

The Staging of *Bartholomew Fair*

EUGENE M. WAITH

"*Let the public see how we work.*" Bertolt Brecht

JACK GELBER'S *The Connection* has shown all over again that an always-visible stage has its special fascination, and that even a play which depends on a certain kind of realism can be enhanced rather than damaged by the absence of those devices which ordinarily produce theatrical illusion. The spectator is confronted, the moment he enters the auditorium, with the contradiction of a stage which is both an extension of the familiar space in which he lives and a projection of a contrived, imaginary space conceived in the mind of the author. The actors, who break the artistic frame by strolling onto the stage before the beginning of the piece, have a persuasive if paradoxical reality of which one part is the apparently honest and immediate rapport they establish between themselves as actors and the audience before whom they are to play. Yet already, as the audience well knows, they are assuming their roles. When one actor, playing the part of the producer, talks to the spectators about the play they are about to see, the strategy of confronting them with theatrical process is carried one step further. Yet these revelations of contrivance do not make the portrayal of the contemporary milieu of dope-addiction any the less convincing. On the contrary, the spectator feels himself pulled into the world of the play as strongly by the seeming confidences of the producer and the visibility of the stage-arrangements as by the successful projection of the imagined situation. If acceptance of the characters as real people is qualified rather more than in the theater of illusion, concern for both the actor and his role seems to be increased when the spectator is encouraged to believe that he is in the know. He enters into a conspiracy with actors, stage personnel, and ultimately, perhaps, with the author.

For many years now the presentational devices of the Elizabethan public theater have been recognized as a potential asset rather than a liability, but many uncertainties about the exact physical characteristics of those stages usually make the visuali-

zation of an Elizabethan performance a very hazy venture. The moment we try to conjure up a picture of the stage action we are confronted by crucial problems about the acting areas. Was the discovery space a large "inner stage," recessed in the tiring-house wall, a smaller space behind the central door, or some sort of booth or pavilion set up on the main stage? How much of an acting area was there "above"? And was it in the balcony or on top of a structure on the stage? About the staging of Ben Jonson's *Bartholomew Fair* we have two important facts—not much, one might think, but taken in rapid succession, rather heady for the student of the Elizabethan theater, used to surviving for considerable lengths of time with no facts at all. First, it is known that the play was performed on 31 October 1614 at the Hope, the theater recently constructed with a stage which could be removed to permit bear-baiting. Secondly, the records show that it was acted at court the following night, on which occasion a payment was made for "Canvas for the Boothes and other necessaries for a play called Bartholomewe Faire."¹ Here is enough information to explain some of the references to staging in the text of the play, and hence to encourage one to reconstruct from a close examination of the text at least the outlines of the play's appearance when it was first performed. Since our interest today is focused chiefly on the public theater, and since the play was first performed there, I shall concentrate attention on the performance at the Hope. It is a reasonable assumption, however, that the method of staging was not basically different the next evening at court. Our information about the booths there may fairly be used in discussing the earlier showing.

The meaning of this play of Jonson's emanates from the Fair itself—from the activities of its vendors, entertainers, thieves, and pimps, and from the encounters of these "Bartholomew birds" with the other main characters. To confront his Puritans, his zealous justice, his men-about-town, his crotchety tutor, and his foolish Bartholomew Cokes with the Fair, Jonson contrived one of his most complicated and ingenious plots.

I am most grateful to Professor Alois M. Nagler and to Mr. Dunbar H. Ogden, both of the Yale School of Drama, for their painstaking criticism of the first draft of this article. In a somewhat different form it will appear in the author's forthcoming edition of *Bartholomew Fair* in the Yale Ben Jonson.

¹*Ben Jonson*, eds. C. H. Herford and Percy and Evelyn Simpson (Oxford, 1925-1952), IX, 245. All Jonson quotations are from Volume VI of this edition. In my text I have modernized the names of characters.

