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The Changeling, the Boy Actor and Female Subjectivity

Lucy Munro

In her late-Jacobean romance, *Urania*, Mary Wroth refers twice to the boy actors of the professional stage.¹ In Part 1, she describes a man whose emotions are undisturbed by the sight of the queen, his erstwhile lover, wooing another: ‘there hee saw her with all passionate ardency, seeke, and sue for the strangers loue, yet he vnmooueable, was no further wrought, then if he had seene a delicate play-boy acte a louing womans part, and knowing him a Boy, lik’d onely his action’.² In Part 2, an allusion to a boy actor appears in a longer description of another woman, an ‘enchantress’ who has bewitched Leonius, the younger brother of Amphilanthus and Urania. The Lady who rules the island of Robollo describes her to Steriamus as

A woeman dangerous in all kinds, flattering and insinuating abundantly, winning by matchless intising, and as soone cast of[f], butt with hasard sufficient to the forsaken or forsaker; her traines farr exceeding her love, and as full of faulshood as of vaine and endles expressions, beeing for her over-acting fashion more like a play-boy dressed gawdely up to shew a fond, loving, woemans part then a great Lady; soe busy, so full of taulke, and in such a sett formallity, with so many framed lookes, fained smiles, and nods, with a deceitfull downe-cast looke, instead of purest modesty and bashfullnes (tow rich Juells for her rotten Cabbinnett to containe). Som times a little (and that while painfull) silence, as wishing, and with gestures, as longing to bee moved to speake againe, and seeming soe loath as supplications must bee (as itt were) made to heare her toungue once more ring chimes of faulse beeguillings, and intrapping charmes, witt being overwourne by her farr nicer, and more strange, and soe much the more prised, inchanting inventions. Soe as her charming phansies and ther aluring daliings makes true witt a foole in such a schoole, and bace faulenes and luxury the Jalours of her house, and unfortunate prisoners.³

In both of these passages, the figure of the boy actor is evoked in the context of emotion, vision and performance. In the first, the queen's ardent wooing of another man no longer moves her former lover because her passion has given him 'new sight [...] to see her shame, and his owne together' (sig. I2v). In the second, the 'enchantress' presents a false face to the world. 'Is she beautiful?' asks Steriamus; the Lady replies, 'Noe, truly, Sir [...] What she hath, she pais for (and itt is nott good neither)' (160). She is over-dressed, dependent on cosmetics and overly histrionic, yet her 'false beeguilings', 'intrapping charmes' and 'charming phansies' have the power to enthrall Leonius.

Wroth's commentaries on the 'play-boy' offer a powerful context for the composition and performance of Thomas Middleton and William Rowley's *The Changeling*, which – like *Urania* – emerged from late-Jacobean literary and theatrical cultures. Written around 1615-20, the first part of *Urania* was published in late summer or autumn 1621; *The Changeling* was licensed for performance by Lady Elizabeth's Men at the Cockpit playhouse, also known as the Phoenix, on 7 May 1622.⁴ The second part of *Urania* was never published, but Wroth appears to have been working on it between 1620 and 1630. Her allusions to boy actors are part of a wider network of theatrical references in *Urania*, and they are perhaps unsurprising given her other interactions with dramatic culture.⁵ In 1605 she appeared in Jonson's court entertainment, *The Masque of Blackness*, an experience upon which she reflects in one of the sonnets in her sequence 'Pamphilia to Amphilanthus', published in the first part of *Urania*.⁶ Jonson dedicated *The Alchemist* to Wroth, addressed three poems to her and appears to have represented her in his pastoral *The May Lord*.⁷ At the same time as Wroth was working on *Urania*, she also composed *Love's Victory*, a pastoral tragicomedy that was probably intended for household performance.

