

Self-Possessed Jonson: Reason, Will, Ownership, Power

Tobin Nellhaus

Toward the end of the English Renaissance, changes in economic and communication practices lay the foundations of a new concept of self that is now recognizably "modern." I will call this concept "self-possessed individuality," a phrase that alludes to three elements that were fused into the individual: reason, ownership, and will. This conception of subjectivity (or at least of male subjectivity) underlies various ideas in modern political, economic, and social thought, such as the rational actor, private property, and personal freedom. One of the architects of the new self-possessed subject, if in some respects an unwitting one, was Ben Jonson.

The self-possessed individual differed in several respects from the idea of the self predominant during the Middle Ages.¹ Broadly speaking, in medieval discourse action tended to be understood as encompassing or ensnaring the person, rather than as being controlled by personal agency. Will was a matter of the passions, an unruly force to be governed and disciplined by the rational intellect rather than served by it. And the notion of the individual person as a discrete, independent being in the modern sense basically did not exist at all: individuals existed only insofar as they referred to and participated in universals, most importantly Divinity. Such corporatism surfaces in numerous aspects of medieval culture, including the perception of people as belonging to types or social categories (serfs, knights, nobility, etc.), and the institutional authority of the Church over interpretation of the Bible. Toward the end of the Middle Ages and the beginning of the Renaissance, a number of practical and discursive changes shifted medieval conceptions of selfhood in "modern" directions, slowly establishing a notion of discrete individuality, aligning reason with will, and sealing both with the imperatives of property; but the major transitions occurred in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries.

The union of individual reason, will, and possession appears in various aspects of Jonson's works, such as the dramatic structures of his plays, the

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theatrical strategies he used for managing performance and audience reception, his use of publication, and the antitheatricality many of these strategies imply. I will sketch the way self-possessed individuality is manifested in Jonson's writings, but I will present only a few brief examples so that I can consider the transformations in economics and communications that led to its formation.

Timothy Reiss has shown that late-Renaissance writers like Francis Bacon conceived the self as a seeker after knowledge, whose path led to personal possessions.² This use of reason to serve ownership is apparent throughout Jonson's major comedies. In *Bartholomew Fair*, Quarlous cunningly obtains and alters documents that he uses to marry a wealthy widow and to commit extortion. *The Alchemist* shows Subtle, Dol, and Face using their knowledge and quick thinking to extract value out of their dupes, and later Lovewit gains knowledge and uses his wits to possess all that the rogues had secured. In *Epiccoene*, Dauphine and his friends concoct schemes to make Dauphine's uncle Morose grant Dauphine his inheritance. Volpone uses various disguises and ruses to gull people, entrancing the audience with his wily, and highly possessive, individuality.³ L. C. Knights' argument about Jonson's anti-acquisitive attitude is well known by now.⁴ Yet the possessive individuals among Jonson's characters are exciting, even if they are villainous, for they lie at the center of his dramaturgy, supplying the energy that drives the plays.

Strength and fixity of will is another central feature of Jonson's characters; once they set a goal or choose a way of behaving, they adhere to it, even insist upon it. Self-possessed individuals cannot change, or they will not possess the self they had: their identity depends on fixity.⁵ Jonson's characters often appear frozen and unitary. They do not "grow" or "deepen" as Shakespeare's do: if they change at all, they often diminish or disappear. At the end of *Bartholomew Fair*, Zeal-of-the-Land Busy and Adam Overdo discover they are out on a limb that allows them only to retreat from their excess into speechlessness. The changes wrought in them seem to tear away an affectation accreted around each character's surface rather than quell a humoural urge. Often at a play's end characters like the dupes in *The Alchemist* are simply shooed off, with little sign that their future will be any different from their past; Jonson seldom leads the audience to imagine that these characters have either future or past.⁶ In *Every Man Out of His Humour*, so little does Jonson abide transformation that, as soon as characters are booted out of their humour, they are removed from the play. The climactic discoveries of *Epiccoene*, *Volpone*, and *The New Inn* simply reveal what already existed unrecognized. Those who embrace transformation, Jonas Barish shows, Jonson presents as either gulls or rogues; the latter often become on-stage actors, transforming themselves like Proteus in the alchemy of performance.⁷

