

AN ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS OF

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Title: PROSE DECORUM AND THE ANATOMY OF FOLLY

IN BARTHOLOMEW FAIR

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By using prose for the language of Bartholomew Fair, Jonson indicates that the comedy focuses on folly. Following contemporary conventions, he writes plays in prose or verse, or a mixture of both, and his comedy ridicules conduct that deviates from rational or moral standards. However, from Every Man in His Humour (1598) through Bartholomew Fair (1614), he develops a systematic application of prose to the exposure of irrational behavior (folly) and verse to the exposure of immoral behavior (vice). Since it reflects his judgment that a specific language form is appropriate to a specific subject matter, his use of prose or verse illustrates an application of language decorum.

Working in an age permeated with dualism, Jonson shows that, for the purpose of his comedy, folly and vice are distinct, irreducible categories of human misconduct. Schooled in a manner that fostered proficiency in prose and

verse composition, he achieves effects for which each form is uniquely suited. He uses the rough, asymmetrical, baroque styles of prose to ridicule fools and to exhibit their undisciplined thinking. He uses blank verse, already connected with moral matters in tragedy, to establish moral and intellectual ideals in his earlier plays and to exhibit unprincipled scheming in his mature plays.

Jonson tightens his unity of effect in his four mature plays, Volpone, Epicoene, The Alchemist, and Bartholomew Fair. The source of the misconduct exposed in each play is restricted to folly or vice, and the language is correspondingly restricted to prose or verse. In the case of Bartholomew Fair, however, most critical discussion addresses the play's "sprawling action," its elements of satire and myth, and its lack of severe moral censure. Investigation of the ways in which Jonson's prose portrays irrational thought reveals that the play presents an anatomy of folly, exposing for ridicule childish innocence, simple-minded affectations, conscious choice to act foolishly, and ingenuity applied to trivial pastimes.

PROSE DECORUM AND THE ANATOMY OF FOLLY
IN BARTHOLOMEW FAIR

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CHAPTER I
LANGUAGE APPROPRIATE TO SUBJECT

According to a popular tradition, ascribed to William Oldys, the first performance of Bartholomew Fair at the Hope Theater on 31 October 1614 so impressed the audience as to call forth the accolade, "O rare Ben Jonson."¹ Few of Jonson's plays seem to have aroused such excited approval, and one may be skeptical about this legendary source for the inscription on Jonson's tombstone. Nonetheless, Bartholomew Fair closes the period generally regarded as representative of Jonson's mature comic artistry. In this prose comedy, Jonson applies a type of language decorum that characterizes his mature dramatic work. Adhering to classical precepts and native practices, he utilizes language that he deems appropriate to his subject. However, his particular application of language decorum aligns one of two basic language forms, prose or verse, with one of two basic categories of comic subject matter, folly or vice. Fundamental to an accurate analysis of Bartholomew Fair, then, is the understanding of which

form of language Jonson considered appropriate to which category of subject.

Satiric, topical, and didactic, Jonson's comedy is generally agreed to be concerned with unmasking folly and vice. Edward Partridge's succinct summary is that "Jonson, like all comic poets, explored the gap which always opens between what men say and what they do, between their occasional profession of piety, morality, and reason and their usual practice of selfishness and folly."² If individuals are usually selfish, their behavior deviates from a moral standard. If individuals are usually foolish, their behavior deviates from a rational standard. The deviation of human conduct from rational and moral standards is the source of Jonson's comedy. Thus, an irreducible dualism of faulty human behavior typifies his comedy and parallels the spirit of dualism that dominated early seventeenth-century upheavals in theology and philosophy. Around Jonson, the old scholastic system of unity and harmony was being challenged by systems of duality. When the challenges later came into print, Bacon argued for a duality of truth, religious truth on the one hand and scientific truth on the other; Browne recognized religious and scientific dualism but chose to mix the fruits of scholasticism and the fruits of empiricism; Descartes decided that reality has two categories, mind and matter; Hobbes asserted that man is governed by appetite and aversion.³ In the comedies of Jonson, a dual attack on

