

*The Ben Jonson Journal*  
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**ARTICLES**

**THE BEN JONSON DISCOVERIES AWARD**

KATHERINE DUNCAN-JONES

"They say a made a good end": Ben Jonson's Epitaph on Thomas Nashe / 1

By permission of the Trustees of the Berkeley Castle Muniments, and with the assistance of their Archivist, Mr. David J. H. Smith, I am able to present what appears to be an authentic addition to the canon of Ben Jonson's poems, an elegy on Thomas Nashe, together with four associated poems by others.[1] The numbering of poems and lines is my own, as is the expansion of contractions; otherwise what follows is a close transcript.[2]

**ARTICLES**

RICHARD B. WOLLMAN

"Speak that I may see thee": Auralty in Ben Jonson's Print Poetry / 21

Once upon a time and after Gutenberg, when the past began to present more publishable anxiety, Ben Jonson acknowledged (in print) to Alphonso Ferrabosco: "When we doe give, ALPHONSO, to the light, / A Worke of ours, we part with our owne right; / or, then, all mouthes will fudge, and their owne way: / The learn'd have no more priuiledge, then the lay" (Epigrammes 131.1-4).[1] In his print poetry, Jonson devises strategies to guard against misinterpretation and to maintain authorial control over a readership that may reach beyond the poet's immediate circle.[2] Richard Newton notes the "anxiety" caused by the "unpredictable circulation" of the printed epigram but misattributes the subjects of Jonson's concern to "purchasers," "meddling copyists," and "editors." [3] "All mouthes" refers not to those who would change or pirate Jonson's works but to readers outside the poet's immediate circle, some of whom will misinterpret and "judge" badly "in their owne way." In print, Jonson can be certain that his poems are not misattributed and that ownership of the poems remains in the poet's hands, but as Newton remarks, print does not provide "protection from promiscuous judging." Newton asserts that printing releases Jonson from "the confines of manuscript circulation and public performance" and that Jonson's fears are "allayed by . . . other possibilities of print," such as "eponymous authority, textuality, specificity, completeness"; however, the opportunities to be misinterpreted are multiplied in proportion to the number of copies available to "lay" readers. Instead of in-groups and out-groups created by manuscript coterie, Jonson divides his audience into "learned" and "lay," similar to Milton's conception of the "fit . . . audience, though few."

ROBERT BEHUNIN

Classical Wonder in Jonson's Masques / 39

Today, "wonder" is used merely to express a rather opaque sense of curiosity, as in the phrase "I wonder if he'll come to class today?" Synonyms of "wonder"--"admiration," "amazement," "awe" and "awful," "marvel," and

"miracle"--have suffered pejoration. The adjective "awful," for instance, has been changed, "moving from the rare sense of terrible, dreadful, appalling and sublimely majestic to the more current usage, designated as slang by the *OED*, as a mere intensive, deriving its sense from the context exceedingly bad, great, long, etc." [1]

"Wonder" belongs to a family of terms that includes the Greek *thauma*, *thaumaston*, *deinos*, *deinotes*, and *ekplexis*; the Latin *admiratio*, *admirabilis*, *mirum*, *miraculum*, *mirabulus*, and *mirandus*; the French and Italian *admirer*, *merveille*, and *meraviglia* or *maraviglia*; and the Spanish *admiracion*, *milagro*, and *maravilla*. [2] Most people today do not place these terms within the same family, but Renaissance writers and thinkers, following classical and medieval models, treated them synonymously. The reason for doing so was because wonder was considered a highly sophisticated concept. Richard Harp points out in his article on Shakespeare's *The Winter's Tale*: "The Renaissance inherited the tradition of wonder from a long line of classical and medieval thinkers. Philosophers, moralists, and poets . . . affirmed that wonder was a primary stimulus to knowledge." [3] Harp's study is one of many that attempts to resuscitate the Renaissance usage of wonder by showing the diversity with which Renaissance writers utilized the concept and by linking it with its classical antecedents.

PAUL J. VOSS

*The Faerie Queene* 1590-1596: The Case of Saint George / 59

In 1590 John Wolfe printed books 1-3 of Edmund Spenser's *The Faerie Queene* for William Ponsonby. Richard Field printed another edition in 1596 complete with books 4-6. Present knowledge of the printing history of *The Faerie Queene* is vast. Numerous studies, including a new electronic database, compare the 1590 and 1596 publications for variations and revisions. [1] Since no collating device or database could detect any material difference, however, one important change between editions remains largely unnoticed. The lone woodcut illustration in *The Faerie Queene* (1590), inserted at the end of book 1, depicts Saint George slaying the dragon (see fig. 1). Field used the identical woodcut in the 1596 edition; he made no changes in the illustration or its placement. Yet the employment of the illustration itself underwent considerable change between 1590 and 1596. Any thoughtful Elizabethan reading the 1596 edition of the poem would likely recognize another level of meaning now associated with the woodcut illustration of Saint George, a meaning replete with bittersweet memories from the recent past.

