Agnieszka Żukowska

The Ordered Performance: Animated Emblems of the Stuart Court Masque

Hailed as "the wonder ... of tongues, of ears, of eyes" (Jonson 1969, 168) in one of the choral songs of Ben Jonson's *Oberon, the Fairy Prince* (1611), the Stuart monarch seated in the auditorium of the Whitehall Banqueting House would in turn expect to feast his ears and eyes upon the wonders created on the stage in the course of a quasi-theatrical entertainment belonging to the genre of the Stuart court masque. A considerable degree of aesthetic pleasure was to be drawn from the masque's architecturally shaped stage pictures, which were interspersed with stylised dances, ornate pieces of instrumental and vocal music, and chunks of the dramatic, all to be followed by the joint dancing of the noble performers taking part in the entertainment and their aristocratic spectators. With its intermedial "speaking pictures," that is, relentlessly explicated scenic *tableaux*, and its philologically analysable dancing routines, which not infrequently transferred messages of an almost philosophical nature, the masque has been viewed as a theatrical transmutation of the specifically early modern combination of word and image, namely, the emblem book. The Italianate illusionistic scenes designed for the court stage by the royal architect Inigo Jones have been likened to emblematic icons, the masque's descriptive songs and speeches, in their turn, are believed to have had the same function as emblematic epigrams (Limon 1990, 78). The curtain screening the stage – together with the ornament-covered proscenium arch supporting a cartouche with the entertainment's title – has been compared to a "frontispiece ... reminiscent of emblematic title pages in printed books" (Limon 1990, 85); the affinities between the masque and other forms of print, for instance Renaissance cartography (Grzegorzewska 1993), have also been acknowledged.

To take this analogy a step further, a peculiarly emblematic quality was not just a feature of the genre's material constitution: it also resonated in the very process of its reception. Just like its printed counterparts, which "had in their sights only a single, ideal reader, or ...one ideal spectator: the patron or dedicatee" (Manning 2004, 185), the masque envisaged the presence of a single ideal addressee: in court theatre the place of the privileged reader would have been taken by the king facing the central section of the perspective stage. When it comes to the general audience present at the entertainment, they were frequently instructed to "look," "watch," "behold" or "wonder," which is precisely the set of ostensive commands addressed to the readers of emblematic epigrams (Manning 2004, 90). Finally, the detailed accounts of masques printed after the actual staging were not unlike the emblematic "record of what would have been otherwise lost," to use a phrase from John Manning's study of the emblem, where the masque is called an "emblematic sister art" (Manning 2004, 186–87).

The seeming ease with which the above analogies have been drawn should not obliterate the fact that there was a pronounced difference between the two arts in question, resulting from the very nature of the scenic medium. The emblem is a finite composition restricted to the page of its compendium, and as such it constitutes a *spatial* sign, that is, in Roman Jakobson's understanding, a text whose content is presented all at once to the addressee (Jakobson 1987, 472–73). Built around a *succession* of architecturally framed *tableaux vivants*, and depending for their aesthetic effect on the swiftness of scene changes, Stuart court entertainments were, however, subject to

time: a masque's overall message was not complete until all of its scenes have been presented, which is a stark contrast to the compositional and semantic self-containedness of an emblem (or of a painting).

Time, which – as stated in Cesare Ripa's *Iconology* – grinds everything with his teeth of iron, must have been a rather unwelcome addition to a scenic work whose main function was to deify – and thus, to detemporalise – the sovereign and his courtiers assembled in the hall. The dynamism inherent in the pulsating rhythm of scene changes, attesting to the temporal nature of the scenic medium, had to be curbed so as to counter the destructive power of Tempus, perceived by the early moderns as one "greedy to devour / His own, and all that he brings forth," to use a phrase from Jonson's 1611 masque, *Love Freed From Ignorance and Folly* (Jonson 1973, 233). In fact, the genre's variously manifested drive towards detemporalisation makes it an emblematic example of the early modern approach to temporality, as described by Ricardo Quinones:

> In his attempts to manage time, Renaissance man strives to achieve by means of process what eternity possesses in stasis.... it would seem that man's ...desire is to savor the present wholeness and being that he always conceived to be the properties of divinity. (Quinones 1972, 26)

Faced with the undeniably temporal character of the masque's changing scenes, the makers of the genre came up with a solution making it possible to partly obliterate the negative effects of time. The successive pages of the scenic emblem book were thus held to be "turned" by the monarch watching the entertainment. The sovereign, whose "arts," to quote an observation on the nature of kingship included in Ben Jonson's *Speeches at Prince Henry's Barriers* (1610), were "to govern and give laws / To peace no less than arms" (Jonson 1973, 161), was thus expected to exercise control over the created world of the performance. Temporal management was an essential part of this control.