These characterizations illuminate the neoclassical unity of time, which was perhaps the most important unity to Jonson, in view of his emphasis on it in the Prologue to *Every Man In His Humour*. The unity of time functioned to stabilize identity, removing the possibility of showing repetition or historical change. This restriction meant that people need not be shown to differ from themselves. Changes could occur in drama, and indeed were called for by Aristotle's *Poetics*. Such changes had to be of a kind that could be completed within one day, and so could always be comprehended by a unified subject, assimilated, as Peter Womack puts it, "into the unbroken consciousness which is sustained between one sleep and the next."⁸

Even without owning objects, every individual possesses a name and a body. Jonson frequently assigned an identity to his characters by using indicative names, such as Knowell, Macilente, Morose, Corvino, Face, Wasp, Engine, and Goodstock. Jonson's characters generally live up to their names in one manner or another. The name becomes a sort of definition, revealing a stable, unchanging essence. Few characters adopt several names; Face's many names signify his lack of any particular self, his opportunistic malleability, his protean nature as a kind of actor.

Like names, a person's physiological sex didn't change. It served as a kind of permanent mark or inscription allowing the onlooker to certify identity, which was supposed to be reflected in clothing. For Jonson, a character whose gender was uncertain, like Epicoene and the puppet Dionysius, was a kind of monster of theatricality and change. Of course, gender marked not only an identity but also the body's function in the circulation of property. In *Bartholomew Fair*, marriages to Grace or Dame Purecraft transfer their property to men; Win Littlewit and Dame Overdo become sexual commodities themselves by joining a prostitution ring. The roles of Epicoene, Celia in *Volpone*, Dol Common and Dame Pliant in *The Alchemist*, and in some ways Livia in *Sejanus* show that the exchange of women for/as property is a central plot motif in many of Jonson's plays.

Jonson's opposition to change and sexual masquerade hints at an antitheatricality that turns up forcefully in Jonson's efforts to control performance and audience response. The Induction to *Bartholomew Fair* attempts to exert this control by offering the audience a mock contract stipulating that

every man heere, exercise his owne Judgement, and not censure by *Contagion*, or upon *trust*, from anothers voice, or face, that sits by him, be he never so first, in the *Commission of Wit*: As also, that if hee bee fixt and settled in his censure, that what hee approves, or not approves to day, hee will doe the same to morrow. . . . It is further

covenanted . . . [that] no person here, is to expect more than hee knowes, or better ware than a *Fayre* will affoord: neyther to looke backe to the sword and buckler-age of *Smithfield*, but content himselfe with the present. . . .

. . . it is finally agreed, by the foresaid hearers, and *spectators*, that they neyther in themselves conceale, not suffer by them to be concealed any *State-decipherer*, or politique *Picklocke* of the *scene*, so solemnly ridiculous, as to search out, who was meant by the *Gingerbread-woman*, who by the *Hobby-horse-man*, who by the *Costard-monger*, nay, who by their *Wares*. . . . And though the *Fayre* be not kept in the same Region, that some here, perhaps, would have it, yet thinke that therein the *Author* hath observ'd a speciall *Decorum*, the place being as durty as *Smithfield*, and as stinking every whit. (*BF Ind.* 97-160)⁹

In short, the spectators are supposed to form their opinions individually, expect something approximating realism (rather than nostalgia or exoticism), and not treat the characters as somehow representing actual people in Jacobean public life. In effect Jonson asks the audience members to maintain the unities of time, place, and person in their own thinking, as he does in the play. In addition, within Jonson's plays characters who we may readily perceive as representing the author frequently provide criticism and commentaries on the action; at the edges of the performance, Jonson framed the plays with prologues and epilogues to guide the audience. Through such devices Jonson displayed his commitment to authorial power, in particular, control over interpretation. The spectators and characters are not the only figures in the theater subjected to Jonson's struggle for authorial control. As Joseph Loewenstein points out, the Induction "succeeds in reducing the actors to mediators. Publication completes the displacement of the performers both as a representational and as an economic fact."¹⁰