From the opening of the second act to the end of the play the paths of the Fair-people and their visitors cross and recross. The comic truth about all these characters emerges at the intersections—a product of the Fair as well as an insight into it; for the Fair is both a means to Jonson's comic end and a fit object of imitation. It has symbolic value as a microcosm, but like all good symbols, has a solid life of its own. To have the theatrical experience of the Fair, then, the spectator should see onstage forms which give visual immediacy to the pig-woman's booth, "the very *wombe*, and *bedde* of enormitie"; the stocks, where the enemies of the Fair are humiliated; and the puppet booth, that microcosm-within-a-microcosm, the final reduction to absurdity.²

Before the Fair is presented, however, there is an induction in which *Bartholomew Fair*, the play, is discussed by the stage-keeper, after which the book-holder (or prompter) reads certain mock "articles of agreement" between the author and the spectators at the Hope. Here the play is clearly an artifact and the stage a stage. We know from the Hope contract that this particular stage was built on trestles, like many a street stage, to make it easy to set up and remove. For the same reason, its canopy overhead was not supported by posts, as in the Swan Theater. The contract provides no other details about the appearance of the stage except that it should be "of suche large compasse, fforme, widenes, and height as the Plaie house called the Swan,"³ from which we may reasonably infer that there were two doors, left and right, in the tiring-house wall, as in the famous De Witt sketch. The stage-keeper gives us, in the induction, one or two more indications. He refers to the arras (l.8) behind which Master Brome may be hiding, and to the "Canuas-cut i' the night" (l.21) which, properly handled, might lead to a "*Iig-ajogge* i' the boothes" (ll.24-25). This last seems like a confirmation of the use at the Hope of canvas-covered booths like those paid for at court, and the arras clearly refers to hangings on the tiring-house wall. All in all, it does not sound like one of the more elegant London stages—an impression which is reinforced by the book-holder's allusion to the dirt and stench from the animals used in the

²See Jonas A. Barish, *Ben Jonson and the Language of Prose Comedy* (Cambridge, Mass., 1960), p. 232.

³E. K. Chambers, *The Elizabethan Stage* (Oxford, 1923), II, 466.

baitings. Yet Jonson uses the very crudity of means as a realistic device, for the theater is said to be "as durty as Smithfield, and as stinking euery whit" (ll.159-160). Thus the stage on which Smithfield is to be presented is also somewhat the kind of stage one might see at Smithfield.⁴

Presumably no properties were put on the stage during the induction. There was only the arras, which was there from the beginning. Was anything added for the first act? There is no reason to think so. The stage, backed by the arras, is quite satisfactory for the interior of John Littlewit's house. To visualize the tiring-house wall, however, we must face the problem of where the arras was hung in such a theater. It might have been between the two doors or it might have covered the entire wall, including the doors. The latter arrangement, as described by Nagler (p. 50), would in fact be essential for several scenes if there were no more than two doors at the Hope, for three entrances to the stage are sometimes required (as in IV.vi), and access to a central opening in the arras could only be hidden from the audience if the arras also covered at least one of the two doors. If the Hope had three doors, as some theaters probably did, the arras may have covered only the central one. Otherwise—and the little evidence we have points to this alternative—it probably extended the full length of the tiring-house wall and had three slits from which entrances could be made.

At the opening of Act I, then, it is easy to imagine Littlewit coming through the center opening as if from an inner room in his house. Either of the other entrances might serve as the outside door of his house, through which his various visitors would come in the course of the act. Herford and Simpson (X, 170) suppose that the entire first act was played "above" on whatever served for an upper stage at the Hope, but it seems unlikely to me that so much action would be relegated to such a relatively confined space upstage (in Scene v there are eight people onstage at once). There is no reference in stage-directions or dialogue to "above" or "below" but only to "in" and "within, in my study." Surely the main stage would lend itself more readily to this situation.

⁴C. Walter Hodges, *The Globe Restored* (London, 1953), p. 65. As will be clear in what follows, I am greatly indebted to Hodges's theories and those of Alois Nagler in his *Shakespeare's Stage* (New Haven, 1958).

