SELF-PORTRAYAL IN THE PLAYS OF BEN JONSON

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SELF-PORTRAYAL IN THE PLAYS OF BEN JONSON

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INTRODUCTION

In this study of Ben Jonson, my purpose has been two-fold. I have attempted to discover to what extent Ben Jonson revealed himself in his plays; then I have tried to explain how this self-portrayal has been effected. In my research on this subject, I find that the evidence of self-portrayal, except in one character--Horace in The Poetaster--, is a controversial question among critics. Though all concede that Horace acts as a mouthpiece for Jonson,[1] the degree to which Horace represents the author is not unanimously agreed upon. Furthermore though critics have made assertions that Horace is Jonson or that Horace resembles Jonson, I have found only two who attempt to explain their assertions or show in what respects the character in the play is consistent with the nature of the author.[2]

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[1]This opinion is expressed in the following works: C. H. Herford and Percy Simpson, Ben Jonson, Vol. I, pp. 418-422; Charles R. Baskerville, English Elements in Jonson's Early Comedies, pp. 508-510; Cambridge History of English Literature, Vol. VI, pp. 20, 45; E. K. Chambers, The Elizabethan Stage, Vol. III, p. 365; William Gifford in Cunningham's Works of Ben Jonson, Vol. I, p. 245, n. 3; John Palmer, Ben Jonson, pp. 54, 57, 60; Algernon Charles Swinburne, Ben Jonson, p. 24; Brinsley Nicholson and C. H. Herford, Ben Jonson, Vol. I, p. 261; Albert H. Marckwardt, "A Fashionable Expression; Its Status in Poetaster and Satiromastix" in Modern Language Notes, XLIV (1929), p. 96.

[2]C. H. Herford and Percy Simpson, Ben Jonson, Vol. I, pp. 418-422 and Charles R. Baskerville, English Elements in Jonson's Early Comedies, pp. 508-510.

Herford and Simpson contend that Jonson substituted an imaginary for a real and historical personation when he conceived the idea of presenting himself in the person of Horace at the court of Augustus.[3] Then they proceed in their discussion of the character of Jonson's Horace by explaining the similarity between the position held by Jonson in Elizabethan England and that held by Horace in Rome. As to self-portrayal, they affirm that Horace is less like Jonson than either Asper or Crites and that he "is neither right Elizabethan nor true Roman."[4] Moreover they do not elaborate upon the statement that he is like the author, nor do they point out specific character traits common to both. Baskerville also points out that "Jonson in treating Horace was glancing at Renaissance and classic ideals of character";[5] thus Baskerville says that he hardly thinks that Horace was "intended primarily for Jonson himself."[6] Like Herford and Simpson, he does not go into detail to show how the two characters are the same, but he has indicated evidences of similarity between the two.

Herford, Simpson, and Baskerville have also discussed briefly the resemblance of Asper-Macilente and Crites to

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[3]Ben Jonson, Vol. I, p. 418. [4]Ibid., p. 422.

[5]Charles R. Baskerville, English Elements in Jonson's Early Comedies, p. 309.

[6]Ibid.

Jonson.[7] Herford and Simpson declare "that Macilente in Every Man Out of His Humour undoubtedly speaks much of Jonson's mind and that his voice often elusively resembles the familiar accents of his creator,"[8] and they make general statements about Jonson's representation in Asper and Macilente, who they recognize were played by the same actor, but they do not attempt to point out definite self-portrayal in these characters. As for Crites in Cynthia's Revels, they call him Jonson's mouthpiece and antitype,[9] but, again, they do not attempt to indicate specific character traits common to both Crites and the author.

Baskerville also generalizes about the characters of Asper-Macilente and Crites in much the same manner as do Herford and Simpson. In regard to Asper and Macilente, he declares that "Asper often . . . may represent the author, just as Macilente, whose role is taken by the actor playing Asper, and who is in many respects the mouthpiece of Jonson,"[10] but Baskerville does not attempt to present Asper

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[7]There are others who make assertions that these characters either represent Jonson or are similar to him, but they do not point out this similarity. See the following works: Cambridge History of English Literature, Vol. VI, pp. 19, 45; E. K. Chambers, The Elizabethan Stage, Vol. III, pp. 361, 364; G. Gregory Smith, Ben Jonson, pp. 47-48; Mina Kerr, Influence of Ben Jonson on English Comedy, p. 10; Brinsley Nicholson and C. H. Herford, Ben Jonson, Vol. I, p. 112.

[8]Ben Jonson, Vol. I, p. 381. [9]Ibid., p. 409.

[10]Charles R. Baskerville, English Elements in Jonson's Early Comedies, p. 148.

and Macilente as Jonson. As for Crites, Baskerville asserts that this character, "though at times the mouthpiece of Jonson is a type figure . . . who for Jonson represents the ideal."[11] Discussing him from this point of view, then, Baskerville has not pointed out specific self-portrayal. As far as I have been able to determine from my study, the attempts of critics to point out Jonson's self-portrayal in his plays terminate with these few generalizations that I have discussed.

I have attempted, then, in my discussion to show that there is definite self-portrayal, not only in The Poetaster, Cynthia's Revels, and Every Man Out of His Humour but also in many of Jonson's other comedies. I approached this subject by accepting the general concession that Horace is Jonson. With this as an hypothesis, I made an intensive study of The Poetaster and the biography of Jonson[12] to see wherein the character of Horace is congruous with that of the author. After this study, I was convinced that Horace not only resembled his creator but that the latter meant to portray himself through Horace. With this assumption as a basis, I read carefully the author's other plays to see

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[11] Ibid.

[12] I relied primarily upon C. H. Herford's and Percy Simpson's biography of Jonson, which is thus described in The Year's Work in English Studies, Vol. VI, p. 159: "The Life is the most penetrating analysis that has yet been attempted, in the light of recent research by the editor and others, of Jonson's character and career."

whether there were characters in them whom Jonson had infused, either wholly or partially, with his spirit. After making this comparative study, I came to the conclusion that Asper-Macilente in Every Man Out of His Humour and Crites in Cynthia's Revels were also Jonson. With the evidence of self-portrayal I had thus far gained, I proceeded to complete my investigation of all the author's plays, and then to evaluate my discoveries.

CHAPTER I

SELF-PORTRAYAL IN THE POETASTER

Just how much self-portrayal an author infuses into his own productions is a question that is always debatable among literary critics. Realizing that this is true, I feel sure that in my study of Ben Jonson I have found much more of him in his plays than many of his critics and much less than many others. Since self-revelation in a literary work is so difficult to prove, I have chosen for discussion, first, a play, The Poetaster, about which there seems to be no doubt that Jonson portrayed himself in the character of Horace.[1] The more one studies this play, the more evident it becomes that Jonson has put into the mouth of Horace not only his general attitudes and opinions toward life and its problems, but even the minutest detail of some of his likes and dislikes.

The Poetaster was written as a means of revenge against John Marston and Thomas Dekker, contemporary playwrights, with whom Jonson had waged a battle in words through plays since his writing of Every Man Out of His Humour. Marston had taken exception to this play because he saw some ref-

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[1] C. H. Herford and Percy Simpson, Ben Jonson, Vol. I, "The Man and His Works," p. 418. Hereafter throughout the thesis, this work will be cited as Ben Jonson, Vol. I.

erence to himself in the character of Clove. When it was rumored that Marston and Dekker, who had then become Marston's ally, were preparing their revenge for Jonson's further satirization of them in Cynthia's Revels, Jonson immediately set to work on a rather caustic satirical drama, which he hoped would silence his antagonists. The Poetaster was the result.[2]

From the introduction of Horace into this play as a poet in the streets of Rome to his concluding speech in Act V, Scene iii, we see Jonson and Jonsonian philosophy in almost every deed and speech. In the beginning Horace does not command the admiration of the reader, for his treatment of Crispinus, regardless of who the latter is, is somewhat rude and discourteous, and his domineering personality is immediately evident.[3] Jonson possessed these same traits.[4] He never hesitated to censure what he thought wrong in others, and he always believed that his was the cause of right.[5] "A personality of immense force . . . he exercised over both men and women a charm which always contained the

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[2]Ibid., pp. 24-27.

[3]Ben Jonson, The Poetaster in Ben Jonson, Vol. IV, edited by C. H. Herford and Percy Simpson, IV. iii. 37-53; III. v. 43-100; V. i. 79-94; V. iii. 61-67. All future references to this play will be to this edition.

[4]Herford and Simpson, Ben Jonson, Vol. I, p. 39. Jonson was once thrust out of court himself for some kind of unmannerly behavior.

[5]Ibid., pp. 27, 151.

germ of repulsion."[6] We find the characteristic Jonson wit in many of Horace's first speeches when he is attempting to free himself of the company of the bore Crispinus, who represents Marston in the play.[7] For example he soliloquizes:

> Doubtlesse, this gallants tongue has a good turne when hee sleepes.[8]

There are numerous references to Horace's wit made by players throughout the play,[9] and in one scene in referring to this, Captain Tucca uses exactly the same words that were spoken by William Drummond of Jonson when he says,

> He wil sooner lose his best friend, then his least iest.[10]

The great and mighty Caesar even pays Horace tribute. In reproaching Tucca and Lupus, who had attempted to prove that Horace had committed treason by writing a certain play, Caesar explains that it is the wit in an author's work that so often calls forth criticism.[11]

Since Jonson wrote The Poetaster for the purpose of ridiculing Marston and Dekker as poets and playwrights,

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[6]Ibid., p. 62. [7]Ibid., p. 423.

[8]Jonson, The Poetaster, III. i. 36-37. In quoting from plays, I have used the original spelling except for u's and v's, which I have modernized.

[9]Ibid., III. i. 44, 56, 61, 64-65, 73, 83, 96, 104, 106, 121, 131, 135, 189, 196, 201.

[10]Ibid., IV. iii. 110-111. [11]Ibid., V. iii. 140-144.

Horace continually heaps upon Crispinus and Demetrius scorn and acrimony.[12] He gives vent to this sentiment in his first meeting with Crispinus, when he freely expresses the contempt he holds for Crispinus as a poet, in a soliloquy, in which he says,

> This tyrannie
> Is strange, to take mine eares up by commission,
> (Whether I will or no) and make them stalls
> To his lewd soloecismes, and worded trash.[13]

This satire continues and gradually becomes more acrid, evident, and specific. Accusation is brought against both Crispinus and Demetrius of being plagiarists and foolishly and ignorantly attempting to defame perniciously the person and writings of Horace.[14] Then they are portrayed as being mere puppets when in their trial they know not how to answer questions until they are first prompted by Captain Tucca, who tells them what to say. They repeat his words verbatim, and, of course, eventually condemn themselves.[15] In this trial before Caesar, Horace acts as their accuser. It is in this scene that he also gives Crispinus the pill which is to rid him forever of his attempt to injure others--just the thing Jonson was attempting to do to Marston. Demetrius then

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[12]Even the ignorant Chloe ridicules Crispinus in II. ii. 72-85.

[13]Jonson, The Poetaster, III. i. 103-107.

[14]Ibid., V. iii. 213-234. [15]Ibid., V. iii. 235-255.

confesses that he had no cause whatsoever against Horace except that he was jealous of him because Horace kept better company than he, that better men loved him, and that Horace's writings thrived better and were better liked than his.[16] This was exactly Jonson's attitude toward Marston and Dekker.[17] Horace vents his final wrath against the two poets, and intimates the depth of his contumely for their poetry when he says to them,

> I would not wish but such as you should
> spight them.[18]

Horace is substantiated in his criticism by Virgil and Caesar, who also comment upon the ignorance of these plagiarists and the crudity of their verse. Virgil expresses doubt that even Horace's pills can cure one whose mind is so surfeited with calumny and inane rhymes as Crispinus'.[19] Caesar is even more acrimonious in his judgment. He says,

> It is the bane, and torment of our eares,
> To heare the discords of those iangling rimers,
> That, with their bad and scandalous practices,
> Bring all true arts and learning in contempt.[20]

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[16]Ibid., V. iii. 449-453.

[17]Herford and Simpson, Ben Jonson, Vol. I, p. 417.

[18]Ben Jonson, The Poetaster, V. iii. 462. In this line the word them refers to poems used in the preceding line.

[19]Ibid., V. iii. 531-536. See also Virgil's speech in V. iii. 531-565.

[20]Ibid., V. iii. 615-618.

So strong was Jonson's taste for realistic satire and drastic and humorous portrayal of manners[21] that in The Poetaster he did not content himself with confining his sarcasm solely to his two antagonists, but he reached out into the intricacies of English society so that many classes felt the bludgeoning of his satirical onslaught.[22] First of these to suffer the force of this assault were those in high office. Horace reveals the ignorance and stupidity of many of the magistrates and government officials in their attempt to buy favors by pointing out the stupid blundering of the character, Asinius Lupus, who is ridiculed and reprimanded by Horace for attempting to prove that a humorous play put on by courtiers as a mere means of entertainment is in reality a conspiracy against the emperor. Horace points out that Lupus, to win the good will of his sovereign cares not whose honor he defames and by pretending to be the guardian of the State he becomes the destroyer of its peace.[23] Horace continues to laugh at the stupidity of Lupus when the latter again comes before Caesar, this time to accuse Horace of writing a play which he contends is a libel against the government. In the presence of Caesar and other high officials Horace subtly insinuates, after Lupus draws conclusions from Horace's

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[21]Herford and Simpson, Ben Jonson, Vol. I, p. 11.

[22]Jonson, The Poetaster, I. ii. 11-18, 45-55, 94, 117-128; III. iv. 52-56, 100-118, 187-192; IV. i. 1-46.

[23]Ibid., IV. vii. 37-53.

speech, that Lupus is the vulture, the wolf, and the ass in the play. Thus Horace reveals the corruption, fraud, and greed always prevalent among government officials. I do not think that Jonson by any means meant to imply that all government officials were dishonest and pernicious. As a young man keenly observant of the daily life about him, he had seen the trickery and schemes of many courtiers, advisors, and lawmakers,[24] and through the character of Lupus he is pointing out the insidious practices that he found prevalent among these.[25] The antipodal type is represented through the characters of Mecaenas, Gallus, Tibullus, and Caesar.[26]

Horace's explanation of his use of ridicule is the same as that evinced by Jonson himself.[27] He contends that since criticism should not be levied against men, but against the bad that men do, it is always against evil deeds that he vents his wrath and scorn. To him this form of criticism is justifiable, and he protests that it should have the sanction of those in authority. He makes this point clear when he says to Trebatius,

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[24]Herford and Simpson, Ben Jonson, Vol. I, p. 9.

[25]Jonson, The Poetaster, I. ii. 94, 98-99; IV. iii. 124-129; IV. vii. 5-11.

[26]Ibid. For evidence of wisdom and justice among government officials see IV. vi. 1-78; IV. vii. 30-60; V. iii. 61-339.

[27]Herford and Simpson, Ben Jonson, Vol. I, p. 44.

> But if they shall be sharp, yet modest rimes,
> That spare mens persons, and but taxe their crimes,
> Such, shall in open court, find currant passe;
> Were Caesar iudge, and with the makers grace.[28]

He feels that many who satirize try to hide or conceal the ugliness of inward vice by a specious outward appearance, and it is often against this practice that he aims the sharp arrow of his criticism and ridicule.[29] So, Horace says, it is always the bad in men, not men themselves, that he wishes to satirize.

On the other hand, Horace realizes that he is scorned and jeered at by many, and he presents his case to Trebatius:

> There are, to whom I seeme excessive sower;
> And past a satyres law, t' extend my power:
> Others, that thinke what ever I have writ
> Wants pith, and matter to eternise it;
> And that they could, in one daies light, disclose
> A thousand verses, such as I compose.
> What shall I doe, Trebatius? say.[30]

This might well be a reenactment of Jonson's own experience when he wrote to Donne for advice about how he should answer the attacks of a slanderous world.[31] The scoffing at Horace

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[28]Ben Jonson, The Poetaster, III. v. 133-136. For other references to this same idea see IV. iii. 87-88; V. iii. 61-67.

[29]Ibid., III. v. 65-100; IV. vii. 37-53; V. i. 79-93.

[30]Ibid., III. v. 1-7.

[31]Herford and Simpson, Ben Jonson, Vol. I, p. 204.

by others was incessant.[32] They even formed cliques for the purpose of ridiculing him and then hired someone to traduce him.[33] Always their hatred of him was motivated by their jealousy, and their criticism was launched against the fact that he always portrayed people as they were.[34] Demetrius says of him,

> Hee is a meere spunge; nothing but humours, and observation; he goes up and downe sucking from every societie, and when hee comes home, squeazes himselfe drie againe.[35]

Tibullus makes clear the calumny and nefarious practices of those whose purpose it was to malign and defame their betters when he accuses Crispinus and Demetrius of conspiring against Horace, whom they had accused of "self love, arrogance, impudence, rayling, filching by translation."[36] Toward all such criticism, Horace assumes the lofty attitude, so characteristic of Jonson, that he cannot be injured by such gross attacks. He declares that though the malice of an absolute tyrant or the iron bands of an immutable law converge to take his life, his innocence and the cause of right are sufficient armor to protect him. Thus he merely laughs

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[32]Jonson, The Poetaster, III. v. 1-7.

[33]Ibid., III. iv. 320-325; IV. iii. 108-128; V. iii. 213-234.

[34]Ibid., IV. vii. 37-53; V. iii. 449-453.

[35]Ibid., IV. iii. 104-107. [36]Ibid., V. iii. 231-232.

when Lupus suggests that he is guilty of libel. He contends that justice knows no fears and therefore is unconquerable.[37] He emphasizes the fact that he really does not care who maligns him and what charges people bring against him. He considers such criticism unworthy of his notice.[38] In fact, he prefers that he should incur the spite and reproach of the ignorant and the false scholars such as Crispinus. Since they are in such a state of hebetude, their praise is less to be desired than their envidiousness; the failure of the ignorant to apprehend his worth and merit but adds to his laurels.[39] Thus throughout the play, Horace makes it very evident that he desires neither the friendship nor the praise of Crispinus and his kind. This is exactly the attitude evinced by Jonson toward the world and those who scorned him.[40]

One of the chief vices which Horace never passed up an opportunity to malign was the evils of wealth. Throughout his life Jonson continually faced financial straits, and it seems that at no one time was he ever completely free of money worries. This was partly due to his own mismanagement, for by nature he was "neither thrifty nor provident."[41]

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[37] Ibid., V. iii. 61-67. [38] Ibid., V. iii. 178.

[39] Ibid., V. iii. 455-462.

[40] Herford and Simpson, Ben Jonson, Vol. I, pp. 33, 204.

[41] Ibid., p. 93.

In London, where he spent most of his life, he looked about him and beheld a society teeming in wealth and luxury, many of whose chief aim seemed to be to obtain as much of this world's goods as possible, regardless of the means of securing it or the effect of this avariciousness on others.[42] Since these practices were exercised daily before his eyes, he saw the follies of wealth, and he took every opportunity offered him to express a contempt for it. Horace assumes the same attitude. In the first place he is, as was Jonson, very poor, for so Caesar accosts him,

> Horace, what saist thou, that art the poorest,
> And likeliest to envy, or to detract?[43]

Horace's answer partakes somewhat of the nature of a reprimand in which he proclaims the merit of the poor and the wickedness of riches. He thinks that the truly great do not consider a wealthy man superior to a needy one because of wealth.[44] He believes it to be only the apocryphal classification of the ignorant that places individuals on various social levels because of their possession of wealth or their lack of it.[45] So he answers the mighty Caesar,

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[42]Ibid., pp. 9-10.

[43]Jonson, The Poetaster, V. i. 77-78. Caesar accepts Horace's view in V. i. 94-99.

[44]For another reference to opinions on poverty see ibid., I. ii. 181-189, 208-212.

[45]Ibid., V. i. 79-93.

> Caesar speakes after common men, in this,
> To make a difference of me, for my poorenesse.[46]

He rebukes Caesar for the opinion that poverty in a learned soul is as opprobrious as ignorance in the wealthy. He seems to believe that "money is the root of all evil" and thus more of a curse than a blessing because its influence and power are so likely to demoralize an individual, who, when once enmeshed within the folds of wickedness to which his wealth has directed him, will sink deeper and deeper in the mire of villainy until finally he will hesitate at nothing.[47] Thus Horace appears in the light of a champion of the poor if the poor be not ignorant. He insinuates that the distinction between individuals should be made on the basis of scholarship not wealth, for he considers the learned poor far superior to and more fortunate than the ignorant rich. Just as he condemned the vices of men, not men themselves,[48] so he condemns the vices that are the excrescence of wealth, not the wealth itself.

Throughout the play the importance of wealth is dwelt upon by various characters. Act II[49] shows how wealth buys the ranting shrew, Chloe, a place at court. She even gains the favor of Julia, the daughter of Caesar, and when she la-

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[46]Ibid., V. i. 79-80. [47]Ibid., V. i. 81-87.