Loewenstein's comment suggests that for Jonson, the printed versions of his plays were "truer," more significant, or more fully his intended products than their performance. Most printed plays of the time tried to assert closeness to their stage productions, but several of Jonson's published scripts announced their distance from the theater, by stating for example that the 1600 Quarto of *Every Man Out of His Humour* contained "more than hath been Publickely Spoken or Acted," or by removing all material written by another, as he did with *Sejanus*. Still more significant is how Jonson's plays came to be printed at all. Scripts were usually considered the property of the theater company that performed them, and the manager seldom let the script out of his hands for fear that public familiarity with the text, or rival productions by other troupes, would reduce the

company's audience. But Jonson took his scripts directly to the print shop. In this manner his court masques sought a public beyond that of their few Whitehall performances, and several of his plays found an appreciative readership as literary works despite being rejected by their theatrical spectators. By publishing his work Jonson could circumvent the actors, who could act badly or alter the play, and he wrested authorship of the play away from the collectivity of the theater company, into his solitary possession. Jonson made authorship into a taut bond between texts and an individual self, a personal intentionality. For these reasons and more, several writers have justly described Jonson's use of print as antitheatrical.¹¹

One index of how closely Jonson expected to be tied to his texts is the care that he exercised over their printed form. He attempted to standardize spelling and systematize punctuation; he provided annotations and scene divisions; he revised plays for publication and corrected the proofs of at least a large portion of his *Works*.¹² He expected all writers worth their salt to expend similar efforts: in his commonplace book, called *Timber, or Discoveries*, Jonson advised writers to "First mind it well, then pen it, then examine it, then amend it; and you may bee in the better hope of doing reasonably well" (*Disc* 2257-59). His commendatory poem for the publication of Shakespeare's Folio warned that "Who casts to write a living line, must sweat" (*UV* 26.59); but he also wrote of the Bard,

I remember, the Players have often mentioned it as an honour to Shakespeare, that in his writing, (whatsoever he penn'd) he never blotted out [a] line. My answer hath beene, Would he had blotted a thousand. (Disc 646-50)

The printed text became the bearer of literary perfection—complete, unalterable, "autonomous."¹³

In this fixed and perfected state, the text was free to meet its audience. Jonson would not let it loose otherwise, for he felt that texts were highly vulnerable.

When we doe give, ALPHONSO, to the light
 A worke of ours, we part with our owne right;
 For, then, all mouthes will judge, and their owne way:
 The learn'd have no more priviledge, than the lay.
(*Epig* 131.1-4)

He often had to defend his writings from misinterpretations, such as those which would aim his satires at specific persons, and those which would accuse his texts of political seditiousness. For example, after *Sejanus* led Jonson to be investigated for popery and treason, he wrote in the Epistle accompanying *Volpone* that many people

professe to have a key for the decyphering of every thing: but let wise and noble persons take heed how they be too credulous, or give leave to these invading interpreters, to bee overfamiliar with their fames, who cunningly, and often, utter their owne virulent malice, under other mens simplest meanings. (*Volp Epist.* 66-70)

But Jonson defended his text with more than protestations against past wrongs. He actively attempted to shape, even force, the way the reader would interpret his plays. In addition to commentaries provided by characters, Jonson supplied the printed plays with prefaces, character descriptions, plot summaries, or annotations to mold the reader's reception of the script.¹⁴

The greatest dangers to Jonson's perfected text were those elements of the theater which violated his will, possession, and reason. He railed against the audience's inability to understand his works and the scholarship that went into them, and complained bitterly of the interpretations that spectators forced upon his writings and the poor performances that actors perpetrated upon his scripts, transgressing his intentionality. And most crucially, Jonson made the play his personal possession, for him to print or obliterate as he chose. Richard Newton observes that Jonson's

proprietary rights, established by his separation of texts from performance and by his insistence on texts as the products of professional enterprise and as objects of study, define them as *his* with an assurance new in literary life. In this he is distinctly ahead of his time, for authors were not to gain a legal right to their copy until 1711. But with Jonson it becomes possible to talk seriously about plagiarism and textual propriety.¹⁵

Jonson shows clearly that intellectual property existed as an attitude well before it existed as an economic reality. The meaning of the play became in effect something that Jonson possessed privately, and in order to understand the play the audience had to discover the author's intentions. Ultimately the text was his: not a part of the stock that the theater company collectively controlled, not a tissue of meanings which the audience's participation helped to create.¹⁶

