

The Ben Jonson Journal
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HELEN OSTOVICH

Mistress and Maid: Women's Friendship in *The New Inn* / 1

"I'll bear my part, and share with thee i' the venture," Frances Lady Frampul promises her chambermaid Pru at the beginning of their escapade in Barnet (2.1.51).[1] This equal friendship between the mistress and the maid withstands severe tests through the course of Jonson's *The New Inn* (1629) and proves more stable than any bonds of kinship or sexuality revealed in the action. In fact, the platonic domestic attachment between the two women is the only intimate, fully reciprocated, and practical loyalty we see. Even the final revelation of the hidden mother-daughter link between the "Nurse"/old Lady Frampul and "Frank"/Laetitia does not disclose a similar degree of mutual support and self-awareness. The family tie seems passive and desensitized: The mother has spent the last seven years in a drunken stupor, and the child experiences no confusion with her filial or gender roles, although she has spent half her life masquerading as someone else's son. But with Frances and Pru, astonishingly, Jonson concentrates on the feminine as a positive and thoughtful influence, celebrating the female role, female audience, and female heir in an otherwise effete and diminished world. Pace Anne Barton and other believers in *The New Inn's* nostalgic glances "harking back to the vanished age of Elizabeth," [2] Jonson seems rather to be rethinking issues of gender and class in order to look forward to an ideal age where equal interdependence between men and women, instead of the traditional male-dominated hierarchy or the epicene grotesquerie of earlier satire, will prevail. The roots of that new age lie in the women's "search for a usable past"--for some precedent among the hitherto unexamined and apparently fated patterns of prior and present behavior--that would free them to develop a healthier social identity.[3]

BRANDON S. CENTERWALL

"Tell Me Who Can When a Player Dies": Ben Jonson's Epigram on Richard Burbage, and How It Was Lost to the Canon / 27

Among the holdings of the Finch Collection in the Leicestershire Record Office is the commonplace book of William Parkhurst (d. 1667), secretary to Sir Henry Wotton (1568-1639), the poet and diplomatist.[1] Collected and bound in the 1640s, it is a trove of original material, containing thirty-two letters by Donne not recorded elsewhere and the sole witness to Donne's verse letter to Sir Henry, "H. W. in Hiber: belligeranti." It was Herbert Grierson himself, editor of the monumental *Poems of John Donne*, who found Donne's verse letter in the Finch papers, which led him to comb the collection for other finds. Thus it was that he discovered the unique witness of an engaging epigram on Richard Burbage's death, attributed to Ben Jonson (fol. 256v):

Epi: B: Jo:

Tell me who can when a player dies

In which of his shapes againe hee shall rise?
 What need hee stand att the judgment throne
 Who bath a heaven and a hell of his owne?
 Then feare not Burbage heavens angry rodd,
 When thy fellows are angells and old Hemmings is God. (ll. 1-6) [2]

ROCCO CORONATO

Was It Just an Anecdote? Ben Jonson and the Eucharist, Paris 1612 / 35

In his latest work, Harold Bloom drops a revealing remark about the stark contrast between Shakespeare's obscure personal life and the ebullient adventures of "men of extraordinary intensity" like Ben Jonson and Christopher Marlowe: "they were great poets and are nearly as famous now for their lives as for their works." [1] This observation has some sense, even if we feel reluctantly estranged from Bloom's classificatory concerns. Admittedly, a large number of Jonson's fans would be in hot water if asked to tell admiration for his literary works from relish for his misadventures. A privileged spot within this anecdote's-sake tradition is occupied by Jonson's European tour (1612 to 1613) as tutor to Wat Raleigh. Two of the most recent, detailed biographies of Jonson spend only a few words on the subject, implicitly taking it as a parenthetical experience between more serious occupations at the London court and theaters. [2] Biography, however, should not remain an unresponsive subject-matter occasionally offering some unrelated scrap of weirdness or Jacobean *esprit du temps*. Although recognizing the importance of source-dotted reconstructions of the original contexts of the Jonsonian works, even the curious perspective of the Paris debate on the Eucharist might surface opposing heuristic theories.

ROBERT L. MACK

Ben Jonson's Own "Comedy of Errors": "That Witty Play," *The Case is Altered* / 47

In his "Lectures upon Shakespeare," first delivered in 1810-1811, Samuel Taylor Coleridge dismissed *The Comedy of Errors* as a farce--the only intentional specimen of that genre in our language. The distinction between farce and genuine comedy is carefully drawn. "A proper farce," Coleridge observes,

is mainly distinguished from comedy by the license allowed, and even required, in the fable, in order to produce strange and laughable situations. The story need not be probable, it is enough that it is possible. A comedy would scarcely allow even the two Antipholuses; . . . farce add(s) the two Dromios, and is justified in so doing by the laws of its end and constitution. In a word, farces commence in a postulate, which must be granted.[1]

The tendency, for many years, to study Shakespeare's comedy in terms of character helped to reinforce this view.[2] The characters of the Antipholus twins, the two Dromios, Adriana, and Luciana are all admittedly slight when compared with the more fully imagined romantic characters of the mature comedies. Indeed the very plot teleology that makes *The Comedy of Errors* such an effective drama when acted in the theater is itself so simple--so

streamlined and straightforward--that it seems to argue for those who read the play as somehow proto-Shakespearean, in a distinctly negative sense.