[48]See p. 12 above.

[49]Jonson, The Poetaster, II. i. 1-226.

ments that her husband, an ordinary tradesman and commoner, shames her exceedingly because of his low birth and boorish manners, Cytheris, one of the gentlewomen of the court, assures her that instead of censuring her for having married the wealthy Albius, the women at court will commend her, for

> They all thinke you politike, and wittie; wise women choose not husbands for the eye, merit or birth, but wealth, and soveraigntie.[50]

Ovid Junior comments on the potency of wealth when he sees the effect of its corruption on society. He laments the fact that the world no longer pays tribute to virtue and honor but recognizes and lauds one only for his wealth:

> "No matter now in vertue who excells,
> "He, that hath coine, hath all perfection else.[51]

This idea of the merits of wealth and the demerits of penury is also made much of by Ovid Senior. He reprimands his son for desiring to be a poet instead of a lawyer because of the financial remuneration he can receive from the latter profession that he cannot hope to gain from poetry.[52] He thus challenges Ovid Junior:

> Name me a profest <u>poet</u>, that his <u>poetrie</u> did ever afford him so much as a competencie.
> . . . . . .

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[50] <u>Ibid</u>., II. ii. 13-15. [51] <u>Ibid</u>., I. ii. 255-256.

[52] For other references to the baseness of poverty see I. ii. 204-212.

> But could this divinitie[53] feed him, while he liv'd? Could his name feast him?[54]

Ovid Junior answers such charges in a soliloquy in which he eulogizes poetry. Thus in all references to money, the corruption of riches and the magnanimity of poverty is emphasized.[55]

Ignorance was to Jonson the most despicable of all states. Confronted by its obstinacy, he could be immediately converted from a gentle, kind, gratuitious individual into a fierce antagonist, "who knew neither chivalry nor mercy."[56] And we see in Horace this same hatred of anything that smacks of artificial and specious knowledge. First, in his meeting with Crispinus through the latter's first few speeches in which he declares himself a scholar and a poet, Horace is immediately convinced that Crispinus is not the scholar and poet that he pretends to be. This pretense and sham vex Horace and convert him immediately into a contumelious character, who wrathfully resents Crispinus' interference.[57]

Horace again strikes a blow at the odium of ignorance

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[53]The word divinitie refers to the word poetry used above.

[54]Jonson, The Poetaster, I. ii. 78-79, 91-93.

[55]Ibid., I. iii. 229-256.

[56]Herford and Simpson, Ben Jonson, Vol. I. p. 62.

[57]Jonson, The Poetaster, III. i. 197-207; III. ii. 6-9, 22-25, 27-29.

when he is being questioned by Caesar about his opinion of Virgil. In a few caustic remarks he insinuates that ignorance may lead to the development of a base, scurrilous nature that is so warped and rapacious in composition that it will hesitate at no villainy that would in any way promote its interest. He makes his opinion clear when he says,

> As if the filth of povertie sunke as deepe
> Into a knowing spirit, as the bane
> Of riches doth into an ignorant soule.
> . . . . . .
>
> He that detracts, or envies vertuous merit,
> Is still the covetous, and the ign'rant spirit.[58]

Horace not only believes that ignorance develops peccant, wizened souls, but he possesses such an utter contempt for it that he despises even the friendship of the ignorant. He far prefers to incur their hatred rather than their recognition of his merit, for he expresses the wish,

> 'Would the world knew,
> How heartily I wish, a foole should hate me.[59]

Horace's contempt for ignorance seems to be no greater than that of the other worthy characters. Virgil freely expresses his opinion when he commends Caesar for having Lupus whipped as a punishment for the latter's attempt to asperse Horace:[60]

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[58] Ibid., V. i. 81-83, 92-93. [59] Ibid., V. iii. 179-180.

[60] For another reference on the hatred of ignorance see Ovid Junior's speech, ibid., I. ii. 229-256.

> Caesar hath done like Caesar. Faire, and iust
> Is his award, against these brainelesse creatures.
> 'Tis not the wholesome sharpe moralitie,
> Or modest anger of a satyricke spirit,
> That hurls or wonnds the bodie of a state;
> But the sinister application
> Of the malicious, ignorant, and base
> Interpreter: who will distort, and straine
> The generall scope and purpose of an authour,
> To this particular, and private spleene.[61]

On the other hand, knowledge immediately wins his admiration and attention, and he never fails to pay it tribute. In his first meeting with Crispinus when hailed by the latter, he speaks and attempts to hurry on, but slackens his haste and evinces interest at once when Crispinus informs him that he is a scholar. Furthermore he returns Crispinus at this time the only courteous remark vouchsafed him during the remainder of the play:

> A scholer, sir? I shall bee covetous
> Of your faire knowledge.[62]

Following this remark, Horace recognizes in Crispinus' next few speeches the lack of true scholarship and is immediately irritated at his attention.

He pays knowledge still higher tribute at various other times.[63] In conversation with Caesar about Virgil as a poet, he proclaims that knowledge is even the means of salvation,

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[61] Ibid., V. iii. 135-144. [62] Ibid., III. i. 21-22.

[63] See Caesar's tribute to scholarship, ibid., V. ii. 39-47.

the medium through which one can keep his soul pure and free from all dross in this sin-scarred world of ours. In his own words he says,

> Knowledge is the nectar that keepes sweet
> A perfect soule, even in this grave of sinne.[64]

Horace also believes that true scholars are not merely products of schools, because he distinguishes between true scholarship and that termed knowledge which "savours a school-like gloss" and consists chiefly in the reproduction of stored facts implanted in the memory at the threat of the cudgel of some worthy pedgogue if the desired facts are not learned.[65] He admits that this specious knowledge will more quickly win for an individual a name, but he contends that such recognition is empty fame and of short duration. In his own words he says:

> His learning labours not the schoole-like glosse,
> That most consists in ecchoing wordes and termes,
> And soonest wins a man an empty name.[66]

So worthy seem Horace's knowledge and justice that he is given the right by Caesar to be the accuser of Tucca, Crispinus, and Demetrius,[67] and then after their cases are pre-

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[64] Ibid., V. i. 88-89.

[65] Tibullus also commends true learning and talent, ibid., V. i. 116-123.

[66] Ibid., V. i. 129-131. [67] Ibid., V. iii. 161-175.

sented, he metes out to them justice.[68] In fact, Horace's justice is felt so strongly that it receives the notice of Virgil who comments about it thus:

> Th' extremitie of law
> Awards you to be branded in the front,
> For this your calumny; but, since it pleaseth
> Horace (the partie wrong'd) t' entreat, of Caesar,
> A mitigation of that iuster doome;
> With Caesars tongue, thus we pronounce your sentence.[69]

Horace is not only a strong advocate of scholarship, but he is the champion of poetry. This, Herford and Simpson say, was also the cause that lay nearest the heart of Jonson. In an age when there was such a radical change in the ideas concerning the merit of poetry, Jonson as one of the greatest poets of his day, in spite of change and criticism, made paramount the cause of poetry, and never wavered from his resolve to restore her to her former eminent status.[70] This despised state of poetry is represented in The Poetaster by Ovid Senior, who condemns poets and shows his aversion to poetry as a profession when he asks his son,

> Shall I have my sonne a stager now? An enghle for players?[71]

Later in the conversation he uses stronger terms of condem-

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[68]Ibid., V. iii. 391-395. [69]Ibid., V. iii. 570-576.

[70]Herford and Simpson, Ben Jonson, Vol. I, p. 127.

[71]Jonson, The Poetaster, I. ii. 15-16.

nation when Ovid Junior tells him Gallus is also interested in poetry. In reply to this information, Ovid Senior exclaims,

> Cornelius Gallus? There's another gallant, too, hath drunke of the same poison.[72]

Poetry's cause was Jonson's cause, and he sincerely believed that it had the sanction and approval of all "choice and worthy spirits among those in power."[73] This is exactly the lofty attitude assumed by Horace throughout the play. He believes that poetry is a revelation of life, and that the more truly a poem reveals life, the longer it will live, gathering a momentum of praise and admiration with the passing of time.[74] Horace expresses this view to Caesar when he is speaking of Virgil's poetry:

> And for his poesie, 'tis so ramm'd with life,
> That it shall gather strength of life, with being,
> And live hereafter, more admir'd then now.[75]

The immortality of poetry and the fame of poets are dwelt upon at length by Ovid. In his opposition to giving up poetry and becoming a lawyer, he explains his attitude and presents

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[72] Ibid., I. ii. 72-73.

[73] Herford and Simpson, Ben Jonson, Vol. I, p. 27.

[74] Jonson, The Poetaster, V. i. 116-123.

[75] Ibid., V. i. 136-138.

a forceful argument for poetry:[76]

> Or that I studie not the tedious lawes;
> And prostitute my voyce in everie cause?
> Thy scope is mortall; mine, eternall fame:
> Which, through the world, shall ever chaunt my name.
> Homer will live, whil'st Tenedos stands, and Ide,
> Or, to the sea, fleet Simois doth slide.
> And so shall Hesiod too, while vines doe beare,
> Or crooked sickles crop the ripened eare.
> Callimachus, though in invention lowe,
> Shall still be sung; since he in art doth flowe.
> No losse shall come to Sopocles' proud vaine,
> With sunne, and moone, Aratus shall remaine.[77]

This tendency to deify poets is not confined to Ovid and Horace, but is also adhered to by the less worthy characters. Gallus feels that poets constitute a chosen group that may expect more of the divine and spiritual favor than the common man.[78] In fact, he declares,

> Who knowes not . . . that the sacred breath of a true poet, can blow any vertuous humanitie, up to deitie?[79]

Julia intimates that they live on a higher plane than that of the ordinary individual when she says,

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[76]For other references on this same point of view see ibid., I. i. 43-84; V. i. 100-107; V. ii. 28-36.

[77]Ibid., I. i. 47-58.

[78]Ibid., II. ii. 62. Crispinus has about the same idea when he says that poets are made of love and beauty. See Caesar's opinion, V. iii. 131-133, and Tibullus' speech, IV. ii. 37-42.

[79]Ibid., IV. ii. 34-36.

> This makes our poets, that know our prophanenesse,
> live as prophane, as we.[80]

And Chloe also recognizes their merit when she rather doubtingly questions the status of a gentleman as compared with that of a poet:

> A gentleman, and a commander?
> That's as good as a poet, mee thinkes.[81]

Just as Jonson believed in the sacredness of poetry, he also believed in using it as a means of punishing any offender who incurred his ill will. We see this same attitude in Horace, who justifies his satirizing in verse by saying that he enjoys best expressing his thoughts and ideas in measures and feet.[82] Thus he believes in using this means to protect himself against the scorn and ridicule of the world, and he declares,

> Like a sheathed sword, it shall defend
> My innocent life.[83]

He condemns, however, the using of poetry as a means of libeling people. It was in 1608 that Jonson had to defend himself against charges brought against him for his satirization of certain classes of English society in Volpone. And it was with the same lofty air of defense assumed by

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[80] Ibid., IV. v. 98-99. [81] Ibid., IV. iii. 50-51.

[82] Ibid., III. v. 49-50. [83] Ibid., III. v. 67-68.

Horace that he defended himself at the "tribunal of the learned" in the course of which he declared again that his cause and the cause of poetry were synonymous. He said, "If my muses be true to me, I will again raise up the despised head of poetry and restore her to her lofty place which is worthy to be embraced, and kist, of all the great and master spirits of our world.[84]

Throughout the play the independence of Jonson[85] is characteristic of Horace, who assumes the attitude that he must exert every effort to correct ignorance and corruption despite the ill will he might incur from taking such a stand. He declares that nothing can deter him or make him change his course:

> But, briefly, if to age I destin'd bee,
> Or that quick deaths black wings inviron me;
> If rich, or poore at Rome; or fate command
> I shall be banish't to some other land;
> What hiew soever, my whole state shall beare,
> I will write satyres still, in spight of feare.[86]

He believes, however, that in taking a definite stand for what he thinks to be right, he can be really injured by nothing. With Horace "right makes might," and since he is assured that his way is the right way, he is clad in an invincible armor

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[84]Herford and Simpson, Ben Jonson, Vol. I, p. 44.

[85]Ibid., pp. 23-24, 33.

[86]Jonson, The Poetaster, III. v. 95-100.

that no sword of criticism or calumny can pierce.[87]

This spirit of independence is so strong that it is noted and commented upon by others. Demetrius says of him:

> I, and tickle him i' faith, for his arrogancie, and his impudence, in commending his owne things; and for his translating: I can trace him, i' faith. O, he is the most open fellow, living.[88]

In all of Horace's contentions his attitude toward each and every individual is quite significant. Each time it is evident that he feels there is but one side to the argument--his side--and that it is always right and has the approval of the great and learned.[89] Tibullus in pronouncing the sentence against Crispinus and Demetrius makes them swear not

> To maligne, traduce, or detract the person, or writings of Quintus Horacius Flaccus; or any other eminent man, transcending you in merit.[90]

And Caesar commends Horace to

> Let not your high thoughts descend so low
> As these despised obiects; Let them fall,
> With their flat groveling soules: be you your selves.

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[87] Ibid., III. v. 35-36; V. iii. 61-67.

[88] Ibid., IV. iii. 120-123. Captain Tucca expresses the same opinion in IV. iii. 108-118. See also comments in IV. vii. 8-11.

[89] See Crispinus' speech, ibid., III. i. 234-246, and Demetrius' in V. iii. 449-453.

[90] Ibid., V. iii. 595-297.

> And as with our best favours you stand crown'd:
> So let your mutuall loves be still renown'd.
> Envy will dwell, where there is want of merit,
> Though the deserving man should cracke his spirit.[91]

Horace never concedes a point and never retracts an avowed stand. His is the correct opinion. To make greater his conquest, he always champions the despised cause; then by proving its merits, he makes his victory appear that much greater. His word always carries weight and is never forgotten.[92] He takes the side of lowly despised poverty against cogent and powerful wealth;[93] true scholarship against specious learning of the majority;[94] and the restoration of the "despised" and "adulterated" form of poetry against those who would further degrade it.[95] This self-confidence of Horace becomes so pronounced that it finally ceases to be self-confidence and becomes egotism. Jonson's attitude was analogous to this because it was that of one contending with the tide--he was the corrector of the customs of his day--[96] and his ideas were often in sharp contrast with those of his contemporaries. From a word picture painted for us by William Drummond, we get an insight

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[91] Ibid., V. iii. 619-625. [92] Ibid., IV. iii. 93-103.

[93] Ibid., V. i. 79-93.

[94] Ibid., V. i. 79-93, 129-138; V. ii. 37-38.

[95] Ibid., V. i. 100-107, 129-138.

[96] Herford and Simpson, Ben Jonson, Vol. I, p. 11.

into this side of his nature.[97] Biographers contend, however, that "his towering egoism was not that of a narrow nature," but sprang from the lack of a "sympathetic understanding which crosses the frontier of an alien soul."[98] Whatever form his egoism assumed is of little import, but that it was a dominant trait of the man is vastly important because if Horace is Jonson, then he must possess this trait. This is the hypothesis that I have tried to prove, and I offer this as final certainty, for it seems to me, after an intensive study of The Poetaster, that egoism is the crystalizing chemical in Horace's character.

Therefore, since Horace possesses the same independent, imperious, domineering personality that characterized Jonson, evinces the same attitude toward the vices and virtues of life--a hatred for ignorance and the corruption of riches, and a love for poetry and scholarship--, and shows the same taste for realistic satire of contemporary life, I am convinced that Jonson portrayed himself through the character of Horace.

In their edition of The Poetaster, Brinsley Nicholson and C. H. Herford list Publius Ovidius, the Poet, as Ben Jon-

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[97] Ibid., p. 151. Jonson paid Drummond a visit at Hawthorndon, during the course of which it seems that Drummond jotted down certain of his guest's observations and manners just as they occurred and summed up his impression afterwards in a brief final note of characterization.

[98] Ibid., p. 62.

son,[99] but I take issue with them on this interpretation of character. Though Ovid does reveal in Act I the same love of poetry and the same desire to dedicate his life to its cause that Jonson did,[100] there is no other analogy between the two. Throughout Acts II and IV, the only other acts in which Ovid appears, he acts the part of a passionate love-sick courtier, who is desperately in love with Julia. During this time he utters no characteristically Jonsonian speech. In fact, many of them are very un-Jonsonian. For example, he praises the character of the ignorant shrew, Chloe, who because of her wealth had secured favor at court:

> Shee will well deserves it, Madame. I see, even in her lookes, gentrie, and generall worthinesse.[101]

Since Jonson laughs at Chloe elsewhere in the play, he would never have been mistaken about her true worth and accepted and praised her as did Ovid. Therefore I think that Jonson used Ovid merely for the purpose of emphasizing the place and value of poetry in life, not as a character through which to portray himself.

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[99] Ben Jonson, Vol. I, p. 264.

[100] Jonson, The Poetaster, I. i. 43-84.

[101] Ibid., II. ii. 29-30. See also his opinion of Crispinus in II. ii. 147-148, and his speech in IV. viii. 1-30.

CHAPTER II

SELF-PORTRAYAL IN EVERY MAN OUT OF HIS HUMOUR

Every Man Out of His Humour is a comical satire that really opened the satirical battle waged for several years between Jonson and his contemporary playwrights.[1] The fact that the play opened this famous stage quarrel, is proof that there must be a great deal of self-portrayal of attitudes and opinions in it. Furthermore, since Asper and later Macilente assume the chief role of a scoffer at society and its mannerisms, I have set up the hypothesis that they must have represented Jonson. That Asper, who appears only in the induction, is Jonson, as Jonson idealized himself, is not questioned,[2] for he is the author and presenter of the play. But the question is whether Macilente fully develops this representation begun by Asper. Brinsley Nicholson and C. H. Herford in their edition of Every Man Out of His Humour, in listing and discussing characters, do not question this assumption, but designate that the "rough and rugged" Asper--Jonson in his humour--is transformed into the "lean and malevolent" Maci-

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[1] Herford and Simpson, Ben Jonson, Vol. I, p. 24.

[2] Ibid., p. 388.

lente--Jonson out of his humour.[3] I am also convinced that Jonson meant for them to be one and the same person, for as Asper leaves the stage in the Induction, he says,

> Now, Gentlemen, I goe
> To turne an actor, and a Humourist,
> Where (ere I doe resume my present person)
> We hope to make the circles of your eyes
> Flow with distilled laughter.[4]

Then Jonson does not even let Asper return to the stage to deliver the prologue, but Macilente performs this very important duty, after which he apologizes to the audience:

> Wel, gentlemen, I should have gone in and return'd to you, as I was Asper at the first.[5]

Since I thus assume that Asper and Macilente are the same individual, any reference I may make to one will apply to the other.

First, however, I should like to point out that Asper is an exact parallel to Horace, who in turn, as I have shown, represents Jonson. The first sentence that Asper utters is evidence of his fearless, dauntless, and independent spirit, and each succeeding one supports and strengthens this thesis.

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[3]Ben Jonson, Every Man Out of His Humour in Ben Jonson, Vol. II, edited by Brinsley Nicholson and C. H. Herford, pp. 112-113.

[4]Ben Jonson, Every Man Out of His Humour in Ben Jonson, Vol. III, edited by C. H. Herford and Percy Simpson, Induction, lines 213-217. All future references to this play will be to this edition.

[5]Ibid., Conclusion, lines 75-76.

The wickedness and sin so rampant in everyday life first receive his malignant scorn and condemnation. Various classes of society, courtiers, lawyers, brokers, usurers, and prurient women, are specifically mentioned, and Asper affirms that he fears not to reveal the profligacy and iniquity of them all. At the ignorant, who dare to raise their profane voices against the true artist, he hurls a biting denunciation. Finally, his towering egotism acts as the solidifying agent that solders all these traits into an individual so like Jonson that it seems improbable to me that the self-portrayal should be questioned.

Asper prepares us for the satirical mood of the play and the theme, the unmasking of social vices, when he retorts,

> But (with an armed and resolved hand)
> Ill strip the ragged follies of the time,
> Naked, as at their birth.[6]

Jonson thus makes clear his purpose. Furthermore we know he wrote the comedy to represent the real life of his time.[7] He was not afraid to do this, because he "had already won repute not only with the town at large but with the more exclusive and cultured section" also.[8] We are therefore pre-

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[6]Ibid., Induction, lines 16-18.

[7]Herford and Simpson, Ben Jonson, Vol. I, p. 379. Jonson had a taste for realistic satire and drastic and humorous portrayal of manners.