The staging of the first act presents no very puzzling problems. The remainder of the play, in which the action is at the Fair, provides more matter for speculation. The text refers specifically to five places on the stage:⁵ (1) to Leatherhead's "shop" on the "ground" he has paid for (II.ii.5, 15); (2) to the "ground" Joan Trash has paid for (II.ii.15) and her "shop" (III.iv.99); (3) to Ursula's "booth" (II.ii.68); (4) to the "stocks" (IV.i.17); and (5) to the place where Leatherhead runs his puppet-show, attended by the doorkeepers, Filcher and Sharkwell, who take the customers' money and allow them to "goe in" (V.iii.17). To get any clear idea of the staging of this part of the play, one needs to know how these places were represented, how and when any practicable structures were set up on the stage, and how many of them were visible at any time.

The answer to the first question is made easier by our knowledge that booths were constructed for the court performance. We know from Henslowe's records that various scenic elements, such as rocks, tombs, and cages, were used on the stage of the public theater, so that there is nothing improbable in the use of booths or stocks. Structures of canvas stretched over wooden frames, such as were used for "houses" in many performances at court, may well have been used for the booths in *Bartholomew Fair*, both at court and at the Hope.⁶ They would answer well to Zeal-of-the-land's reference to the "tents of the wicked" (I.vi.71-72). However, there is no reason to suppose that all these structures were identical; hints of what they were like must be sought in the text.

At the beginning of II.ii., Leatherhead is asking Joan Trash, the gingerbread-woman, to sit farther away so as not to hinder "the prospect" of the "shop" where he sells "hobby-horses." A few lines later, some of the action takes place in the "booth" where Ursula, as we soon learn, provides "pig and punk" and other conveniences. All three places must be visible at once, Leatherhead's and Trash's obviously close together, and probably somewhat removed from Ursula's, as they have no conversation with her until they go to help her

⁵In each case I give the first reference, though in some cases there are many more. I reserve for later discussion the problem of variant terminology—"shop," "booth," etc.

⁶See Nagler's summary of the evidence in *Shakespeare's Stage*, pp. 34-42.

when she falls. Joan Trash has a basket of gingerbread, also called a "hamper" (III.iv.146), and a "flasket" (III.vi.98), probably on some sort of table or stand, which Busy knocks over when he "*overthrows the gingerbread*" (III.vi.98-100). Although there are references to her "shop" (as in the stage-direction at III.iv.97-99), I doubt if the term denotes any special structure. All she needs is a place to sit by her stand. That Leatherhead's shop is a more pretentious establishment is made quite clear when Cokes offers to "buy vp his shop, and thy basket" (III.iv.106-107). The difference between the prices they ask seems significant even when allowance is made for the different cost of hobby-horses and gingerbread: Leatherhead asks "sixe and twenty shillings seuen pence, halfe-peny, besides three shillings for my ground," while Trash asks only "foure shillings, and eleauen pence, Sir, ground, and all" (III.iv.150-151, 154-155). However, even Leatherhead's shop need not be elaborate. On the contrary, it must be such that he can take it down and carry it away at the end of the third act, when he and Trash decide to disappear. He refers to "packing up" twice during this scene (III.vi.20, 133), and there is nothing to show that they have been there when Cokes returns in the second scene of Act IV. Leatherhead, then, has a larger stall than Trash, very likely with a covered part behind the counter, like many a booth at a fair. The fact that the term "booth" is used only for Ursula's establishment does not mean that hers is the only booth shown on the stage, for we know that more than one booth was built at court. It seems likely that Leatherhead's shop might also have been called a booth.

Ursula's booth must meet several specific requirements. In the first place, it must obviously have both a front and a back part, separated in some way—presumably by a curtain. From the back part she emerges, sweating profusely, when we first see her (II.ii.42). There she has her fire for roasting pigs; there the Puritan family goes in to eat and drink; there are taken various stolen goods; there she accommodates the ladies with "the bottome of an old bottle" (IV.iv.217) and later provides them with fancy clothes. The front part of her booth is shaded with boughs and displays a sign, advertising her roast pig (III.ii.57-58). In this front part of the booth Knockem and his pals must be revealed playing their game of vapors

at the opening of IV.iv. That the booth remains visible to the end of the play is suggested by Littlewit's saying in the last scene, "I left her at the great woman's house in trust yonder, the Pig-woman's" (V.vi.16-17), presumably pointing to it as he speaks. Cokes may do the same when he swears "by that fire" (V.iii.29), interpreted by Herford and Simpson (X, 209) as the fire in Ursula's booth.