While many critics notice the conspicuous relationship between Saint George and Red Crosse Knight in book 1, few scholars have commented upon the woodcut of Saint George per se....

DAVID GEORGE

Night, Hell, and Epilepsy in *Othello* / 75

By the end of *Othello*, Iago has deceived most of the dramatis personae; only a few high personages and minor characters have not been taken in. Among his victims may be counted Roderigo, Brabantio, Cassio, Othello, Bianca,

Emilia, and Desdemona, all injured at least to one degree or another. Of these seven persons, five are dead at the play's end as a result of Iago's machinations. Of course, most of them realize before the end what kind of deceitful human being Iago is, but for all of them (except perhaps Cassio and Bianca) it is too late.

Less often noticed is the strong suggestion that Iago is helped by malign spirits, "ugly little demons of black disgrace," who "swarm over the mental horizon of the play.... Iago is directly or indirectly their author and originator." [1] Such was G. Wilson Knight's impressionistic claim in 1949; but Knight did not go on to draw the conclusion toward which I suspect the play drives us--that Iago himself ends up a victim of his own summoning of these evil creatures. Nor did Knight go into the provenance of these demons, except to claim that "cynicism is [Iago's] philosophy, his very life, his 'motive' in working Othello's ruin." [2] That explanation seems not to go deep enough; cynicism does not, for example, well explain Iago's amazing success. Some theory of dark assisting power seems required. . . .

GRACE IOPPOLO

Treason, Treasonous Sexuality, and the Eventful Politics of James I in Middleton's *Hengist, King of Kent* / 87

According to our current ideologies and methods of inquiry, topical "events" and the historical facts that contain or record them no longer possess value as hermeneutic signs or symbols in a literary text. As Leeds Barroll has concluded,

current historical thinking--cultural poetics, cultural materialism, and the 'new history'--itself recognizes that the physically recorded signs of past human activity are not in themselves univocal.... A grouping of records can produce narrative to be taken as 'the basic event,' but the historical 'fact' so assembled is no more real than are the structural principles that inform its production. [1]

The consequences of this dismissal of "recorded signs" for archival researchers such as theater historians and textual scholars who study Renaissance play-texts and their composition, performance, and publication "histories" have been serious. These play-texts, unlike poems or prose works, are by their very nature communal texts performed for specific audiences at specific times and venues. Play-texts therefore have a series of recorded histories that must be recognized in order to allow these texts to render their inscribed power and message. While it is true that historical facts are not always "truths" but are sometimes culturally skewed or idiosyncratic representations of events, these facts have been embedded in culture as accepted "truths."

I wish to take issue with current historical thinking and argue that the basic event has more value than its structural principles of production, especially for a theatrical text. Although archival records, including theatrical and political documents and histories, may be open to interpretation, their mere

existence insists that they be recognized as a seminal force in an author's as well as a critic's construction of theatrical texts. In this essay, I will argue that event- and fact-based inquiry into Thomas Middleton's play, *Hengist, King of Kent, or The Mayor of Queenborough*, a play about sexual treason by those most trusted to provide loyalty and allegiance, can "in fact" betray "theory." In some cases, it is only the possession of historical facts that gives a play its truth and its reality and its structural principles of production. *Hengist* is one of these cases. . . .

JAMEELA LARES

Milton and the "Office of a Pulpit" / 109

In one of his best-known statements, Milton claims that poetic "abilities, wheresoever they be found . . . are of power beside the office of a pulpit." [1] We can understand this statement--and rightly so--as an assertion of the high seriousness of poetry for Milton, in contrast to the frivolous and libidinous poetry of his time. But in this article I will argue that Milton has something even more specific in mind when he claims that the poetry can serve a function analogous to that of the pulpit. I will, in fact, be presenting evidence that it was easier to get the never-ordained Milton out of the pulpit than it was to get the pulpit out of Milton.[2]

Before we can understand how poetry can have any relation to preaching, however, we need to know how the English Reformation generally viewed the pulpit and the role of the preacher, and then the extent to which Milton shared these views. Fortunately, a great deal of evidence survives, not only to settle these questions but even to pinpoint the immediate influences on Milton's thinking about "the office of a pulpit" and its particular "power."

JOHN STEADMAN

Principles of Epic:

Problems of Definition, Renaissance and Modern / 127

"What *is* an epic, and what *are* its principles?" Three centuries ago these questions would have seemed not only answerable but inevitable and essential. Inevitable, for they raised issues of fundamental significance for poetry and criticism as rational disciplines. Essential, for they involved nothing less than the very essence of heroic poetry. How could one judge--or successfully write--an epic without first determining what an epic was or ought to be? For neoclassical poets and critics alike, ascertaining the nature and principles of the epic genre seemed imperative--a necessary prerequisite for the exercise of their arts.

