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# DARRYLL GRANTLEY


## "Promisse Me My Liberty:" Conventions of Roman Comedy and the Representation of Oppression and Resistance in the Tudor Interlude *July and Julian*

*July and Julian* is a mid-sixteenth-century (c.1547-53) play for boys, anonymous and with auspices unknown save that it appears to have been written for school production. The play has been very much neglected, apparently in its own period since it survives only in manuscript with no apparent printings, and in the present day in which it has had only one very basic edition (by Giles Dawson for the Malone Society in 1955, checked by Arthur Brown).[1] It has singularly lacked critical attention as well and somewhat unaccountably so, as it is not only an early example of the use and adaptation of classical comic conventions in English vernacular comedy, but also contains some dimensions of potential interest for the study of cultural history and ideology in the sixteenth century.

The paucity of contextual information in respect of the play's auspices and performance history is a problem in trying to discern the audience for which it may have been intended. As mentioned above, it is likely to have been for school production, the prologue stating, "We are come hither to troble yow as boyes, / and after sage thinges to shewe our trifflinge toyes" (7-8).[2] Schools in the sixteenth

century frequently used drama as an educational tool to promote eloquence and confidence in their pupils, and some schoolmasters, most notably perhaps Nicholas Udall who taught at Eton and subsequently Westminster, wrote plays or adapted classical ones for their pupils to perform.[3] The school companies were often taken to perform at court and in the third quarter of the century, for instance, of the seventy-six payments for court performances the boys of St Paul's School received twenty-one, other schoolboy companies ten and the children of the royal chapels fifteen, as against thirty-two made to adult troupes.[4] The plays of the juvenile companies frequently contained satirical, political and contentious material, the probable reasons for this licence being both the unlikeliness of the authorities to punish the boy actors and the fact of their more restricted, elite audiences. It is not known by which school or boys' company *July and Julian* was produced nor whether it was played at court, though this is a distinct possibility. Whatever its likely audience, the play does not shy away from trenchant social comment. Though there is a formal claim in the prologue that its purpose is "but to shewe ower witte, / in such exersise as for vs be fitte" (11-12), its narrative circulates around various forms of oppression and successful resistance to it, at least one element of which being the subject of contemporary discussion in other contexts.

The two principal manifestations of resistance in the play are interconnected. The first involves the central narrative of illicit love between July and Julian, respectively the son of an elite household and a servant girl, and the successful achievement of marriage in the face of strong parental opposition. The second involves the successful achievement of release from bondage of the two slaves who devise the tricking of the master of the household to bring the marriage plot to a successful conclusion. Both these narrative elements—the clandestine love affair of

the young heir and the intrigue engineered by the slaves—are, of course, the conventional stuff of Roman comic drama. The play is, indeed, very much in the mould of classical comedy and the names of two its characters—Chremes and Menedemus—may have been based on those of two similarly named characters in Terence's *Heauton Timorumenos*, though there is no other apparent debt to that play. However the way in which the narrative tropes are handled draws very selectively from or adapts the conventions found in Terence or Plautus. The departures are consistent with the particular emphasis placed on resistance to oppression found in the play. These two main strands of narrative are also connected with more minor strands, fairly incidental to the main plot, that help to maintain the thematic focus on this.

In Roman comedy, the social transgressiveness of the cross-class love match is part of the ethical challenge offered by this drama, which tends to plead for tolerance and compassion. However, this transgressiveness and therefore the challenge it poses to social mores is usually ultimately defused at the conclusion of these plays by the *deus ex machina* disclosure of the elevated or respectable birth of the lower ranked partner, always the female. This is the case at the conclusion of Terence's *Andria* (incidentally translated as another anonymous school play earlier in the century called *Terens in Englysh*). In *Heauton Timerumenos* Antiphila, the apparently low-born lover of the son of a wealthy man is found to be after all of respectable birth, allowing the match to be legitimised. Plautus also uses this device on a couple of occasions, and in *Poenulus* a young man of a good family is ultimately enabled to marry his lover, who is at risk of being forced into prostitution, when it is found that she was stolen from her parents years previously and has a Carthaginian father with sound social standing. In *Cistellaria* the son of a good house wants to marry the daughter of a courtesan, and his father opposes the match until she is revealed to be a foundling,