The rise of this possessive, willful, reasoning self was not fortuitous. It was closely connected to two developments, one concerning an aspect of capitalism, the other involving the rise of print culture. Capitalism was replacing the personal relations of the feudal order, in which contractual ties and the exchange of land rights for personal services were achieved through oaths sealed ritualistically, with legal and monetary relations modeled on and often using written contracts. Capitalism tended to represent all social relations as text-like contracts, positing property exchange as a free act between equals. Money, written contracts, and exchange started to take a central role in society and ideology. Henceforth, property would be exchanged not by means of a ceremony or ritual, but according to terms and procedures stipulated on paper, or if uttered orally, imagined in terms of inscription.

Thus in *The Alchemist* Jonson presents the project undertaken by Subtle, Face, and Dol as an entrepreneurial, money-making enterprise; as a democratic republic that in Act 1 is threatened with civil war; and as an oral contract, as we can see in Dol's reprimand to Subtle—how dare he talk, she demands,

as if you, onely, had
The poulder to project with? and the worke
Were not begun out of equalitie?
The venter *tripartite*? All things in common?
(*Alc* 1.132-35)¹⁷

Later in the play, Face calls their arrangement an "indenture tripartite, / twixt SUBTLE, DOL, and FACE" (*Alc* 5.4.131-32). Subtle's claim to primacy is based on his reading and espousing the alchemical texts—he claims to be the brains behind the operation. Face, the go-between, is the more electrifying and heinous character, who readily breaks the contract with Dol and Subtle, only to form a new contract with his master, Lovewit. At the end of the play, in fact, he makes yet another contract, this one with the audience:

I put my selfe
On you, that are my countrey: and this pelfe [loot],
Which I have got, if you doe quit me, rests
To feast you often, and invite new ghests.
(*Alc* 5.5.162-65)¹⁸

Contractual relations and the authority of the written word are even more central to *Bartholomew Fair*. The play begins with the formal compact between Jonson and the audience; much of the action turns on a marriage license

authorizing Cokes to wed Grace, but it is stolen at Quarlous's request so he might alter it and marry Grace himself; Trouble-All will do nothing without a warrant signed by Justice Overdo; Overdo gives an open warrant to someone he thinks is Trouble-All, but is actually Quarlous in disguise, and Quarlous uses this warrant to extort money from Grace and Winwife. Grace herself makes an oral contract with Quarlous and Winwife to marry whichever of them wrote the name in her notebook that is circled by the first passerby. Logically enough, Jonson set the entire play in the most commercial location of any of his works, the Fair. Don Wayne points out the connection of all this activity to the self-possessed individual when he observes that "in *Bartholomew Fair* there is an unmistakable tension between, on the one hand, the traditional moral doctrine of social obligation according to status, and, on the other hand, the more modern principles of rational self-interest and voluntary contractual obligation."¹⁹

But the ultimate contract is the legacy, the *will*, made in sound mind to dispense property after death. Wills conjoin intentionality, ownership, and reason in a legal text; and inheritance or its possibility is the motivating element in several of Jonson's comedies. In *Epicoene*, Morose is the butt of various practical jokes because he plans to disinherit his nephew Dauphine. Volpone lives off of others' desire to be his heir. At the beginning of *The Staple of News*, Pennyboy Junior obtains his inheritance when his father falsely reports himself dead in order to test his son, but the test only becomes valid when the father returns and the son rescues the estate from a grasping lawyer. These plays make legacies the goal or the instrument of individuals who combine cleverness, possessiveness, and willfulness within themselves.

From this perspective it is worth reconsidering the question of names. It was slowly becoming more important for a person (at least, a middle- or upper-class person) to write his or her own name.²⁰ It was (and is) crucial to be able to write a signature in order to validate legal documents, such as the contracts so indispensable to capitalism. The unity of writing and the unity of self were closely bound together through the signature or autograph, the writing of the name of the self. It is the self-possessing individual who can enter into contracts, gain power, acquire knowledge, and reap its rewards. Jonson's decision in 1604 to respell his own name without an *h* appears to have been a tactic in his efforts to separate himself from his origins and from more commonplace Johnsons. It was a sign (a signature?) of his creation of an authorial identity, extended from print to orthography.