I do not argue here that Wroth exercised a direct influence on *The Changeling*, although it is possible that Middleton and Rowley were familiar with the first part of *Urania*. Instead, I use *Urania* as an intertext that brings to the fore a set of issues that are central to this essay: gendered performance, spectatorship and the techniques through which female subjectivity was constructed on the Jacobean stage. Wroth's work forcibly reminds us not only of the material and histrionic elements that were brought together when a boy actor played a woman on stage, from dress and cosmetics to gestures and facial expressions, but also the contribution of the response of female spectators to the construction of female roles. Moreover, Wroth employs a set of repeated images in her own construction of female subjectivity – eyesight, cabinets and the labyrinth – all of which appear prominently in *The Changeling*.

Questions of surveillance, witnessing, watching and judging feature elsewhere in this collection, connected with gender by Jean E. Howard, with emotion and Calvinism by Jesse Lander and with spectatorship by Jennifer Low. My interest here, in contrast, lies in the potential gap between the female spectator and the female character, to which Wroth's commentary points, and the ways in which her own work illuminates the strategies that Middleton and Rowley take to close that gap. In what follows, I look first at what we can recover about the design of female roles in the play, and their potential impact in performance by boy actors, drawing on documentary evidence about the personnel of Lady Elizabeth's Men in 1622 and the work of Evelyn Tribble, Scott McMillin and John Astington on actor training. I then return to the work of Wroth, reading the female roles of *The Changeling* through the linguistic framework that her writing establishes.

In its treatment of subjectivity in the play, this essay follows the lead of scholars such as John Stachniewski, Ania Loomba, Roberta Barker, David Nicol and Nora

Williams. Stachniewski's influential reading of *The Changeling* argues that what resembles psychological depth in Beatrice-Joanna is an effect of Calvinist structures of thought around predestination and salvation; if Beatrice-Joanna has an unconscious, it is because there is a gap between her understanding of herself as elect and her true status as reprobate.⁸ In *Gender, Race, Renaissance Drama*, published a year before Stachniewski's essay, Ania Loomba analyses the 'schisms' in female subjectivity presented in plays such as *The Changeling*, arguing that '[t]he contradictions imposed on women are internalised, but then they catalyse an alienation which radically disrupts all notions of social or psychic stability'.⁹ More recently, Barker and Nicol critique what they term the 'the Freudian/romantic reading of *The Changeling*', viewing it as 'a misreading in which Beatrice's hatred for De Flores is turned into love, and her misery into lust'.¹⁰ Focusing on the play's performance tradition, Williams points to the ways in which the play's asides both allow characters to articulate hidden thoughts and emotions and complicate its presentation on twentieth- and twenty-first-century stages. She comments that the aside 'plays deliberately in the metatheatrical space between the character, the actor, and the audience', disrupting naturalistic conventions that often depend on the very erasure of this 'space'.¹¹ The object of my enquiry here is thus the 'subjectivity effect' (to adapt Joel Fineman's term) that is created when Middleton and Rowley embed the performances of boy actors – themselves dependent on an established set of internal structures, gestural conventions and material aids such as costume and cosmetics – within a network of images that spectators might associate with female agency and desire.¹² Created by two male dramatists, and performed by an all-male cast, *The Changeling* nonetheless offers a complex mediation between the creative expression of women such as Wroth, the desires of female spectators, and the conventions that underpinned the creation of what looks to us like dramatic character.

THE CHANGELING AND GENDERED PERFORMANCE

I want to offer two conjectures about the potential casting of *The Changeling* in May 1622, both of which have implications for how we understand its female roles. The first is that Andrew Cane – a notable comic actor who also trained boys for the stage and is linked with Lady Elizabeth’s Men in a list drawn up in 1622 – would have been well cast as Lollio if he was available to the company, and that the role may have been designed for him.¹³ Cane’s only recorded role is that of the ‘*humorous gallant*’ Trimalchio in Shakerley Marmion’s *Holland’s Leaguer*, performed by Prince Charles’s Men in 1631. Trimalchio is the largest role in that play, and he appears in more scenes than any other character; as John H. Astington points out, the role also appears to have been intended to give him substantial stage-time with the boy actors who were apprenticed to him.¹⁴ A pamphlet published in 1641, *The Stage Players Complaint*, written as a dialogue between a fictionalised Cane and another Caroline stage clown, Timothy Read, also gives a flavour of Cane’s fast-talking stage persona, a quality that also marks out Trimalchio in *Holland’s Leaguer*. Read tells Cane, ‘You incuse me of my nimble feet; but I thinke your tongue runnes a litle faster, and you contend as much to out-strip facetious *Mercury* in your tongue, as lame *Vulcan* in my feete’.¹⁵