In a genre freely blending fact with fiction, which – very much in the spirit of Neoplatonism – called for a momentary suspension of disbelief on the part of the audience so that they could witness a *true* scenic epiphany of the celestial realm, the king's ordering input was to be taken as something more than just a metaphor anchored in the art of the theatre. Having once famously described his kingly office as that of an earthly "little God" (James I 2002, 12), the Stuart sovereign wanted to be perceived as the sole source of the divine harmony revealing itself on the masquing stage, or – to clothe the some notion in more operative terms – as the true animator of the scenographic wonders, able to influence the scenic world without leaving his seat in the hall.[1] It was at the monarch's *sight* that veils shading performers' identities would drop, as they supposedly did in Francis Beaumont's *Masque of the Inner Temple and Gray's Inn* (1613), and the sophisticated machinery erected on the court stage would start moving. As the scenic machine was thus set in motion by the king's very presence, the harmony of the celestial world was to radiate out from the stage into the auditorium. The operative reading of the royal person was made possible by a popular Renaissance belief that one may draw "a parallel ...between the royal power, which rests on the divine order of this universe, and architecture, which is a material and artistic manifestation of that order" (Limon 1990, 83).

As there were hardly any limits to the scope of the courtly panegyric, the Stuart sovereign was believed to exercise parallel influence over his entire realm. The first to share in this semi-divine order were the courtiers assembled in the hall, who – of course within the conventions of the elaborate half-theatrical half-ritualistic game devised by masque-makers – would hope to get the impression that they have been freed from the destructive power of time. This amounts to saying that the courtly reality would be conceptualised as the prolongation of the timeless celestial realm

[1] To read more on the Stuart king as the driving force behind the wonders of the masque, or a solo-performer projecting his vision onto the stage, see Limon 2010.

uncovered on stage. As a result of this, the courtiers would be glorified – and deified – in accordance with the rule formulated by Stephen Orgel, who stated that it was a distinctive feature of the masque that what its "noble spectator watched he ultimately became" (Orgel 1975, 39). Still, lacking the king's quasi-magical capacities and devoid of his insight into the realm of the divine, the nobility present at the masque had to come into direct, or tactile, contact with gods and virtues as a precondition for their deification.

A vital role in the transference of divine order from the stage picture into the masquing hall was played by the disguised aristocrats taking part in the performance, customarily referred to as the *masquers*. Even a brief survey of masques' printed accounts will reveal that the performing aristocrats, though costumed and masked, were at the same time perfectly recognisable as their courtly selves. Owing to this ontological opalescence, the Stuart masquers were predisposed to transcend the boundary between the auditorium and the stage, and eventually incorporate those watching the show into the timeless realm peopled by mythological gods and personified abstractions, which was the ultimate aim of the genre. Still, the masquer's opalescent ontological status could also prove to be a potential threat to the masque as a whole. For the sole reason of being human, and hence inevitably involved with time, performing courtiers brought with themselves the very temporality that, as already noticed, was so much dreaded by masque-makers. After all, the presence of a live human being on the theatrical stage was bound to occasion "a moment of dynamic asymmetry, motion and the breaking of constraints, licence and accident.... The painterly [and – it might be added – emblematic] depiction was permanent and stable, the actor introduced a temporal and changeable element into it" (Ratajczak 1985, 32, *translation mine*).

The makers of the genre, still, had provided for this inconvenience, inventing a number of detemporalising strategies meant to partly dispose of the unwanted temporality imported by the masquers. And thus, the costumed courtiers did not interact much with the remaining (i.e., professional) performers, neither kinetically nor verbally. They did not engage in scenic conversation, which may of course be viewed as a condescension towards courtly decorum, but, at the same time, it might be considered as an attempt at ruling out the dialogical functions of questioning and answering, which are inherently connected with time. Consequently, they had to have their entries, details of dress and attitudes explicated by professional players taking part in the masque, which partly explains the genre's strong predilection for ekphrasis.[2] What is more, no movement was possible on the part of the disguised courtiers unless they were *told* to move, or dance, by other figures present on the stage. So thoroughly deprived of agency, Stuart masquers may be said to have functioned in a way not unlike scenic props, which come to be "activated" only when handled by a live performer, who, in his or her turn, functions as the primary point of reference for the scenic world.