unacceptable human behavior distinguishes folly, or unwise actions, from vice, or immoral actions. Unwise actions reflect abuses of thought, of reason, of logic. Immoral actions reflect abuses of conscience, of morality, of ethics. As two categories of erroneous human behavior, folly and vice overlap and interact in their actual manifestations, and instances of art and argument abound with treatments of the vices of folly and the follies of vice. Jonson, however, seems to have developed separate methods for treating folly and vice in his comedies. He makes distinctions between the forms of language with which he renders man's abuses of his moral capabilities and his rational capabilities, ultimately focusing entire plays on each category of abuse.

Were "folly" and "vice" always used with such precision as their first definitions in the OED afford, fewer misconceptions might arise in the critical discussion of their appearance in comedy, generally, and in Jonsonian comedy, particularly. "Folly" would signify "The quality or state of being foolish or deficient in understanding; want of good sense, weakness or derangement of mind; also, unwise conduct"; and "vice" would signify "Depravity or corruption of morals; evil, immoral, or wicked habits of conduct; indulgence in degrading pleasures or practices." But such precise use is not, and has not been, the case with these terms. "Vice" is used in references to matters amoral, as in the rhetoricians' references, in Jonson's age, to injudicious figures of speech as vices of language.⁴ Jonson

himself uses "vice" in this sense in Discoveries:

There is almost no man, but hee sees clearlier,
and sharper, the vices in a speaker, then the
vertues. And there are many, that with more
ease, will find fault with what is spoken
foolishly, then that can give allowance to that
wherein you are wise silently.⁵

Likewise, "folly" appears in moral contexts, from the King James Bible version of Ecclesiastes, 7:25, "to know the wickedness of folly," through the references from preachers and moralists to the follies of greed, licentiousness, and other unsanctioned behaviors. Such cross-categorical applications serve to intensify a writer's or speaker's disapproval: the unwise is the more reprehensible when colored by the immoral, and the immoral is the more despicable when colored by the unwise. In the study of Jonson's mature comedy, though, maintaining the sharper distinction is important because the human errors explored in each play demonstrate, primarily, folly or vice. Thus, perplexing questions about the correct reading of the mature plays, especially Volpone, Epicoene, The Alchemist, and Bartholomew Fair, could be resolved by determining, first, whether or not a rationale exists for identifying folly or vice as the basic subject of each play. Much discussion of the purpose, the problems, and the success of these plays seems to lump together the subjects of folly and vice. Such criticism becomes, then, either too freely speculative or too imprecise. Robert Knoll, for instance, would have Bartholomew Fair read "as a sophisticated morality play . . . an urbane comment on various kinds of folly into which men

are likely to fall."⁶ While Knoll is not the only source expounding morality-play elements in Jonson's comedies,⁷ and while late morality plays did incorporate concerns other than the ethical plight of man's soul, Knoll's comment seems to blur unnecessarily the elements of morality and folly in Bartholomew Fair. Knoll does, however, remark that "this play which owes so much to the indigenous dramatic traditions illustrates an urbane, humanistic doctrine: the senses inspire the passions which only the reason can control."⁸ By giving primacy to the issue of reason's controlling function, Knoll hints at the central thematic concern of Bartholomew Fair, the manifestations and consequences of irrationality.

Some critical observations in the study of Jonson's drama have marked his separate treatment of moral and intellectual issues, but these observations have not been pursued at any great length. In 1898, Elisabeth Woodbridge cautioned against the assumption that all of Jonson's plays drive home a moral lesson:

On the whole, his efforts are directed quite as much against intellectual weakness as against moral, and he preached quite as emphatically from the text "don't be a fool" as from the text "don't be a knave," while if we except his tragedies, the weight of emphasis is rather on the first than on the second.⁹