Like Trimalchio, Lollio is voluble and highly articulate. Moreover, as David Nicol points out in his essay in this volume, his ‘devious, and vicious personality’ gives the impression that he was ‘created for an actor with a quite different stage persona’ from that of the play’s co-author, William Rowley, who specialised in ‘guileless plain-speakers’. Playing Lollio would also enable Cane to supervise the performance of the boy actor playing Isabella, who may have been one of his apprentices. We know that Cane entered a new apprentice, Thomas Staynoe, in the books of the Goldsmiths’

company, of which he was a member, on 20 July 1621.¹⁶ The cast of *Holland's Leaguer* featured a later apprentice of Cane, Arthur Saville, in the demanding role of Quartilla, which he took on within four months of beginning his apprenticeship. Astington suggests that Saville 'had been carefully chosen', and the same may have been true of Staynoe if he played Isabella in May 1622.¹⁷

My second conjecture is that the role of De Flores may have been designed for Elliard Swanston, who appears alongside Cane in the 1622 list. Swanston was a rising star – by 1624 he had joined the King's Men, becoming one of that company's leading actors. He was remembered in the Restoration as 'a brave roaring Fellow' who 'would make the stage shake again' if he were to be resurrected and brought back to the stage, but his known roles – which include Othello, Richard III and the title-roles in Chapman's *Bussy D'Ambois* and Beaumont and Fletcher's *Philaster* – suggest that he was capable of a greater range and subtlety than the image of a 'brave roaring Fellow' alone conveys.¹⁸ Not only Richard III but also two smaller roles in 1620s plays by Philip Massinger – Domitian's spy, Aretinus, in *The Roman Actor* (1626) and the sleazy courtier Ricardo in *The Picture* (1629) – argue that he could manage ambivalent, villainous characters with ease.¹⁹ If this identification is correct, it suggests that the boy playing Beatrice-Joanna was required to be more independent of his master than the boy playing Isabella, a supposition that is supported by a closer analysis of the play's female roles.

Internal structures within the text of *The Changeling* suggest that its female roles were tailored to actors with varying degrees of experience or aptitude, and that the techniques that we often associate with the theatrical presentation of subjectivity, such as the aside, were carefully managed. The roles of Diaphanta and Isabella include a number of the 'scaffolding' structures identified by Evelyn Tribble in the plays of

Christopher Marlowe, which include moments at which characters played by boy actors are ‘shepherded’ onto the stage by other characters, ‘attentional devices’ in which they are addressed directly, repetitions or echoes of cue lines, and the ‘alternation of relatively restricted, highly scaffolded scenes with more voluble and demanding scenes’.²⁰ These roles are also ‘restricted’ in the sense outlined by Scott McMillin, who argues that roles for boy actors might be designed to interact with a limited number of other characters, meaning that some sequences could be rehearsed one-on-one and in larger cast scenes a boy actor could listen for his cues from a small set of his fellow performers.²¹

The cues for Diaphanta’s lines, entrances and exits are spoken by only two characters, Jasperino (1.1), and Beatrice-Joanna (2.2, 4.1 and 5.1). The most demanding of her scenes is Act 4, Scene 1, which requires her to speak in aside, sing and display a series of symptoms when she drinks the liquid ‘M’, proffered by Beatrice-Joanna. The actor’s performance is still, however, supported by the text. Two of Diaphanta’s short lines, ‘Is’t possible?’ and ‘Are you in earnest?’ (75, 79), could be transposed without doing violence to sense or metre, and she sometimes repeats elements of Beatrice-Joanna’s lines, replying to her mistress’s comment, ‘You’re too quick, I fear, to be a maid’, with ‘How? Not a maid?’ (95-6) and to ‘You dare put your honesty / Upon an easy trial?’ with ‘Easy? Anything!’ (100-1). Her responses to the liquid are closely tracked in the dialogue; Beatrice-Joanna watches as she gapes or yawns, and then comments,

there’s the first symptom,
And what haste it makes to fall into the second –
 [*Diaphanta sneezes*]
There by this time! Most admirable secret!
On the contrary, it stirs not me a whit,
Which most concerns it.
DIAPHANTA Ha, ha, ha!