again with respectable paternity. In *Casina* the permission for a well-born young man, Lysidamus, to marry a slave with whom he is in love, as a result of her being found to be actually free-born, is an outcome not dramatised in the play itself, but promised in the epilogue. In *July and Julian* there is no such revelation to legitimise the socially unequal match between the eponymous hero and heroine. The fact that the marriage is ultimately permitted to go ahead in the face of this inequality is a remarkable representation of a triumph of the powerless over the powerful. The play is also unusual in English drama of the period in dramatising an issue of contemporary concern—choice of marriage partners in the face of social inequality—in the way that it does. Some contemporary interludes use the quest and successful accomplishment of an aspirational marriage only in oblique ways. It is employed as a metaphor for personal self-improvement in Henry Medwall's *Fulgens and Lucres* (c.1497) and the 'Wit' plays: John Redford's *Play of Wit and Science* (1539), the anonymous *The Marriage of Wit and Science* (1569) and Francis Merbury's *The Marriage of Wit and Wisdom* (1571-9). Another comedy, John Phillip's *Patient and Meek Grissell* (1558-61) uses the unequal match to create an idealised picture of submissive womanhood, while the only tragedy to deal with the issue, *Gismond of Salern* (1567-8) by various members of the Inner Temple, dramatises the catastrophic consequences of cruel parental interference in the marriage choice. However, triumph over parental opposition to a match on the basis of unmitigated social inequality is, at this point in the extant English drama, unique to this play.

The slave intrigue is also inflected in a particular way in the play. In English drama of the period where servant figures have a significant part to play in the intrigue plots or otherwise, such figures tend to be just that, servants rather than slaves, or at least the question of the slave status does not crop up. In plays directly

drawn from classical models, or translations of Roman plays—such as John Jefferes's *Bugbears* (1563-6), George Gascoigne's *Supposes* (1566) or the anonymous translation *Terens in Englysh* (1516-33) —the servant figures may be slaves but no issue is made of their status, and they remain entirely functional in the narratives. In other vernacular plays based more loosely on classical models—such as *Jack Juggler* (1553-8), *Misogonus* (1564-77), or Nicholas Udall's *Ralph Roister Doister* (1552-4) —the figures are clearly servants rather than slaves. In Henry Medwall's *Fulgens and Lucres* (c.1497) the servants seek employment, and there is a similar implication in *Damon and Pithias* (1564-8). What is unusual in *July and Julian* for English comedy is the strong insistence on the slave status of the servant-intriguers, and of Julian. This is despite the fact that the two servant-intriguers are, in accordance with a recurrent English dramatic convention, given English names, Fenell and Wilkin, while the other male protagonists have a mixture of classical and English names. In Roman comedy proper there is naturally no other category of servant figure, and the presence of slaves in the drama merely reflected current social practice. However, the fact of the availability to the sixteenth-century English drama of the category of unbonded servant does give a potential significance in a play that not only represents the servants clearly as slaves but places a focus on the oppressive behaviour of authority figures. The play is relatively unusual among interlude dramas in giving voice to this issue and, though the oppressiveness of those in authority is occasionally a peripheral subject of this drama, probably the most eloquent articulation of the idea in the early drama is to be found in the cycle rather than interlude drama, and specifically the Wakefield *Second Shepherd's Play*.[5]

The egregious insistence in *July and Julian* on the fact of the bonded status of the slaves implicitly brings to the fore the question of bodily ownership and control,

something that is present in all the narrative strands in the play that deal with oppression and resistance to it. The rigours of the life of the slaves are expressed in very physical terms, something that is echoed in the treatment of the two younger children in the family. These two motifs are connected in turn to the play's problematising of the right of Chremes and Maud, the master and mistress of the household, to the ownership and disposal of the bodies of their slave Julian (through sale) and their son July (through marriage). To this extent it articulates the increasing interest in the body as a source of social identity, basis for power and locus of political contestation in the period.