JAMES A. RIDDELL

Some Notes on the Printing of the Jonson Plays of 1631 / 65

In 1631 John Beale printed three of Ben Jonson's plays for Robert Allot, *Bartholmew Fayre*, *The Divell is an Asse*, and *The Staple of Newes*, all in folio.[1] Although a few copies of one or more of the plays may have been sent into the world, some by Jonson himself,[2] most remained out of sight, finally to appear about ten years later in what was to be the second volume of the second edition of Jonson's *Workes*. The plays form a somewhat unusual part of the Jonson corpus, having been printed while Jonson was still alive but showing very little sign of the care lavished on earlier printings of Jonson plays, either in the various quarto editions or in the Folio of 1616. Perhaps because of their unusual status, or perhaps because they have been numbered among Jonson's "dotages," they have not recently attracted much notice as a part of printing history; discussion of their printing, as one might expect, is to be found in individual editions of each play.[3] Very little, however, has been added to the Herford and Simpson descriptions of the plays--which occur in several places, chiefly in their "Survey of the Text" in volume 9 (85-122) of *Ben Jonson*. [4] In these notes my purpose is to emend and to augment some of the observations of Herford and Simpson and of some more recent editors; I shall first consider some common characteristics of the three plays, and then turn to each one separately.

DOUGLAS BROOKS

"If He Be at His Book, Disturb Him Not": The Two Jonson Folios of 1616 / 81

Ben Jonson's 1616 folio has figured prominently in recent studies of early modern authorship and print culture.[1] For many scholars, Jonson's folio stands as a singular achievement of emergent authorial awareness, especially with regard to the meaning of print. Joseph Loewenstein asserts that "the 1616 *Workes* marks a major event in the history of what one might call the bibliographic ego." Richard C. Newton singles out Jonson as the poet/author who "in an important sense 'invents' (discovers) the printed book by using the book to distinguish what is his." For Harold Love, "in the 1616 folio Jonson produced one of the great typographical monuments of his age." [2] In this essay, I want to refine the current view of the 1616 folio's significance by suggesting that textual analysis of the 1616 *Workes* reveals a significant fissure in the monument to Jonsonian authorship that the folio has come to represent; and I want to begin to account for this fissure by reconsidering the concept of authorship itself.

DENNIS QUINN

Pastimes of the Prince: Hal and Eutrapelia / 103

*Sing care away with sport and play
Pastime is all our pleasure.
--"Heart's Ease"*

King Henry VIII wrote a lyric that might well have served as the theme song for the young prince who was to become King Henry V. Here are the first fourteen lines:

Pastime with good company
 I love and shall, until I die.
 Grudge who list, but none deny!
 So God be pleased, thus live will I.
 For my pastance,
 Hunt, sing and dance,
 My heart is set.
 All goodly sport
 For my comfort
 Who shall me let?

Youth must have some dalliance,
 Of good or ill some pastance.
 Company me thinks the best,
 All thoughts and fancies to digest;
 ("Pastime")

Apart from its lyrical charm the poem is a virtual compendium of the theme that is the subject of my paper. The pastimes of nobles are dancing, hunting, and singing, but above all "good company." These pleasant activities belong especially to youth, which must have "dalliance," a word that usually implies idle, frivolous activities, in contrast to serious business such as war, as in the prologue of act 2 of *Henry the Fifth*:

Silken dalliance in the wardrobe lies:
 Now thrive the armourers. (2-3)

The company enjoyed in pastimes, however, says Henry, "digests" "All thoughts and fancies." "Thoughts" here means cares, troubles, or mental afflictions, as in the Gospel's "Take no thought for the morrow" (Matt. 6:34). Samuel Purchas tells us that the explorer "Soto died of thought in Florida" (*OED*). "Fancies" in Henry's poem probably means troubling imaginings or delusions, and "digest" means dissipates. In short, "pastance" (from the French *passer temps*) among agreeable companions brings relief from the burdens of life.

WILLIAM D. MELANEY

Spenser's Allegory of Temperance: A Study in Comparative Poetics / 115

In this paper, I wish to address a central paradox in the traditional interpretation of Edmund Spenser's *Faerie Queene*, Book II, canto xii, originating in a discrepancy between Spenser's stated intentions as an epic writer and the mode of presentation that defines his poetic objectives.[1] The paradox cannot be resolved as long as allegory is generally conceived as a public mode of address. Close attention to the rhetorical structure of Spenser's allegory of Temperance, however, indicates that the alleged paradox involves a mistaken application of a literary category rather than a genuine insight into literature.

The apparent conflict between ethics and rhetoric will be discussed on the basis of Spenser's understanding of the Renaissance epic and his relationship to classical tradition and in terms of the symbolic structure of Guyon's final adventure. While my argument involves a comparative examination of Spenser's literary sources, it will ultimately suggest that his poetry contains a nonmimetic component, which, I feel, further supports my interpretation of his private use of allegory.