BEATRICE [*aside*]
As if 'twere circumscribed

Just in all things and in order

(4.1.109-15)

The text incorporates pauses during which Beatrice-Joanna watches for the first and third symptoms, and she directly cues the second. Moreover, even in the small Cockpit/Phoenix playhouse, where a greater number of spectators could see actors' facial expressions clearly than in a large, outdoor playhouse, it would not matter too much if Diaphanta's gaping, sneezing and laughing were not precisely on cue because they are managed through Beatrice-Joanna's dialogue.

The role of Isabella would have been more testing for an apprentice actor, but it nonetheless includes a number of scaffolding techniques. The demanding sequence in Act 3, Scene 3, in which Isabella is assailed by Antonio and Lollio, includes long speeches and a short soliloquy (230-5), but some of its lines are also structured to support the boy actor. For example, Isabella's comment about the 'madmen', cued by offstage singing, could easily be dropped if the boy actor forgot his line:

MADMEN (*singing, within*)

Bounce! Bounce!

He falls! he falls!

ISABELLA Hark you, your scholars in the upper room
Are out of order.

LOLLIO [*shouting offstage*] Must I come amongst you there?
(3.3.122-7)

Similarly, Isabella's lines in her dialogue with Antonio are repetitive and could be swapped without doing too much damage to the meaning or the metre: 'You are a fine fool indeed. [...] You're a parlous fool. [...] A forward fool too!' (136, 142, 147). Her responses to Lollio's assault are structured similarly – 'How now? [...] What's the matter? [...] You bold slave, you' (237, 240, 243) – and the fact that these lines are in

prose means that scansion is not an issue. Against this backdrop, the sequence in Act 4, Scene 3, in which she adopts the guise of a madwoman and humiliates Antonio functions as a set-piece in which the boy actor is given an opportunity to demonstrate his developing prowess.

Beatrice-Joanna is by some distance the most demanding of female roles in *The Changeling*. She is given some support from structures within the text – for instance, when she enters in Act 5, Scene 3, she echoes Alsemero’s cue lines:

BEATRICE Alsemero!
 ALSEMERO How do you?
 BEATRICE How do I?
 Alas! How do you? You look not well.
 ALSEMERO You read me well enough. I am not well.
 BEATRICE Not well, sir? Is’t in my power to better you?
 (5.3.14-17)

However, these structured moments appear in the midst of a number of far more demanding sequences. Beatrice-Joanna is as likely to initiate an exchange as to speak in response to direct address, and she cues Diaphanta in three scenes, enacting a miniature scaffolding structure in which she takes the role of the ‘master’. At the start of Act 5, she enters alone and speaks an eleven-line soliloquy in which she is required to perform in tandem with the striking clock (5.1.1-11); this double-act is resumed later in the scene, when she holds the stage during the sequence in which the offstage De Flores sets fire to Diaphanta’s chamber (5.1.61-71).

In three scenes – Act 2, Scene 1, Act 2, Scene 2 and Act 3, Scene 4 – Beatrice-Joanna and De Flores enact duologues in which many of their lines are spoken in aside; such exchanges require the actors not only to modify their tone and direction of address but also to manage their own non-verbal performance while the other actor is speaking their aside. In Act 2, Scene 1, for instance, De Flores speaks one aside of 25 lines