The discontent of the slaves in the play is made a prominent feature right from the start. The opening lines consist of Fenell's extended speech of complaint about his situation, giving a graphic account of the manifold misfortunes of his life and the extent of his physical suffering:

> Who so is present and wold gladly knowe
> the numerall number of mischefous all of a rowe,
> which wer ever felt, hard, seen or understodd,
> yet be not, wer not, nor ever can be goodd,
> hither lett him comm, and lern them all of me,
> for in practise, haue I proved all meanes of misery.
> I was born in bondage, and brought vp in beggery.
> My life in lost in loiteringe, in dedes be all but drudgery,
> drowsy, and vnlusty, and for lake of slepe
> my browes ar hevy, my brain lyght.
> Myn [e]yes I cannot kepe open, for cold I am almost hoorse,
> as lene as a rake, and coloryd lyk a coorse,
> my flessh ys falen a way, mi visage bare and thin,
> on all the bones on my body, noght hanges but only skin.
> Longes logges mi bones, mi bely ys never full,
> my back and bones be bett, my skonce ys made a skull.
> (1-16)

His anguish is ascribed directly to the rigours of servitude and the burdens placed on him by his extremely demanding master and mistress:

> My master makes me trudge, hit is don strayght way.
> The hoar damsell sayes, my dame sendes me sumwhether,
> I ron, and comme a gaine, by and by comes a nother,
> wait on mr Dicke to the schole, and hye a gaine
> to the markett, to the colpitt, in cold snow and raine,
> to wait vpon a mare all th[e wh]ole day longe.
> If I applye not this, I am plied wth cogels stronge.
> Durtshod, wetshod, haliday, and workenday,
> and when all is don, all is to do, with me alway.
> (68-76)

He is, in fact, worse treated than the household pet and working horse:

> My dames puppye is a gentelman in respeck of me.
> I durst not compare with old baiard, buy yet she can scarse se,
> for when she hath served vs, then we serve her with meat
> but when I haue don oght, I can get noght to eat.
> (77-80)

The question of the ill-treatment of slaves is an issue which crops up in the plays of both Plautus and Terence. In Plautus's *Asinaria* the slaves are unhappy in their bondage and the issue of the treatment of slaves also features in *Captivi*, while conversely in *Rudens* a positive representation is given of compassion in a master. However, the matter is never as insistently represented as it is in *July and Julian*. Here the motivation of the slaves Fenell and Wilkin in engineering the intrigue that leads to the success of July's marriage-quest plot is overtly their manumission. Early on Fenell resolves to resort to duplicitous ways to achieve his freedom:

> . . . with crafty flattery will I deall.
> for men now a daies therby do get ther weall,
> . . .
> with cappe, & kne at every word, with ye sir, nor fye,
> god save your faier face, said ye so? Oh how wittely.
> how say you, am not I fyt for this fine occupacion?
> (85-91)

July's servant, Wilkin, later makes even more explicit that the price of his involvement in the plot to achieve his master's ends is the gaining of his freedom:

> Promisse me my liberty, and I will vndertake,

> with my fellow ffenell, to fetch such a fetch,
> that I will go ny her, from him to snatch
> (751-53)

Wilkin promises Fenell's freedom from bondage in return for his help in arranging the marriage between July and Julian:

> Now ffenell, do after me, yf you will
> helpe master Iulye forward in his marriage
> and we shall be both fre from bondage
> (578-80)

And later when he is talking to Fenell about the plot they hatch to rescue Julian, he reiterates the reasons for their participation in it: "Now ffenell we may ryd ourselfes owt of bondage, / let vs do that lyeth in vs, lybertye ys ower wage" (762-63). The issue of the manumission of the bondsmen comes up again just before they put the final part of the intrigue into practice. July assures Fenell, "and they that for vs haue taken this payne / ther lybertye at my fathers hand I shall by & by obtaine" (1195-96). In Roman comedy the freeing of slaves does crop up from time to time. In Plautus's *Epidicus* the clever slave wins his liberty as a result of the successful conclusion of his intrigue and in Terence's *Adelphi* the master Demea, in one act of generosity among many at the end of the play, frees his slave. In neither of these cases, however, is the drive for freedom as evidently present as in the English play, nor is this as clearly tied to the oppressiveness of servitude. In one play, Plautus's *Casina*, the slave-intriguer Chalinus actually refuses manumission, preferring the pleasure of seeing his master's plans spoiled.[6] In fact, Kathleen McCarthy has suggested of Plautine *servi callidi* that, "The lack of interest clever slaves show in manumission underscores their essential collusion in their servitude."[7] The prominently dramatised complaint of Fenell at the outset of the play is intertwined with the complaints of others in the play about their own situation. It is possible that the prominence given to

his complaints suggests at least in part a metaphorical role. As Mark Thornton Burnett has remarked, “The male domestic servant lent himself to a range of metaphorical uses. Across a variety of literary forms, the representation of this type facilitated an exploration of a perceived crisis in service, as well as providing a means of addressing broader insecurities.”[8]