Woodbridge's notice of the separation of folly and vice in Jonson and her point that his emphasis is rather more on folly are slightly modified by Larry Champion. Finding Jonson's habit of judging to be more often intellectual

than moral, Champion says that "his satire is aimed primarily at those vices which lead man to misuse his intelligence rather than at those which are morally reprehensible."¹⁰ Champion adds that Jonson's comedy "censures evil . . . through exposing the folly and gullibility of its victims or through showing how evil gains its advantage because of the victim's lack of intelligent discipline."¹¹ However, when Jonson exposes moral turpitude, as in Volpone or The Alchemist, "gullibility" and "lack of intelligent discipline" are simply static traits of his characters; their abuses of ethical conduct are developed and exposed for censure. When Jonson exposes abuses of reason, as in Epicoene or Bartholomew Fair, hypocrisy and moral laxity are the static traits of his characters; their irrationality or misused rationality is anatomized and its consequences illuminated. By suggesting that Jonson subordinates the censure of vice to the exposure of folly, Champion distorts Jonson's mature comic technique that holds characteristic vices constant when the play explores various abuses of reason, and characteristic follies constant when the play explores various abuses of morality.

In other critical discussion, the central concerns of folly and vice become lost altogether in attempts that mix discoveries of literary analogues and topical targets to suggest the supposed purpose or significance of certain comedies. C. G. Thayer, for example, charts the course of Jonson's growth as a comic dramatist as starting at allegory

and arriving at myth by way of realism:

The early and middle comedies, containing, to be sure, their "built-in" allegories, are strongly realistic ("the deeds and language such as men do use"); Cynthia's Revels, with its masques and allegorical personages, satirizes realistically the vices and follies of courtiers. But the superb realism of Bartholomew Fair is tempered by a newly integrated mythic element.¹²

One dares not gainsay Thayer's findings of allegoric, realistic, and mythic ore; but since the comedies are not allegory, slice-of-life, or myth, one might seek more profitably to know the nature and function of the product in which the refined ore is alloyed to make something that satirizes vices and follies. What, for instance, does the presence of masques and allegorical personages in Cynthia's Revels have to do with the realistic satire of the vices and follies of courtiers? If the satire of certain vices and follies is central to the play, what form does the satire on vice take? What form does the satire on folly take? Are they identical or different? Finally, what relates masque, allegory, and realism to the treatment of vice and folly?

Whether or not one chooses to pursue answers to such questions, one would do well to follow Thayer's lead in attempting to put Jonson's comedies in perspective. The comedies from the first version of Every Man in His Humour (1598) through Bartholomew Fair (1614) are generally regarded as differing from his very early and his very late work. Pre-1598 plays are regarded as works of an apprentice dramatist. From these "prentice years,"¹³ only two plays

survive, A Tale of a Tub and The Case Is Altered.¹⁴

Neither was included in the 1616 Folio, Jonson's audacious, carefully selected and edited version of plays that he claimed as serious literary "Works." The late plays, The Devil Is an Ass, The Staple of the News, The New Inn, and The Magnetic Lady, are generally taken to mark a diminution of Jonson's comic prowess. The first of these was produced in 1616, two years after Bartholomew Fair, and suffers in the shadow of its predecessor. The last three were produced after Jonson had been absent from the comic stage for ten years (their respective production dates being 1626, 1629, and 1632) and come from the period when Jonson's health began to fail. The term "dotages," first used by John Dryden,¹⁵ has been applied widely, and perhaps unjustly,¹⁶ to these plays. At any rate, critical opinion finds something necessarily and typically "Jonson" in the comedies beginning with Every Man in His Humour and ending with Bartholomew Fair. Some of the subjective criticism of Jonson would dissipate if more attention were given to the distinctive features of these plays. Furthermore, much discussion of the focus of Jonson's comedies would be strengthened by finding common purposes to which Jonson applied the two basic forms of language, prose and verse, in these plays.