[8]Ibid., p. 22.

pared for Macilente's assuming the chief role of scoffer at the various classes of society, their ideas, practices, and manners, just as Jonson did in real life.[9] First of all, he evinces the characteristic Jonsonian hatred and contempt for ignorance and those who pretend to be the intelligentsia but who are in reality mere imposters. He contends that their spuriousness is so contagious that it does much harm, and for that reason their ignorance should be revealed. Furthermore he argues that they are objects of repulsion to the learned and for that reason should not be endured. This brings forth the condemnation:

> O I would know 'hem, for in such assemblies
> Th' are more infectious then the pestilence
> And therefore I would give them pills to purge,
> And make 'hem fit for faire societies.
> How monstrous, and detested is 't, to see
> A fellow that has neither arte, nor braine
> Sit like an Aristarchus, or--starke-asse,
> Taking mens lives, with a tobacco face,
> In snuffe, still spitting, using his wryed lookes
> (In nature of a vice) to wrest and turne
> From what they doe behold! O' tis most vile.[10]

The stupidity and speciousness of the ladies of the court and their fawning admirers continually bring forth from Macilente a volley of derision and scorn. He easily sees the duplicity of the ladies, who pretend to the dull courtiers to possess great wit and learning, and he comments at length up-

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[9] Ibid., p. 151.

[10] Jonson, Every Man Out of His Humour, Induction, lines 173-184.

on this sham. In derision of Saviolina, who was supposed to have been one of the cleverest lady-wits, he says that the viol, which was out of tune,

> Makes good harmony with her wit.[11]

And to sum up his opinion of her, he asks Fastidius Brisk,

> Are these the admired lady-wits, that having so good a plaine-song, can runne no better division upon it? S' heart all her iests are of the stampe (March was fifteene yeres ago.) Is this the Comet, Monsieur Fastidius, that your gallants wonder at so.[12]

Later he proves the verity of his opinion when he plays a prank on Saviolina to test her judgment and ability.[13]

Throughout the play he laughs at the courtiers and the fools they make of themselves. He shows that even clowns and jesters, when dressed in royal robes, can play the role of a noble as successfully as the noble himself.[14] In fact, he hints at the idea that if a fellow can successfully make a fool of himself, he can excellently represent the gentility.[15] Through the character of Fastidius Brisk we see the culmination of all the ridiculous artifices that were practiced at the court by the doltish gallants to secure

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[11] Ibid., III. iv. 91. [12] Ibid., III. ix. 134-138.

[13] Ibid., V. ii. [14] Ibid., V. ii. 113-114.

[15] Ibid., III. iii. 47-64; IV. v. 26-35, 48.

them entrance there.[16] Macilente explains this position of these lesser gallants by a description of the ludicrous appearance of Brisk:

> And those that know him,
> Know him the simplest man of all they know:
> Deride, and play upon his amorous humours,
> Though he but apishly doth imitate
> The gallant'st courtiers, kissing ladies' pumps
> Holding the cloth for them, praising their wits,
> And servilely observing every one,
> May doe them pleasure: fearful to be seene
> With any man (though he be ne're so worthy)
> That's not in grace with some that are greatest.[17]

He shows how readily a fool who can swagger profusely and who is dressed in costly raiment can demand entrance into any society:

> If he can purchase but a silken cover,
> He shall not only passe but passe regarded.[18]

Then Carlo explains how very simple it is for the dullest individual to get himself recognized as a great gallant by the nobles who frequent the ordinaries (eating houses):

> True and the fashion is, when any stranger comes in among'st 'hem, they all stand up and stare at him, as he were some unknowne beast brought out of Affrick but that'll bee help't with a good adventurous face. You must be impudent ynough, sit downe, and use no re pect; when any thing's propounded above your

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[16] Ibid., II. iii. 173-193; III. ix. 6-30; IV. vi. 15-19.

[17] Ibid., IV. ii. 30-39.

[18] Ibid., III. ix. 12-13. See also IV. v. 26-34.

> capacitie, smile at it, make two or three faces, and 'tis excellent, the'le thinke you have travel'd; though you argue, a whole day, in silence thus, and discourse in nothing but laughter, 'twill passe. Onely (now and then) give fire, discharge a good full oth, and offer a great wager,--'twill be admirable.[19]

Thus Jonson has let us peep into the heart of the society of his day and see its faults, artifices, and corruptions, and we can readily see that the "drastic and humorous presentation of Elizabethan England is the proper domain of the Jonsonian drama."[20]

Again we see the characteristic Jonsonian ridicule of those poorly endowed with wit who nevertheless profess to be poets. Asper proclaims them plagiarists and heaps upon them the full strength of his contumely when he declares,

> Oh, how I hate the monstrousness of time,
> Where every servile imitating spirit,
> (Plagu'd with an itching leprosie of wit)
> In a meere halting fury, strives to fling
> His ulc'rous body in the Thespian spring,
> And streight leap's forth a Poet! but as lame
> As Vulcan, or the founder of Cripple-gate.[21]

Macilente continues to scoff at literary pretenders when he expresses his contempt for Orange and Clove, whom he terms

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[19]Ibid., III. vi. 176-186. For another reference to this same idea see III. iv. 101-114.

[20]Herford and Simpson, Ben Jonson, Vol. I, p. 122.

[21]Jonson, Every Man Out of His Humour, Induction, lines 66-72.

parrots.[22] The sarcasm in portraying these two as such obvious dolts, attempting to make a show, is very caustic,[23] but it is Jonson's attitude toward false scholars and poets.

Since Asper makes it evident in his first speech that he intends to unmask all vices and lay bare to public investigation all nefarious practices that he can detect, we are prepared for the wicked artifices of the wealthy and all the evils that exude from riches, which corruptions Macilente points out to us. He first condemns the potency of wealth because it gives those who possess it an unfair advantage over the poor, though the latter might possess more wit and talent than the fellow who because of his money is socially superior. He incessantly rail at the injustices that arise from the unequal financial status of various members of society, and his jealousy of those who possess much of this world's goods is quite manifest. He cannot understand why those who are so obviously his inferiors in intellect should hold a place in the world that he cannot attain because of his penury. According to Drummond, this was definitely Jonson's attitude.[24] Macilente even declares that society is so corrupt that money can successfully cover up sins and buy

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[22]Ibid., III. iv. 19-20.

[23]This is the reference that first aroused Marston to take issue with Jonson.

[24]Herford and Simpson, Ben Jonson, Vol. I, p. 151.

a pardon for one's offenses:

> Is't possible that such a spacious villaine
> Should live, and not be plagu'd?
> . . . . . .
> And (like a boist'rous whale swallowing the poore)
> Still swimme in wealth, and pleasure! is't not strange?[25]

He makes it clear that the world feels that the goal of living is to acquire riches and those things that riches can buy. He contends that it judges a man by his rich apparel, rather than his merit when he says,

> It gives respect to your fools.[26]

This idea is emphasized throughout the play,[27] and the sarcasm becomes rather caustic when Fastidius Brisk persuasively argues:

> Why, assure you, signior, rich apparell has strange vertues: it makes him that hath it without meanes, estemmed for an excellent wit: he that enioys it with means, puts the world in remembrance of his meanes: it help the deformities of nature and gives lustre to her beauties; makes continuall holy-day where it shines; sets the wits of ladies at worke, that otherwise would be idle; furnisheth your two shilling Ordnarie; takes possession of your stage at your new play; and enricheth your oares, as scorning to go with your scull.[28]

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[25]Jonson, Every Man Out of His Humour, I. iii. 67-68, 73-74.

[26]Ibid., II. vi. 55-56. [27]See also III. ix. 6-30.

[28]Ibid., III. vi. 45-54.

Macilente feels that the potency of wealth is so great that real merit profits a man nothing, because

> Wealth in this age will scarcely look on merit.[29]

In fact, he contends that altruism and real worth are contemptible to people in general. Such sentiment incurs derision and scorn rather than praise and glorification. He states his opinion thus:

> 'Tis now esteem'd precisianisme in wit,
> And a disease in nature, to be kind
> Toward desert, to love, or seeke good names:
> Who feeds with a good name? who thrives with loving?
> Who can provide feast for his owne desires,
> With serving others?--ha, ha, ha:
> 'Tis folly, by our wisest worldlings prov'd,
> (If not to gaine by love) to be loved.[30]

Thus Macilente feels the futility of worthiness of character when it is pitted against wealth. Despite this inequitableness, however, we get a hint of Macilente's belief in the retribution of justice, which Horace in The Poetaster always preaches, when he insinuates that those who do not possess merit will eventually become the victims of their folly. From this discussion it is evident that Macilente's opinion of riches and their corruption is the same as that held by

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[29] Ibid., I. iii. 87.

[30] Ibid., IV. iv. 87-94. This same idea is developed in IV. vi. 136-140.

Horace, which was that also evinced by Jonson.[31]

Whereas Horace expresses a contempt for the world's laudation of riches, Macilente is envious. This is probably the reaction that would result from ill humour, however, and we must not forget that Macilente is Jonson out of his humour. Thus he cannot help questioning why the fool, the fop, and the ignorant should be rich and prosperous and enjoy the pleasures that only money can buy, while he, a true scholar and poet, far superior in intellect and ability, should have to exist in penuricus circumstances and be denied these pleasures. So he asks,

> I faine would know of heaven, now, why yond foole
> Should weare a suit of sattin? he? that rook?
> That painted jay, with such a deal of outside?
> What is his inside trow?[32]

However, Macilente declares himself purged of all envy when those who were at first favored because of their position and wealth have become a prey to their own folly. He explains:

> I am as emptie of all envy now,
> As they of merit to be envied at.
> Then it hath stuff to feed it; and their folly
> Being now rak't up in their repentant ashes,
> Affords no ampler subiect to my spleene.[33]

This belief in the final triumph of the intellectual over the

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[31]See Chapter I, footnote 91.

[32]Jonson, Every Man Out of His Humour, II. v. 40-43. This same idea is expressed in I. iii. 26-32.

[33]Ibid., V. xi. 55-60.

ignorant was also characteristic of Horace.

Though Drummond possibly did Jonson an injustice when he said that "he would rather lost his friend than his jest,"[34] it is certain that the poet would not resist satirizing people's follies in cleverly turned phrases that produced simultaneously laughter and resentment from the individual whose withers were thus wrung. This trait is immediately noticeable in Macilente. His soliloquies, especially, are nearly always witty remarks that explain the true meaning of previous fallacious statements. All of his clever responses to the court gallant in Act II show this sense of humor or his witty satirical bent. In his contemptuous reference to one of the courtiers who always took tobacco between every phrase that he spoke when he was in conversation with one of the ladies, Macilente soliloquizes,

> I ne're knew tobacco taken as a parenthesis before.[35]

Hardly an inane speech is uttered in his presence that he does not answer it with some satirical quip.[36] So caustic are his jests that others comment upon them and warn those who do not know him to beware of incurring his displeasure

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[34]Herford and Simpson, Ben Jonson, Vol. I, p. 24.

[35]Jonson, Every Man Out of His Humour, III. ix. 69-70.

[36]See ibid., II. vi. 41-44; III. iii. 4, 14-16, 30; III. ix. 41, 63-64, 80-82, 91, 96-97, 117, 123.

if they do not wish to be the objects of his contumely. Just how much they fear the lash of his tongue or pen is expressed by Carlo, the jester:

> A leane mungrell, he lookes as if he were Chap-falne, with barking at other mens good fortunes: 'were how you offend him, he carries oil and fire in his pen will scald where it drops: his spirits like powder, quick, violent; hee'le blow a man up with a jest: I feare him worse then a rotten wall do's the cannon, shake an houre after, at the report.[37]

Furthermore the denouement in the play is brought about by his playing a trick on Saviolina, a lady-wit, to reveal to Fastitius Brisk her lack of wit and general intelligence.[38] This finally involves the other characters and results in putting them all out of their humours, which act saps Macilente dry of his ill humour. Thus there is evident in Macilente the characteristic Jonsonian love for a jest.

Likewise, he exhibits the independent spirit that made Jonson say that "he would not flatter though he saw death,"[39] and certainly Macilente does not flatter. When confronted with the ignorant Carlo, he gives vent to his feeling for such individuals in the most contemptuous language and with the attitude of one whose right it is to judge and whose

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[37]Ibid., I. ii. 212-218. For another reference to Macilente's jest see III. iv. 63-67; IV. vi. 21-22.

[38]Ibid., V. ii. 1-138.

[39]Herford and Simpson, Ben Jonson, Vol. I, p. 24.

opinion is of such weight that it cannot be gainsaid.[40] In his observation of other characters, he comments upon them so contemptuously and points out their weaknesses in such a manner that he appears to be the sole corrector of the customs of society.[41] In the induction to the play Asper prepares us for the imperious action of Macilente when he declares that it is his purpose to unmask all vices and hold them up to ridicule, and that he will do so in contempt of fear:

> I feare no mood stampt in a private brow,
> When I am pleas'd t' unmask a publicke vice.
> I feare no strumpets druge nor ruffians stab,
> Should I detect their hatefull luxuries;
> No broker, usurers, or lawyers gripe
> Were I dispos'd to say, they're all corrupt.
> I feare no courtiers frowne, should I applaud
> The easie flexure of his supple hammes.[42]

In fact, he not only intends to expose vice where he finds it, but he purposes to lash it with the venom of his ridicule. So he declares,

> I will scourge those apes
> And to these courteous eyes oppose a mirrour
> As large as is the stage whereon we act:
> Where they shall see the time's deformitie
> Anatomiz'd in every nerve, and sinnew,

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[40]Jonson, Every Man Out of His Humour, I. ii. 191-196.

[41]Ibid. See II. iv. 60-74; III. iv. 19-20, 99-100; III. ix. 80-82.

[42]Ibid., Induction, lines 117-122.

With constant courage, and contempt of feare.[43]

Apparently Macilente successfully carried out these intentions, for the feeling evinced by the other characters shows that they feared his ill will. They knew that he never hesitated to lash their flagitiousness with his pen, and when once so scourged, they could never hope to retrieve their former reputation. Carlo, the jester, states Macilente's position in the eyes of the public:

> A scholler, Macilente, doe you not know him?
> a lanke raw-bon'd anatomie, he walkes up and downe
> like a charg'd musket, no man dares encounter him.[44]

This is the same position in society at large that Horace held and the same as that occupied by Jonson in England at the time Every Man Out of His Humour was written.[45]

Egotism, which is such a dominant trait in Asper, is not so directly evident in Macilente. Asper proclaims to the world his superiority as a poet, and he challenges any censor to find fault with his production:

> Let me be censur'd by th' austerest brow,
> Where I want arte, or iudgement, taxe me freely:
> Let envious censors, with their broadest eyes,
> Looke through, and through me, I pursue no favour

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[43]Ibid., Induction, lines 117-122.

[44]Ibid., IV. iv. 24-27. See also I. ii. 197-202.

[45]Herford and Simpson, Ben Jonson, Vol. I, p. 23-24.

> Onely vouchsafe me your attention,
> And I will give you musicke worth your eares.[46]

He praises his poetry still more highly when he assures the public:

> Good men, and vertuous spirits, that lothe their vices
> Will cherish my free labours, love my lines,
> And, with the fervour of their shining grace,
> Make my brain fruitful to bring forth more obiects
> Worthy their serious, and intentive eyes.[47]

We see Macilente's glorification of his own work only in his final speech when he declares:

> The cates that you have tasted were not season'd
> For every vulgar Pallat, but prepar'd
> To banket pure and apprehensive eares:
> Let then their Voices speake for our desert;
> Be their Applause the Trumpet to proclaime
> Defiance to rebelling Ignorance,
> And the greene spirits of some tainted Few,
> That (spight of pietie) betray themselves
> To Scorne and Laughter; and like guiltie Children,
> Publish their infamie before their time,
> By their owne fond exception.[48]

Nevertheless the spirit of egotism pervades all of his actions. He asserts his superiority chiefly, not through praise of his work, but in his envy of those brainless ones who have been favored by fortune, while he, a great wit and

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[46]Jonson, Every Man Out of His Humour, Induction, lines 60-65.

[47]Ibid., Induction, lines 134-138.

[48]Ibid., Conclusion, lines 10-20.

learned man, is fated to live in poverty and bow to those who are really his inferiors. So he questions the justice of such a fate:

> I see no reason why that dog (call'd Chaunce)
> Should fawne upon this fellow, more then me:
> I am a man, and I have limmes, flesh, bloud,
> Bones, sinewes, and a soule, as well as he:
> My parts are every was as good as his,
> If I said better? Why, I did not lie.[49]

Then he insinuates his superiority again when he laments,

> Blind fortune still
> Bestowes her gifts on such as cannot use them:
> How long shall I live ere I be so happy?[50]

His opinion of himself takes a somewhat more altruistic turn when in the end of the play, instead of envying the folly of the wealthy, he really begins to pity them. In fact, he is grieved to think that such foolish beings are human, but since they are, he even wishes that it were possible for them to become wise and finally be saved.[51] Thus praise of his own work is not as evident in Macilente as in Horace, though the belief in his own superiority and greatness is never lost sight of by the reader.

Apparently, then, the characteristic Jonsonian traits are not so well defined in Macilente as in Horace. That he

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[49] Ibid., II. iv. 9-14. [50] Ibid., II. iv. 133-135.

[51] Ibid., V. xi. 61-66.

possesses most of them I have shown, but that he is somewhat at variance with the usual nature of Jonson is obvious. To be more specific, though Macilente exhibits an independent spirit, it is not so domineering as that evinced by Horace. We find Macilente admitting that he must bow down to wealth and power, saying "I thank you" to a fool or to many others his inferior in real merit,[52] and thereby assuming a spurious deference that is not in harmony with the imperious nature of Jonson. Neither is this admission characteristic of Horace, who never conceded a point nor retracted an avowed stand. Furthermore Macilente's admitting that he can be swayed and tempted by the beauty of a woman and his supplication for such a one,[53] whom he himself declares to be "wild in her affection, immodest" and prone to lose her self-control in violent passion,[54] are somewhat un-Jonsonian. Likewise, his admitting that he is envious of those who, though rich, are otherwise very inferior to him is also incompatible with Jonson's nature. He was "jealous of every word and action of those about him,"[55] but he did not admit his jealousy, and in The Poetaster he condemns those envious souls that re-

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[52]Ibid., II. iv. 5-16. [53]Ibid., II. iv. 157-166.

[54]Ibid., IV. iii. 105-108.

[55]Herford and Simpson, Ben Jonson, Vol. I, p. 151.

pine at others' good.[56] In spite of these traits, however, that seem contrary to Jonson's we must remember that Macilente is Jonson out of his humor, and in the throes of a violent temper his fury might easily have taken this bent.

Therefore after an intensive study of the character of Macilente, I have concluded that he is Jonson out of his humour. Though he makes many concessions that are somewhat un-Jonsonian, he possesses the author's predominant traits. He has an utter abhorrence of ignorance, he possesses the power of vivid portrayal of human weakenesses and vices, he inveighs against the evils that are the excrescences of wealth, he is gifted with a clever perception into the intricacies of life, he is endowed with an independent spirit, and he evinces a dominating egotism. To admit that he is envious of those whom he knows to be his inferior, to lament over the fact that he does not possess a woman who he admitted was a shrew, and to play the part of a grovelling suppliant for favors at the hands of the wealthy are incongruous with the usual vehement, contumacious disposition of Jonson, but they are natural bents that such a fiery, temperamental nature in the throes of anger might exhibit.

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[56]Jonson, The Poetaster, V. iii. 454. See also V. i. 79-93, 587-610.

CHAPTER III

SELF-PORTRAYAL IN CYNTHIA'S REVELS

Cynthia's Revels is another comedy which continues the satirical battle raging between Jonson on the one hand and Marston and Dekker on the other. Since it was written after the latter had taken a thrust at the poet of humour in Jack Drum's Entertainment, there seems to be no doubt that the purpose for which it was produced was, in part at least, to return Marston's blow. The characters of Hedon, "the light voluptuous reveller," and Anaides, "his shabby and foul-mouthed companion," were so evidently Marston and Dekker respectively that these antagonists readily recognized themselves in these characters.[1] Since it was evidently Jonson's purpose, then, to satirize his two contemporaries, we might expect to find one character in the play that represents him. I believe Crites to be this one, because I find in him the same dominating Jonsonian traits that I found in Horace in The Poetaster and Macilente in Every Man Out of His Humour.