In Roman comedy the conflict is frequently between youth and age, usually a son having to resort to subterfuge to achieve his amorous or marital ambitions in the face of the opposition of reactionary, avaricious or sexually competitive older, frequently parental figures. This conventional youth-age struggle is exemplified in Plautus’s plays in *Asinaria*, *Mercator*, *Epidicus* and *Bacchides*, in Terence in *Andria*, *Phormio* and *Adelphi*, and in sixteenth-century English drama in John Jeffere’s *The Bugbears* and the translation of the *Andria*, *Terens in Englysh*. Though the marital quest theme is apparently the central narrative in *July and Julian* as well, it is largely displaced by the other ways in which the youth-age opposition is articulated. These involve the dramatisation of the troubles of the two siblings of July, Nan and Dick, and the sorrows of Julian.

The daughter of the house, Nan, is the recipient of ill-treatment from her mother who cuffs her, and she is actually shown to suffer physical abuse on stage in the play. Her extended complaints encompass not only her vulnerability to abuse because of her juniority in the household, but also the problems of her status as a woman:

> But wenches fortune I trow be such,
> never to be in quiet reast.
> Women can never hate that they love beast.
> (223-25)
>
> We have so many thinges to tak hed vppon,
> that strockes we much nedes haue many on.

(228-29)

Her role as junior family member is even blurred with that of a servant:

> First we must be fine, tricke, handsome, & neat,
> smal midled, well mad, frolick and feat.
> Hed, ye, hand, hill, nor noght most be a wry.
> For the lest of thes (I warrant you) der we must a by.
> We must also locke vnto ye kichen, and buttery,
> and se that albe well, but specially all huswiffery.
> (232-37)

She actually ends up being more sympathetic to the suffering of servants, something she resolves to address when she is eventually in charge of her own household, "Well, when I am lady wenches shall haue more ease. / Till then I must never be well at ease" (238-9).

July's younger brother, Dick, is given even more space to express his discontent, in his case the harsh treatment he received from his schoolmasters. As with the Nan episode, this element is gratuitous to the main narrative and appears to have been included as a means of broadening the picture of oppression in the play and rendering more negative the representation of the parents. Dick pours forth his anguish:

> Amonge all creatures less or mo,
> we pore litle boyes abyd muche wo.
> At whom, at schole, and every where,
> we sylie ones are put in fere.
> (133-36)

This situation is aggravated by the unsympathetic attitude of his parents:

> Men may do what thei lyst god wott, so cannot we.
> For if I laughe, my father a wanton calles me.
> Yf I be sadd, my mother saith, I am dumpish and sorlye.
> Of all livinge thinges, men be worst to pleasse.
> Of all mankind, boyes be lest at easse.
> Of all boyes, I dare say, none can be worse then I:
> both my parentes, & masters, handle me so shrewdly.
> (147-53)

This play is not alone in dealing with the issue of the harshness of school discipline, as the topic appears in certain other interludes focusing on the question of the upbringing of youth in the period. It was the subject of discussion in non-dramatic texts as well, and it is evident that the question was of concern to some humanist writers on education.[9] Given that *July and Julian* is clearly a play for boys for probable performance in educational contexts, the prominence given to the matter of the cruelty of schoolmasters is rather curious. One explanation might be the comic potential in the irony of the situation particularly when Fenell remarks, “scholmasters be findishe fellowes ye may me belive” (191). However this seems unlikely, and its presence seems more justified by the fact that it is part of the representation of a variously inflected pattern of oppression in the play, exemplified by a linked chain of victims.

The final instance of oppression, which is more or less independent of the main narrative strand, is the mooted sale of Julian. She is, as the object of July’s affections, of course very much implicated in the main plot. However, the offer received by Chremes for Julian’s potential sale is a somewhat incidental element and, as in the case of the other victims, is used to give Julian—otherwise a relatively silent character—the occasion to articulate her human suffering to the audience:

> I know not whother I go, nor to whom,
> I wold I wer wythe my father at whome.
> He wold not lett me be led so fare,
> to serue an vnknowne stranger.
> (881-84)

The episode also contributes to a representational process that links the victims in a pattern of opposition and resistance to the oppression to which they are subject.[10] This will be further discussed below.