Whether it be written in prose or verse, drama is the literature of things done, composed for performance so that an audience may see and hear the doing. Though it may well

be read--else Jonson's pains to preserve his drama in print, and on occasion therein to address the reader, had been for naught--it is bound to the exigencies of creating language for characters in action.¹⁷ J. B. Bamborough judges that a typical Jonson play is aimed at the audience in the theater and the audience in the library.¹⁸ But Jonson wanted his plays appreciated at least as much when they were seen and heard as when they were read; and from the tone of certain prologues and prefatory remarks, he appears to have sought the approval of the theater audience more, seeking the approval of the reading audience when the theater audience had been cool or obstreperous in its reception.

In drama, the language composed for performance must be a more specialized medium than language in narrative verse and prose (e.g., language in the verse epic or in the prose romance) or in discursive and argumentative oratory. Gabriele Jackson observes that "The line between what is said and what is done is, in a play, faint and wavering. Language becomes action: a game played is played in words; a stance assumed is assumed in speech."¹⁹ Jonson, at times, employs verse for his dramatic language; at other times, he employs prose. Utilizing both forms of language is typical of the dramatists of his day. Dramatic verse of the late Elizabethan and early Jacobean periods generally reflects a speaker of noble rank, and dramatic prose generally reflects a speaker of lower rank. Additionally, serious subject matter and action are most often discussed in verse;

humorous subject matter and action, in prose. Amidst the inherent demands upon dramatic language and the contemporary conventions for the dramatic uses of prose and verse, Jonson formulated a personal technique that connects the prose of a play to the comic exposure of folly, and verse to the comic exposure of vice. Earlier critics of Jonson tended to overlook his specific applications of prose and verse. In 1912, Mina Kerr followed Felix Schelling's lead in assessing the prose and verse in the comedies:

. . . sometimes we find blank verse and prose almost equally divided, as in Every Man in His Humor and Every Man out of His Humor; sometimes blank verse alone, as in The Alchemist, or prose alone, as in Bartholomew Fair; and again, the two forms combined in varying proportions. . . .²⁰

Kerr then claims that Jonson had no great influence on dramatic blank verse or prose because his "rigidity" in blank verse ran counter to contemporary freedom and fluency in dramatic verse and because stage comedy was already making greater use of prose.²¹ One's agitation at such a glib glossing over of the manner of Jonson's comic expression is best tempered by a realization that the topics and historicity of his plays were of more pressing interest to the critic.

Although C. H. Herford and Percy Simpson's critical interests were certainly much broader than Kerr's, they offered little more to the discussion of Jonson's dramatic prose and verse. In the first volume of their authoritative edition (1925), they assert that "Jonson's choice of prose or verse for different plays fluctuates . . . while the

choice between them for different scenes or situations in the same play is far less logical or consistent than in Shakespeare."²² Whatever the logic is of Shakespeare's use of prose and verse, and that logic, too, fluctuates, one gains little knowledge of the purpose for Jonson's choice of dramatic prose or verse by intimating that Shakespeare's use represents a standard from which Jonson's use is a falling off. John Enck issues a noteworthy caution: "Two axioms apply to all [of Jonson's] writing: nothing is accidental, and deliberateness does not guarantee results."²³ Bamborough is more explicit in remarks intended for those approaching Jonson for the first time: "Fundamental to his cast of mind seems to have been a passion for order, logic and consistency, for leaving no loose ends, and for bringing everything within a systematic and coherent framework."²⁴

If a deliberate purpose is everywhere to be expected in Jonson's work and if Jonson is predisposed to the systematic, careful analysis of the prose and verse in his comedies is necessary. Some of the plays are predominantly verse; some are predominantly prose. Two of the plays, Volpone and The Alchemist, are truly verse comedies; two of the plays, Epicoene and Bartholomew Fair, are truly prose comedies. Closer observation reveals that Volpone makes an excursion into prose when the Fox disguises himself as a mountebank, a charlatan vendor of quack medicine, and stands on the street violating all logic as he extols his elixir. Bartholomew Fair, on the other hand, makes an excursion into

verse--rough and jangling doggerel--as the puppet play raises the most insipid questions of morality in the art of the drama and in the place of the theater before the assembled fools of the fair. The plot concerns of Epicene ride along on prose, but a loose prose much different in style from that of Bartholomew Fair. The Alchemist employs verse, but a verse, on the whole, freer from the rigidity that one might mark in Volpone.