STELLA P. REVARD

The Politics of Cowley's *Anacreontiques* / 131

During the years that the Puritans held power in England there was a resurgence of interest in Anacreon and the *anacreontea*, the collection of hemiambic poems attributed to the ancient Greek writer that Henri Estienne had first published in 1554, poems that celebrated the old poet Anacreon and his determined pursuit of love, wine, and song. After their initial publication on the continent Ronsard and the Pleiade poets had imitated the *anacreontea* in French, and several neo-Latin writers had fashioned Latin versions. [1] Subsequently, Spenser, Jonson, and other Elizabethan and Jacobean poets had turned their hands to English translations and imitations. While Anacreon lapsed somewhat in popularity in the early seventeenth century, the *anacreontea* was rediscovered anew by the Cavalier poets of the 1640s and 1650s--Robert Herrick, Richard Lovelace, Charles Cotton, John Cleveland, Alexander Brome, and especially Thomas Stanley and Abraham Cowley, who made him their particular champion as the days of Charles I and his Cavalier poets were passing. Anacreon was not (ostensibly) to come again into favor until after the Restoration, when a new set of poets began once more to sing of wine and roses.

It is a curious phenomena that during the height of the Civil War and throughout the Protectorate, poets (most of them royalist) translated, adapted, and imitated the *anacreontea*. We might in one sense put it all down to nostalgia, for Anacreon had been identified with the Cavalier or courtly life-style and its pursuit of sexual pleasure. So in translating and adapting Anacreon, many of these dispossessed courtiers seem only to be longing for a life-style that was passing away in the wake of the Puritan ascendancy. Yet there is something in many of these translations and adaptations that makes them more than nostalgic old bar tunes; rather, they are a form of political propaganda, a way of speaking out for king and for the royalist cause in a time when such speaking out was unpopular. In some writers this hint of royalist sympathy is only the faintest of undertones; in others it is the very *leitmotif* of the *anacreontic* collection.

BIBLIOGRAPHIC AND EDITORIAL STUDIES AND NOTES

JOHN BURDETT AND JONATHAN WRIGHT

Ben Jonson in Recent General Scholarship, 1972-1996 / 151

Since 1972, the four hundredth anniversary of Ben Jonson's birth, scholarly discussion of Jonson has surged. Unfortunately, however, the standard printed bibliographies of Jonson scholarship are now increasingly dated. The volume covering the poems and prose ceases coverage with 1978, while the volume devoted to the plays ends in 1975. Neither volume deals with

Jonson's masques, and although W. L. Godshalk's valuable essay surveys modern commentary on nearly all Jonson's works, it was published in 1977 (see Lo77 below). Annual bibliographies, such as the one issued by the MLA, do survey criticism focused specifically on Jonson, but such bibliographies cannot indicate in any great detail which of Jonson's works an author discusses. An article nominally devoted to *Volpone*, for instance, may mention many other works, but such additional coverage obviously cannot be specified in the annual standard bibliographies.

The present article, then, is intended as the first installment of a much more detailed effort to trace recent commentary on Jonson's writings. It focuses on more than three hundred books published since 1972--books in which Jonson is discussed but in which he is *not* the primary focus. Most Jonson scholars will be familiar with (and even have handy) many monographs devoted chiefly to their poet, but the present survey is deliberately restricted to books in which he figures but in which he is not the sole concern. We thus hope to make recent commentary on Jonson by "non-Jonsonians" more easily accessible to Jonson scholars. Although we attempted to include as many "major" studies as possible, we also deliberately sought out commentary in less-expected places. We limited ourselves to a little more than three hundred books mainly for reasons of space; in later installments we hope to make our coverage even more comprehensive.

THEATRICAL PERFORMANCES

PETER HAPPÉ

The Alchemist and *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme*: Folly and Illusion / 181

The performances on a large scale of these two plays during the autumn of 1996, one in London and the other in Paris, have given a rare opportunity of comparing two great seventeenth-century comic talents on the stage. Because Bill Alexander, working with the Royal National Theatre and the Birmingham Repertory Theatre Company, directed *The Alchemist* in the Olivier, he took on the huge dimensions of an auditorium, which at times seems more like a classical amphitheater, for a play that rarely has more than four people on stage at a time: indeed the play is constructed to take advantage of the premise of not allowing the characters to meet one another.[1] Jerome Savary's revival of *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme* was done in an arena quite as big: the Salle Jean Vilar at the Théâtre National de Chaillot--but this play, from its origins, was always meant to be "un spectacle." It was called a "comédie-ballet" on the title page.[2] But in spite of the underlying differences, to which I shall return, the exposure of the folly in which both dramatists are engaged brings them close together, and also brings to our attention the mystery of the illusion by which the audience is enticed to experience the play world and to be involved in its comic dilemmas, which may not be simply funny. In this brief account I should like to look at some ways in which the folly is presented and exposed and at the ambiguity of theatrical illusion in these productions.

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