At first sight, it might seem not a little indecorous to have the aristocratic performers instructed and ordered about by the meaner characters, impersonated by professional players. Still, one should not forget that it was the king – claiming God's creative prerogative – who was considered to be the true author, or the divine architect, of the scenic *tableau* hosting the masquers. It was on his behalf that all the allegorical and mythological figures present on the stage spoke and acted. It follows that the striking passiveness demonstrated by costumed aristocrats was not to be perceived as a drawback or limitation. The automaton-like performers were very much part of the masque's manifestly artificial scenographic arrangement, bristling with positive associations taken from Renaissance visual arts, architecture and sculpture in particular. When first revealed on stage, masquers were seated amid numerous columns, pilasters, cornices, arches and niches, all of these making up the architectural composition of the stage. The architectural organisation of the stage picture could also be detected in the sheer geometric character

[2] The ekphrastic nature of the masque is discussed in my article on the functions of verbal explication on the Stuart court stage (Kołodziejska 2006).

of masquers' grouping within the *tableau*; and thus, it was a standard practice to place them along one or more horizontal axes. What we are dealing with is a scenic arrangement strongly reminiscent of that of sculptures on such items of architecture as early modern altars, tombs, as well as church and palace façades.

A thoroughly ordered disposition of the aristocratic performers within the boundaries of the scenic *tableau* can already be noticed in one of the scenes of *The Masque of Beauty* (1608), Ben Jonson's third theatrical commission of the type discussed, where masquers posed, absolutely immobile, in several niches of a scenographic construction referred to as the Throne of Beauty. Duly observing the classical rule of the superposition of orders – the Ionic pilasters framing the niches were crowned with nine statues in the Corinthian order – the multilayered "throne" must have borne a certain resemblance to Renaissance architecture, so revered by Inigo Jones. Even when it comes to the Jonesian settings that were not intended as scenes of architecture, such as stock masquing gardens or heavens, the performing aristocrats would nevertheless be accompanied by architectural detail, which might have been a single niche or arch. Examples include, for instance, the anonymous *Masque of Flowers* (1614) or Thomas Middleton's *The Masque of Heroes* (1619). The latter case is particularly interesting, as it clearly indicates that even a setting as manifestly non-architectural as the sky would have been architecturally conceived when drafted for the Stuart court stage. Displayed in the upper part of the scenic *tableau* – a fitting location for heroes deified for their virtues, which was the collective *persona* adopted by the courtiers taking part in this entertainment – Middleton's performing aristocrats were seated in arches of *clouds* (not of stone or brick), whose aerial substance was nevertheless to be perceived as part of a quasi-architectural structure.

Embedded in a clearly architectural context, masquers participated in a vision of perfect order, resonating with Leon Battista Alberti's theoretical notion of *concinnitas*, i.e., the harmonious arrangement of "parts that are quite separate from each other by their nature, according to some precise rule, so that they correspond to one another in appearance" (Alberti 1991, 442). At times, the masquer's integration into scenic architecture (the Albertian harmonious arrangement of distinct parts) was so thorough that architectural detail would not just surround the performer but it would find its way into the aristocrat's costume. And thus, Ionic volutes figure prominently in a Jonesian design of a headdress drafted for one of the lady masquers of Thomas Campion's *The Lords' Masque* (1613); the *pteruges* worn by the male performers in the same entertainment resemble acanthus leaves, an ornament which is to be found, for instance, on Corinthian column capitals.[3]

The architectural context, coupled with masquers' complete immobility when first discovered on stage, must have been the main source of a distinctively sculptural air which was noticeable about the noble performers. The various manifestations of what might be termed the *sculptural stylisation* of the disguised aristocrat were not left unacknowledged by masque-makers. To quote the printed version of William Davenant's *Luminalia* (1638), the noble performers taking part in the entertainment managed to create the impression that they "falsif[ied] relief" (Davenant 1973, 709). The phrase coined by Davenant was not a figurative metaphor: many a masquer's costume was actually modelled on classical sculpture, or rather on classical sculpture as filtered through the sensibility of the master artists of the continental Renaissance. It should be stressed that the choice of visual sources for Jonesian designs was not solely motivated by the architect's aesthetic predilections; it was part of a general masque-specific strategy of incorporating the noble performer into the glorious age of antiquity. As the *Hymenaei* lady masquers (1606) – to quote one of Jonson's numerous costume glosses – appeared on the stage in outfits resembling those of "some statues of Juno, no less airy than glorious" (Jonson 1969, 84), they entered a realm much