It is also arguable that Ursula's booth is taken down to make way for Leatherhead's puppet theater at the opening of Act V, but if so, it is the one instance in the play where one position on the stage represents successively two places in the Fair. The characters often seem to be aware of returning to a certain part of the Fair when they come onstage, and it is noteworthy that in Act V, Scene ii, after Leatherhead has set up his theater booth, Winwife and Grace come to look for Quarlous, wondering why he does not "return" to the place where they left him in Act IV.

There are at least two ways in which Ursula's booth might be constructed. In front of the central opening in the arras might be set up such a "pavilion" as Hodges and Nagler describe, or the variant form of it recently postulated by Albert Weiner.⁷ It must be large enough to contain at least the seven characters revealed there at the opening of Act IV, Scene iv. There should be curtains on three sides, so that when they are drawn, leaving only two posts to mark the front of the booth, the actors seated inside drinking can be seen clearly by all the audience. Sight-lines might make it advantageous to have no top to the pavilion. Once the actors are discovered, however, they might in any case move out into the area in front of the booth for the succeeding action in which three more characters eventually participate. With any form of pavilion in this position, the arras itself would serve as the division between the front and back parts of Ursula's booth, as it divides Littlewit's front room from his "study within."

While this might be a quite satisfactory rendition of the pig-woman's booth, it would also be possible to set up, a few feet downstage from the central entrance, a free-standing structure, divided into two compartments. This would be a pavilion iden-

⁷Hodges, pp. 51-65; see his sketch of the Hope, p. 176; Nagler, pp. 26-32; Albert Weiner, "Elizabethan Interior and Aloft Scenes: A Speculative Essay," *Theatre Survey*, II (1961), 15-34.

tical with the one just described, except that it would be deeper, and hence would project farther out on the stage. Though no scenes are played in the back part of the booth, this arrangement would have the advantage of bringing the action in the front of the booth closer to most of the audience, and of allowing occasional glimpses of the smoke from Ursula's fire, to which there are several allusions, as in Overdo's oration against tobacco: "the braine smoak'd like the backside of the Pig-womans Booth, here" (II.vi.42-43). At the end of Act IV, Scene iii, the text suggests that Quarlous and Edgworth might even be expected to walk in back of the booth; for as Edgworth is leading Quarlous there from the stocks, he says, "Here, Sir, you are o' the backside o' the Booth already, you may heare the noise" (IV.iii.130-131). Immediately afterwards the scene in the booth begins, presumably with the drawing of curtains from the front of the booth. By line 27 Quarlous is at the front of the booth, looking for Wasp. Now the word "backside" could mean back yard as well as part of the booth, but in either case we are to imagine Quarlous and Edgworth behind the booth and then shortly in front of it. If they could pass between the back of the booth and the arras the sense of their movements would be immediately clear. And if the space were small, it would doubtless be possible for actors to get offstage from the rear of the booth unobserved. There is the further consideration that at court the booth would necessarily have been a free-standing structure. That the booth, however constructed, should have a rectangular look is implied by Ursula's reference to the "corner o' the Booth" (II.ii.68) and Quarlous's phrase (referring to the rear portion), "a pig-boxe" (III.ii.136).

If the booths of Leatherhead and Ursula were somewhat as we have described them, we can return to the question of how and when they were erected. It is possible that they were on the stage from the beginning, in which case the first act might have to be played on the upper stage. I think it is more likely that they were set up at the beginning of the second act, combining a frank display of theatrical process with a kind of local color, since the setting up of the stage-booths would, after all, approximate closely the setting up of the actual booths in the Fair. The first scene of Act II is a soliloquy given by Justice Overdo in his disguise as mad Arthur

of Bradley. It is clear that he has just arrived at the Fair and in his search for "enormities," is lurking in the neighborhood of some activity. From other indications we know that it is still fairly early in the morning and that not much is going on yet. Since Leatherhead opens the next scene with his complaints to Joan Trash, he may enter with her during the Justice's soliloquy and start setting up the booth which he is later to pack up and take away. At the same time Ursula's booth could be set up with its pig's-head sign, "Here be the best pigs: and shee doe's roast 'hem as well as euer shee did" (III.ii.67-68). These doings would provide an obvious attraction to the zealous eye of Overdo.