Another important recurrent element in the play contributes to this pattern connecting the various instances of oppression to allow audience sympathy for one to be engineered in the direction of others, and also create a representational dichotomy between the various victims on the one hand and the two perpetrators on the other. This is the sympathy offered by the slaves to the others in their plight, and the associations made by Fenell between the suffering experienced by himself, and that of the others. Shortly after his own complaint, Fenell first proves to be sympathetic to young Dick's situation, remarking, "In ded your ii masters play with yow so lewdly" (154) and:

> Alas good master Dicke, all men may perseive plaine,
> how pitiously your tender ages is putt to to much paine.
> But you must neddes take it paciently till time you be a man.
> Yow are in manner on alredy, so far as I iudge cane.
> (170-73)

When the daughter, Nan, is beaten by her mother, Fenell is both thankful that he has escaped Maud's wrath himself, and sympathetic to Nan:

> Thankes be to god, I had a thron bowse in my cappe,
> ore in thes ii tempest [the chastisement of Dick and Nan] I might haue had a
> thonder clappe.
> Alas good mastris Nane, what aldist yow to wipp.
> For £40 a srew hath bene bitinge of a shippe.
> Peace faier lady, peace, you mare your faier face.
> I pray yow what is the matter, how standes your case.
> (204-9)

And when Nan rather petulantly rebuffs him, saying, "a way in the divels name" (209), he nonetheless goes on:

> Alas who beates Nane?
> A foull yll on his fatt face by saynt tane.
> She hath a womans hart, & well she plaieth a womans part
> to be wrabled, anger half an ower at once,
> after she be well angred once.
> I know what you aild, I cold mend it if I will,

but you will tell me nothinge, nay hit shall not skill.
(209-15)

Fenell again addresses the audience at the opening of Act 1 scene 5 pointing up the cruelty of his mistress towards her daughter and making a direct comparison between the ill-treatment meted out to Dick by his schoolmasters, and the treatment that he himself receives from his master:

How say yow masters, is not my dame a shrewe,
I dare not say it my selfe, but ile be iudge by you
how she canvassed litle Nane before your face?
And what knaves be thes scholmasters in like case:
they pay litle master Dicke, as my master paies me.
For I for mhy part go not always skotfre.
I had rather be in heven then live such a livinge.
(248-54)

The other intriguer-slave, Wilkin, comforts July after his complaint about his parents' oppressive stance towards his proposed match; thereafter he goes on to console Dick on his suffering at the hands of his schoolmasters. He advises him to stick with his brother who will try to help him. If July marries Julian and sets up his own household, Dick will be able to go and live with them. He thus fulfils a conventional classical comic role as an engineer of intrigue, while at the same time cementing the supportive bonds (especially in the eyes of the audience) between the powerless victims.

It is not just the sympathetic approach of the slaves to others in the play that helps to align audience response with them. A feature of Roman comedy that is brought into play here is the direct rapport that slave-intriguers often have with the audience, through direct address and other means.[11] Fenell's direct speech to the audience is the extended one that opens the play and he addresses the audience on several other occasions as Wilkin does shortly after his first entry, having the whole of Act 2 scene 2 entirely to himself.[12] In a way characteristic of the clever slaves of

Roman comedy, they not only offer comment but also engage the audience by being the principal source of information about the machinations of the intrigue plots.

A complication in English drama is that skill in intrigue is usually *ipso facto* a token of the vicious nature of its possessor. The problem derives from the presence within the Christian ethos of early English drama of the very prominent Vice figure, but this idea stretches on into later figures such as Barabas in *The Jew of Malta* and Iago in *Othello*. This is not necessarily the case in Roman comedy; William Anderson has observed of the Plautine *servus callidus*:

> To put it briefly, as soon as the tricky bad slave takes on the Mission Impossible of helping out his young master in a quest of money for love, he becomes 'good' surrounded with symbols of freedom and Roman dignity and authority, admired by his friends and feared by his intended victims for the very same qualities—trickiness, deceptivity, plausibility, adaptability, and restless energy. Or, in the Latin terms Plautus employs to epitomize his comic paradox, the clever intriguing slave, whose character can be summarized by the word *malitia* (badness) aims at a goal which in conventional Roman terms is the proud one of military conquest of a despised enemy, the highest achievement of manliness (*virtus*).[13]