The proper and improper use of a contract becomes, in Jonson's hands, a metaphor of proper and improper interpretations of texts. Although in *Bartholomew Fair* the misappropriations of authorizing texts are not altogether malevolent (the play is, after all, a comedy), nevertheless they do violate the

meanings authorized by the texts' authors, or supplant the authorized author with an unauthorized one. Such activities were of course commonplace in Renaissance print culture, as texts often were published under false names or were issued without the writer's permission, and readers could subject texts to forced interpretations or plain slander.

Compounding the effects upon subjectivity of capitalism in general were the influences of one of the earliest capitalist enterprises: printing, which involved venture capital, mass production, and commodification. Printing encouraged the unification of reason, will, and property in the self-possessed individual in several ways. It expanded the practice of silent reading, which encouraged individual interpretation of texts. The individualization of understanding and the use of texts as a means of developing knowledge was incorporated in a variety of cultural practices, such as Protestantism. Jonson made a similar call for individual interpretation when he asked the audience for independent judgment in the *Induction to Bartholomew Fair*.²¹

Such a unification of knowledge and reasoning with individualism also became part of attitudes toward rhetoric and style. In medieval and early Renaissance rhetoric, style was supposed to be appropriate to one's theme and audience. Jonson was part of a movement away from this approach: he argued that style should reflect the character of the speaker or writer. Translating a passage from Vives, Jonson wrote,

Language most shoves a man: speake that I may see thee. It springs out of the most retired, and inmost parts of us, and is the Image of the Parent of it, the mind. No glasse renders a mans forme, or likenesse, so true as his speech. Nay, it is likened to a man; and as we consider feature, and composition in a man; so words in *Language*. (*Disc* 2031-36)

As a form in which self becomes manifest, language should be used to present a realistic portrayal of characters' mental status in all its facets—emotional, intellectual, and moral. Verbal style should correspond to its speaker, that is, its most immediate speaker: each fictional character should converse in a particular manner, and the author's own voice could appear either through direct address or narration, or indirectly through one of the characters or the work as a totality. Thus Jonson complained that Sir Philip Sidney, like certain other poets, "did not keep a Decorum in making every one speak as well as himself" (*Conv* 18-19).²² Sidney represented his own merits through the quality of his writing, but he forgot that the goal of depiction was to represent the fictional character, not

himself. For Jonson it was crucial to make language befit the speaker, rather than the audience or the ultimate moral value of the subject.

This shift to individualistic style was promoted by another effect of printing. Medieval and early Renaissance concepts of style had a strong rhetorical orientation derived from the classical oratorical tradition. This in turn was grounded in the exigencies of manuscript culture, in which the educated often needed to be proficient at oral persuasion (such as in academic debate, law, or preaching). To be able to present a set speech without the benefit of writing, one had to be able to remember and organize what one had to say. Oral performance thus often used rhythm, stock phrases, and other forms of repetition, as well as rhetorical figures entailing balance and repetition (such as anaphora, parison, isocolon, chiasmus, and climax).²³ These concerns underlie the early Renaissance development of verse and Euphuistic prose.

Printing undercut the need for rhetorical figures and verse: words could easily be preserved on a page instead of in memory. Rhetorical training and techniques could be dispensed with; the "unmemorable" speech of everyday life required no special learning and appeared to reflect the spontaneous workings of the mind. Prose therefore could supplant verse. Moreover, Jonson, who felt that speech was a window into a person's nature and needed to represent reality accurately in order to satirize it more thoroughly, was concerned to present the natural functioning of his characters' minds, especially the twisting, tumbling quality of his characters' thought. For example, here are a couple of Downright's lines:

Let him [Wellbred] spend, and spend, and domineere, till his heart
ake; an' hee thinke to bee reliev'd by me, when he is got into one
o'your citie pounds, the Counters, he has the wrong sow by the eare,
ifaith: and claps his dish at the wrong mans dore. I'l lay my hand o'
my halfe-peny, e're I part with't, to fetch him out, I'le assure him.
(*EMI* 2.1.75-81)