First, we see very definitely in Crites Jonson's keenness for satire. He plays the part of the great scoffer at society, one who looks about him, sees the artificiality, pomp, and fop-

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[1]Herford and Simpson, Ben Jonson, Vol. I, pp. 25-27.

pery of his day, and then critically holds it up for public inspection. This spirit of ridicule is very evident throughout the play, and here as in The Poetaster not only one, but many classes feel the bludgeoning of his satirical onslaught. Naturally Hedon and Anaides, since they represent Marston and Dekker, are forced to bear the heaviest barrage of his contempt, and these are continually made to wince under the fire of his assault. Hedon is first referred to as "a gallant wholly consecrated to his pleasures."[2] Then all his foolish habits, his great attempt at ostentatiousness, and the artifices by which he attempts to win the favor of the ladies are reviewed in a very ludicrous manner. For example, Crites depicts him as follows:

> Nay stay, my deare Ambition, I can doe you over too, You that tell your Mistris, Her beautie is all composde of theft; Her haire stole from Apollo's goldy-locks; Her white and red, lillies and roses stolne out of paradise; Her eyes, two starres, pluckt from the skie; her nose, the gnomon of Loves diall, that tells you how the clocke of your heart goes: And for her other parts, as you cannot reckon 'hem, they are so many; so you cannot recount them, they are so manifest.[3]

Then Mercury endorses Crites' opinion, for he describes him thus:

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[2]Ben Jonson, Cynthia's Revels in Ben Jonson, Vol. IV, edited by C. H. Herford and Percy Simpson, II. i. 34-35. All future references to this play will be to this edition.

[3]Ibid., V. iv. 297-605.

> He do's hire a stocke of apparell, an some fortie, or fiftie pound in gold, for that fore-noone to shew . . . . He courts ladies with how many great horse he hath rid that morning, or how oft he hath done the whole, or the halfe pommado.[4]

Crites portrays Anaides just as derisively and probably somewhat more ludicrously than he depicts Hedon. He makes him appear a mere simple puppet who is interested chiefly in the number of oaths he can conjure up and the effect that these produce upon the ladies. Crites so mocks him:

> To your cost, sir; which is the Peece, stands forth to bee courted? O, are you shee? Weel, Madame, or sweet lady, it is so, I doe love you in some sort, doe you conceive? And though I am no Monsieur, nor no Signior, and do want (as they say) logicke and sophistrie, and good words, to tell you why it is so; yet by this hand, and by that candle, it is so; And though I bee no booke-worme, nor one that deales by arte, to give you rhetorike, and causes, why it should be so, or make it good it is so, Yet dam' me, but I know it is so, and am assur'd it is so, and I and my sword shall make it appeare it is so; and give you reason sufficient, how it can be no otherwise.[5]

Earlier in the play Crites' opinion of Anaides has also been confirmed by Mercury, who characterized him as follows:

> He has two essentiall parts of the courtier, pride and ignorance . . . . His fashion is not to take knowledge of him that is beneath him in clothes . . . . Hee do's naturally admire his wit, that weares gold-lace, or tissue. Stabs any man that speakes more contemptibly of the scholler then he. Hee is

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[4]Ibid., II. i. 67-68, 63-65. For a full description of Hedon see all of Mercury's explanation in II. i. 48-69.

[5]Ibid., V. iv. 577-588.

> a great proficient in all the illiberall sciences, as cheating, drinking, swaggering, whoring, and such like.[6]

Throughout Scene ii of Act II both these characters are made to appear ridiculous through their discussion of the clever remarks they have conceived, with which they hope to astonish, delight, and captivate the ladies of the court.[7] Crites continues this caricaturing of Hedon and Anaides in the masque presented in the last act.[8] But he vents the supreme force of his contumely against them in return for their malignant decision to calumniate him at every opportunity:

> Poore pittious gallants! what leave idle sleights
> Their thoughts suggest to flatter their starv'd hopes?
> As if I knew not how to entertaine
> These straw-devices! but, of force, must yeeld
> To the weak stroke of their calumnious tongues.
> What should I care what every dor doth buzze
> In credulous ears? it is a crown to me,
> That the best iudgement can report me wrong'd;
> Them lyars; and their slanders impudent.[9]

Thus from beginning to end, they are continually under the fire of ridicule not only from Crites but also from the other meritorious characters in the play.

From the satirizing of Hedon and Anaides in particular, Crites turns to a criticism of courtiers in general. It seems

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[6] Ibid., II. ii. 77-78, 87-88, 90-93. For a full description of Anaides by Mercury see this whole speech, II, ii. 77-103.

[7] Ibid., II. ii. 66-69. [8] Ibid., V. ix. 27-52.

[9] Ibid., III. iii. 3-11.

that Jonson was keenly observant of even the most petty vices and artifices practiced by the gallants of his day, for every artificiality and imposture of Elizabethan life suffered the venom of his pen. Crites hurls taunt after taunt at the little fopperies and vanities indulged in by the idle gallants who spent their lives just chasing after flimsy, worldly pleasures. Virtue and true merit meant nothing to them; only those ostentatious things of life counted for aught. If one could display some pretense of wealth, social prestige was immediately assured him, and his position in society was thus established. If he could lay some claim to a noble heritage, he might hope for additional honors, but such an inheritance was not essential to social recognition.[10] Crites makes evident this truth in the following soliloquy:

> He will ranke even with you (er't be long)
> If you hold on your course. O vanitie,
> How are they painted beauties doted on,
> By light, and emptie ideots! hour pursu'de
> With open and extended appetite!
> How they doe sweate, and run themselves from breath
> Rais'd on their toes, to catch they ayrie formes,
> Still turning giddie, till they reel like drunkards,
> That buy the merrie madness of one houre,
> With the long irkesomeness of following time![11]

Then he continues to vent the burden of his scorn against the court fop when he reviles him for his selfishness, snobbish-

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[10] Ibid., I. iv. 34-38. See also V. iv. 174-177.

[11] Ibid., I. v. 23-33.

ness, and insolent and base ambition. These, he contends, mold one into a dishonest, deceitful, fawning individual who spends all his life trying to make others think he is somebody.[12] These human weaknesses also bring forth the condemnation of all the other worthy characters in the play. Mercury argues that Crites should write a masque to reveal to these foolish individuals their silly practices, for he says that if something is not done they

> With their apish customes, and forc'd garbes,
> Would bring the name of courtier in contempt.[13]

Then later in the play he declares his intention of exposing their every vanity and foolish practice, mentioning especially their foolish maneuvers and quips by which they hope to charm the foolish ladies of the court and win their favor.[14] Arete and Cynthia also level their criticism at these apocryphal beings who have so grossly and wantonly brought their court into contempt. Arete evinces her contempt for them when she urges Crites to be patient:

> This knot of spiders will be soone dissolv'd,
> And all their webs swept out of Cynthia's court,
> When once her glorious deitie appeares,
> And but presents it selfe in her full light.[15]

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[12]Jonson, Cynthia's Revels, III. iii. 32-44. See also III. iv. 89-93, and V. iv. 331-340.

[13]Ibid., V. i. 35-36. [14]Ibid., V. iv. 284-287.

[15]Ibid., III. iv. 87-91.

Then Cynthia reprimands them for their follies and vices and attempts to purge her court of such ulcerous growths as they. She indicates this enormity of corruption among mortals when she says,

> But if that Deities with-drew their gifts,
> For humane follies, what could men deserve
> But death and darkness?[16]

Then she emphasizes the fact that she is always conscious of the nefarious artifices that are being practiced, and she intimates that she can take revenge against them:

> Let 't suffice
> That we take notice, and can take revenge
> Of these calumnious and lewd blasphemies.[17]

In further confirmation of the verity of Crites' opinion of courtiers, their foppery and inanity are ludicrously revealed through their actions at intervals throughout the play. Their foolish topics of conversation, their actions before the frivolous ladies of the court, their love of ostentation and wealth, their ridicule of true scholars, their apish imitation of those whom they consider their superiors, and their attempts to verse a newcomer in their midst in the manners and customs of the court prove Crites' correct

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[16] Ibid., V. vi. 33-36.

[17] Ibid., V. xi. 31-33. See also this same act and scene, 56-59.

evaluation of them.[18] Thus we see in Crites the same spirit of hatred for pomp and vanity that were evident in Horace in The Poetaster.

Crites next gazes into the crystal ball of English society, and after studying its myriad reflections, reveals the follies and idle pastimes of the women of the upper strata of Elizabethan society pictured there. Just as he found many of the court gallants, he found these idle lady-wits spending their lives in search of worldly pleasure, adhering to the vanities and practices that the courtiers seemed to expect of them, continually striving to gain new admirers, practicing all sorts of deceit and lewdness, and forever conjuring up means of surpassing another of the same circle in show and pretense. Crites exposes this corruption and licentiousness to Arete when he lashes these lesser ladies of the court with the venom of his ridicule:

> Then must the ladies laugh, straight comes their Scene
> A sixt times worse confusion then the rest.
> Where you shall heare one talke of this mans eye;
> Another, of his lip; a third, his nose;
> A fourth commend his legge; a fift his foot;
> A sixt his hand; and every one a limme;
> That you would thinke the poore distorted gallant
> Must there expire. Then fall they in discourse
> Of tires, and fashions, how they must take a place,
> Where they may kisse; and whom, when to sit downe,
> And with what grace to rise; if they salute,
> What curt'sie they must use: such cob-web stuffe,
> As would enforce the common'st sense abhorre

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[18]See especially I. iv. 54-60; I. v. 61-63; III. v. 93-98; and the whole of Act IV.

The Arachnean workers.[19]

Then he composes, in the most caustic phrases, the first masque to point out to these lascivious women their sensualness and folly.[20] To do this, he explains the true object for which they were admitted to Cynthia's court, and the contrast between this purpose and their common practices is so very evident that the satire cannot help striking the very depth of their contemptible practices and immorality. Again the other worthy characters endorse Crites' opinion of such matters. Near the beginning of the play Cupid vents his wrath against, and his contempt for, the deceitful practices of such women. He depicts Argurion to Mercury as follows:

> A Nymph of a most wandering and giddy disposition, humorous as the aire, shee'le runne from gallant to gallant (as they sit at primers in the presence) most strangely, and seldome stayes with any. Shee spreads as shee goes . . . . Shee takes speciall pleasure in a close obscure lodging, and, for that cause, visites the City so often, where shee has many secret true-concealing favourites. When shee comes abroad, shee's more loose and scattering then dust, and will fly from place to place, as shee were rapt with a whirle-winde. Shee loves a player well, and a lawyer infinitely: but your foole above all . . . . The worst in her is want of keeping state, and too much descending into inferior and base offices, she's for any coorse employment you will put upon her, as to be your procurer, or pandar.[21]

Then all such women are reprimanded by Cynthia after Crites

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[19]Ibid., III. iv. 73-86. [20]Ibid., V. vii. 165-167.

[21]See all of Cupid's speech in II. iii. 164-185.

in his masque has torn from them the specious veil behind which they had carried on their lewd artifices, and she intimates her intention to chastise them when she declares,

> we must lance these sores,
> Or all will putrifie.[22]

Furthermore the vanity and voluptuousness of these witless women are held up to ridicule through their own conversation at intervals throughout the play.[23] Thus their own actions substantiate the charges brought against them by Crites and his worthy friends and prove the justice of his criticism. Thus we see in Crites, Jonson's "taste for realistic satire" that was so strongly evident in Horace and Macilente. In Cynthia's Revels it is very pointed and caustic, and it shows that Jonson was a keen observer of the folly and vices of contemporary life, against which he always raised an angry voice of protest.[24]

Furthermore, just as Horace and Macilente were ridiculed by others, so is Crites. Always he incurs this hatred and contempt from those who are his inferiors, and these launch the volley of their disapproval against his scholarship and superior wit. He first brings down upon himself the hatred of Hedon and Anaides when he makes them see how ridiculous

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[22]Jonson, Cynthia's Revels, V. xi. 68-69.

[23]See all of II. iv. and all of IV.

[24]Herford and Simpson, Ben Jonson, Vol. I, p. 45.

their inane fopperies and vanities appear to others. Hedon laments,

> Hart, was there ever so prosperous an invention thus unluckily perverted, and spoyl'd by a whoresonne booke-worme, a candle-waster?[25]

Anaides pays a similar tribute to Crites' wit when he also deplores being persecuted by the venom of it:

> Dam' mee, if I should adventure on his campanie once more, without a sute of buffe, to defend my wit; he does nothing but stab the slave: how mischievously he cross'd the device of the prophesie there? And Moria, shee comes without her muffe too, and there my invention was lost.[26]

This incident calls forth the conspiracy of these two to malign Crites at every mention of his name in their presence. They plan to accuse him of being a plagiarist, and they even swear that they will damn their own souls if necessary in order to calumniate him.[27] They definitely put their plan into operation when Amorphus laments Arete's asking Crites' advice instead of his. Anaides attempts to console Amorphus by bringing exactly the charge against Crites that he had said he would:

> Death, what talk you of his learning? he understands no more then a schoole-boy; I have put him downe my selfe a thousand times (by this sire) and

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[25]Jonson, Cynthia's Revels, III. ii. 1-3.

[26]Ibid., III. ii. 38-43. [27]Ibid., III. ii. 52-68.

> yet I never talkt with him but twice, in my life: you never saw his like. I could never get him to argue with me, but once, and then, because I could not construe an Author I quoted at first sight, hee went away, and laught at me. By Hercules, I scorne him, as I doe the sodden Nymph, that was here e'en now, his mistris Arete: And I love my selfe for nothing else.[28]

Hedon substantiates Anaides' opinion, then heaps upon Crites a bit of worldly scorn:

> I wonder the fellow do's not hang himself, being thus scorn'd, and contemn'd of us that are held the most accomplisht societie of gallants![29]

Then later on, these two conspire again to attempt to outwit Crites and hurl him from the preeminent position he holds of being the greatest wit among them.[30] But, of course, they are thwarted again in their design and, in turn, are made the butt of Crites' target of cynicism.

He is next reviled for being a hard working scholar who spends most of his life in study:

> Fough he smels all lam-oyle, with studying by candle-light.[31]

Scholarship is so thoroughly in disrepute among the ignorant of Cynthia's court that each revels at a chance to get to utter maledictions against it. So Amorphus draws a contrast

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[28] Ibid., IV. v. 40-49. [29] Ibid., IV. v. 50-52.

[30] Ibid., V. iv. 552-557. [31] Ibid., III. ii. 11-12.

between "despised" and "adulterated" learning on one hand and wealth and influential favor at court on the other:

> What make you in companie of this scholler here?
> I will bring you knowne to gallants, as Anaides
> of the ordinarie, Hedon the courtier, and others,
> whose societie shall render you grac'd, and respected: this is a triviall fellow, too meane,
> too cheape, too course for you to converse with.[32]

Crites is next condemned for his scholarship in the light of his penury:

> But a meere poore scholer as he is, I thinke
> I should make some desperate way with my selfe,
> whereas now (would I might never breathe more)
> if I doe know that creature in this kingdome,
> with whom I would change.[33]

Then Argurion is insulted and sneers at the idea of Moria's suggesting to her that she pay Crites special attention.[34] Throughout these tirades against him, Crites assumes the haughty imperious attitude of Jonson, letting all censorship slip from him like mercury from a slick surface. He considers himself so far above such slander that he does not consider it worth his notice and condemnation:

> And I doe count it a most rare revenge,
> That I can thus (with such a sweet neglect)
> Plucke from them all the pleasure of their malice.
> For that's the marke of all their inginous drifts,
> To wound my patience, howsoe're they seeme

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[32]Jonson, Cynthia's Revels, I. iv. 172-177.

[33]Ibid., IV. v. 56-60. [34]Ibid., IV. i. 86-88.

> To aime at other obiects: which if miss'd
> Their envi's like an arrow, shot upright,
> That, in the fall, indangers their owne heads.[35]

This parallels Horace's attitude toward his would-be slanderers.

It seems that the odium of riches must have sunk deep into the consciousness of Jonson, for there is hardly a play of his in which he does not hurl darts of caustic criticism against the corruptions that are the excrescences of wealth. Thus in Cynthia's Revels this favorite subject is touched upon. But in this play Jonson has chiefly hurled the volley of his scorn indirectly against the evils that originate in worldly treasures by showing their effect upon the actions of the characters; how it is that the worldly rich cease to value the true virtues in life and pay tribute only to gold and what it will purchase.[36] Thus Crites does not directly, as do Horace and Macilente, rail against this vice, but he does approach it negatively. He argues that he should not attempt to write a masque because he is so poor and despised that the world will not listen to him. Instead of revealing to men their follies he will merely bring down upon himself their hatred and contumely:

> I, but though Mercurie can warrant out

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[35] Ibid., III. iii. 37-44.

[36] Ibid., I. iv. 32, 69-70; V. iv. 625-654.

> His under-takings, and make all things good,
> Out of the powers of his divinitie,
> Th'offence will be return'd with weight on me,
> That am a creature so despisde, and poore;
> When the whole Court shall take it self abusde
> By our ironicall confederacie.[37]

That he was despised because of his indigent circumstances is proved by others' expressing a contempt for his penurious condition. Hedon contumeliously refers to him thus:

> By this heaven, I wonder at nothing more then our gentlemen-ushers, that will suffer a piece of serge, or perpetuana, to come into the presence: mee thinkes they should (out of their experience) better distinguish the silken disposition of courtiers, then to let such terrible coors ragges mixe with us, able to fret any smooth or gentile societie to the threeds with their rubbing devices.[38]

Moria and Argurion also refer to his needy condition.[39] Thus we see that Crites, as were Horace and Macilente, was a poor scholar that was reviled and persecuted by the world because of his lack of wealth. Since this is congruous with Jonson's position in the society of his day, we can assume that, in this respect, Crites' character parallels that of Jonson.

Furthermore Crites' opinion of the world's attitude toward wealth is substantiated by other characters in the play. Echo declares that though the world no longer approves and praises one for merit, but recognizes him great in proportion to the amount of wealth he possesses, wealth will not buy true hap-

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[37]Ibid., V. i. 23-29. [38]Ibid., III. ii. 28-35.

[39]Ibid., IV. i. 83-84; 86-88.

piness. In his own words Echo laments,

> O hadst thou knowne the worth of heavns rich gift,
> Thou wouldst have turn'd it to a truer use,
> And not (with starv'd, and covetous ignorance)
> Pin'd in continuall eying that bright gem,
> The glance whereof to others had beene more,
> Then to thy famisht mind the wide worlds store:
> So wretched is it to be meerely rich.[40]

Consequently each time Jonson discusses riches, he makes us feel their opprobriousness by showing how the world's false evaluation of them detracts from the worldly value of the real virtues of life.[41]

Apparently another of Jonson's favorite subjects was ignorance. Here again Crites rings true to Jonsonian traits. Though not as bitter in his denunciation of this state of hebetude as Horace, he nevertheless indicates his abhorrence of it. In criticizing Hedon and Anaides he indicates that all of their faults originate in their stupidity and lack of knowledge:

> The one, a light voluptuous reveller,
> The other a strange arrogating puffe,
> Both impudent, and ignorant inough;
> That talke (as they are wont) not as I merit:
> Traduce by custome, as most dogges doe barke,
> Doe nothing out of judgement, but disease,
> Speake ill, because they never could speake well.[42]

Then in the final chorus of the play he intimates that know-

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[40] Ibid., I. ii. 45-51. [41] See also III. iv. 103-107.

[42] Ibid., III. iv. 25-31.

ledge will wash away all sins, and cure all ills. In fact, when he is finally given the sole right of meting out punishment to the offenders of Cynthia's court, he decrees as final judgment on all that they must haste to the well of knowledge and drink thereof so that they may be purged of all their maladies, after which action they may become honored members of a gracious court.[43]

Crites does not stand alone in his condemnation of ignorance; other meritorious characters indorse his opinion. Early in the play Echo intimates that it produces warped and wizened wouls that are so easily blinded by the glamour of the world that they are unable to detect things of real merit.[44] Arete echoes this sentiment when she explains to Crites what she thinks constitutes true worth:

> It is the pride of Arete to grace
> Her studious lovers: and (in scorne of time,
> Envie, and ignorance) to lift their state
> Above a vulgar height.[45]

Then Mercury, who thinks courtiers the most corrupt of all beings, lists ignorance as one of their two cardinal vices. Thus Jonson, who would fly into a towering passion when confronted by ignorance,[46] has infused into Crites and other

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[43]Jonson, Cynthia's Revels, V. xi. 35-40.

[44]Ibid., I. ii. 45-50. [45]Ibid., III. iv. 100-104.

[46]Herford and Simpson, Ben Jonson, Vol. I, p. 62.

worthy characters his vehement hatred of this despised state.

Just as bitterly as he condemns stupidity, he passionately praises knowledge. Crites, throughout the play, shows how the actions of the ignorant are foolish, contemptible, and pernicious, and he contends that the intellect will always conquer the weak, grovelling spirit. He reflects that the mind is man's best part, but he laments that oftentimes it is so abused that it ceases to function except upon lewd and vulgar things:

> If he not strive t' erect his groveling thoughts
> Above the straine of flesh! But how more cheape
> When, even his best and understanding part,
> (The crowne, and strength of all his faculties)
> Floates like a dead drown'd bodie, on the streame
> Of vulgar humour, mixt with commonst dregs?[47]

Recognizing Crites' knowledge and wisdom, Arete and Cynthia not only become his firm friends but delegate to him the sole power of judging and meting out punishment to the foolish, malignant courtiers and ladies who had maligned him for his scholarship and penury.[48] Even the ignorant pay tribute to the scholar though they do it unwittingly. Amorphus in reviewing the faces of the various professionals describes a scholar as follows:

> Then have you your students, or academique face,
> which is here, an honest, simple, and methodicall face.[49]

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[47]Jonson, Cynthia's Revels, I. v. 34-39.