[3] The two designs, held in Devonshire Collection, Chatsworth, are reproduced in Orgel and Strong 1973, figs. 83, 79.

different from the world of everyday temporality. The blending of the old and the new, or of the sculptural and the actual – and, what follows, of the timeless and the temporal – was even more noticeable in the case of the male outfits designed for the same entertainment, which Jonson describes as combining Greek statuary with contemporary design.

In some entertainments, an aristocratic performer might even be assigned the role of an actual sculpture. This was the case with *The Lords' Masque*, one of whose *tableaux* represented a group of court ladies impersonating golden statues. The printed version of Campion's work gives an idea of the extent to which the costumed members of the nobility were integrated into their architectural surroundings:

> four noble women-statues of silver, standing in several niches, accompanied with ornaments of architecture, which filled all the end of the house, and seemed to be all of goldsmith's work.... Over every statue was placed a history in gold, which seemed to be of bas-relief; ...Above all, for finishing, ran a cornice, which returned over every pilaster, seeming all of gold and richly carved. (Campion 1967, 111)

The bas-relief narrative placed over the silver statues covered the story of Prometheus, which concluded with a much-telling image of the enraged Jupiter changing the titan's creation – a group of women – into statues. For all its dramatic character, the message imported by the pictorial sequence described was not altogether negative. Prometheus had sculpted his women out of base clay; Jupiter, in his turn, had transformed them into the infinitely more splendid golden likenesses. Jupiter's artwork, even if intended as a punishment, could not be anything but magnificent, and it was a vision of magnificence that the audience assembled in the hall were supposed to see, with a full understanding that "Jupiter" was to be read as "King James." As already noticed, it was one of the basic assumptions of the masque that the sovereign seated in the auditorium was to be viewed as a celestial artist responsible for the wonders uncovered on stage. The Stuart monarch present at *The Lords' Masque* could thus "assert his control over his environment and the divinity of his rule through the power of the art at his command," which is what Stephen Orgel lists as one of the main aspirations of a Renaissance ruler (Orgel 1975, 55).

Scenically rendered as architecturally articulated sculpture, Stuart masquers absorbed a wealth of symbolic associations the two arts would produce in a cultured Renaissance mind. These came to be enumerated in a song from Jonson's *Chloridia* (1631), where the figure of Fame, seated on the top of a mountain erected on stage, was addressed by the personified History, Poetry, Sculpture and Architecture in the following way:

> We that sustain thee, learned Poesy
> And I, her sister, severe History,
> With Architecture, who will raise thee high,
> And Sculpture, that can keep thee from to die,
> And help to lift thee to eternity. (Jonson 1995, 154)

Placed alongside Poetry and History, both of these highly regarded *studia humanitatis*, Architecture and Sculpture were thereby presented as powerful and trustworthy instruments of glorification and immortalisation. The scene analysed, belonging to Jonson's final masque at court, might be taken as a summary of the workings of the entire genre, where the air of the statuesque about the aristocrat's body was to denote this body's exclusion from the power of time, while the architectural elevation of the noble performers attested to their superior status, both within the performance and outside of its boundaries, namely, at court.

It should be noticed, however, that the scenographic visions of the type described above, reverberating with positive associations connected with architecture and sculpture, allowed for no actual transference of the divine order between the scenic epiphany and the courtly reality.

Having taken over the optimistic meanings generated by the stage picture, such as sculptural timelessness or architectural perfection, but still confined to the boundaries of the illusionistic stage, the performing aristocrats could not as yet come into direct contact with the earthly domain. This peculiar state of impenetrability might be sensed in the lines taken from Jonson's *Pan's Anniversary* (1620), describing one of this masque's scenographic displays, which was a "*fair* fount of light, / As still you[the masquers] sit without the injury / Of any rudeness folly can, or spite" (Jonson 1969, 312, *emphasis added*). Despite their promise of relative safety, such scenic *tableaux*, on which John Peacock remarks that they must have "look[ed] like picture[s]" (Peacock 1995, 164), would remain entirely beyond the spectators' reach.