In these four comedies, especially in the prose of Volpone and the verse of Bartholomew Fair, Jonson portrays his own brand of seventeenth-century dualism: humanity's errors stem from man's abuse of intellect or from man's abuse of morality, and dramatic prose exploits the manifestations of abused intellect while dramatic verse exploits the manifestations of abused morality. Dramatic prose addresses unwise human behavior, and dramatic verse addresses immoral human behavior. The former exposes folly; the latter exposes vice. For Jonson, the criteria that determine the use of prose and verse are set by the type of behavior under investigation in the situation or in the play. Behavior exhibiting weak reason is rendered in prose; behavior exhibiting weak conscience is rendered in verse. Such a bipartite division is compatible with the attitude of dualism growing in the early seventeenth century. Moreover, it reflects a unique application of the principle of language decorum. Jonson was, after all, an artist in touch with contemporary ideas, not a speculative philosopher

predisposed to overthrow the reign of medieval scholasticism. Distinguishing two categories for the errors to which mankind is prone seems naturally to have paralleled the prevailing philosophic dualism. However, dramatizing these errors required application of theory and conventions appropriate to the literary form within which Jonson worked. The literary principle of decorum seems to have guided Jonson's differing comic treatments of folly and vice. The specific principle of language decorum that Jonson develops and applies is not decorum in the narrow sense of polite good taste, but decorum in the true classical and neoclassical sense of language appropriate to subject. By regularly developing and consistently applying a principle of decorum that links prose or verse to the rational or moral concern at the heart of a play, Jonson provides direction for the correct way to understand the play. The prose medium of Bartholomew Fair is, thus, a signal that the play is a comic exposure of the abuses of reason, and the play needs to be regarded, above all else, for its resolute delineations of follies in action. Therefore, critical discussion could best be directed toward the subject matter inherent in the play: the sources and effects of folly, the complications it gives rise to, and the manner of resolving or correcting it.

The concept of decorum is central to neoclassical ideals. Prior to Jonson, it was best expounded in English by Sir Philip Sidney in his Defence of Poesy (probably written 1582-83, published 1595). After Jonson, the concept was

widely treated, notably in Dryden's Essay of Dramatick Poesie (1668). The English neoclassical idea of decorum derives largely from admonitions in Horace's Ars Poetica. Some of these, in W. J. Bate's translation, include "A subject for Comedy refuses to be written in verse suitable for Tragedy," and "you must mark the characteristics of each period of life and present what is fitting to the various natures and ages."²⁵ A native practice of decorum can be observed, however, in English authors not generally recognized for following classical dictates. For example, Chaucer's Knight and Miller do not speak the same level of language, nor do they tell the same type of tale. Moreover, the Gawain Poet uses words of different sounds and lines of different tempos for his seduction and hunting scenes. Shakespeare's Macbeth and Drunken Porter speak hardly the same vocabulary. Horatian decorum, though, as Sidney works it into his Defence, is somewhat more exacting than this native practice. For Sidney, a true abuse of poetry may be found in such works of contemporary playwrights that

. . . be neither right tragedies nor right comedies, mingling kings and clowns, not because the matter so carrieth it, but thrust in the clown by head and shoulders to play a part in majestical matters, with neither decency nor discretion; so as neither the admiration and commiseration, nor the right sportfulness is by their mongrel tragi-comedy obtained.²⁶

In addition to this echo of Horace's advice to keep the subjects of tragedy and comedy separate, one finds Sidney's caution that poetry is "not speaking table-talk fashion,

or like men in a dream, words as they chanceably fall from the mouth, but piecing each syllable of each word by just proportion, according to the dignity of the subject,"²⁷ and praising that style which is "fittest to nature."²⁸