[48]See V. viii. 18-35; V. xi. 95-99, 114-119.

[49]Ibid., II. iii. 24-25.

Then he, an ignorant courtier, really shows the merit of knowledge when he openly condemns it,[50] for Crites says,

> So they be ill men,
> If they spake worse, 'twere better: for of such
> To be disprais'd, is the most perfect praise.[51]

Amorphus at this same time in his instruction to Asotus on court forms, reveals the general sentiment toward scholarship:

> Rather seeme not to know 'hem, it is your best.
> I. Be wise, that you never so much as mention the name of one, nor remember it mention'd; but if they be offered to you in discourse, shake your light head, make betweene a sad and a smiling face, pitie some, raile at all, and commend your self: 't is your only safe and unsuspected course.[52]

Just how true a representation this was of society is questionable, but that Jonson felt that he was chiefly alone in battling the cause of knowledge seems certain.[53] In this respect, then, again we see him represented in Crites.

Furthermore Crites, immediately upon his introduction into the play, exhibits the characteristic Jonsonian wit. Then throughout the play he continually punctuates conversations with short quips that definitely bring out the inanity of some previous speech of an errant courtier. For example, in

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[50] Ibid., III. i. 68-73. [51] Ibid., III. iii. 14-16.

[52] Ibid., III. i. 68-73. 'hem refers to good writers used in the preceding speech. For other references to the same idea see I. iv. 175-177 and II. iii. 175-178.

[53] Herford and Simpson, Ben Jonson, Vol. I, p. 44.

criticizing a play, Anaides says,

> 'Tis too full of uncertaine motion. He hobbles too much.[54]

Crites wittily replies,

> 'Tis call'd your court-staggers, sir.[55]

This gift brings forth much varied comment from Crites' acquaintances. His friends praise him for it, while his enemies malign him. Mercury seems to value this trait highly, for in summing up the scholar's great qualities he lists it as an important one:

> In somme, he hath a most ingenuous and sweet spirit, a sharp and season'd wit, a straight iudgment, and a strong mind.[56]

Cynthia pays him still higher tribute when she praises the cleverness of the masque Crites has composed:

> With no lesse pleasure, then we have beheld
> This precious christall, worke of rarest wit,
> Our eye doth reade thee (now enstil'd) our Crites.[57]

To his antagonists the poignancy of his wit is like a two-

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[54]Jonson, Cynthia's Revels, V. iv. 210-211.

[55]Ibid., V. iv. 212. For other examples of Crites' wit see I. iv. 71-72, 113; I. v. 8-9; I. iv. 154, 161.

[56]Ibid., II. iii. 137-139.

[57]Ibid., V. ix. 29-31. See also V. viii. 30.

edged sword that easily severs into parts their puny attempts at facetiousness. Therefore Hedon and Anaides are just as vehement in their criticism as Mercury and Cynthia are in their praise.[58] Thus in his use of caustic repartee, Crites exhibits another Jonsonian trait.

Furthermore he shows evidence of stanch independence. From the beginning Crites makes it obvious that he scorns the world and its ridicule of him. In fact, he pities those who are so blinded by their own folly that they cannot recognize true merit:

> I suffer for their quiet now, and my soule
> (Like one that lookes on ill-effected eyes)
> Is hurt with meere intention on their follies.[59]

Like Horace, he believes so heartily in the final triumph of virtue over worldly vices that he scoffs at the idea that the ridicule of malignant antagonists can injure him, and he declares that he will not be swerved from his purpose:

> What can his censure hurt me, whom the world
> Hath censur'd vile before me? If good Chrestus,
> Euthus, or Phronimus, had spoken the words,
> They would have moov'd me.[60]
> Well, since my leader on is Mercurie,
> I shall not feare to follow. If I fall
> My proper vertue shall be my relief.[61]

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[58] Ibid., III. ii. 38-41. [59] Ibid., I. v. 40-42.

[60] Ibid., III. iii. 17-20.

[61] Ibid., V. i. 40-42. For another reference to the same idea see III. iii. 22-24.

This independent air is so pronounced that it is very evident to those with whom Crites comes in contact, and it is naturally very irritating to his enemies. That all of their opprobrious vilification of him cannot draw the volley of his fury against them is the source of greatest provocation to Hedon and Anaides. Confronted with such aspersion, he evinces the attitude that their scorn is unworthy of his notice, and as he probably intended that it should, this reaction to their calumny enrages them to desperation because they can do nothing about it; they have no other weapon of revenge to hurl at him. They even admit their fury:

> Gods precious, this afflicts mee more then all the rest, that wee should so particularly direct our hate, and contempt against him, and hee to carrie it thus without wound or passion! 'tis insufferable.[62]

But just as his independent attitude is contemptible to his enemies, it is praiseworthy to his friends. Mercury admires him greatly for it, and expresses his approval:

> Hee will thinke and speake his thought both freely; but as distant from depraving another mans merit, as proclaiming his owne. For his valour, tis such that he dares as little to offer an iniurie, as receive one.[63]

Jonsonian independence, then, is another of Crites' traits.

Possibly, however, the crystalizing characteristic which

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[62] Ibid., III. ii. 19-22. [63] Ibid., II. iii. 134-137.

establishes the certainty that Crites is Jonson is egotism. That Crites believed himself to be superior and richly endowed with intellect cannot, I believe, be gainsaid by any critic of the play. This trait is so pronounced that the reader never for once loses sight of it. Immediately after Crites appears upon the scene, he assumes the lofty attitude of one who is capable of ferreting out the faults and vices of men, commenting upon them, and then pointing the culprits toward the true way of life.[64] This is the spirit he exhibits throughout the play.[65]

Then the other meritorious characters bear proof of the worthiness of his character. In reality, they eulogize him, vouchsafing him so much reverence that they make him appear almost divine. In fact, Mercury, in reviewing the superiority of his character, declares,

> It is cleare, Nature went about some ful worke, she did more then make a man, when she made him.
> . . . . . .
> O Cupid, 'tis beyond my deitie to give him his due prayses: I could leave my place in heaven, to live among mortals, so I were sure to be no other than he.[66]

All the virtues that it is possible for man to have, Crites

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[64]See Crites' speech in I. v. 23-66.

[65]Jonson, Cynthia's Revels, III. iii. 1-44; III. iv. 1-52, 54-86; V. iv. 625-648; V. ix. 138-160.

[66]Ibid., II. iii. 128-130; 147-149. See also V. x. 104-105.

is given credit by these individuals for possessing, and there is not so much as a hint that he exhibits any human frailities. Both Cynthia and Arete agree with Mercury that his goodness exceeds that of man and is thus beyond comparison. Arete describes him thus:

> Excellente Goddesse, to a mans, whose worth,
> (Without hyperbole,) I thus must praise;
> One (at least) studious of deserving well,
> And (to speake truth) indeed deserving well;
> "Potentiall merit stands for actuall,
> "Where onely oportunitie doth want,
> "Not will, nor power: both which in him abound,
> One, whom the Muses, and Minerva love.
> For whom should they, then Crites, more esteeme,
> Whom Phoebus (though not Fortune) holdeth deare?
> And (which convinceth excellence in him,)
> A principall admirer of your selfe.[67]

Then Cynthia endorses everything that Arete has said when she acknowledges his virtue:

> Our eye doth reade thee (now enstil'd) our Crites;
> Whom learning, vertue, and our favour last,
> Exempteth from the gloomy multitude.
> "With common eye the supreme should not see,
> Henceforth be ours, the more thy selfe to be.[68]

The substance of these eulogies is repeated at various times by these two goddesses,[69] and Cynthia finally adds the crown to these laudations when she recognizes the greatness of his

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[67] Ibid., V. vi. 83-94. [68] Ibid., V. viii. 31-35.

[69] Ibid., See III. iv. 92-107; IV. v. 13-15; V. i. 30-39; V. vi. 101-111; V. viii. 18-28; V. xi. 114-119.

wisdom by appointing him judge to determine what punishment shall be meted out to those unworthy spirits for disgracing her court.

In this position he is like Horace, for his justice is so altruistic that it proves he possesses a great spirit of leniency and forgiveness.[70] From these facts, we see that Crites possesses the same "towering egotism" that characterized Horace and Macilente. This, in turn, is consistent with the nature of Jonson.

I have thus tried to show that the character of Crites throughout parallels that of Jonson himself. His ability to look beneath the specious surface of English society and see the ulcerous sores of improbity, lewdness, and other vices prevalent there show him to be keenly observant of the life about him; his cleverness in ludicrously revealing these evils to the public bespeak his bent for satire; his hatred of ignorance and his laudation of knowledge declare him a scholar; his contempt for riches indicates him to be a simple virtuous man; his wit, independence, and egotism proclaim him an imperious, dominating personality; and all of these prove him to be Jonson.

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[70] Ibid., V. xi. 130-133.

CHAPTER IV

SELF-PORTRAYAL IN THE STAPLE OF NEWES, THE NEW INNE, AND THE MAGNETICK LADY

In the plays discussed thus far there is one character in each that is so definitely like Jonson there seems to be no doubt that he must have been portraying himself in each, but in the plays now under discussion I find no such character. However in The Staple of Newes, The New Inne, and The Magnetick Lady, there is one character in each play whom Jonson seems to use chiefly as a means through which to speak his philosophy of life in general. Each of these characters possesses many Jonsonian traits, but none is so characteristically like him that I can identify him as Jonson. Probably Peni-Boy Canter in The Staple of Newes more nearly represents him than Lovel in The New Inne or Compasse in The Magnetick Lady, because he evinces the same dominating personality and hatred of worldly frivolity and vanity that were evident in Jonson. Then in the end of the play his caustic satire and his ridicule of all corruption and vice resemble very much Jonson's attitude toward worldly evils. He does not have an opportunity to show the full development of his character, however, because he pretends to be what he is not throughout the greater part of the play. Therefore

we do not see him in his real character until near the end of the comedy. Lovel in The New Inne is a gentleman, soldier, and scholar, who often speaks words of profound wisdom that even parallel those of Horace in The Poetaster or Crites in Cynthia's Revels. Here the comparison ends, however, for Lovel represents the type of the lovelorn gentleman, melancholy because of his inability to obtain the lady of his choice. Compasse in The Magnetick Lady is represented as a scholar, well read in men and manners,whose adversaries dread very much his censure and disapprobation. In the end of the play, through foresight and judgment, he untangles all plots and makes it possible for the play to terminate with wrong punished and right rewarded. He, too, however, becomes enamored with a fair maiden and in the end successfully woos her. Thus in these three plays, The Staple of Newes, The New Inne, and The Magnetick Lady, there is no one character through whom Jonson portrays himself. Probably the time of writing might partly explain this fact. In the production of The Poetaster, Cynthia's Revels, and Every Man Out of His Humour, Jonson was waging a stage quarrel with Marston and Dekker, and naturally he had to put himself into these plays to satirize more satisfactorily his antagonists. In the writing of these later plays--he wrote The Staple of Newes, The New Inne, and The Magnetick Lady between 1625 and 1632--it seems that he had no definite individual against whom to hurl the volley of his scorn and derision. Still, these plays

are characteristically Jonsonian, for they hold up to ridicule contemporary frivolity and vices, the practices against which Jonson always aimed his poignant sarcasm.

In these, as in his earlier plays, he acrimoniously satirizes various phases of English life. First to feel the venom of his pen are the idle courtiers and other foolish, indolent individuals who are interested in nothing but worldly ostentatiousness and pleasures. Peni-Boy Junior in The Staple of Newes is an excellent example of this type, and the one in this play against whom Peni-Boy Canter, who is much like Jonson, directs the major part of his reprimand. In the beginning of the play Peni-Boy Junior is introduced to the reader in the role of an egotistical, idle pleasure-seeker when he is first discovered discoursing with Leatherleg:

> Look to me, wit, and look to my wit, Land,
> That is, looke on me, and with all thine eyes,
> Male, Female, yea Hermaphroditicke eyes,
> And those bring all your helpes, and perspicills,
> To see me at best advantage, and augment
> My forme as I come forth, for I doe feele
> I will be one, worth looking after, shortly.[1]

Peni-Boy Canter is acutely aware of the levity and vainglory of Peni-Boy Junior, and he derisively comments upon them throughout the play. He sees the folly of conforming to the foolish customs and manners of the day, and he explains his

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[1]Ben Jonson, The Staple of Newes in Ben Jonson, Vol. VI, edited by C. H. Herford and Percy and Evelyn Simpson, I. i. 3-9. All future references to this play will be to this edition.

objection thus when Peni-Boy Junior informs him that he is loath to lose his courtesies:

> So are all they, that doe them, to vaine ends,
> And yet you do lose, when you pay you(r) selves.[2]

After observing the lewdness and sensuality of Peni-Boy Junior, Pecunia, Cymbal, and other pleasure-seekers, he vents against them a volley of wrath and contumely that equals in severity that of Horace or Crites when they were most grievously incensed against the depraved and malignant practices indulged in by many of those about them:

> Look, look, how all their eyes
> Dance i'their heads (observe) scatter'd with lust!
> At sight o' their brave Idoll! how they are tickl'd
> With a light ayre! the bawdy Saraband!
> They are a kinde of dancing engines all!
> And set, by nature, thus, to runne alone
> To every sound! All things within, without 'hem
> Move, but their braine, and that stands still! mere monsters,
> Here, in a chamber, of most subtill feet!
> And make their legs in tune, passing the streetes!
> These are the gallant spirits o' the age!
> The miracles o' the time! that can cry up
> And downe mens wits! and set what rate on things
> Their half-brain'd fancies please! Now pox upon 'hem
> See how solicitiously he learnes the Jigge,
> As if it were a mystery of his faith![3]

Then when Peni-Boy Canter discards his disguise and reveals himself to be the father of Peni-Boy Junior, he openly reviles his son and other ne'er-do-wells, as does Crites in Cynthia's Revels, for bringing courtiers and the court into disrepute

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[2] Ibid., III. ii. 12-13. [3] Ibid., IV. ii. 130-145.

by their perverted practices and polluted lives:

> A worthy Courtier, is the ornament
> Of a King's Palace, his great Masters honour.
> This is a moth, a rascall, a Court-rat,
> That gnawes the common-wealth with broking suits,
> And eating grievances! So, a true Souldier,
> He is his Countryes strength, his Soveraignes safety,
> And to secure his peace, he makes himselfe
> The heyre of danger, nay the subiect of it
> And runnes those vertuous hazards, that this Scarre-
> Crow
> Cannot endure to hear of.[4]

In these outbursts of fury against the idle profligates, Peni-Boy Canter has as clearly portrayed Jonson's attitude toward such individuals as does Horace, Crites, or Macilente. Thus in this respect his point of view is consistent with that of the poet.

In The Magnetick Lady the love of ostentatiousness, the pomp and ceremony, and the depravity so prevalent among the English gentility of Jonson's day are chiefly depicted through the characters of Sir Diaphanous Silkworme and Sir Moath Interest. Just how extensive is the frivolity and vanity of the idle nobility is exemplified by Sir Diaphanous after he has been injured in an encounter with Ironside:

> There's nothing vexes me, but that he has staind
> My new white sattin Doublet; and bespatter'd
> My spick and span silke Stockings, O' the day
> They were drawne on: And here's a spot i'

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[4]Ibid., IV. iv. 140-149. For other references to this dissoluteness of the gentility see I. vi. 71-73; III. ii. 222-240; IV. ii. 48-129.

my hose, too.[5]

In reply to this Compasse vouchsafes some Jonsonian philosophy, though it is not as caustically satirical as that used by Peni-Boy Canter. Still it shows Compasse's contempt for such folly and vanity:

> Shrewd maimes! your Clothes are wounded desperately
> And that (I thinke) troubles a Courtier more,
> An exact Courtier, then a gash in his flesh.[6]

And the ridicule of such vanity is still more pronounced and ludicrous in Sir Diaphanous' reply:

> My flesh? I sweare had he giv'n me twice so much,
> I never should ha' reckoned it. But my clothes
> To be defaced, and stigmatiz'd so foulely!
> I take it as a contumely done me.
> Above the wisdome of our Lawes to right.[7]

In the remainder of this conversation Compasse continues ironically to laugh at Silkworme and spur him on to engage in a duel with Ironside. Through Silkworme's conversation the cowardice and pusilanimity of this doltish courtier is subtly revealed.[8] Then when he meets Ironside preparatory to engaging him in combat, the latter together with Compasse succeeds in making the former appear a veritable fool. Silk-

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[5]Ben Jonson, The Magnetick Lady in Ben Jonson, Vol. VI, edited by C. H. Herford and Percy and Evelyn Simpson, III. iv. 7-10. For a similar reference see I. vi. 1-9. All future references to this play will be to this edition.

[6]Ibid., III. iv. 11-13. [7]Ibid., III. iv. 14-18.

[8]Ibid., III. iv. 19-129. See also II. vi. 116-121.

worme discourses at length upon the various kinds of valor, and insists on fighting in his shirt sleeves. Ironside's answer to this suggestion shows the contempt he feels for courtiers in general:

> O, that's to save your doublet;
> I know it a Court trick! you had rather have
> An ulcer in your body, then a Pinke
> More i' your clothes.[9]

And Compasse makes clear his opinion of their status when he indicates by comparison the kind of valor they possess:

> Which is in children, Fooles, or your street Gallants
> O' the first head.[10]

Sir Moath Interest represents the more malignant, pernicious type of courtier, who is so avaricious that he will stoop to any kind of maliciousness that will offer him a pecuniary reward. He makes various bargains to cheat his niece, whose guardian he is, out of her inheritance. Though Practice, the lawyer, argues with him about his attempt to secure this fortune, this repacious, grasping old profligate makes clear the utter depravity to which he has sunk and his inability to be swerved from his course by public opinion:

> Let 'hem exclaime, and envie: what care I?
> Their murmurs raise no blisters i' my flesh.[11]

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[9] Ibid., III. vi. 73-76. [10] Ibid., III. vi. 115-116.

[11] Ibid., II. vi. 37-38.

The discussion between Ironside and Compasse that follows this statement shows the contempt they hold for such artifices of the worldly-minded. Thus in The Magnetick Lady Jonson has held up for public inspection the inane mannerisms and degeneration of the gallants of his day, and he has placed the derisive jeering at such practices chiefly into the mouth of the character Compasse, who scoffs at them, though not so acrimoniously as do other characters that represent Jonson. In this respect, then, he is much like the poet.

I find in The New Inne only a hint of scorn hurled at the degenerate condition of English society. This is probably due to the fact that the play in general is somewhat of a drama of absurdity, for there is no doubt that it is certainly one of Jonson's poorest comedies and does not add, by any means, to the fame of its author.[12] Even here, however, as I have said, Jonson did not refrain from touching upon one of the favorite subjects of his comedies of manners. This ridicule of courtiers is incorporated chiefly in the conversation of Lovel and the host when they are discussing the possible future of Franke. Lovel suggests that he take the boy as a page and rear him as a noble. The host rejects such a proposition by declaring,

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[12]William Gifford, The Works of Ben Jonson, Vol. II, p. 385.

> I had rather . . .
> My selfe, make a cleare riddance of him . . .
> Then dam him to that desperate course of life.[13]

Lovel then presents the life of a courtier as he sees it, and the host answers him by contrasting what the nobility once was with the degeneracy to which it has now fallen:

> I that was, when the nourceries selfe, was noble,
> And only vertue made it, not the mercate,
> That titles were not vented at the drum,
> Or common outcry; goodnesse gave the greatnesse,
> And greatnesse worship: Every house became
> An Academy of honour, and those parts--
> We see departed, in the practice, now,
> Quite from the institution
> . . . . . .
>
> Instead of backing the brave Steed, O' mornings,
> To mount the Chambermaid; and for a leape
> O' the vaulting horse, to ply the vaulting house:
> For exercise of armes, a bale of dice,
> Or two or three packs of cards, to shew the cheat,
> And nimblenesse of hand: mistake a cloake
> From my Lords back, and pawne it. Ease his pockets
> Of a superfluous Watch; or geld a iewell
> Of an odde stone, or so: Twinge three or foure buttons
> From off my Ladyes gowne. These are the arts,
> Or seven liberall deadly sciences
> Of pagery, or rather Peganisme,
> As the tide run.[14]

This caustic criticism of the English gallant is, in every way, congruous with that which has already been noted in other plays. Here it is not Lovel, the poet and scholar,

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[13]Ben Jonson, The New Inne in Ben Jonson, Vol. VI, edited by C. H. Herford and Percy and Evelyn Simpson, I. iii. 36, 37, 39. All other references to this play will be to this edition.