The metaphors shift; "the Counters" (jail) is interpolated associatively; the first sentence has an ellipsis leaving out a phrase that might explain why Wellbred would have "the wrong sow by the ear," but that absent phrase is alluded to in the second sentence (Downright expects that if Wellbred landed in jail, he would ask Downright for bail or debt payment). All this makes for muddy reading—but the whirling and fuming of Downright's mind become clear on stage. The example is perhaps more than usually convoluted, but it is one that Barish would find reasonably representative of Jonson's style, particularly in the prose comedies. Jonson used various strategies to "dislocate symmetry and thus create

the illusion of an absence of rhetoric" in order to represent natural, everyday speech and give the impression of spontaneity, in what Barish calls a "Baroque style."²⁴ (In Jonson's verse plays, a similar function is served through frequent enjambment.) The "Baroque" here is far more than a profusion of ornamentation: it constructs an epistemological relation between speaker and utterance, letting the audience know characters' qualities through their language. By the same token, Jonson often hinted that his writings taken as wholes could be understood as representations of his mind, embodiments of his authorial intentions. Individual speeches may be uttered by particular characters, but the plays were "by Jonson."

What Jonson signed his name to, particularly his literary products, were in effect his property. Such possessiveness was encouraged by capitalistic notions of selfhood, but the possession itself was made possible by printing. To have knowledge meant to have books on the shelf and in the head: it was a matter of possession and self-possession. Jonson opposed the notion of public domain, insisting on his private possession of the words and meaning of his text; he enforced a shift from corporate control over interpretation (such as the Church attempted to exercise over the Bible in the Middle Ages) to individual and authorial control. In short, Jonson's authorial, self-possessed self was based on *writing*—the signing of contracts, and the composition of publishable texts as a profession. Jonson thus printed his *Works* as textual evidence of his self-possession, his authority and mastery over his own meaning, the meanings he owned.

The basic elements of the modern self—the union of knowledge, possession, and will in the individual—have continued to the present day, just as capitalism and printing have continued. But photocopying, software pirating, and video and sound re-recording have created a challenge to intellectual private property. This challenge is likely to grow. Perhaps it will eventually make the individual possession of knowledge obsolete. But whether a less individualistic concept of power over meaning can fill its place is not, of course, knowledge that I possess.