(2.1.26-51) and another of 12 lines (2.1.78-89), during which time the actor playing Beatrice-Joanna receives no support from the text. The boy actor is also required to enact non-verbal performances that trigger lines from other characters, such as Alsemero's 'You seemed displeased, lady, on the sudden' (1.1.108) and Tomazo's comments to Alonzo: 'I see small welcome in her eye' and 'did you mark the dullness of her parting now?' (2.1.107, 125). These aspects of the ways in which the roles of Beatrice-Joanna and De Flores are constructed may reflect early modern assumptions about what constituted good acting. In a commentary on Richard Burbage, Richard Flecknoe praises his ability to sustain his role when he was not speaking, writing that 'when he held his peace [...] he was an excellent Actor still, never falling in his Part when he had done speaking; but with his looks and gesture, maintaining it still unto the heighth'.²² In early performances of *The Changeling*, a performance by Cane as Lollio or Swanston as De Flores would have supported and been supported in turn by the work of the apprentice boy actors, whether they were speaking or silent.

THE CHANGELING AND GENDERED SUBJECTIVITY

The techniques that made the role of Beatrice-Joanna challenging for a trainee actor also supported him creating a credible impression of female subjectivity on stage. Some of these effects, such as the facial expressions that act as cues for commentaries from the men on stage, could be bolstered by other aspects of stage presentation. If the boy actor playing Beatrice-Joanna wore white or lustrous make-up, as it is likely that he did, his cosmeticized face would have been easier to 'read' on the small Cockpit/Phoenix stage. However, the use of cosmetics would have connected his performance with broader discourses of status and race in *The Changeling*. The play's representation of gendered subjectivity and agency is grounded in its language of fairness and blackness,

initially associated with Beatrice-Joanna and the ‘foul’ De Flores respectively, the racialisation of which is reinforced by the narrative’s setting in southern Spain.²³ If the play presented a cosmeticized Beatrice-Joanna, it would have drawn on what Farah Karim-Cooper terms ‘[t]he paradox of cosmetic whiteness’, in which ‘whiteness symbolized a virtuous and superior racial ideal’ but ‘[p]retending to embody the ideal complexion seems to have been considered almost as bad as, if not worse than not having white skin at all’.²⁴ Furthermore, when Alsemero suspects Beatrice-Joanna’s sexual relationship with De Flores, he comments, ‘The black mask / That so continually was worn upon’t / Condemns the face for ugly ere’t be seen’ (5.3.3-5), referring not only to the masks that high-status European women wore to preserve their white complexions but also one of the technologies, besides cosmetics, through which blackness was presented on early modern stages.²⁵

It is striking, in this context, that the next play licensed for Lady Elizabeth’s Men after *The Changeling*, on 10 May 1622, was entitled *The Black Lady*.²⁶ The actor who played Beatrice-Joanna is likely also to have played the protagonist of *The Black Lady*; when these two plays were performed in repertory together spectators would have been forcibly reminded of the material, gestural and linguistic conventions that underpinned the gendered and raced performance of female subjectivity. Moreover, both plays may also be connected with the ‘embodied technique[s] of racialization’ that Noémie Ndiaye identifies in plays performed by Lady Elizabeth’s Men in the period between 1623 and 1625, such as *The Spanish Gypsy*, *The Martyred Soldier* and *The Bondman*.²⁷

Beatrice-Joanna’s ‘black mask’, an image that brings together performance technologies and the inner life of the character, is one of the subjectivity effects of *The Changeling*. Middleton and Rowley embed it within a series of images that Wroth uses

to add depth to the female characters of her sonnets and prose fiction. Two appear in the description of the ‘enchantress’, quoted at the start of this essay, when Wroth describes her ‘deceitfull downe-cast looke, instead of purest modesty and bashfullnes (tow rich Juells for her rotten Cabbinett to containe)’. Literal and metaphorical cabinets recur in *Urania* as vehicles in which women’s secrets are hidden, circulated and imagined. In Part 1, the narrator comments that Pamphilia ‘could bee in greatest assemblies as priuate with her owne thoughts, as if in her Cabinet’ (sig. 3C3r) and *Urania*’s friend Liana likens her own barely contained emotions to ‘a Cabinet so fild with treasure, as though not it selfe, yet the lock or hinges cannot containe it, but breake open’ (sig. 2E2r). Similarly, the enchantress’s ‘deceitfull downe-cast looke’ is reflected in the repeated references to the eyes, and their capacity to deceive, in ‘Pamphilia to Amphilanthus’. In Sonnet 5, Wroth asks, ‘Can winning eyes proue to the heart a sting?’, while Sonnet 34 describes the need for lover to manage her own gestures: ‘Take heed mine eyes, how you your looks doe cast, / Lest they betray my hearts most secret thought [...] Catch you alwatching [*sic*] eyes ere they be past, / Or take yours fix’t’ (sigs 4A1v, 4C1v). A third key image is that of the labyrinth, which animates the ‘Crown of Sonnets Dedicated to Love’. The first sonnet opens with the lines,