Unlike a majority of twentieth-century scholars, Renaissance critics were still accustomed to thinking in terms of sharply defined and strictly differentiated species.[1] The literary genres were still "divided and distinguished worlds"--their forms seemingly as immutably fixed as Plato's ideas, their similarities and differences as inevitable as those of animal species, and their principles as universally binding as the laws of nature. Though theorists might debate what these principles and definitions actually were, and to what degree a particular epic conformed to them, few doubted that such ideal species and rules did really exist or that, with sufficient labor and intent study, they might

be discovered. With rare exceptions, the critical controversies of the period left the central assumption--the theory of genres itself--virtually unchallenged.

## BIBLIOGRAPHIC AND EDITORIAL STUDIES AND NOTES

JOHN MULRYAN

"Is my team ploughing?": The Struggle for Closure in *The Faerie Queene* 1590 (3.45) / 145

The rejected stanzas of the third book of *The Fairie Queene* conclude with a witty reference to the journey's end that also contains, in my view, several punning references to the art and labor of writing. The lines in question read as follows:

But now my teme begins to faint and fayle,  
 All waxen weary of their iournall toyle:  
 Therefore I will their sweatie yokes assoyle  
 At this same furrowes end, till a new day:  
 And ye faire Swayns, after your long turmoyle,  
 Now cease your worke, and at your pleasure play;  
 Now cease your worke; to morrow is a holy day. (st. 47a, ll. 3-9).[1]

"Iournall" is glossed as "daily" by Thomas Roche (1165 n), but the *OED* confirms that it can also refer to daily record keeping of commercial transactions. There is also, of course, a play on the word "journey." Thus Spenser's "daily" toil is to keep his writer's journal, as he plows his arduous way through the untilled land of Faery.

The references to a yoked team and "this same furrowes end" recall the inability topos employed by Chaucer's knight: "I have, God wool, a large feeld to ere, / And wayke been the oxen in my plough" (*The Knight's Tale*, 886-87). [2] But both Chaucer and Spenser may be referring to an earlier method of writing that imitated the back-and-forth movement of the plowman and his team. It is ably described by Douglas C. McMurtrie in his seminal work, *The Book: The Story of Printing and Bookmaking* . . . .

E. E. DUNCAN-JONES

Jonson's Queen Cis / 147

"The real truth about the squabble over Cis . . . why it created such animosity, will probably never be recovered." [1]

Challenged by this remark of Anne Barton's in her discussion of *The New Inn*, I looked again at the unpublished extract I made long since from the Scudamore Papers in the Public Record Office and thought that, a little supplemented, it provided a key to this small mystery. When "at last," as Jonson says, more than two years after its famously unsuccessful performance at Blackfriars in January 1629, *The New Inn* was published, Jonson printed it with a second epilogue, never delivered, in which he alludes at some length to the hiss from the audience that had greeted the name of "Cis," the chambermaid, who has the leading female part. In the printed text,

except for occasional inadvertences, "Cis" and "Cicelie" are replaced by "Pru" and "Prudence." [2]

Jonson writes as though the objection to "Cis" were merely captious, but there must have been a remonstrance that he could not ignore. He evidently made the change reluctantly, and if "Cis" is restored, it is evident that it had served Jonson's purpose better than "Pru." For this rounded character the playwright would hardly have chosen in the first place a name drawing attention to a single characteristic (Prudence). The softer sound of "Cis," "soft, debonaire and amiable Cis," "serenissimus Cis," is not unimportant. . . .

NEIL PROBST

A Topical Index to Jonson's *Discoveries* / 153

Because Ben Jonson's *Discoveries* has long been regarded as his most important work of prose, analysts have often turned to this text for any insights it might suggest about Jonson's more obviously "creative" writings, including his dramas, poems, and masques. Although *Discoveries* consists, to a large degree, of translations and adaptations from the writings of others, the work has often been thought to reflect many of the poet's own deepest interests and convictions. In fact, many parallels can be found between ideas expressed in the *Discoveries* and ideas voiced elsewhere in Jonson's works, and often the prose seems to expound on various views that Jonson otherwise only touches on or implies. Caution, of course, is often necessary in using the *Discoveries* to interpret Jonson's other works or his general state of mind. We can never be quite sure, for instance, whether he fully endorsed the views that he here translated or adapted, or whether (instead) he simply and disinterestedly noted them. Nor can we always be confident that the ideas recorded in the *Discoveries* (which seems to have been mainly a product of Jonson's final decade or so of life) are necessarily relevant to his greatest creative works, many of which were written many years earlier. Ultimately, each interpreter must decide exactly how the *Discoveries* can and should be used.

Yet the usefulness of this work nevertheless seems undeniable, which is why the absence of a convenient overview of its main topics has seemed so regrettable. We have had no handy guide to the topics that Jonson explores in his *Explorata* (to use its Latin title). . . .

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