[14]Ibid., I. iii. 52-59, 72-84.

however, who explains this depravity, and in this respect he is certainly unlike Horace, Crites, or Macilente.

In these plays, as in Jonson's more satirical ones, other groups of English society also feel the venomous lash of his satire. In The Staple of Newes, the foolish and absurd practices of doctors, especially, are caustically portrayed. Jonson, as well as the other learned men of his day, recognized the fact that many nefarious artifices were engaged in by those who pretended to be versed in medical science, because the majority of people were still so ignorant and superstitious that they could easily be gulled by anyone adept at discoursing in grandiloquent terms. Peni-Boy Canter easily sees through this surreptitiousness, and in the role of the chief scoffer at society, he sarcastically refers to them as "stall-fed Doctors."[15] Later he discourses at length upon the artifices which they practice to obtain the patronage of their patients:

> The Doctor here, I will proceed with the learned
> When he discourseth of dissection,
> Or any point of Anatomy: that hee tells you,
> Of Vena Cava, and of vena porta,
> The Meseraicks and the Meserterium
> What does hee else but cant. Of if he runne
> To his Iudiciall Astrologie,
> And trowle the Trive, the Quartile and the Sextile,
> Platicke aspect, and Partile, with his Hyleg
> Or Aechochoden, Cuspes, and Horoscope.
> Does not he cant? Who here does understand him?[16]

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[15]Jonson, The Staple of Newes, I. vi. 67.

[16]Ibid., IV. iv. 37-47. For another reference to Peni-Boy Canter's opinion of doctors see IV. iv. 159-165.

From this satirical onslaught it is evident that Peni-Boy Canter possesses the same scornful, derisive attitude toward society that was evinced by Horace or Crites. Furthermore his opinion of doctors is substantiated by even Peni-Boy Senior, the money bawd, who also indicates the fraud indulged in by physicians.[17] In all of his scoffing, however, Peni-Boy Canter, like Horace, contends that it is the vices of men, not men themselves, that he hates, for he tells Peni-Boy Junior:

> If thou had'st sought out good, and vertuous persons
> Of these professions: I' had lov'd thee, and then.
> For these shall never have that plea 'gainst me,
> Or colour of advantage, that I hate
> Their callings, but their manners, and their vices.[18]

Other professions to feel the bludgeoning of his onslaught were the hardened old sea captain, Shun-field,[19] and Pyed-mantle, the herald. In reference to the latter, he makes it clear again that it is not the man that he hates but the evils that men do:

> Here is Pyed-mantle,
> 'Cause he's an Asse, doe not I love a Herald?[20]

From these criticisms, it is evident that Peni-Boy Canter has the same satirical bent that was so predominant in Jonson.

In The Magnetick Lady, also, physicians are subjected to

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[17] Ibid., II. iv. 71-78. [18] Ibid., IV. iv. 135-139.

[19] Ibid., IV. ii. 80-81. [20] Ibid., IV. iv. 150-151.

the most acrid ridicule. No antagonist of Horace's or Crites' suffered a more virulent lashing than that endured by Dr. Rut when Compasse describes him thus:

> Rut is a young physician to the family:
> That, letting God alone, ascribes to nature
> More then her share; licentious in discourse,
> And in his life a profest Voluptary;
> The slave of money, a Ruffon in manners;
> Obscene in language; which he vents for wit;
> Is sawcy in his Logicks, and disputing,
> Is anything but civill, or a man.[21]

Compasse also takes a thrust at lawyers when he declares:

> He [Practice] is a Lawyer, and must speake for
> his Fee,
> Against his Father, and Mother, all his kindred;
> His brothers, or his sisters: no exception
> Lies at the Common Law.[22]

From these various speeches, it is quite obvious that Compasse can also qualify as a scoffer at society, and is therefore much like Jonson in this respect.

Along with the other vices of English life, those of the church and churchmen are also maligned in Jonson's plays. The poet knew well the practices of both Catholicism and Anglicanism, for at various times he was a member of both churches, and once when imprisoned for felony, he suddenly adopted the Catholic faith and claimed benefit of clergy to escape punish-

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[21]Jonson, The Magnetick Lady, I. ii. 38-45. For another reference to doctors see I. vi. 116-118.

[22]Ibid., II. v. 55-59. See also II. vi. 116-118.

ment.[23] Though he made use of such practices himself, he realized the questionableness of them, and he did not hesitate to hold them up to public ridicule. In The Staple of Newes, however, it is not Peni-Boy Canter, the chief scoffer, that thrusts sarcasm at religious artifices, but these are ludicrously referred to in the news of the day.[24]

In The Magnetick Lady the sarcasm becomes more caustic when Compasse verbally paints the parish priest as he sees him:

> Hee is the Prelate of the Parish, here;
> And governes all the Dames; appoints the cheere;
> Writes downe the bils of fare; precks all the Guests;
> Makes all the matches and the marriage feasts
> Within the ward; drawes all the parish wils;
> Designes the Legacies; and strokes the Gills
> Of the chief Mourners; and (whoever lacks
> Of all the kindred) hee hath first his blacks.
> Thus holds hee weddings up, and burials,
> As his maine tithing; with the Gossips stals,
> Their pewes; He's top still, at the publique messe;
> Comforts the widow, and the fatherlesse,
> In funerall Sack! Sits 'bove the Alderman!
> For of the Ward-mote Quest, he better can
> The mysterie, then the Levitick Law:
> That peece of Clark-ship doth his Vestry awe.
> Hee is as he conceives himselfe, a fine
> Well-furnish'd, and apparaled Divine.[25]

This shows Compasse's idea of the worldliness of the Clergy, and it was undoubtedly Jonson's because Compasse later explains that the idea conveyed in this description is not his

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[23]Herford and Simpson, Ben Jonson, Vol. I, p. 19.

[24]Jonson, The Staple of Newes, III. ii. 123-151. See also III. ii. 286-297.

[25]Jonson, The Magnetick Lady, I. ii. 15-32.

but that of a great "clarke (Ben: Ionson)."[26] The clergy and church are referred to at various other times,[27] and once even the servants jeer at parson Palate's gluttony:

> The Parson has an edifying stomack,
> And a perswading Palate (like his name:)
> He hath begun three draughts of sack in Doctrines
> And fower in Uses.[28]

From this we can see that the worldliness and corrupt practices of the church, along with the evils in other phases of life, suffered ridicule at the point of Jonson's pen and that the poet used chiefly one character to express his scorn and derision.

Very similar to Jonson's contempt for the foolish mannerisms and sensuality of the English gallants is his mockery of the frivolity and lewdness of many of the women of his day. In The Staple of Newes this is depicted through Pecunia and her attendants, Mortgage, Statute, Band, and Wax, and though they are allegorical characters and hold true throughout to the things they personify, they possess womanly characteristics and exhibit much of the inane formality and voluptuousness that were characteristic of women in seventeenth century England. Again Peni-Boy Canter plays the chief role of scoffer, and he makes it evident that Pecunia spends her

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[26] Ibid., I. ii. 33-34.

[27] Ibid., See II. v. 32-33 and I. v. 17-24.

[28] Ibid., III. i. 16-19.

time in frivolously making love to all who will woo her and that she demands in return their flattery and attention.[29] Her sensuality and lack of maidenly modesty is ludicrously portrayed in the scene where she freely bestows kisses upon all the men present when she has been instructed to vouchsafe them only the favor of her hand.[30]

The Magnetick Lady contains a very direct and pointed satire in the character of Mrs. Polish. She is an excellent representation of the garrulous gossiper. Compliant, glib, and resourceful, she wins the confidence of her associates, unwittingly reveals her trickery, and when confronted with the truth, assumes an attitude of bold effrontery, and defiantly scorns the punishment she thinks may be meted out to her. Jonson reveals in this character an individual seldom found but one who is true to life, and he lets fall upon her the full weight of his contumely for such women.[31] Dr. Rut sums up her character admirably when he says,

> 'Tis such a Fly, this Gossip, with her buz,
> Shee blowes on every thing, in every place![32]

Though Compasse is not used as the chief means of satirizing

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[29]Jonson, The Staple of Newes, I. vi. 49-90.

[30]Ibid., II. v. 46-78; III. ii. 1-11.

[31]Jonson, The Magnetick Lady, IV. iv. 1-56; V. ii. 580-581; V. v. 27-46.

[32]Ibid., V. vii. 1-2.

Gossip as he was the courtiers and professionals, he is the one who discovers her treachery and is then responsible for its being revealed. Thus again he is very much like Horace and Crites.

In The New Inne there is a hint of such ridicule. Though the scene of Pinnacia and Stuffe is quite absurd and really adds nothing to the play, Pinnacia makes a pointed thrust at the frivolity and dissolute life led by the court ladies when she commands and reproaches Stuffe:

> Here tie my Shooe; and shew my velvte petticote,
> And my [illegible]like stocking! Why doe you make me a Lady,
> If I may not doe like a Lady, in fine clothes?
> . . . . . .
>
> Why doe you bring me in wild Company?
> You'd ha' me tame, and civill, in wild Company?
> I hope I know, wild Company are fine Company,
> And in fine company, where I am fine my selfe,
> A Lady may doe any thing, deny nothing
> To a fine party, I have heard you say it.[33]

In this respect, this play holds true to Jonson's dramatic presentation of English life, for in every play discussed thus far, the folly of women has been touched upon.

Though Jonson was waging no satirical battle with any particular contemporary poet between 1625 and 1632,[34] as he was when he wrote Every Man Out of His Humour, Cynthia's

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[33]Jonson, The New Inne, IV. ii. 82-87, 92-97.

[34]The time of writing The Staple of Newes, The Magnetick Lady, and The New Inne.

Revels, and The Poetaster, it seems that he could not refrain from casting a few puns at the apocrayphal or mediocre poets, whom he so contemptuously scorned. Thus in The Staple of Newes he levels a few darts of well-aimed criticism at poetic pretenders through the character of the insipid Madrigall, who is poetaster and prime jeerer of the group whose chief duty it was to irritate others with their inane puns. Madrigall is first introduced as the crowned Poet of his time, who is to use his poetic gift to sing the praises of the lustful and worldly Pecunia.[35] Then later he admits that he has been spending his time reading verses to Pecunia's women, whom he reprimands for having gone to sleep while he was reading.[36] Peni-Boy Canter again assumes the role of scoffer and sums up his opinion of this poet when he says to him:

> And your selfe a Foole
> O' the first rank, and one shall have the leading
> O' the right hand file, under this brave Commander.[37]

The low estate of poetry is portrayed in much the same manner as its degeneracy was indicated in The Poetaster. Peni-Boy Senior positively refuses to lend Madrigall money when he is informed that the latter is a poet:

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[35]Jonson, The Staple of Newes, I. vi. 81-84.

[36]Ibid., I. vi. 136-145.

[37]Ibid., IV. ii. 30-32. For other satirical references to this poet see III. iii. 21-25; IV. iii. 81-128.

> Y' ave said enough. I ha' no money, Gentlemen,
> An' he goe to 't in ryme once, not a penny.[38]

From this, it is evident that Jonson still retained his earlier idea of poetry, that he was still posing as her champion, and that he was still opposed by those who would hurl her from her high estate and let her sink to the degradation to which false poets would naturally doom her. By way of contrast to these poetic pretenders, the ignorant characters, Mirth and Tatle, who comment upon the play between acts, really argue the merit of Jonson's poetry when they condemn it, for Jonson always contended that the condemnation of the ignorant merely proved the real value of a production.[39] Mirth explains the general opinion of The Devil is an Asse:

> I remember it gossip, I went with you by the same token, Mrs. Trouble Truth diswaded us, and told us, hee was a prophane Poet, and all his plays had Divels in them. That he kept schole upo' the Stage, could coniure there, above the Schole of Westminister, and Doctor Lamb too: not a Play he made, but had a Divell in it, And that he would learne us all to make our husbands Cuckolds at Playes by another token, that a young married wife i' the company, said, shee could finde in her heart to steale thither, and see a little o' the vanity through her masque, and come practice at home.[40]

Then Peni-Boy Canter completes the contrast when he explains

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[38] Ibid., II. iv. 22-23.

[39] Jonson, The Poetaster, V. iii. 179-180.

[40] Jonson, The Staple of Newes, Intermeane after the first act, 47-56.

what apocryphal poets consider poetry:

> My Eg-chind Laureat here, when he comes forth
> With Dimeters, and Trimeters, Tetrameters,
> Pentameters, Hexameters, Catalecticks,
> His Hyper, and his Brachy-Catalecticks,
> What is all this but canting?[41]

Thus, though Peni-Boy Canter does not eulogize poetry as do Horace and Crites, indirectly he explains the merit of true poets and condemns the spuriousness of false ones.

In The New Inne and The Magnetick Lady there are very few references to poetry. In fact, in The New Inne there are none that bear directly on Jonson's attitude toward her dethroned state, but in The Magnetick Lady the subject is touched upon. Since this is brought in only incidentally in the play, the praise of poetry or the satire of false poets is not so pointed as it is in The Staple of Newes. Jonson's idea of the essential elements of good poetry and the inability of the ignorant to appreciate good verse are always stressed.[42]

In these three plays under discussion, it is very evident that Jonson has obviously revealed himself by the attitude he expresses toward the corruption of riches. In fact, the theme of The Staple of Newes is the use and abuse of riches, which are forcefully and clearly depicted. Peni-Boy Junior and

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[41] Ibid., IV. iv. 54-59.

[42] Jonson, The Magnetick Lady, II. vii. Chorus, 34-47; III. iv. 21-28; III. vi. 125-126.

Peni-Boy Senior are also corrected and punished so that, again, right is rewarded and wrong punished. Furthermore this retribution is brought about chiefly by Peni-Boy Canter, the scoffer, just as it was by Horace in The Poetaster and Crites in Cynthia's Revels. Pecunia is the queen of money, and she possesses all the magnetism that wealth and its accompanying vices can command. She easily secures the worship of Peni-Boy Junior and the other gallants and immediately causes them to forget everything except money and the worldly pleasures that money can buy. In his opposition to this situation, Peni-Boy Canter shows the general public's opinion of wealth, its potency and its vices, and how it minimizes the importance of virtue and right living:

> A Money Bawd, is lightly a Flesh Bawd, I see too.[43]

In fact, he is just as caustic in his condemnation of the corruption of riches as either Horace or Crites. He explains that in a tilt between wealth and virtue, the latter offers really no opposition to its antagonist:

> Why that's the end of wealth! thrust riches outward
> And remaine beggers within: contemplate nothing
> But the vile sordid things of time, place, money,
> And let the noble, and the precious goe,
> Vertu and honesty; hang 'hem; poore thinne membranes
> Of honour; who respects them? O, the Fates?
> How hath all iust, true reputation fall'n

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[43]Jonson, The Staple of Newes, II. v. 99-100.

Since money, this base money 'gan to have any![44]

Peni-Boy Senior, the money bawd, expresses the same opinion:

> You saw very right,
> My meritorious captaine, (as I take it!)
> Merit will keepe no house, nor pay no house rent.
> Will Mistresse Merit goe to mercat, thanke you?
> Set on the pot, or feed the family?[45]

Later, however, Peni-Boy Canter takes issue with public opinion and argues that money can never compensate for virtue:

> Were he a learned Herald, I would tell him
> He can give Armes, and markes, he cannot honour,
> No more then money can make Noble: It may
> Give peace, and ranke, but it can give no Vertue.[46]

In this respect, also, Peni-Boy Canter is like Horace and Crites in their acrimonous condemnation of vices which are the excresences of wealth.[47]

This same idea of riches is to be found in The New Inne, though not so much emphasis is placed upon it as in The Staple of Newes. Neither is it so malignantly satirized by any one individual as it is by Peni-Boy Canter. Lovel, the character into whose mouth Jonson put much of his philosophy, has little to say on this subject. He does express somewhat

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[44]Ibid., III. ii. 241-248. [45]Ibid., II. iv. 60-64.

[46]Ibid., IV. iv. 155-158.

[47]Ibid. For other references to the misuse of wealth see I. iii. 38-41; I. v. 136-140; Intermeane after first act, 12-14; II. i. 35-38; II. v. 68-69; IV. iii. 23-24; IV. iv. 131-132.

the uselessness of money and its inability to satisfy when it is possessed, however, when he is arguing with his genial host about the lack of satisfaction one receives from temporary affection:

> Who would be rich to be so soone undone?
> The beggars best is wealth, he doth not know:
> And, but to show it him, inflames his want.[48]

Other characters bring out Jonson's idea of the low estate to which virtue and goodness have degenerated and the condemnation of poverty as a vice. The Host expresses the opinion of the age on this subject by explaining the attitude of the past era as to what constituted greatness:

> I that was, when the nourceries selfe, was noble,
> And only vertue made it, not the mercate,
> That titles were not vented at the drum,
> Or common out-cry; goodnesse gave the greatnesse
> And greatnesse worship.[49]

The nurse more caustically and clearly explains the real status of the penurious and the rich:

> That, or a noble, or an honest man,
> Should dare t' except against, her poverty.
> Is poverty a vice? Bea. Th' age counts it so.
> Nurse God helpe your Lordship, and your peeres
> that think so,
> If any be: if not God blesse them all,
> And helpe the number o' the vertuous,
> If poverty be a crime. You may object

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[48]Jonson, The New Inne, II. vii. 200-202.

[49]Ibid., I. ii. 52-56.

> Our beggery to us, as an accident,
> But never deeper, no inherent baseness.[50]

Though the direct references to the subject of riches in The New Inne are few, they help to establish the hypothesis that they were really Jonson's ideas about wealth, because they are consistent with all those thus far found in his work.

Likewise, in The Magnetick Lady, though the references are few, the evaluation of wealth is ably discussed by Sir Moath Interest in his dissertation on money. In this he reveals the improbity to which man will stoop to gain a large share of this world's goods, and the important place that money holds in the interest and life of individuals. It requires only a few extracts from this discussion to prove that the general ideas expressed about money are exactly the same as I have noted in Jonson's other references to the potency of wealth:

> My monies are my blood, my parents, Kindred:
> And he that loves not those, he is unnaturall:
> I am perswaded that the love of monie
> Is not a vertue, only in a Subject,
> But might befit a Prince.
> . . . . . .
>
> First, wee all know the soule of man is infinite
> I' what it covets . . . It will be then
> No hard thing for a coveting man to prove
> Or to confesse, hee aimes at infinite wealth.
> . . . . . .

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[50] Ibid., V. v. 54-62.

> Fourthly, tis naturall to all good subjects
> To set a price on money; more then fooles
> Ought on their Mrs. Picture.
> . . . . . .
>
> Fiftly, wealth gives a man the leading voice,
> At all conventions; and displaceth worth,
> With generall allowance to all parties:
> It makes a trade to take the wall of vertue;
> And the mere issue of a shop, right Honourable.
> . . . Your wise poore men
> Have ever been contented to observe
> Rich Fooles, and so to serve their turnes upon them,
> Subjecting all their wit to the others wealth.
> And become Gentlemen Parasites, Squire Bauds
> To feel their patrons honorable humors.[51]

Thus we see that Jonson, regardless of what theme he is discussing, never fails to permeate it with his hatred of the evils that arise from covetousness and greed, and he never fails to show that a love of money is so woven into the warp and woof of man's character that the resulting fabric is immediately sensitive and responsive to the pricking of any pecuniary stimulus, be that stimulus good or bad.

In these plays, also, Jonson does not fail to give recognition to scholarship. The esteem in which scholars are held and the tribute paid them by some characters is in accord with Jonson's praise of knowledge.[52] Furthermore the satirical quips, which the ignorant often cast at scholars and which merely aid in proving the latter's merit are bitterly satirized in The Staple of Newes by Peni-Boy Canter.

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[51] Ibid., II. vi. 1-101.

[52] Jonson, The Staple of Newes, I. v. 125-130; II. iv. 20-21; IV. iv. 6-7.

In speaking of Medrigall, Peni-Boy Junior refers to him as a "dainty Scholler." This calls forth the following comments:

> Alm. No, no, great scholler, he writes like a Gentleman
> Shu. Pox o' your Scholler. P. Ca. Pox o' your distinction
> As if a Scholler were no Gentlemen.
> With these, to write like a Gentleman, will in time
> Become, all one, as to write like an Asse.
> These Gentlemen? these Rascalls! I am sicke
> Of indignation at 'hem.[53]

Thus again, in the chief role of scoffer, Peni-Boy Canter is like his prototypes, Horace and Crites, who in turn expressed Jonson's idea of scholars.

