's analysis of the histories. To this degree, the masques and entertainments may be construed as reinforcements of court culture. Yet the practical circumstances of performance – mishap and unreadiness, ill-grace on the part of the principal spectator, squabbling ambassadors and ill-behaved courtiers – point to something other than hours and minutes of elite fantasising. Moreover, the texts of masques and entertainments reveal, when set beside current events and current preoccupations, a series of strategic adjustments, suppressions and re-makings that are in themselves both directly and by implication political. The essays by Graham Parry and Martin Butler in this volume show how these adjustments, and the content and temper of the masques, vary as the political life of the Stuart court varies, making them more sensitively political, in both general and particular ways, than has commonly been thought.

It may be useful to pursue this question of the current significance of the court entertainment a little further, in order to open up more fully the complex of senses in which masquing occasions may be read as political.

In obvious ways, the masque is the theatre-form its original presenters would most readily have identified as directly concerned with theatre and government; and it is the form which, although

serious work began well before the advent of the newer scholarship, has most directly benefited from it. Masques throughout the Stuart period were, as Martin Butler phrases it, 'at the point of intersection between politics and the arts,'³³ and the political resonances of the masque have become increasingly clear over the past fifteen years or so. Important work has also been done on the role of masques as endeavours of art, not least in establishing the work of Inigo Jones as the most notable and sustained contribution to theatre design in the history of the British stage.³⁴ Work on the music and dance of the masques has been less fully integrated into the general account of the form, no doubt because of the range of scholarly expertise such an undertaking requires.³⁵ Concentrating on the politics of the masque, it is easy to forget that dances represented the most extended part of the performance, and were intricately choreographed; that the bands accompanying the performance routinely numbered dozens of lutanists and violinists, woodwind players, trumpets and brass, and included named soloists of distinction; that the music was composed by the leading court composers of the day; that the songs were performed by trained and accomplished singers; that professional actors spoke the text; and that preparing, directing and co-ordinating all of this called for skill of a high order. The lavish financial outlay on masques and entertainments has been sufficiently interpreted politically, but less than due emphasis has perhaps been placed on the role of the masque as developing artistic experiment and competence across a wide range of art-forms, and as edging Britain into the European mainstream of courtly magnificence. It is salutary to be reminded, as Graham Parry reminds us below,³⁶ that contemporaries viewed the masques primarily in these terms, so far as surviving commentary records, referring to the excellence or failure of the spectacle, the elegance or otherwise of the dancing, and even the generic propriety of the contrivance – thus situating the politics of the masquing occasion in the history of aesthetics rather than the history of government.

Yet the masque *was* directly political, by virtue of its occasion and its audience, as well as its content. The occasion itself is charged with political implication, due to its privileged status as a festival moment. The masque performance *represents* the British court in 'magnificence' and aesthetic sophistication as well as subject-matter – before a European and not merely a British audience. But within the broad politics of international esteem (and aside from the

parochial, though important, politics of ambassadorial rivalry), what are the political implications of subject-matter and reception? The difficulty for the interpreter is to know where to draw the boundaries of interpretation, which meanings to hold in focus and which to neglect. While it is true that Festival books and the printing of masque texts (or the preparation of scribal or holograph presentation copies) sought to provide some kind of permanence, the very uniqueness of the masque-occasion requires attention to be given to the specific moment, to the persons involved, to current disputes, factional groupings, styles of behaviour. Martin Butler expresses the challenge from the point of view of the masque writer who 'had tactfully to negotiate the complex statements and counter-statements passing in the event between King, Queen, Prince and Lords';³⁷ situating the writer in this way illuminates the embarrassments, tonal disjunctions, ellipses and suppressions to which the interpreter needs to be alert in commentary on the printed text.³⁸ It also provides a perspective on the sense in which, as in all occasional writing, but in a marked way in the masque, the author is consciously and not merely inevitably *decentred*. Such decentring invites political interpretation. So too, not infrequently, does the choice of subject-matter. The most evident case, so far as the early Stuart masque is concerned, is the topic of chivalry, with its implication of a backward-looking political stance and a preference for militarist solutions to international politico-religious disputes.³⁹ Yet a taste for chivalric exercises could consort perfectly well, when the options closed down, with support for James's pacifist policies in a particular instance. The difficulty is to reconcile interpretation of broad cultural developments with the micro-politics, not always fully recoverable, of a particular occasion. The newer scholarship has taught us to pose these questions but not always as yet provided us with the means to answer them.

The entertainments for Henry in 1610 and 1611 provide a clear example of the complexities that confront the commentator on the political significance of masques. Stephen Orgel has remarked on the aesthetic instability that attaches to the conflation, or confusion, of the role of spectator and participant on any such occasion; here in the entertainments for Henry that essentially precarious relationship is put further at risk by the real if disavowed tensions between the political stance of Henry's party, recognisable if nowhere sharply defined, and that of James himself. As Graham Parry explains