At this point of the entertainment, the sculptural stylization of the performing courtier started to be perceived as an obstacle, standing in the way of the much desired union of the stage and the court. This metaphysical paralysis, however, would soon be overcome with the aid of the royal animator of the scenic wonders. As already mentioned, the very presence of the Stuart sovereign was believed to set the performance in motion. In an act of a masque-specific miracle, he would thus use his supposedly potent gaze to animate the hitherto motionless human sculptures displayed on the stage, turning them into scenic automata, or *animated emblems*. In William Davenant's *Britannia Triumphans* (1638), for instance, the sovereign's input was rendered as the literal "unfreezing" of the masquers, who had just been told that "'Tis fit [they] mix[ed] that wonder with delight, / As [they] were *warmed* to motion with his [i.e., the king's] sight" (Davenant 1973, 666, *emphasis mine*).

The masque, still, would not content itself with the mere dynamisation of the scenic emblem: thus, the sovereign's animating intervention in the *tableau* would have been invariably followed by the performing aristocrats' descent onto the dancing place, i.e., onto a clearly delineated performance space beneath the perspective stage. To quote one of the songs accompanying this section of the entertainment, the aristocratic performers taking part in *The Masque of Flowers* were told to "[d]escend ...from [their] hill, / Take spirit at his [the king's] will" (Anon. 1967, 168), which they did, exchanging their floral garb for the human shape as they walked onto the dancing place. For all the negative cultural associations of downwards movement, the descent – in the course of which, as stated in a number of masquing *libretti*, deities would *incarnate* themselves in human beings – was to bring even more splendour to the performing courtiers. To return to the Campion's *Lords*, its masquers were told they would "by descending gain a higher place" (Campion 1967, 111). It should be noticed, in passing, that the lines quoted above seem to imply that the reality of the court was considered to be superior to the celestial realm, which was entirely in line with the epideictic nature of the genre analysed. A similar message was expressed in *The Masque of Heroes*, whose audience were to admire a group of worthies reared beyond time in reward for their virtues, who would

> descend to have their worth
> Shine to imitation forth;
> And by their motion, light, and love
> to show how after times should move. (Middleton 1967, 267–68)

The mixture of "motion, light, and love," which people – and the universe as such – ought to imitate, is the masquer-exclusive dance, a standard element of each entertainment of the type discussed.

Having left the stage picture, the performing aristocrats would thus usually engage in a geometrical dance, which was performed on the dancing place. Much has already been written on the main idea behind this intricate routine, which has been described as the scenic representation – or, one might say, with a full recognition of the masque's conventional nature, *incarnation* – of

the ideally ordered motion of the universe, the *musica mundana*.[4] For the purposes of the present discussion, one may add that the carefully planned routines, which permitted little, if any, improvisation, were meant to depict the same kind of (divine) order as the one invoked by the masquers' former architectural articulation and sculptural stylisation, which have been here presented as effective instruments of glorification and immortalisation. Such intermedial analogies are all the more justified in the light of the Renaissance conviction that music and the visual arts (or, strictly speaking, the art of perspective, which functioned as the compositional basis for most masque *tableaux*) – were much alike.[5] "The same numbers that pleas the eare please the eie," Inigo Jones wrote on one of the pages of his copy of Alberti (Walls 1996, 215).

A brief survey of masques' printed accounts will show that they abound in remarks on costumed courtiers' geometrical dances, where masque-specific routines are linked with the notion of order, in its turn associated with divinity and timelessness. All these issues have been included in a self-referentially charged scene from Jonson's *Hymenaei*, in the course of which eight female masquers, impersonating the powers of Juno, were literally "led on by Order, the servant of Reason" (Jonson 1969, 84) in the direction of the audience. The allegorical figure, a star on his forehead pointing to the "affinity of reason and order with the divine, and perhaps too [with] the order kept by the stars" (Gordon 1975, 166), was an appropriate guide for a troop of stellified courtiers. As the playwright himself remarks, Reason's servant "was ... rather a person of ceremony than use" (Jonson 1969, 84), which does not mean that the personified Order should be treated as a mere ornament. The printed account of the masque indicates that Order's presence was an essential element of the entertainment. Acting as a veritable master of ceremony, he supervised the obligatory masquer-exclusive dancing routines so that the dancers would "not confound / Their measured steps, which only move / About th'harmonious sphere of love" (Jonson 1969, 83). Moreover, the servant of Reason also oversaw the pairing of the powers of Juno and eight humours and affections (male masquers), the two groups uniting for a common dancing routine devised to tame the unruly elements. As we learn from the printed account of the entertainment, the latter routine was performed to the accompaniment of "the music of the hours" (Jonson 1969, 84). In a masterfully self-referential stroke, the masquers' ordered motion is thus described as imitating – or rather, re-creating – the incessant movement of the heavenly spheres, and hence it may be treated as an instrument of exempting dancers from earthly decay.