One more property, the stocks, could be put in place at the opening of Act II. Though they are not needed except in Act IV, when Overdo, Busy, and Wasp are put in, they could appropriately be onstage through the last four acts as a part of the Fair, like Ursula's booth. But whereas Ursula's booth is so central to the meaning of the play that it should be in the center of the stage, the stocks might better be at one side, where the "criminals" would be only a few feet from the standees in the pit, and hence in a very similar situation to that of real criminals exposed in a public place. When the stocks were not in use they would not be in the way on this part of the stage.

Let us suppose, then, in order to give our picture more precision, that from the opening of Act II to the close of Act III the spectators had before them, going from stage right to stage left, Leatherhead's booth, Joan Trash's stand, Ursula's booth (stage center), and the stocks. None of them could have been far from the tiring-house wall, because all the action of the play takes place in front of them. Such structures and such an arrangement of the stage were firmly rooted in theatrical tradition. The booths were similar to the houses, of which there were sometimes three or four, in plays based on classical models and acted at the court or the universities.⁸ They resembled more closely the mansions of the mystery plays. The *Ludus Coventriae* required mansions fully as large as Ursula's booth must be (e.g., the "council house"), and one (Pilate's house) divided in two sections. Knockem's ironical mention of "Vrsla's

⁸See T. S. Graves, *The Court and the London Theatre during the Reign of Elizabeth* (Menasha, Wis., 1913), p. 51.

mansion" (II.v.40) must certainly have struck some of the audience as an amusing reference to the mysteries. What is most notable is Jonson's use of the principles of simultaneous staging, for although the imagined distances between the several locations strung across the back of his stage are not so great as those between medieval mansions, the flow of the action from one to another is remarkably similar. Supernumeraries stroll from side to side of the stage gaping at what the Fair offers, and the principal characters move freely from one center of interest to another, as Cokes in the third act goes first to Leatherhead's shop, then to the stand of the gingerbread-woman, and is then distracted by the itinerant ballad-singer. A corollary of this kind of staging is that characters who do not participate in the action in one locality may nevertheless remain onstage in their localities, as I suppose Leatherhead and Trash do through most of the second and third acts.⁹ Since Jonson merely lists at the beginning of each scene the names of the speakers in that scene, there is often no indication of the presence of these inactive characters, and sometimes there is none even when a character has one speech to make during the scene, as is the case with Leatherhead in Act III, Scene ii.

In Act IV Leatherhead's booth, where so much of the previous action has taken place, is gone, the curtains around the front part of Ursula's booth have presumably been drawn after the retirement of Littlewit and his wife into the back, and the stocks on the other side of the stage come into prominence. Gifford, one of the editors who cared most about the staging of Jonson, divided the act into four scenes: i, "Booths, stalls, a pair of stocks, etc.;" ii, "Another part of the Fair" (where Quarlous and Winwife argue over Grace); iii, "Ursula's Booth, as before" (for the game of vapors); and iv, "The back of Ursula's Booth. Overdo in the stocks." Levin, who built and improved on Gifford's indications of locality, reduced the scenes to three: i, "The stocks in the Fair," ii, "Between the stocks and Ursula's booth" (including both the episode of Grace and her lovers and the game of vapors), and iii, "The stocks." Both editors were obviously aware that the action of Jonson's Scene iii, ending with the departure of Quarlous and Edgworth from

⁹Trash leaves at II.v.166 to get cream for Ursula's burned leg, but returns at the beginning of III; there is no need for Leatherhead to leave until III.vi.84, when he goes for the watch, returning less than twenty lines later.