The English Vice derives his dangerous nature precisely from the combination of the fact that he works under the official, legitimate authority structure and his ability to construct complex, covert, subversive intrigues. He is in a chain of association that leads directly to Satan. In the English drama modelled on classical lines in which servants play a significant part, those that remain morally untainted do not exhibit complex intrigue skills, remain firmly comic, or work directly under the direction of their masters. This is the case in *Supposes*, *Fulgens and Lucres* and *Damon and Pithias*. In other English plays of broadly classical lineage, such servant figures as do exhibit wily traits on their own account are squarely Vices, like Cacurgus in *Misogonus* or Ambidexter in *The Glass of Government*. The strenuously insisted-upon

benevolence of both the cunning slaves, Fenell and Wilkin, might possibly be seen in the context of this as a means of avoiding inappropriate associations.

By contrast, in *July and Julian* what further justifies the subversion of authority and the deception of the parents, Chremes and Maud, is the uncompromisingly negative terminology in which these authority figures are represented. If the slaves exude sympathy, the parent figures demonstrate a range of moral failings and rebarbative characteristics that are insisted upon right from the prologue which announces that, "the matter with crafte ys so conveyed, / that Chremes in his dronkennes with avarice [ys] deceyed" (33-4). At her first entry Maud displays cantankerous attitudes and behaviour that amply bear out the complaints uttered by Fenell earlier:

> *Maud*: Here it, trip to the schole qickly, or Ile twidge your dock
> *Dick*: I tarry but for fenell forsoth, whom you sent of an arrant
> *Maud*: Ye must haue a man still, I faith ile be a treavaunt.
> Thei servauntes in this howse, be the slothfull lubbers a live.
> If I shuld tarry but halfe so long, I wold thinke never to thriv.
> Why fenell where a bowt go yowe?
> *Fenell*: To fetch whit poddinges for your breackfast, I cold get but thes to.
> *Maud*: Yt is well provided, geve them to Iulian, mak hast
> that Dicke were had to ye schole, it is vi of ye clock, & past.
> (111–19)

On her second appearance Maud then strikes her daughter on stage. She later shows no hesitation in betraying her maid, Julian, just after having apparently had proof that Julian had been true to her. Driven entirely by a profit motive, Maud's financial rapacity takes precedence over any consideration of loyalty to her servant. When her husband announces that he has had a letter making an offer to purchase Julian and asks what she thinks, Maud responds:

> Ser, brefly my iudgment is, that she shuld go,
> yf yow may haue for here inogh money.
> All though I like here well, y[e]t so I say,

> both because money cometh never amysse,
> and although she now be faithfull ywysse,
> yet, as the vse is, she may not leaue,
> and herafter both of vs deceaue.
> As for me, I can get as good a maid as she,
> againste tomorow nyght, if ned be.
> Tak time, whill time is, for time will away.
> At no time, is any time, to refusse money.
> (691-701)

Chremes also reveals, almost in passing, that he has committed a misdemeanour for which he has incurred a fine, as yet unpaid, "in forfet for fitinge with ser robart Rose" (705). It is this to which the money gained from the sale of Julian will be put. The final execution of the intrigue plot devised by the slaves involves a feast to which Chremes will be invited by his neighbour, Bamford, to be told that Bamford had the previous evening accommodated a wealthy guest with a marriageable daughter. This man will be claimed to have lands bordering those of Chremes, and a daughter (in fact Julian in disguise) available for marriage to July. The success of the deception depends on Chremes being tripped up by his own indulgence and greed. Drinking too much will compromise his judgement and the apparent opportunity to acquire land adjacent to his own will do the rest: "When his wittes with drinke waxeth bare, / we will traine him to your fantices, avarish shall be our snare" (1049-50).