In this strange Labyrinth how shall I turne,
Wayes are on all sides, while the way I misse:
If to the right hand, there in loue I burne,
Let mee goe forward, therein danger is.

If to the left, suspicion hinders blisse:

(sig. 4E2v)

The last sonnet, as the form requires, returns to the same image in its final lines: ‘So though in love I fervently do burn, / In this strange labyrinth how shall I turn?’ (sig.

4F1r). The corona sonnets thus enact the stifling contortions of the labyrinth itself, in which there is no true progress but only repetition and regression.

All of these images appear in *The Changeling*, structuring and supporting its subjectivity effects. Like Wroth, Middleton and Rowley play on the literal and figurative capacity of the cabinet to conceal women's secrets. Beatrice-Joanna's discovery of Alsemero's cabinet enables her to enact the role of the virginal bride despite her concealed sexual experience, and it also recalls Alsemero's earlier description of Diaphanta, 'These women are the ladies' cabinets; / Things of most precious trust are locked into 'em' (2.2.6-7). Middleton and Rowley similarly make use of the eyesight and the gaze, their extensive use of asides mirroring Wroth's use of first- and third-person narrators. In the hospital plot, Alibius tasks Lollo with watching Isabella, commenting with apparently unconscious sexual innuendo, 'Here, I do say, must thy employment be: / To watch her treadings, and in my absence / Supply my place' (1.2.37-9). Isabella is more aware than Beatrice-Joanna of the extent to which she is subjected to scrutiny by 'watchful bankers' (3.3.231), but the latter consistently returns to the image of the eye when discussing her desires and the ability to transcend obstacles placed in their way. For example, when she is brought the news of Alonzo's death, Beatrice-Joanna's response connects the eyes not only with emotion but the ways in which it was performed on stage: 'My joys start at mine eyes; our sweet'st delights / Are evermore born weeping' (3.4.25-6). Because she is so ready to connect her emotional state with her eyesight, the fact that she characterises De Flores as a 'basilisk' (1.1.115) suggests his power to unsettle her; Alsemero unconsciously reworks this image when he suspects the sexual relationship between the pair, imagining Beatrice-Joanna herself as having 'eyes that could shoot fire into kings' breasts' (4.2.107).

The image of the labyrinth similarly connects the two plots. Isabella describes the hospital in ways that evoke the classical labyrinth in which the Minotaur was kept prisoner, asking Lollio at the start of Act 3, Scene 3 ‘Whence have you commission / To fetter the doors against me?’ (1-2) and referring to it as a ‘cage’ and a ‘pinfold’ (3, 7). The image is crystallised, however, in the following scene, in which Beatrice-Joanna attempts to pay off De Flores for murdering Alonzo and De Flores attempts to take – and, at length, brutally succeeds in taking – his payment in the form of sex. Half-way through the exchange between them, she comments in aside, ‘I’m in a labyrinth! / What will content him?’ (73-4). Like Isabella, Beatrice-Joanna is in a labyrinth shaped by the desires of men; the difference is that she has not noticed it before. The sexual contours of this labyrinth are made yet more clear in Act 4, Scene 3, the scene that points most directly to the difference between Isabella and Beatrice-Joanna: where Beatrice Joanna makes use of the servant De Flores to do away with her unwanted fiancé, hoping to leave the way clear for Alsemero, Isabella instead makes use of the servant Lollio – like De Flores a sexual predator who is waiting for her to slip – to neutralise Antonio, Alsemero’s structural equivalent, and remain faithful to her husband. Thus, while Beatrice-Joanna finds herself trapped in a ‘labyrinth’ of De Flores’s desire, Isabella instead controls the image, alluding directly to Dedalus’s labyrinth when she takes on the guise of a madwoman. Making its sexual undertones explicit, she pretends to take Antonio for Icarus, crying, ‘Stand up, thou son of Cretan Dedalus, / And let us tread the lower labyrinth; / I’ll bring thee to the clue’ (4.3.113-15). Like the play’s images of cabinets and eyes, the image of the labyrinth lends the female characters of the play a multi-layered quality, in which allusion combines with gesture and performed emotion to present a compelling impression of complex subjectivity.