It should be noted, however, that at this point in the masque the general courtly audience was not as yet incorporated in the harmony whose advent they so desired. Even though the masque's animated emblems – i.e., the aristocrats formerly contained within the stage picture – had left the constraints of the architectural arrangement of the stage, all they had managed to do was to move a step closer to the court. The masquer-exclusive dance – even when performed to the accompaniment of the hours – should rather be seen as an intermediate phase in the process discussed, a halfway stage of the transference of divine order from heaven, or the stage, to earth, or the court. This, in turn, corresponds rather well with Mark Franko's statement on the mediating function of geometrical dance in Baroque entertainments: "Dancing is a visual intermediary between the spectator and harmony: in seeing dancing we see voice, not only as a conciliatory image, but also as a third term, a genuine hybrid, a sort of conceptual androgyne" (Franko 1993, 44).

There was, indeed, a distinctly hybrid quality about the bodies of the noble performers, who, though they have broken out of the architectural entourage and shed the increasingly cumbersome sculptural stylisation, continued to be considerably dehumanized, acting in a manifestly artificial way. Subordinated to the shifting figures of geometrical dance, their comportment was anything but natural. Still, as already noticed, this was part of a conscious strategy of deification: the stylised

[4] For a detailed discussion of the subject, see, for instance, Carter 1992, or Meagher 1962.

[5] The art of perspective used proportion, just as music made use of musical harmony. See Walls 1996, 206–20.

choreographic patterns presented in this section of the masquing entertainment were thus to be taken as "an image of something outside the human being – measure, 'highness' ... movement made abstract" (Shepherd 2006, 50). At times, the artificiality of the dancing routine could be further stressed by substituting the living performers with mobile elements of stage design, later to be replaced with the real masquers. The audience assembled in the masquing hall must have enjoyed mechanically contrived sequences, such as the "dancing" stars hovering over the stage in Campion's *Lords' Masque*, or "balleting" trees in the same author's *Lord Hay's Masque* (1607).

The gap between the artistically rendered realm of the divine and the courtly reality was finally bridged when masquers asked out some spectators seated in the auditorium for a series of common dances, referred to as the revels. It was then that the carriers of divine influence, the "animated emblems," as they have been called, mingled with the courtiers, saturating the earthly domain with divinely inspired harmony. It was then that the celestial order – denoted in retrospect by the ideally proportioned scenic architecture and stylised geometrical dance, by this time present only in the spectators' memories – finally descended onto the earth. This fact was not left unaccounted for in the masquing *libretti*: this is, for instance, how Astraea marvelled at the sight of the noble performers dancing with the spectator ladies in Jonson's *Golden Age Restored* (1616): "What change is here! ... Of all there seems a second birth, / It is become a heaven on earth" (Jonson 1995, 107). These words might be used as a general description of the intended effects of the final stage of the masque, in the course of which the aristocrats watching the entertainment were to be finally reborn into divinity through the agency of their fellow courtiers who had taken part in the masque.

In the deified space of the court, there could be no end to the process of miraculous rebirth delineated above. This is tantamount to saying that the transmission of harmony would not cease even after the masque's *finale*: the animated emblems would retain their status as carriers of the divine order long after they unmasked. This was made possible by the aristocrats' peculiar comportment, which did not change "once they had finished dancing: it remained with them as it was their normal posture" (Nevile 1999, 882). In other words, it was the animated emblems' continuing presence among their fellow courtiers, rather than the magnificent yet short-lasting display of gods and personified abstractions in the masque proper, that was supposed immerse the Stuart monarch's court in a never-ending vision of order. However, the chosen members of the nobility would not have been able to invest the space of the court with celestial influence, had it not been for their initial inclusion in the stage picture and their subsequent engagement in the geometrical dancing routine, both of these being indispensable stages in the remarkably ordered performance referred to as the Stuart masque.

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