In The New Inne tribute is paid to scholars only through the recognition accorded Lovel, who is characterized in the list of characters as a "complete gentleman, a soldier, and scholar, much honored and beloved by the host."[54] In The Magnetick Lady, Compasse, who declares himself to be a scholar, is so recognized by Ironside in terms which prove that most men fear his censure just as most men feared Jonson's:

> Sir, I confesse you to be one well read
> In men, and manners; and that, usually,
> The most ungovern'd persons, you being present,
> Rather subject themselves unto your censure,
> Then give you least occasion of distaste,
> By making you the subject of their mirth.[55]

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[53] Ibid., IV. ii. 148-154. [54] Jonson, The New Inne, p. 402.

[55] Jonson, The Magnetick Lady, I. i. 29-34.

Furthermore Jonson hurls a few darts of venomous ridicule at the ignorant. For example in The Staple of Newes Peni-Boy Canter attributes most of the evils of the flesh to the sin of ignorance:

> They are a kind of dancing engines all!
> And set, by nature, thus, to runne alone
> To every sound! All things within, without 'hem
> More but their braine, and that stands still! mere monsters,
> Here, in a chamber, of most subtill feet![56]

This is similar to the opinion evinced by Horace in The Poetaster. In The New Inne the same idea is conveyed by Lad when he speaks sarcastically of Prudence:

> Dull, stupid, wench!
> Stay i' thy state of ignorance still, be damn'd,
> An idiot Chambermayd! Hath all my care,
> My breeding thee in fashion, thy rich clothes,
> Honours, and titles wrought no brighter effects
> On thy dark soule.[57]

And in The Magnetick Lady ignorance is mentioned as being worthy of scorn.[58] Thus, though much less tribute is paid to scholarship and much less aversion shown toward ignorance in these plays than in the earlier ones, the attitude evinced toward both is the same in all plays. Apparently, then, it

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[56]Jonson, The Staple of Newes, IV. ii. 134-138. For another reference see I. v. 36-41.

[57]Jonson, The New Inne, IV. iv. 311-316.

[58]Ibid., II. vii, chorus, 69-76.

seems logical to conclude that Jonson must have considered scholarship worthy of all merit and ignorance the worst of all states.

Finally, there are slight hints of Jonsonian egotism to be found The Staple of Newes and The Magnetick Lady. Since these plays contain characters that really do not represent Jonson but merely exhibit some of his predominant traits, the spirit of egotism is not conveyed through these characters. Direct allusions to his greatness are made by commentators of the plays. For example, in the Induction to The Magnetick Lady the author calls himself, in the words of Mr. Damplay, "the poet of the day."[59] The merit of his plays as contrasted with those of other authors is clearly explained by the Boy in the Induction,[60] and in Act I Compasse pays tribute to Jonson:

> As any 'is of his bulke, (Ben: No a great Clarke Ionson) made it.[61]

Later his goodness and honesty are enthusiastically commented upon when the Boy explains why he always lends Jonson his support in the face of all opposition:

> But his clothes shall never be the best thing about him, though; hee will have somewhat beside, either

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[59]Jonson, The Magnetick Lady, Induction, 11-12.

[60]Ibid., Induction 52-57; 88-93; 135-141. See also II. vii, Chorus, 34-47; III. vi, Chorus, 34-36.

[61]Ibid., I. ii. 33-34.

> of humane letters, or sever honesty, shall speak him a man though he went naked.[62]

In The Staple of Newes this spirit of egotism is not so pronounced as in The Magnetick Lady, but it is conveyed in the same manner. For example, in commenting upon plays Mirth explains how true to life Jonson's plays are, what excellent advice they contain, and how the vanities and follies of society are depicted.[63] Since these elements, according to Jonson,[64] constitute a good play, he seemed to believe that he surpassed any of his time in the art of play writing. Thus Jonson infuses into these plays the spirit of his superior ability and intellect, and makes direct references to his own greatness.

Of the three characters in these plays that partially portray Jonson, I believe that Lovel possesses fewer Jonsonian traits than Compasse or Peni-Boy Canter. He is depicted as a scholar and student who because of this fact is accorded much recognition. Here the similarity between him and the author really terminates, for he does not possess the strong satirical bent, the independent spirit, and egocentric nature that were the dominating traits in Jonson's character. On the other hand he is a lovelorn gentleman

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[62] Ibid., I. vii, Chorus, 54-57.

[63] Jonson, The Staple of Newes, Intermeane after the first act, 43-56.

[64] Jonson, The Magnetick Lady, Induction 98-111.

pining away because he is unable to win the affection of the girl of his choice. This attitude is truly inconsistent with that of the author. Therefore these observations convince me that Lovel is not Jonson.

I find in Compasse, who is also not a true prototype of Jonson's, more traits of similarity to the author than I found in Lovel. He is a scholar, he scorns the worldliness of those whose only concern seems to be to conform to some formality, he ridicules the fraudulent practices of exploiters and apocryphal practitioners, he is chiefly responsible in the end for right being rewarded and wrong being punished, and he possesses a great degree of self-esteem and a belief in his own superiority. On the other hand he fails to measure up to all Jonsonian standards. He lacks the fervid enthusiasm for scholarship and poetry evinced by Horace and Crites, the evils of wealth and the injustices heaped upon the poor bother him little, and finally he elopes with the heiress and marries her apparently for her money. In these respects he is certainly unlike the author.

Peni-Boy Canter, more than either Lovel or Compasse, compares favorably with his great prototypes, Horace and Crites. He early evinces an independent nature, a bitter sarcasm for the misuses of wealth, a hatred for sensuality and wickedness in general, and a love of knowledge and a belief in the opprobrium of ignorance. He lacks, however, the refined and

cultural mien and the strong egotistical bent so characteristic of the author. Furthermore he does not receive the esteem and recognition of his greatness by those of power and influence that were accorded Horace and Crites. Thus I think that the character of Peni-Boy Canter is hardly consistent with that of Jonson.

Apparently, then, considering the plays as a whole, Jonson did not attempt to create a character in The Staple of Newes, The Magnetick Lady, or The New Inne that is an epitome of him, though he does infuse many of his own traits into Peni-Boy Canter, Compasse, and Lovel. Many of the basic tenets of his philosophy, however, have been delineated through other characters in the plays.

CHAPTER V

PLAYS WITH LITTLE SELF-PORTRAYAL

As far as I have been able to determine, evidence of self-portrayal in Jonson's plays terminates with The Poetaster, Every Man Out of His Humour, Cynthia's Revels, The Staple of Newes, The Magnetick Lady, and The New Inne. It is true that there are hints of self-presentation in some of the other plays but no definite self-portrayal. Though some of the comedies are excellent satires on contemporary life, there is no one character in any play so sympathetically drawn that I can identify him as Jonson. Nevertheless in one group of the dramas I do find elements that are characteristically Jonsonian. For example, in Every Man in His Humour Edward Kno'well Junior exhibits a few of these traits. First, he is a scholar, who seems to have gained renown at the universities he had attended, for his father so refers to him,

> He is a scholler, if a man may trust
> The liberall voice of fame, in her report
> Of good account, in both our universities,
> Either of which hath favoured him with graces.[1]

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[1]Ben Jonson, Every Man in His Humour in Ben Jonson, Vol. III, edited by C. H. Herford and Percy Simpson, I. i. 9-12. All future references to this play will be to this edition.

Furthermore he seems to merit the praise accorded him by his father, for his advice to his errant cousin Stephen shows him to be a serious-minded youth who is interested in the good and virtuous things of life and who possesses sound judgment and much wisdom. He thus cautions Stephen:

> Learne to be wise, and practice how to thrive,
> That would I have you doe: and not to spend
> Your coyne on every bable, that you phansie,
> Or every foolish braine, that humors you.
> I would not have you to invade each place,
> Nor thrust your selfe on all societies,
> Till mens affections, or your owne desert
> Should worthily invite you to your ranke,
> He, that is so respectless in his courses,
> Oft sells his reputation, at cheape market.
> Nor would I, you should melt away your selfe
> In flashing braverie, least while you affect
> To make a blaze of gentrie to the world,
> A little puffe of scorne extinguish it,
> And you be left, like an unsavorie snuffe,
> Whose propertie is onely to offend.
> I'ld ha' you sober, and containe your selfe;
> Not, that your sayle be bigger then your boat:
> But moderate your expences now (at first)
> As you may keepe the same proportion still.
> Nor, stand so much on your gentilitie,
> Which is an aerie, and meere borrow'd thing,
> From dead mens dust, and bones: and none of yours
> Except you make, or hold it.[2]

This eulogy to virtuous living compares favorably with the panegyrics given by Horace and Crites on the worthiness of chastity and sobriety. His recognition of poetry and worthy poets is also consistent with the character of Jonson. He with Clement, the merry magistrate, heartily condemns false poets and praises good ones. In defense of the latter muses,

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[2] Ibid., I. i. 66-89.

Clement says,

> Nay, no speech, or act of mine be drawne against such as professe it worthily. They are not borne everie yeere, as an Alderman. There goes more to the making of a good Poet, then a Sheriffe, Mr. Kitely; you looke upon me! though I live in the citie here, amongst you, I will doe more reverence to him, when I meet him, then I will to the major out of his yeere. But these paper pedlers! These inke dablers! They cannot expect reprehension, or reproch. They have it with the fact.[3]

In reply to which speech Kno'well Junior declares,

> Sir, you have sav'd me the labour of a defense.[4]

In the Quarto of 1601, Kno'well gives this defense, which equals in fervor and laudation any such encomium given by Horace and Crites.[5] Thus we see that Kno'well, as did Jonson, posed as the champion of poetry.

There is also in Kno'well Junior, as in Horace and Crites, evidence of Jonsonian wit. Hardly an inane remark is given in his presence that does not call forth from him an apt witticism. For example, in his and Well-bred's discussion of Stephen, Well-bred says of the latter, "I can compare him to nothing more happily, then a drumme; for every one may play upon him."[6] Kno'well replies,

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[3]Ibid., V. v. 37-45. [4]Ibid., V. v. 46.

[5]Ben Jonson, Every Man in His Humour in Ben Jonson, Vol. III, 1601 Quarto, edited by C. H. Herford and Percy Simpson, V. iii. 312-343.

[6]Jonson, Every Man in His Humour, III. ii. 23-24.

No, no, a childes whistle were farre the fitter.[7]

And as in Horace and Crites, his witticisms often develop into contempt and scorn. He continually laughs and jeers at Bobadill, who attempts to portray himself as a great man but who in reality makes a fool of himself. Kno'well Junior laments that the age should produce such men:

> O, manners! that this age should bring forth such creatures! that Nature should bee at leisure to make 'hem![8]

Kno'well also recognizes the fact that Matthew, the town gull, who pretends to be a poet has merely stolen verses from old poems and read them as his own. For this, Kno'well scourges him with the severest ridicule:

> A filtching rogue? hang him. And from the dead? it's worse then sacrilege.[9]

Thus it is evident that Kno'well Junior, to a certain extent, plays the role of scoffer at society as do the other characters that represent Jonson. He is also a scholar and poet, and is endowed with the characteristic Jonsonian wit. Here, however, the similarity ends, for Kno'well lacks the imperious, domineering personality, the towering egotism, and the caustic

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[7] Ibid., III. ii. 25. For other examples of Kno'well's witty remarks see III. i. 94, 133, 139; III. v. 26-29, 170-171.

[8] Ibid., IV. vii. 146-149. [9] Ibid., IV. ii. 59-60.

satirical bent that were the crystalizing traits of Jonson's character. For these reasons, I conclude that Kno'well Junior is not Jonson but merely an individual into which the author infused much of his own personality.

Bartholmew Fayre is another of Jonson's powerful satires that abound in wit and humor. In this play the author attacks with bitter irony the Puritans, who in his day suffered much persecution. Though I find no one character that evinces strong Jonsonian traits, there has been placed into the mouth of Knockem, as there was in the mouth of Jonson's great antitypes, scathing denunciation of certain practices prevalent in contemporary English life. For example, Knockem plays, to a certain extent, the role of scoffer at people and their foolish mannerisms. He especially satirizes Zeal-of-the-land Busy, an excellently drawn representation of a hypocritical overzealous Puritan divine, who is the target for many a well-aimed satirical dart. Knockem gives vent to his contempt for such an opprobrious character after Busy, having devoured all the roast pig that he could secure, pronounces upon the remainder of the fair his righteous curse. Knockem aptly characterizes the churchman thus:

> An excellent right Hypocrite! now his belly is full, he falls a railing and kicking, the Iade. A very good vapour! I'll in, and ioy Ursula, with telling, how her pigge works, two and a halfe he eate to his share. And he has drunke

> a paileful. He eates with his eyes, as well as his teeth.[10]

From his actions, it is very obvious that Busy merits Knockem's criticism.[11] In fact, he has been similarily ridiculed by Littlewit earlier in the play:

> Presently, mother, as soone as he has cleans'd his beard. I found him, fast by the teeth, i' the cold Turkey-pye, i' the cupbord, with a great white loafe on his left hand, and a glasse of Malmessey on his right.[12]

Thus it is evident that Knockem is justified in his scorn of the hypocrisy of the Puritan divine, and he exhibits a strong Jonsonian trait in scoffing at such artifice. Furthermore Knockem jeers at the credulity, vanity, and pruriency of women. He is the chief actor in the scene where Mrs. Littlewit is enticed into selling her virtue for the sake of becoming a great lady.[13] Knockem plays upon her vanity by promising her finery and a gay life:

> 'Tis true, Ursula, take 'hem in, open thy wardrope, and fit 'hem to their calling. Green-gownes, Crimson-petticoats, green women! my Lord Maiors green women! guests o' the Game, true bred. I'le

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[10]Ben Jonson, Bartholmew Fayre in Ben Jonson, Vol. VI, edited by C. H. Herford and Percy and Evelyn Simpson, III. vi. 47-51. All future references to this play will be to this edition.

[11]Ibid., III. ii. 30-48; III. vi. 27-110; IV. i. 91-95; IV. vi. 85-721.

[12]Ibid., I. vi. 33-36. [13]Ibid., all of IV. v.

provide you a Coach, to take the ayre, in.[14]

Then after persuading Mrs. Littlewit to do as he suggests, he utters his contempt and contumely for such prurient practices:

> O, they[15] are as common as wheelbarrows, where there are great dunghills. Every Pettifogger's wife has 'hem, for first he buyes a Coach, that he may marry, and then hee marries that hee may be made Cuckold in't: For if their wives rede not to their Cuckolding, they doe 'hem no credit. Hide, and be hidden; ride, and be ridden, sayes the vapour of experience.[16]

Self-portrayal in Knockem terminates with his scorn of various groups of society, however, for in other respects, he is very different from the author. In the first place, he is a sensual, scurvy horse-courser, who instead of trying to lift humanity up, tries to debase and drag it down. He is neither a scholar nor a poet and makes no pretense of possessing superior intelligence. He is himself a cheat and makes no effort whatsoever to reform society. Neither does he evince a strong, stanch, independent character which is necessary in order that he be the epitome of the author. Thus though he does satirize the society of his day, his character is not sympathetically enough drawn to be consistent with that of Jonson's. The

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[14] Ibid., IV. v. 91-95.

[15] The word they refers to the word Coach used in line 94.

[16] Jonson, Bartholmew Fayre, IV. v. 97-103. For a further satirization of womanly folly, see V. iv. 23, 35, 47-48, 68-69, 225-226, 334.

play, then, as a whole, though an excellent satire on the corrupt practices of exploiters and the evil means used by them to gull ignorant dupes into becoming the prey to their wily schemes, contains little self-portrayal.

I find in Epicoene, or The Silent Woman more evidence of Jonsonian traits than I did in Bartholmew Fayre. Though there is no character in the play that parallels Horace or Crites, Truewit is so drawn that he seems to possess enough of the author's tendencies that he may be likened to him. Near the beginning of the play, he vouchsafes a philosophy that would do credit to Horace or Crites or one more mature in years than he appears to be throughout the play. In arguing with Clerimont about how one should spend his time, he assumes a lofty, impressive tone when he replies thus to one of Clerimont's statements:

> Yes; as if a man should sleep all the term, and think to effect his business the last day. O Clerimont, this time, because it is an incorporeal thing, and not subject to sense, we mock ourselves the fineliest out of it, with vanity and misery indeed! not seeking an end of wretchedness, but only changing the matter still.[17]

We see in this speech the indication of a character who is, at least, interested in the good and serious things of life. Though he does not pose as a renowned scholar or poet, he is so sympathetically portrayed that he gains the reader's ad-

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[17]Epicoene, or The Silent Woman, I. i. The Works of Ben Jonson, edited by Lieut.-Col. Francis Cunningham, II, 405.

miration. He is the originator of all jests in the play and finally brings about their termination in the end so that the unworthy are punished and the worthy receive justice. We see in him, immediately upon his introduction into the play, his tendency to condemn and satirize the foolish pastimes and indulgences of the idle. When Clerimont inquires of him what a man should do, he sarcastically replies,

> Why, nothing; or that which, when 'tis done is as idle. Hearken after the next horserace, or hunting-match, lay wagers, praise Puppy, or Peppercorn, White-foot, Franklin; swear upon White-mane's party; speak aloud, that my lords may hear you; visit my ladies at night, and be able to give them the character of every bowler or better on the green. These be the things wherein your fashionable men exercise themselves.[18]

Then later in the play he illustrates the credulity and cowardice of two courtiers, La-Foole and Sir John Daw, whom he plays a trick upon by telling La-Foole that he is liable to an attack from John Daw, and John Daw that he is liable to an attack from La-Foole. Each is afraid to meet the other and suffers himself to be blindfolded and chastized, as he thinks, by his antagonist so that the quarrel might be settled without bloodshed. The action of these two throughout the play substantiates Truewit's opinion of them, and finally they receive condign punishment in the end when he reveals publicly their duplicity and scurrility. He scathingly denounces them

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[18] Ibid., I. i, p. 405.

thus:

> Nay, Sir Daw and Sir La-Foole, you see the gentlewoman that has done you the favours! we are all thankful to you, and so should the women-kind here, specially for lying on her, though not with her! you meant so, I am sure. But that we have stuck it upon you today, in your own imagined persons, and so lately, this Amazon, the champion of the sex, should beat you now thriftily, for the common slanders which ladies receive from such cuckoos as you are. You are they that, when no merit or fortune can make you hope to enjoy their bodies, will yet lie with their reputations, and make their fame suffer. Away, you common moths of these, and all ladies honours. Go travel to make legs and faces, and come home with some new matter to be laughed at: you deserve to live in an air as corrupted as that where with you feed rumour.[19]

I have consistently pointed out that idleness, foolish mannerisms, and gross lewdness indulged in by most courtiers of seventeenth century England always aroused in Jonson a voice of protest. In this respect, then, Truewit's nature parallels that of the author. Nor does Truewit cease with ridiculing courtiers. He is also aroused to express his opinion of those who profess to be scholars but who are in reality ignorant buffoons. The following conversation illustrates the contempt he feels for such pretenders:

> Cler. They say he is a very good scholar.
> True. Ay and he says it first. A pox on him, a fellow that pretends only to learning, buys titles, and nothing else of books in him!
> Cler. The world reports him to be very learned.

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[19] Ibid., V. i, p. 461.

> True. I am sorry the world should so conspire to belie him.
> Cler. Good faith, I have heard very good things come from him.
> True. You may; there's none so desperately ignorant to deny that; would they were his own![20]

Again he satirically denounces those who merely profess to be intellectual when he is explaining to Haughty the trick he has played on John Daw:

> That falls out often, madam, that he that thinks himself the master-wit is the master fool.[21]

The termination of the play proves the verity of Truewit's opinion of Daw.

In this play also there are pointed thrusts at the folly and lewdness of women. In Truewit's advice to Morose, he explains every deceit and vice of which the feminine sex is capable.[22] This cannot, however, be taken as his honest opinion, for afterwards he admits that he was merely condemning women to inveigle Morose into marrying. Nevertheless much of this opinion is substantiated later in the play, for at various times Truewit alludes to the frivolity and vanity of women. Once he laughs at their use of cosmetics by remarking to Clerimont:

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[20] Ibid., I. i, p. 410. For other references to this same character see IV. ii, p. 446.

[21] Ibid., III. i, p. 432. [22] Ibid., II. i, pp. 413-416.

> I'll warrant you for the college honours: one of their faces has not the priming colour laid on yet, nor the other her smock sleeked.[23]

After this in his discourse on women to Dauphine he stresses all their frailties and vices.[24] This seems to be so well done that Dauphine immediately recognizes in Truewit's description the ladies of the court, for he asks, "On what courtly lap hast thou late slept to come forth so sudden and absolute a courtling?"[25] Thus Truewit, as do his great prototypes, Horace and Crites, ridicules the vanity of women. Here the similarity ends, however, for Truewit is not the independent, self-assured, dominating personality that Horace and Crites are, who do represent Jonson. Therefore the foregoing observations induce me to conclude that, though Truewit is not Jonson, the author has infused into him many of his own traits.