Winwife and Grace, is continuous with that of Scene iv, in which Quarlous and Edgworth arrive at Ursula's booth by way of its "backside." However, the various indications of change of place ("Another part of the Fair," etc.) imply a rather different sort of staging from that which I am describing. Though Levin's indications correspond to the shifts of the action from one focus of interest to another, they do not make it sufficiently clear that the places referred to are all visible at once, or that the action of his Scene ii is not all, strictly speaking, "between the stocks and Ursula's booth," but partly in the neighborhood of the stocks and partly inside the booth, as his later stage-direction shows. If one recognizes the nature of the setting, the problem of indicating locality for a scene vanishes; for the action flows from one part of the stage to another regardless of scene-divisions—Jonson's or those of later editors.

The example of Act IV is telling. With the departure of Leatherhead and Trash at the end of Act III the stage has been cleared for the first time since the opening of Act II. Then the watch enter left, bringing Overdo to the stocks, and conversing with mad Trouble-all. At the end of the scene only Trouble-all is left, and in Scene ii he is joined by Edgworth and Nightingale, who have come to play a prank on Cokes. When Cokes enters looking for Leatherhead and Trash (l.23), he is presumably stage right, where their "shops" were, but moves past Ursula's, where no activity can be seen, to Nightingale, who whistles to attract his attention. After the two tricksters have again gulled him, the stage is once more cleared momentarily before the arrival of Grace and her two lovers in Scene iii. No special locality is required for their discussion of who is to have Grace, but the stage-direction, "*Trouble-all comes again*" suggests that he is returning to the locality he left a moment before; and when Edgworth, somewhat later, says that Wasp is with Knockem and others "yonder" (l.111), he is obviously pointing to Ursula's booth. The last line of the scene, referring to the "backside" of the booth, shows that he and Quarlous have by that time moved from near the stocks, where they must have been with Trouble-all, to the rear of Ursula's place. Scenes iv and v are in her booth, beginning with the discovery of the game of vapors, already referred to several times. During the course of Scene vi the action moves

back once again to the stocks. The scene opens with Trouble-all reappearing. Knockem, drinking at Ursula's with Whit, asks him over. After they have persuaded him to have a drink, they leave him to join their ladies in the back part of the booth. Trouble-all apparently wanders out with his drink by one of the stage entrances just as Quarlous enters at another, looking for him. Quarlous is accompanied by Edgworth, who makes their locality onstage clear by saying, "Sir, will it please you, enter in here, at *Vrsla's*" (1.18). When Edgworth leaves him, Quarlous, after a few minutes of self-debate, sees some of the watch coming with Wasp. They are followed by more of the watch with Busy and Overdo, and most of the scene concerns their unsuccessful efforts to keep these worthies in the stocks. At the end of the act the stage is clear.

The action of the last act is all in or near the puppet booth. The chief problems about the staging are therefore the appearance and location of this booth, which has not been seen before. To begin with the most essential feature, there must be a puppet theater so situated that both the audience onstage and the audience in the auditorium can see Littlewit's "motion" of *Hero and Leander*. George Speaight, who arranged and performed the puppet play in the Old Vic's production of *Bartholomew Fair* in 1950, argues persuasively that the puppets were glove puppets,¹⁰ in which case there must be a narrow booth, topped, at about the height of a man's shoulders by the stage where the puppets move on the hands of the manipulators as they sit on stools inside. That the booth is low is shown by Leatherhead's statement, "Troth, Sir, our Tiring-house is somewhat little . . . you cannot goe vpright in't" (V.iii.58-60). There is probably a curtain over the stage, drawn just before Cokes, realizing the "motion" is to begin, says, "Peace, ho; now, now" (V.iv.115). Leatherhead, the puppet master, stands in front of the booth, interprets, speaks for the puppets ("I am the mouth of 'hem all" [V.iii.78-79]), engages in slanging matches with them, and allows himself to be struck "over the pate." In fact, he does everything but the actual manipulation. But what might be referred to as Leatherhead's booth in this act is not strictly speaking the puppet booth, but a structure which contains the puppet booth; for no one is to see the motion who has not paid his fee; even the author is chal-

¹⁰*The History of the English Puppet Theatre* (New York, n.d.), p. 65.

lenged by the overzealous doorkeeper. We are to imagine a considerable group of characters entering the door of the booth, sitting down, and watching the play which we also see. Hence, we must see outside and inside Leatherhead's booth at once. Outside there is some sort of banner and a sign—probably the bill which Cokes reads in Scene iii. Possibly the simplest way to satisfy these requirements would be to have posts, representing the front of the booth, set some distance in front of the puppet theater. Between the posts and the theater would be benches and chairs, "inside" the booth, though the walls would be purely imaginary.