Herford and Simpson mince no words in their judgment that Jonson accepted Sidney's concept of decorum: "There is no room for doubt that [Jonson] was, in the first place, a whole-hearted adherent of the doctrine of decorum, as put forward, in particular, by Sidney."²⁹ But either Sidney did not practice the decorum he described or there was something about Sidney's notion of decorum that Jonson accepted less than whole-heartedly, because Drummond of Hawthornden records Jonson censuring Lucan, Sidney, and Guarini for violating decorum by making their characters speak as well as the poets could.³⁰ The difference of opinion seems to arise from Sidney's ambivalence to the task of the comic poet. Throughout his Defence of Poesy, Sidney supports language that is decent and uplifting, not "table-talk," or unconscious babbling, or obscenity. Of comedy, however, and the responsibility of the comic poet, Sidney says "that the comedy is an imitation of the common errors of our life, which [the comic poet] representeth in the most ridiculous and scornful sort that may be; so as it is impossible that any beholder can be content to be such a one."³¹ Jonson, like Sidney, puts upon the audience the responsibility for aversion, rather than mimicry, of the errors portrayed in comedy. If a writer presents the offensive side of humanity,

A man, that is on the mending hand, will either ingeniously confesse, or wisely dissemble his disease. And, the wise, and vertuous, will never thinke any thing belongs to themselves that is written, but rejoyce that the good are warn'd not to bee such; and the ill to leave to bee such.³²

The responsibility for the comic exposure of man's tarnished side is the comic writer's; the responsibility for avoiding what the comic writer exposes is the beholder's. However, if he must represent "the most ridiculous and scornful sort that may be," the comic poet will be hard pressed to do it in decent and uplifting language and still make each word fit "the dignity of the subject." The requirements of comic drama necessitate that Jonson not be a whole-hearted adherent to the decorum of language in just the way that Sidney recommends. In Alexander Sackton's words, "The speech of fools must be foolish to be correct,"³³ because the life imitated in comedy may be that life which fails to observe the polite decorum of society or the uplifting decorum of oratory. When Jonson transgresses these latter types of decorum, depicting a character who favors the indecent and the obscene, there is a serious purpose in his use of such base sources of humor. Nearly always, as Helena Baum notes, "the impropriety is in character for the speaker."³⁴ For Jonson, strict decorum of language appropriate to a given character is a means of exposing, and thus ridiculing, incorrect behavior.

L. A. Beaurline terms the idea of decorum prevailing in Jonson's time as a "protean concept," and remarks that

Puttenham,³⁵ Sidney, and Jonson use decorum to justify, variously, diction, tone, and ideas. Sometimes, "decorum" means simply "tact." At other times, it suggests "propriety" or "fitness" of language and character.³⁶ Compounding this variety, another concern of the comic playwright confronted Jonson. His comic characters frequently are comic because they practice affectations; that is, their comic characteristics do not stem simply from what they are, but from what they aspire to be and the manner in which they imitate their ideals. In other words, it is one thing to represent a fool in comedy and give him the language of a fool, but it is another thing to represent a person who is foolish because of his inept imitation of a worthy ideal or his adept imitation of a worthless ideal. Jonas Barish explains the complexity of such a problem for Jonson:

The identity of language with character, in Jonson, leads to an especially acute concern for decorum, the law which demands that a character speak like himself at all times. Mimicry, however, introduces a complication: a violation, so to speak, on the part of the character who is straining not to speak like himself, not to play his proper role. The playwright then has the task of observing decorum while his character is offending against it. And this he may do either by insinuating, through the texture of the language, that all is false, or else by intermingling the "true" and "natural" in his character's speech with the unnaturally appropriated forms of wantonness. The latter is Jonson's more usual procedure.³⁷

In Barish's view, the speech of Jonson's characters who are ridiculous because of what they imitate or how they imitate it reveals a norm. Their speech reveals their own natural intellectual capacities or levels of conscience against which

their follies and vices may be measured.