Although Middleton and Rowley could not have been familiar with Wroth's commentary on the boy actor in Part 2 of *Urania*, and they may not have read Part 1 either, their use of the images of labyrinth and cabinet mounts a challenge to female spectators. Wroth describes in Part 1 a female spectator for whom the 'action' of a boy player is pleasing but emotionally uninvolved, and in Part 2 a woman whose calculated emotional performance is likened to an 'over-acting' boy. Middleton and Rowley forestall both of these criticisms by writing female roles with internal structures that support their boy actors in the performance of emotion and by surrounding these roles with images that evoke the representation of female subjectivity elsewhere in their culture. In doing so, they create a series of subjectivity effects, moments at which their female characters are granted additional depth and complexity. They also give the apprentices who played Beatrice-Joanna and Isabella the ammunition to take on charismatic leading actors like Elliard Swanston or Andrew Cane and to hold the stage in their own right.

¹ Earlier commentaries on these allusions include Michael Shapiro, 'Lady Mary Wroth Describes a "Boy Actress"', *Medieval and Renaissance Drama in England* 4 (1989), 187-94; Roberta Barker, "'Not One Thing Exactly': Gender, Performance and Critical Debates Over the Early Modern Boy-Actress", *Literature Compass* 6.2 (2009), 460-81.

² *The Countesse of Mountgomerie's Urania* (London, 1621), sig. I2v.

³ *The Second Part of the Countess of Montgomery's Urania*, ed. Josephine A. Roberts, completed by Suzanne Gossett and Janel Mueller (Tempe, AZ: Renaissance English Text Society, 1999), 159-160.

⁴ N.W. Bawcutt, *The Control and Censorship of Caroline Drama: The Records of Sir Henry Herbert, Master of the Revels 1623-73* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), 136.

⁵ See, for instance, *Countesse of Mountgomerie's Urania*, sigs I2r, K1r, 2B4v, 2R4r-v, 2Vr-v, 2X4r, 3A4r, 3C1r, 3O1v, 4F3v; *Second Part of the Countess of Montgomery's Urania*, 105, 127, 234.

⁶ Sonnet 22, in *Countesse of Mountgomerie's Urania*, 4B2v.

⁷ Ben Jonson, 'To the Lady, Most Deserving her Name and Blood: Mary, Lady Wroth', in *The Cambridge Edition of the Works of Ben Jonson* (henceforth *CBJ*), gen. ed. David Bevington, Martin Butler and Ian Donaldson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 4: 557; *Epigrams*, 103 and 105, in *CBJ*, 5: 170, 171; *Underwood*, 28, in *CBJ*, 142. On *The May Lord* see *CBJ*, 5: 343-5.

⁸ John Stachniewski, 'Calvinist Psychology in Middleton's Tragedies', in *Three Jacobean Revenge Tragedies*, ed. R.V. Holdsworth (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1990), 226-47.

⁹ Ania Loomba, *Gender, Race, Renaissance Drama* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1989), 96, 102.

¹⁰ Roberta Barker and David Nicol, 'Does Beatrice-Joanna Have a Subtext?: *The Changeling* on the London Stage', *Early Modern Literary Studies* 10.1 (May 2004), 3.1-34 (30).

¹¹ Nora Williams, "'Cannot I keep that secret?': Editing and Performing Asides in *The Changeling*", *Shakespeare Bulletin* 34 (2016), 29-45 (31).

