

Abstract

論文題目 The Theatricality of Everyday Life in the Plays of the Children of Paul's
(聖ポール寺院少年劇団の劇における日常の演劇性)

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論文要旨

This thesis examines the theatricality of everyday life variously expressed in the four plays of the Children of Paul's (1599–c.1608): John Marston's *What You Will* (1601), Thomas Dekker and John Webster's *Westward Ho* (1604), and Thomas Middleton's *A Mad World, My Masters* (1605) and *The Puritan, or the Widow of Watling Street* (1606). Considering the performance conditions and socio-cultural contexts, this thesis explores how each play of the Paul's company offered the theatrical interpretations of the audience's own visual or aural experience in everyday life.

From the sixteenth-century to the seventeenth-century, the attempt to theatrically understand their own world was an urgent concern for early modern English subjects in the ever growing and increasingly fluid society. In response to the social change, theatres staged the objectified representation of the audience's own world. Especially after the playing companies settled in the urban environment in the mid-1590s, the demand for plays which

takes its setting in their own everyday, local life surged in the London theatre industry, to produce the cluster of plays now called city play. Even though it has attracted less critical attention, the Children of Paul's vigorously participated in dramatization of the audience's local life from within the city of London and became one of the centres of the new theatre trend.

Previous research into city play, especially over the recent decades, has been topography-based and regarded city plays' functions as facilitating the audience's conceptual understanding and/or criticism of various places of London. However, such approach overlooks the original audience's theatrical experiences of seeing the dramatizations of their own everyday life in their local theatres. This thesis articulates the various natures of theatrical experiences the Paul's plays offered to their local audiences and the way in which such experiences are realized within each play.

Chapter 1 considers the two spaces that form a base for the audience's theatrical experiences; the milieu of the Paul's Playhouse and the Paul's theatre space. As the centre of almost every aspect of the London civic life, Paul's precinct was the place where the inhabitants and visitors alike became self-conscious of theatricality of everyday life. Although scarcely noticed, the Paul's stage's relative autonomy from the auditorium would have enabled spatial representation of a self-enclosed world that would invite the audience's close but distanced

examination.

In Chapter 2, I delve into the relationship between theatricality and community depicted in *What You Will*. The play explores the awareness of theatricality embedded in the civic life in the city of London. In the play, just as the audience observe the characters, the characters observe each other in the fictional world so that the verbal and mutual communication between them is virtually impossible. The play's hilarious use of disguise crystallizes the concept of this kind of social relationship. Just as a character's identity assumed by a boy actor is recognized by the audience through clothing items covering the actor, the characters in the fictional world recognize one's identity only through their appearance. Therefore, with the appearance of the double of the protagonist Albano covered entirely with his clothing, the true Albano is mistaken as his double, and his voice becomes a part of theatrical show, deprived of agency to convey his inner thought, just as the audience listens to the voice of an actor not as his own but as part of his acting. This uproarious, but dire situation of Albano reflects the contemporary idea that one's identity is defined by clothing, which was one of commodities circulated in the increasingly capitalized early modern English society. In this way, *What You Will* makes the audience to experience the flimsiness of the concept of one's unique, firm identity.

In Chapter 3 and 4, I focus on the theatricality of gender relationship depicted in *A Mad*

World, My Masters and *Westward Ho*. Both plays effectively utilize the backstage wall and off-stage space to offer the audience the visual experience that is linked to their everyday life experience. In both plays, backstage wall serves as the boundaries between fictional spaces or the blockage that obstructs the audience's view into the hidden part of the fictional world. With their adept use of backstage wall, *Mad World* and *Westward Ho* manipulate the sight of both the characters and the audience to overlap the audience's visual experience with those of the characters. As a result, the negotiations between those who observes and those who are observed in the plays serve for the audience as reflection of their own everyday experiences.

A Mad World, My Masters overlaps the male characters' observing the female characters' performance with the audience's observing the female characters' performance in order to represent the contemporary men's anxiety over women hiding secret within themselves. In *Mad World*, the impossibility of fathoming women's interior mind is most expressed through the courtesan Frank's performance of sickness, which forms an analogy to the structure of the Paul's playhouse itself: as much as the male characters cannot penetrate into the inside of Frank's body, which could be contaminated by illness or her lust, the audience cannot see into illicit affairs occurring beyond the backstage wall, which is covered by Frank's performance of sickness on stage.

In *Westward Ho*, the same backstage wall function as the boundaries between the fictional places. The play's city wives' audacious movement within the city and to the west London suburb is expressed through their crossing the boundaries, theatrically corresponding to the backstage wall. By enacting their theatrical plots involving their husbands, the city wives are capable of moving themselves and the male characters across borders and hiding themselves behind walls. Employing the contemporary folk imagination of cuckoldry's horns, the play shows the theatricality latent in matrimonial relationship in early modern England. As discussed in *Mad World*, male anxiety over cuckoldry reflects the patriarchal structure in which husbands keep his wife's behaviour under surveillance. *Westward Ho* further suggests that the anxiety also stems from husbands' fear that their wanton wives can secretly impose a certain role on their husbands, which, in the worst-case scenario, makes them a cuckold with a set of horns on their forehead and socially humiliates them. Indeed, the play's city husbands face such crisis in Brainford (now Brentford in west London), where the wives escape with their favourite gallants and eventually hide behind the backstage wall, which is followed by the husbands arriving there. Not only the audience and the husbands share the experience of exclusion from the wives behind the backstage-wall, the audience would realize the husbands' risk of being exposed as cuckolds corresponds to their theatrical position, which is onstage.

However, as it turns out, the spatial representation of the city suggests that the play's London is dissected by walls, which prevents the cuckoldry to be exposed. *Westward Ho* responded to early modern male anxieties exacerbated by the spatial dissection of the city of London and paradoxically makes visible the increasing invisibility of London space through its ingenious use of the backstage wall.

In Chapter 5, I examined how the Paul's last city play *The Puritan, or the Widow of Watling Street* dramatizes the practice and position of the Paul's company itself within the city of London. The play's protagonist Pieboard, the outsider of the city, devises a plot to deceive and manipulate the citizens. However, along with the development of his plot, he gradually loses control over his plot to be subsumed into it as a mere cog. The spatial representation of the play synchronizes with this trajectory of Pieboard's theatrical agency: while the represented spaces in the former part of the play are abstracted, towards the end of the play, they become more and more situated within the map of the city of London, to virtually correspond to where the audience is, the playhouse. The city plays of the Children of Paul's have presented the audience the result of observation of civic lives from omniscient point of view, just as the outsider Pieboard does. *The Puritan* suggests the irony that such practices of the company are being observed and subsumed in the city of London.

This thesis has revealed that, through various technical as well as material devices, the plays of the Children of Paul's let the audience vividly experience the augmented or re-interpreted versions of their social experiences in everyday life, and present the theatrical structure lurking in the audience's everyday life. On the tiny stage of Paul's, radical theatricality of everyday life unfolded visually, materially and spatially.