Act V begins with the arrival of Leatherhead and his doorkeepers on a stage just vacated by the watch and the other characters involved in the action at the stocks. It would be natural for Leatherhead to enter at the opposite side of the stage and to set up his puppet show near where he has his toy booth in the morning. Thus the action, which has been largely at stage left during Act IV, would return to the right. He tells his men to put out the sign and beat the drum, and instructs them about how much to charge. It would not be difficult for the three of them to bring the puppet booth in with them, set it up, and set up the posts on which a flag and playbill could be displayed. Again the action has a certain realism in its reflection of what actual operators of such booths did at Smithfield and elsewhere. By an odd coincidence the site of the Hope Theater was very near (if not identical with) the old Paris Gardens, where puppet shows had been "set up for comic relief . . . after bull- and bear-baiting was over," as far back as 1584, when such a show was described by the German Lupold von Wedel.¹¹

Though Leatherhead and the doorkeepers are not heard from in Scene ii, when Quarlous, disguised as Trouble-all, obtains his warrant from Justice Overdo, the action of the scene must not be far from their booth, since the justice remains onstage after Quarlous, Purecraft, and the others have left, and sees Cokes looking at Leatherhead's sign at the opening of Scene iii. Scene ii might well be played near Ursula's booth, where, as we later learn, Quarlous has been just prior to Scene ii. In Scene iii, while Justice Overdo stands by, Cokes is admitted to Leatherhead's "theater" and shown the puppets,

¹¹Speaight, p. 61.

which are brought out in a basket from behind the puppet booth. In Scene iv Grace and Winwife return for the second time, also observed by the justice, and place themselves where they can see Cokes, through he does not see them. Since they are never challenged by the doorkeepers, they apparently do not "go in" and take seats, but remain just outside like Overdo. Knockem, Whit, Mistress Overdo, Mistress Littlewit, and Wasp are now given seats inside and soon the puppet play begins. It is not long until, one after another, all the remaining characters come to Leatherhead's booth. The last to arrive is a group headed by Trouble-all, carrying Ursula's pan, and hotly pursued by the pig-woman herself and Nightingale. Presumably they run out from the rear of Ursula's booth, where they have certainly been, and after circling around to the front of Leatherhead's booth, run in amongst the others. Thus in the last act the puppet booth becomes what the "pig-box" earlier was—the chief locus of the action.

If *Bartholomew Fair* was staged in the manner I have described, it is one of the clearest examples of the survival in the Elizabethan public theater of the essentially medieval tradition of staging.¹² Though the "speciall *Decorum*" of the Fair relates the spectacle closely to Smithfield, the stage forms are those of the old mansions and the conception of space is that of the mysteries. Partly because of this meeting of convention and realistic imitation, the play also illustrates certain assumptions about theatrical reality which underlie Elizabethan stagecraft. The illusion of Smithfield never obscures the reality of the stage and the frank admission of its contrivances. The audience is often reminded that it is witnessing a performance by the Lady Elizabeth's Men at the Hope Theater. As in *The Connection*, the imaginative appeal of the performance is of a special sort. It points to the paradox that the realistic theater of Ibsen is the theater of illusion *par excellence*, relying as it does on the most curious of all artifices, the pretense that the audience does not exist. The actors of *Bartholomew Fair*, not separated from the spectators by any invisible wall, address them

¹²Such a survival has been discussed by many scholars; see Chambers, *Elizabethan Stage*, III, 117; G. F. Reynolds, *The Staging of Elizabethan Plays at the Red Bull Theater 1605-1625* (New York, 1940), Chap. VII; Herford and Simpson, X, 170; Hodges, p. 65.

directly, cajole or insult them, and finally draw them into the world of imagination created by author and actors together.

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