¹² See Joel Fineman, *Shakespeare's Perjured Eye: The Invention of Poetic Subjectivity in the Sonnets* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986); *The Subjectivity Effect in Western Literary Tradition: Essays Towards the Release of Shakespeare's Will* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1991). My approach differs here from the classic account of keywords in *The Changeling*, Christopher Ricks's 'The Moral and Poetic Structure of *The Changeling*', *Essays in Criticism* 10 (1960), 290-306, in two important respects: (1) I am interested specifically in images that are used to present female subjectivity; and (2) the images that I trace cut across both of the play's plots.

¹³ On the composition of Lady Elizabeth's Men in 1622, see Bawcutt, *Control and Censorship*, 136; John Tucker Murray, *English Dramatic Companies, 1558-1642*, 2 vols (London: Constable, 1910), 1: 215-16; Gerald Eades Bentley, *The Jacobean and Caroline Stage*, 7 vols (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1941-68), 1: 184.

¹⁴ John H. Astington, *Actors and Acting in Shakespeare's Time* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 149.

¹⁵ *The Stage-Players Complaint. In a Pleasant Dialogue Between Cane of the Fortune, and Reed of the Friars* (London, 1641), sig. A2r.

¹⁶ See John H. Astington, 'The Career of Andrew Cane, Citizen, Goldsmith, and Player', *Medieval and Renaissance Drama in England* 16 (2003), 130-44 (132-3); David Kathman, 'Grocers, Goldsmiths, and Drapers: Freeman and Apprentices in the Elizabethan Theater', *Shakespeare Quarterly* 55 (2004), 1-49 (22).

¹⁷ Astington, *Actors*, 156.

¹⁸ Thomas Shadwell, *The Virtuoso* (London, 1676), 14. On Swanston's roles see Astington, *Actors*, 159; Lucy Munro, *Shakespeare in the Theatre: The King's Men* (London: Bloomsbury Arden Shakespeare), 10, 19-21, 32.

¹⁹ Although Swanston played Richard III later in his career, the connections that Mark Hutchings draws between the two plays in arguing for Shakespeare's influence on Middleton and Rowley also point to the strengths that an individual actor might bring to the performance of Richard and De Flores. See 'Richard III and *The Changeling*', *Notes and Queries* 52 (2005), 229-30.

²⁰ Evelyn Tribble, 'Marlowe's Boy Actors', *Shakespeare Bulletin* 27 (2009), 5-17 (11).

²¹ Scott McMillin, 'The Sharer and his Boy: Rehearsing Shakespeare's Women', in *From Script to Stage in Early Modern England*, ed. Peter Holland and Stephen Orgel (London: Palgrave, 2004), 231-45 (235).

²² Richard Flecknoe, *Love's Kingdom: A Pastoral Trage-comedy [...] With a Short Treatise of the English Stage* (London, 1664), G5v-6r.

²³ On Beatrice-Joanna as 'the figure of the heretical, easternised, and hence changeable woman', see Clare McManus, "'Constant Changelings'", *Theatrical Form, and Migration: Stage Travel in the Early 1620s*, in *Travel and Drama in Early Modern England: The Journeying Play*, ed. Claire Jowitt and David McInnis (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 207-29 (220). On race in the play see also Lara Bovilsky, *Barbarous Play: Race on the English Renaissance Stage* (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 2008), 137-58; on *The Changeling* and Spain see David Nicol's essay in this volume.

²⁴ Farah Karim-Cooper, 'Staging the Black and White Binary in the Early Modern Theatre', in *The Cambridge Companion to Shakespeare and Race*, ed. Ayanna Thompson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021), 17-29 (23).

²⁵ On the use of black fabric in racial impersonation, see Ian Smith, 'Othello's Black Handkerchief', *Shakespeare Quarterly* 64 (2013), 1-25.

²⁶ Bawcutt, *Control and Censorship*, 137.

²⁷ Noémie Ndiaye, "'Come Aloft, Jack-little-ape!': Race and Dance in *The Spanish Gypsy*", *English Literary Renaissance* 51 (2021), 121-51.