The Divell is an Asse is another of Jonson's satirical comedies. In this play the satire is launched chiefly against monopolists, projectors, pretended demoniacs, and witch-finders. Consequently among the characters we find the characteristic gull, who thinks himself to be a very wise person but who easily becomes a prey to the wily schemes of exploiters; the gross and cunning individuals, who commit themselves

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[23]Ibid., II. iv, p. 423. [24]Ibid., IV. i, pp. 435-436.

[25]Ibid., IV. i, p. 436.

to any practice from which they expect to secure pecuniary remuneration; and these meritorious characters who in the end are finally successful in correcting and debasing knavery and rewarding virtue. From this observation, it is evident that the drama, as a whole, holds true to Jonson's idea of dramatic treatment. In this play, as in a number of others I have discussed, I find no one character that represents the author. But Manly, who is a worthy individual, is largely responsible for revealing the fraudulent artifices of the scurrilous practitioners and for seeing that they receive condign punishment for their chicanery. And though he appears only seldom on the scene, his attitude at all times proves that he possesses many Jonsonian traits. He easily perceives the gullibility of Fitzdottrel and readily expresses it as his opinion that Africa and America "with all their fruit of monsters" could not produce "so just a prodigy."[26] And when asked by Wittipol whether he could have believed without seeing that there existed such a mind so sordid, Manly confesses:

> I believe anything now, though I confesse
> His Vices are the most extremities
> I ever knew in nature.[27]

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[26]Ben Jonson, The Divell is an Asse in Ben Jonson, Vol. VI, edited by C. H. Herford and Percy and Evelyn Simpson, I. v. 7-10. All future references to this play will be to this edition.

[27]Ibid., I. v. 14-16.

Then after Fitzdottrel decides to feign a fit, Manly's bitter condemnation of such evil and fraudulent practices proclaims him an antagonist to such pernicious artifices and to villainy in general:

> Are you phreneticke, Sir,
> Or what grave dotage moves you, to take part
> With so much villainy? wee are not afraid
> Either of law, or triall; let us be
> Examin'd what our ends were, what the meanes,
> To work by; and possibility of those meanes,
> Doe not conclude against us, ere you heare us.[28]

At the frivolousness of women he also evinces his repugnance, for he recognizes the artificiality and depravity of those whom society accepts, because of their station in life, as the molders of social forms and mannerisms. In disgust he exclaims as he leaves the room after a discussion with Lady Eitherside,

> Over smocks!
> What things they are! That nature should be
> at leisure
> Ever to make 'hem! my woing is an end.[29]

Thus there is evidence in Manly of his antipathy toward the obscenity and wantonness so prevalent in seventeenth century England, and in this respect he may be likened to Horace and Crites and in turn to Jonson himself. Manly also exhibits a parcel of that independent spirit and hatred of ignorance so

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[28]Ibid., V. viii. 91-97. [29]Ibid., IV. iv. 190-192.

characteristic of his great archetypes, when he expresses a desire that the depraved and ignorant would not praise him, for like Horace, he believes that to merit their praise proves the unworthiness of his own character. Thus in answer to a tribute paid him by Everill, one of the exploiters, he exclaims:

> Would one
> Of worth had spoke it: whence it comes, it is
> Rather a shame un to me then a praise.[30]

The virtue of his own character is not more strongly portrayed than the plea he makes for virtue in others. In his desire that Mrs. Fitzdottrel succumb not to the baseness of her husband, he pleads with her,

> O friend forsake not
> The brave occasion, vertue offers you,
> To keepe you innocent: I have fear'd for both;
> And watch'd you, to prevent the ill I fear'd.
> But, since the weaker side hath so assur'd mee,
> Let not the stronger fall by his own vice,
> Or be the lesse a friend, 'cause vertue needs him.[31]

This plea for virtue compares favorably with the opinion expressed by Horace and Crites on the merit of chastity. Thus in many ways the character of Manly parallels that of Jonson, but I do not believe that he represents the author, for he does not possess the towering egotism, the scholarly,intellectual outlook, and commanding personality characteristic of the

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[30] Ibid., IV. vii. 37-39. [31] Ibid., IV. vi. 28-34.

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In the remainder of Jonson's plays I really find no self-portrayal. In the comedies many corrupt practices of English life, such as the evils of wealth, the fraudulent practices of exploiters, the ludicrousness of court mannerisms, and the frivolity of women, are vitalized, ridiculed, and finally punished. But Jonson uses no one character to scoff at these artifices or untangle the plots in such a way that merit is rewarded and wrong punished. This role of scoffer and corrector is one played by all the characters who represent Jonson in the plays discussed thus far.

The medieval science of alchemy, the object of which was to turn baser metals into gold and to find a means of indefinitely prolonging life, furnishes the theme for The Alchemist. This drama, which is a satire on social life, portrays how rampant medieval superstitious and pseudo-scientific theories still were in seventeenth century England. Jonson seems to be chiefly interested in revealing the credulity of human nature and the prevailing ignorance of a large majority of the English populace of his day, but he uses no one character to scoff at these corrupt practices or to bring about a retribution of justice as he does in the plays I have already discussed. Though the play, then, is one of the most satirical of all his comedies of manners, and, as a whole, shows the author's satirical bent, I find no really definite self-portrayal in it.

Volpone, considered by some "indubitably the best production of its author,"[32] is another very caustic satire on English life in the sixteenth century. It deals with the subtle and crafty practices of a miser who with the help of his inimitable parasite dupes one gull after another into bestowing upon him rich gifts, in return for which each dupe believes that he will be made heir to the miser's fortune. The comedy brings out very dramatically the depth of wickedness and cruelty to which one will stoop in order to obtain wealth. Though the play deals with one of Jonson's favorite themes, the evils of wealth, against which his antitypes in the various plays that I have discussed continually hurl one venomous dart of criticism after another, there is no one character in Volpone that serves as the corrector of society in general. That is,the author has not put into the mouth of any one character the bitter condemnation of the evils that result from riches. Apparently, then, there is in Volpone no character so drawn that I can really see a similarity between him and Jonson.

The Case is Altered is another comedy in which I have been unable to find a character so portrayed that he seems in any way to represent the author. Apparently it is true that in this play Jonson satirically alludes to one of his contemporary playwrights, Antony Munday, and really represents him in the

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[32]Gifford in Cunningham's Works of Ben Jonson, I, 399, n. 1.

character of Balladino, but the latter is not opposed by any one antagonist as are Crispinus and Demetrius in The Poetaster. The author has Balladino scornfully reply to Onion's question about plays,

> Why looke you sir, I write so plaine and keepe that old Decorum, that you must of necessity like it; mary you shall have some now (as for example, in plaies) that will have every day new tricks, and write you nothing but humours: indeed this pleases the Gentlemen: but the common sort they care not for 't, they know not what to make on't, they looke for good matter, they, and are not edified with such toyes.
> . . . . . .
> Tut give me the penny, give me the penny I care not for the Gentlemen I, let me have a good ground, no matter for the pen, the plot shall carry it.[33]

Balladino's ridicule is no doubt cast at Jonson, but no character ridicules Balladino in return nor does the latter appear in the play after this scene. In the first place, The Case is Altered is not a satirical comedy; it is primarily a play of romantic adventure. It recounts the story of a beautiful girl stolen while an infant by the steward in the family, who turns miser and rears the girl as his own daughter. When she grows to womanhood, she is wooed by many suitors including the Count of Milan, his son, and his steward. The drama also relates

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[33]Ben Jonson, The Case is Altered in Ben Jonson, Vol. III, edited by C. H. Herford and Percy Simpson, I. ii. 58-65, 75-77. This evidence of Jonson's satire is pointed out by C. H. Herford and Percy Simpson in Ben Jonson, Vol. I, p. 306.

the story of the Count's family, which has been visited by the double tragedy of the mysterious disappearance of a son and the death of the countess. Through many entangling circumstances all action finally leads toward each worthy person receiving his just deserts and each wicked one being punished. But again, as in the two plays mentioned above, no one character is chiefly responsible for such a termination of events; no one character is endowed with traits so Jonsonian that he can be identified as the epitome of the author.

A Tale of a Tub is another of Jonson's plays in which I find no self-portrayal. This comedy is quite different in "subject matter, cast of society, and atmosphere" from the author's other dramas, and it is unquestionably one of his poorest.[34] It is a comedy that deals with rivalry in love between a number of rural rustics, and in this respect it is not characteristically Jonsonian. The love theme especially, indicates that Jonson must have been writing to comply with the vogue at that time, for he seldom attempted to treat this subject.[35] Nevertheless it is worthy of note that the author in this play reverts to his old method of using the drama as a means through which to ridicule his enemies just as he had used the "humour plays" to satirize Marston and Dekker. It is generally conceded that the masque in this play, written by

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[34]C. H. Herford and Percy Simpson, Ben Jonson, Vol. I, p. 280.

[35]Ibid., p. 291.

the poet Scriben, is a thrust at Inigo Jones. Whether this is true may be questioned, but it is a fact that Jones took exception to the introduction of the masque and that he and Jonson were enemies at this time.[36] Furthermore some of Jonson's favorite subjects are touched upon in the drama. Squire Tub, just as did Horace, Crites, or Macilente, recognizes the potency of wealth, for he tells Basket Hilts:

> And hope of money, Hilts:
> A valiant man will nibble at that bait.[37]

And later Pol Martin, though he laments Audrey's lack of wit, affirms that wealth will compensate for the deficiency:

> (I see the wench wants but a little wit;
> And that defect her wealth may well supply).[38]

I have already shown that Jonson continually raised a protest against the evils and power of riches. The folly of women, another of the author's favorite subjects, is also hinted at. In fact, the women in the comedy are almost caricatures because they are so ludicrously drawn, all being artificial, gross, and sensual, and, as in the other plays I have discussed, womanly vanity is definitely stressed. Pol Martin, recognizing

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[36]Gifford in Cunningham's Works of Ben Jonson, II, 479, n. 1.

[37]Ben Jonson, A Tale of a Tub in Ben Jonson, Vol. III, edited by C. H. Herford and Percy Simpson, IV. iii. 17-18. All future reference to this play will be to this edition.

[38]Ibid., IV. v. 82-84.

this trait in Audrey, woos and wins her by promising to array her in finery:

> I can gi' you
> A silken Gowne, and a rich Petticoat:
> And a french Hood. (All fools love to be brave:
> I find her humour, and I will pursue it.)[39]

And by this means he wins the maid, whom three other suitors are attempting to wed.

Though some of Jonson's favorite ideas are touched upon in A Tale of a Tub, no one character is so sympathetically drawn or so reacts to certain situations that I can find a definite similarity between him and the author.

The Sad Shepherd is a pastoral drama, probably the author's last work written for the stage, which is preserved for us in unfinished form, there being only the first, second, and part of the third act extant. Whether Jonson really completed the play is a question to which there is as yet, at least, no solution.[40] Suffice it to say that it is a beautiful poem about Robin Hood, the shepherds and shepherdesses of Sherwood Forest, and numerous woodland nymphs, who are brought together in a feast at which the story of the Sad Shepherd's supposed loss of his beloved is recounted. Naturally, being a pastoral drama, The Sad Shepherd would probably permit of little self-portrayal, and being in fragmentary form, evidence, if there

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[39] Ibid., IV. v. 93-96.

[40] Gifford in Cunningham's Works of Ben Jonson, II, 486.

were any of Jonsonian traits, would be difficult to identify. Consequently I find none whatsoever.

Jonson's two tragedies, both having a true historical background, permit of little self-portrayal. Both have their settings in Rome during the rule of the Caesars, and many of the speeches, especially in Catiline His Conspiracy are translations from "The Orations of Sallust" and from other historical sources.[41]

Catiline is the old story of Catiline's conspiracy in which Cicero, the great Roman orator, made known the conspiracy of the wicked, cruel-hearted Catiline, who had plotted to seize from Caesar the rule of Rome. As I have said before, I can find no self-portrayal in the drama, but I think it is worthy of note that the author has introduced some of his favorite themes into the tragedy. For example, he stops in the midst of the most tragic, fiendish, and diabolic plot ever conceived in the brain of man to express his contempt for the frailty and vanity of women.[42] Furthermore, it seems that Jonson must have had an especially high regard for Cicero, for in the play he has endowed him with every grace, courtesy, and lovable characteristic that man can possess. Even in such a tense and fearful situation as Cicero and his followers found themselves in on the morning that an attempt had been made to

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[41] Ibid., p. 140.

[42] Catiline His Conspiracy, II. ii, The Works of Ben Jonson, edited by Lieut.-Col. Francis Cunningham, II, 89-94.

assassinate Cicero, the latter reveals such a softening trait of sweetness that it is commented on by one of the Allobrogian ambassadors:

> This magistrate hath struck an awe into me
> And by his sweetness won a more regard
> Unto his place, than all the boist'rous moods
> That ignorant greatness practiseth, to fill
> The large unfit authority it wears.[43]

Thus on reading this tragedy, though I can find no definite self-portrayal, I feel that the author has infused into the drama a Jonsonian atmosphere.

Sejanus His Fall is possibly Jonson's best known tragedy, but as a play it was not very successful, being the most involved and puzzling drama in its internal arrangement that was ever produced.[44] It is the story of an unscrupulous, ambitious Roman, who, in the last years of Rome's world supremacy is able by intrigue and pernicious means to gain the helm of statecraft from a vacillating tyrant such as Tiberius Caesar reveals himself to be. I think that Jonson has rather realistically portrayed life in Rome during the first century of the Christian era, for history paints for us exactly the same picture of the mercurial, impetuous, rapacious mobs and the easy rise and fall of commoners to power that Jonson has

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[43] Ibid., IV. ii, p. 115.

[44] Brinsley Nicholson and C. H. Herford, Ben Jonson, Vol. II, p. 308.

given us in this play, but the nature of the subject does not give the author a chance to infuse himself into it. Consequently this play is also void of self-portrayal.

I have not attempted to treat Eastward Ho in my discussion because it is generally conceded to be the work of Jonson, George Chapman, and John Marston. Even if I were able to find Jonsonian traits in the drama, I feel that it would be impossible for me to point out that they are self-portrayals of Jonson since the play is the work of not one but three authors.

In conclusion, then, after an intensive study of the plays discussed in this chapter, and after comparing them with The Poetaster, Cynthia's Revels, and Every Man Out of His Humour, which plays contain characters that represent Jonson, I have attempted to prove that there is some evidence of self-portrayal of the author in Kno'well Junior in Every Man in His Humour, Knockem in Bartholmew Fayre, Truewit in Epicoene, or The Silent Woman, and Manly in The Divell is an Asse. In The Alchemist, Volpone, The Case is Altered, A Tale of a Tub, The Sad Shepherd, Catiline His Conspiracy, and Sejanus His Fall I have tried to show that there is no self-portrayal because no one character evinces the characteristic Jonsonian attitudes.

CONCLUSION

Having accepted the theory of critics that Horace in The Poetaster was either Jonson or his spokesman, I began my study by attempting to determine to what extent the author portrayed himself in Horace. After a study of The Poetaster, I was convinced that Horace is Jonson, for all dominant Jonsonian traits are Horace's. Horace is the same domineering, independent individuality as was Jonson; he believes that his cause, whatever that cause might be, is always sanctioned by the noble and learned; he continually enlivens a conversation with his cleverly turned phrases and repartee; he satirizes with poignant force the foolish formalities and foibles of his fellowman; against the corruption which arises from misuse of riches he raises an angry voice of protest; he defends the cause of lowly, despised poverty against the hostile artifices of potent and influential wealth; he reprimands the vulgar populace for its gross disrespect of worthy men, even though the noble characters be poor; he poses as the champion of "despised" and "adulterated" poetry and delivers many eulogies to her sacred muses; he is a firm believer in the superiority of the intellect over grovelling stupidity, and considers true scholars the embodiment of virtue, courage, and divine inspiration; he is immediately converted from a sanguine, benignant individual into a frenzied, contumelious satirist

when confronted by the obstinacy of ignorance; he continually spurns the criticism of the dull pretentious scoffers who, in their attempt to gain meritorious recognition, jeer at their intellectual superiors, and he evinces toward them an independent and contemptuous attitude. Finally, he exhibits a towering egotism which is the crystalizing and solidifying agent in his nature that solders all his other traits into an individual so like the author that his identity is immediately obvious to a student of Jonson.

Having determined wherein the nature of Horace and the author were alike, I began a further investigation of Jonson's plays to discover to what extent self-portrayal had been infused into them. As I have already explained, I became convinced that Crites in Cynthia's Revels and Asper-Macilente in Every Man Out of His Humour also possess the dominant traits of the author and evince attitudes and opinions similar to those held by Horace. Thus I concluded that they, too, were meant to represent the author. With these characters, however, as far as I have been able to determine, exact self-portrayal ends. From the conclusions I had drawn thus far, I then evaluated characters in other plays. After making careful comparisons, I found evidence of strong Jonsonian traits in Peni-Boy Canter in The Staple of Newes, Compasse in The Magnetick Lady, and Lovel in The New Inne. In fact, the nature of Peni-Boy Canter is so like that of Horace, Crites, and Macilente that we might almost say that his nature is also consistent with

that of the author. Possessing a strong independent spirit, a bitter satirical bent, a hatred for ignorance and all evil practices, and a love for knowledge and wisdom, he could truly be identified as Jonson if he also possessed the latter's cultural mien and towering egotism, and were accorded the recognition of other worthy souls that Horace enjoyed. Compasse in The Magnetick Lady and Lovel in The New Inne are not so like the author as Peni-Boy Canter, and they express fewer of his opinions.

In a number of other plays, I found characters that evince many Jonsonian attitudes and traits, but none for whom Jonson is the prototype. Kno'well Junior in Every Man in His Humour, Knockem in Bartholmew Fayre, Truewit in Epicoene, or The Silent Woman, and Manly in The Divell is an Asse at various times are almost exact delineations of the character of the author, but they do not conform throughout the play to his characterization. Thus they, too, cannot be classified with Horace, Crites, and Macilente as antitypes of Jonson. It is true that in part of his plays, The Alchemist, Volpone, The Case is Altered, A Tale of a Tub, The Sad Shepherd, Catiline His Conspiracy, and Sejanus His Fall, I have been unable to find any evidence of self-portrayal, but it seems to me that various traits pointed out by biographers as being those of Jonson are so pronounced in some characters and are repeated so many times in others that I can conclusively say that Jonson did portray himself in his plays.

I seriously question, however, whether he successfully presented himself as he wished to appear. For example, I think there is no doubt that he meant to portray Horace as a great poet and scholar, one so truly learned that his wisdom would be recognized and praised by all who were worthy of seeing greatness where it really existed. Horace then champions the cause of poetry and knowledge by drawing a contrast between learning that shows a "school-like gloss" and knowledge that comes from truly cultivating an inherent intellect. He pleads the cause of lowly, despised poverty, and he demands that the poor receive justice when oppressed by the machinations of the wealthy. Against the evil and malignant practices of flagitious exploiters and practitioners who were so prevalent in Elizabethan England, he hurls the venom of his scorn and ridicule. The corruptions that arise from riches receive the malediction of his just censure, while the merit of all worthy souls is duly praised. It is obvious that one who possesses all of the above-mentioned characteristics is honest, moral, and benevolent, for all of these go to make up a noble character. And that Horace was to impress the reader as being this type of individual seems to me to have been the author's intention. But that Horace fails to measure up to the desire of the creator is the generally accepted idea of critics.

In the first place, Horace does not immediately command the sympathy and admiration of the reader. Instead, in his treatment of Crispinus, when the latter first appears on the

scene, he impresses one as being impatient, quick to find fault in others, and somewhat rude in demeanor. Though Crispinus may have justly merited Horace's criticism, the acrimony with which the rebuke is given allies the reader's sympathy with the one rebuked rather than with the censor. It is obvious throughout the play that Horace in his zeal to condemn the foibles and wicked practices of man always delivers his censorship in such a bitter, malignant spirit that he fails to convince the reader of the verity of his reproach. Instead, one immediately has a feeling of repulsion for an individual who so bitterly and contumeliously reviles his fellow man, though the latter be guilty of all the accusations brought against him. In like manner, when Horace poses as the champion of poets and scholars, instead of impressing upon one that he is a true unassuming devotee to knowledge, the reader feels that he is an egotistical bigot who sees merit only in his own productions. Thus Horace, instead of appearing as a noble enthusiast for learning, poetry, and righteous living, inadvertently presents himself as a cynical, contumacious, contentious individual who is a confirmed egoist.

From my interpretation, then, of characters who represent the author, I feel that Jonson portrayed himself in his plays as he wished to be thought of but also unconsciously as he would never have desired to appear. Though he was probably unconscious of his own conceit, that element in his nature was necessary to complete the portrait; thus Jonson has given a

fuller portrayal of himself than he perhaps realized.

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