It has to be admitted that *July and Julian* is in many ways a crudely constructed and written play. This fact, and the absence to date of an edition that presents the text in an accessible format, have resulted in almost total critical neglect of this potentially important interlude from the mid-sixteenth century. Nevertheless, the way in which the play draws together and intertwines, to the common benefit of their presentation, the three issues of the oppression of servants, parental attempts to frustrate a love match on the grounds of aspiration to wealth and the disparity of rank, and the harsh treatment of schoolchildren, is noteworthy in itself. A further significant

point of ideological and dramaturgical interest in the piece is the way that the author uses the conventions of Roman comedy to legitimise the subversive agenda of the play. Not only do these comic conventions become a means through which the audience sympathy is aligned, but the classical frame of reference also affords implicit cultural sanction as an increasingly important part of elite discourse in the period. *July and Julian* deserves more prominence among the pre-commercial theatre plays both in respect of its focus on issues of contemporary social relevance, and its place in the history of form in the vernacular dramatic tradition.

**Notes**

[1] The manuscript is Folger Shakespeare Library MS448.16. The Dawson edition is the one referred to in this essay, part of the Malone Society Reprints series printed at the University Press, Oxford. I have made small adjustments to the punctuation of Dawson's transcription in the interests of greater clarity.

[2] Interludes of the period known to have been performed by boys cover a broad generic range, including the anonymous *Nice Wanton* (1547-1553), *Respublica* (1553), *Jack Juggler* (1553-1558), *Apius and Virginia* (1559-1567), *Tom Tiler and his Wife* (1561), *The Marriage of Wit and Wisdom* (c. 1569), *The Disobedient Child* (1559-1570), as well as John Redford's *Play of Wit and Science* (1539), John Heywood's *Play of the Weather* (1527-1533) and John Phillip's *Patient and Meek Grissell* (1558-1561). Few show direct debts to classical drama, but this list cannot be taken as representative of the whole corpus of children's drama, much of which is not extant.

[3] For an account the use of drama in schools in the century, see D. Grantley, *Wit's Pilgrimage: Drama and the Social Impact of Education in Early Modern England* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2000), 50-53.

[4] See H. N. Hillebrand, *The Child Actors* (New York: Russell and Russell, 1964), 127 and E. K. Chambers, *The Elizabethan Stage* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1923), Vol. 2: 4.

[5] "We are so hamyd, / Fortaxed and ramyd, / We are made handtamyd / With thyse gentlery-men. / Thus thay refe vs oure rest, our Lady theym wary! / These men that ar lord-fest, theay cause the ploghe

tary. / These men say is for the best, we fynde it contrary. / Thus ar husbandys opprest, in ponte to myscary." "Secunda Pastorum," lines 15-22, *The Wakefield Pageants in the Towneley Cycle*, ed. A. C. Cawley (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1958), 43.

[6] Niall Slater notes that this is characteristic of a clever slave. *Plautus in Performance: The Theatre of the Mind* (Princeton: University of Princeton Press, 1985), 82-83.

[7] K. McCarthy, *Slaves, Masters and the Art of Authority in Plautine Comedy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000), 212.

[8] M. Thornton Burnett, *Masters and Servants in English Renaissance Drama and Culture: Authority and Obedience* (London: Macmillan, 1997), 79.

[9] For an account of this issue in both the drama and elsewhere, see Grantley, 164-67.

[10] Fenell and Wilkin rescue Julian by a trick which involves substituting a free-born girl for her, and then claiming her from the person to whom she has been sold, on the grounds of the illegality of the sale. The source for this element may be Plautus's *Persa*, in which a similar trick is played.

[11] Timothy Moore observes of Plautine slave-intriguers: "Monologues, audience address, eavesdropping and relative knowledge thus give some characters more rapport with the audience than others" and "No character type enjoys greater rapport with the audience than the *servus callidus*: as the most common plotters of deception, clever slaves always share knowledge with the audience unknown to others." *The Theater of Plautus: Playing to the Audience* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1998), 36. Cf. also William Anderson, "It is an obvious fact that Plautus aligns his audiences on the side of the deceivers, for all their badness, against the people who usually control Law and Order, fathers, mothers, rich men and property-owners (nicely symbolized by the frequent victim, the pimp, the slave-owner of certain desirable prostitutes)." *Barbarian Play: Plautus' Roman Comedy* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993), 90.

[12] Fenell's main addresses, aside from his opening speech, are 248-55, 506-9, 1132-36 and 1189-92; Wilkin's is 293-315.

[13] Anderson, 91-2.