Notes

1. See the survey in Timothy J. Reiss, *The Discourse of Modernism* (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1982) 55-107.
2. Reiss 190; on modern (post-Renaissance) subjectivity, see also 35-36, 58-59, 144, 206, 307-9, 319.
3. See also Lawrence Venuti, "Transformations of City Comedy: A Symptomatic Reading," *Assays* 3 (1985): 104-10.
4. L. C. Knights, *Drama and Society in the Age of Jonson* (1937; New York: Norton, 1968) 188-92, 200-27.
5. On Jonson's antipathy to movement and change, his ideal of stasis, see Jonas Barish, "Jonson and the Loathèd Stage," *The Antitheatrical Prejudice* (Berkeley: U of California P, 1981) 135, 143-44; and Thomas Greene, *The Light in Troy: Imitation and Discovery in Renaissance Poetry* (New Haven: Yale UP, 1982) 276-77.
6. See also Gail Kern Paster, "Ben Jonson's Comedy of Limitation," *Studies in Philology* 72 (1975): 61.
7. Barish, "Jonson and the Loathèd Stage" 142, 145-48; Alvin B. Kernan, "Alchemy and Acting: The Major Plays of Ben Jonson," *Studies in the Literary Imagination* 6 (1973): 11 and passim; R. L. Smallwood, "'Here, in the Friars': Immediacy and Theatricality in *The Alchemist*," *Review of English Studies*, ns 32 (1981): 145-46.
8. Peter Womack, *Ben Jonson* (New York: Basil Blackwell, 1986) 40.
9. All references to Jonson's works are to C. H. Herford, Simpson, and Evelyn Simpson eds., *Ben Jonson*, 11 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon P, 1925-52). Citations will be made in the text using the following abbreviations: *The Alchemist* (*Alc*), *Bartholomew Fair* (*BF*), *Conversations with William Drummond of Hawthornden* (*Conv*), *Epicoene* (*Epi*), *Epigrams* (*Epig*), *Every Man In His Humour* (*EMI*), *Every Man Out of His Humour* (*EMO*), *Sejanus* (*Sej*), *The Staple of News* (*SN*), *Timber, or Discoveries* (*Disc*), *Ungathered Verse* (*UV*), *Volpone* (*Volp*).
10. Joseph Loewenstein, "The Script in the Marketplace," *Representations* 12 (1985): 107-8.
11. For extensive discussions of Jonson's use of print, see Herford, Simpson, and Simpson 9:13-16, 44-73; Loewenstein 101-14; Newton 31-55; Barish, "Jonson and the Loathèd Stage" passim; Richard C. Newton, "Jonson and the (Re-) Invention of the Book," *Classic and Cavalier: Essays on Jonson and the Sons of Ben*, ed. Claude J. Summers and Ted-Larry Pebworth (Pittsburgh: U of Pittsburgh P, 1982) 31-55; Timothy Murray, *Theatrical Legitimation: Allegories of Genius in Seventeenth Century England and France* (New Yorks: Oxford UP, 1987) chaps. 2-5; Richard Helgerson, *Self-Crowned Laureates: Spenser, Jonson, Milton, and the Literary System* (Madison: U of Wisconsin P, 1983) chap. 3; Jeffrey Portnoy, *The Transition to Print: Editorial Presence and the Literary Community*, diss., Emory U, 1988, chap. 3; and see James Kenneth Bracken, *William Stansby's Early Career and the Publication of Ben Jonson's Folio in 1616*, diss., U of South Carolina, 1983, chap. 11.
12. Evidently he corrected the first quarter of the *Works* extensively, the next two quarters rather less, and the remainder hardly at all, presumably because he became engrossed in other projects: see Bracken 180.
13. Newton 35.
14. See also the works cited in note 11.
15. Newton 44-45.
16. See also Don E. Wayne, "Drama and Society in the Age of Jonson: An Alternative View," *Renaissance Drama*, ns 13 (1982): 108; Alexander Leggatt, *Ben Jonson: His Vision and His Art*

(London: Methuen, 1981) 236, 248-50; Murray 95-96; and especially George E. Rowe, Jr., "Ben Jonson's Quarrel with the Audience and Its Renaissance Contexts," *Studies in Philology* 81 (1984): 438-60 passim.

17. See also *Alc* 1.82, 110.

18. See also Venuti 104-7; Wayne 112-20.

19. Wayne 104.

20. See Jonathan Goldberg, *Writing Matter: From the Hands of the English Renaissance* (Stanford UP, 1990) 233-44; Lawrence Stone, "The Education Revolution in England, 1560-1640," *Past and Present* 28 (1964): 43-44; David Cressy, *Literacy and the Social Order: Reading and Writing in Tudor and Stuart England* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1980) 25, 34, 56-61.

21. The most notable books on the effects of printing are Elizabeth L. Eisenstein, *The Printing Press as an Agent of Change*, 2 vols. (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1979), which is unfortunately marred by a degree of technological determinism; and Lucien Paul Victor Febvre and Hanri-Jean Martin, *The Coming of the Book: The Impact of Printing 1450-1800*, trans. David Gerard, ed. Geoffrey Nowell-Smith and David Wootton (London: Verso, 1976).

22. See also *Conv* 64-65 for a similar statement regarding Guarini, and *Conv* 611-12 where it is applied to Sidney, Guarini, and Lucan.

23. See Brian Vickers, "Shakespeare's Use of Rhetoric," *A New Companion to Shakespeare Studies*, ed. Kenneth Muir and S. Schoenbaum (London: Cambridge UP, 1971) 86-91, and Ruth H. Finnegan, *Oral Poetry: Its Nature, Significance, and Social Context* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1977) 90-109, 127-33.

24. Jonas Barish, *Ben Jonson and the Language of Prose Comedy*, (New York: Norton, 1970) 2, 49. The fortunes of prose comedy fluctuated in the years leading to the civil war; but when theater was re-authorized in 1660, prose became the norm for new comedies; see *ibid.*, 280, 285.

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