Jonson's acceptance of the prevailing notions of decorum is, thus, not indiscriminate. In his comedy, he cannot everywhere represent decent and uplifting speech because his comic characters cannot be everywhere decent and uplifting. He fits Sidney's definition of the comic poet; and to fulfill the obligations set forth in that definition while still working within the framework of classical literary precepts, he refines the principle of decorum so that he may apply it to the requirements of stage comedy.

CHAPTER II
PROSE AND THE COMIC POET

Jonson not only fits the definition of a comic poet, as articulated by Sidney, but he also calls himself a poet and his work, including his stage comedy, poetry. Here, it is worthwhile to recall that the divisions of poetry and prose are modern, and perhaps incorrect. In The Defence of Poesy, Sidney explains that although many who write poetry clothe their art in verse, verse is no determiner of poetry, "verse being but an ornament, and no cause to poetry, since there have been many most excellent poets that never versified, and now swarm many versifiers that need never answer to the name of poets."³⁸ He cites works of Xenophon and Heliodorus, written in prose, which are called poetry. He concludes that "it is in that feigning notable images of virtues, vices, or what else, with that delightful teaching, which must be the right describing note to know a poet by."³⁹ Very much like Sidney's explanation is Jonson's note in Discoveries:

Hence, hee is call'd a Poet, not hee which writeth in measure only; but that fayneth and formeth a fable, and writes things like the Truth. For, the Fable and Fiction is (as it were) the forme and Soule of any Poetical worke, or Poeme.⁴⁰

Moreover, Jonson reinforces himself in a later assertion that "A Rymer, and a Poet, are two things."⁴¹ In Sidney's and Jonson's contexts, there is no indication that a poet working in prose is any less noble, any less artistic, any less seriously concerned with the making of poetic literature than the poet working in verse. The feigning (the imitation) is the primary occupation, the primary determiner of a poet. Jonson's addition that the feigning is of a fable or story-- a complete action, in Aristotelian terms--indicates his dramatic bent. As one studies the prose and verse of Jonson's comedies, one must avoid making the distinction that prose is not poetry, as Constance Bullock does in discussing the rise of English literary prose: "Poetry is older than prose; it is more spontaneous; it takes its rise from the very beginnings of the human race."⁴² The accuracy or inaccuracy of her assertion is moot, for during the rise of English literary prose, especially in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, writers did not make such a distinction.

Prose works had been written in English prior to the Renaissance, but, for the most part, they lacked the control that meter, rhyme, and stanza give to verse, even to verse of poor technical quality. "Prose control in both narrative and discussion," points out Charles Baldwin, "seems assured

first in Sir Thomas More; but as late as John Lyly the progress of prose was still uncertain."⁴³ The Renaissance in England, especially by way of the Erasmus-motivated educational system⁴⁴ it fostered, provided the impetus for developing a literary prose controlled in a variety of ways, just as verse is controlled in several ways. Slowly at first, because the prose studied in the schools was Latin, and then very rapidly, as the grammar-school methods of control became more adapted than imitated and other methods were discovered or devised, the end of the sixteenth century and the beginning of the seventeenth century saw the rise of English prose suited to the tasks of poetry that Sidney and Jonson described.

Tradition holds that Jonson received a grammar-school education, or the bulk of one, at Westminster School, although his name does not appear in the records of students there.⁴⁵ The old school of Westminster at the Church of St. Peter's was refounded in 1560 under the Protestant Queen Elizabeth, who seems to have used her prerogative to suspend school statutes for Camden's appointment as headmaster in 1593 (the statutes required the headmaster to be a "clerk in orders," and Camden was a layman).⁴⁶ Camden was second-master during the time Jonson would have attended Westminster. By Jonson's account, he was largely responsible for Jonson's grammar-school education. If Jonson remained to participate in the upper forms, he and his classmates, by statute, "wrote themes on Monday and Wednesday in prose, on Tuesday and

Thursday in verse, Latin and Greek."⁴⁷ It is likely that he did achieve the upper forms because he explained to Drummond of Hawthornden that he wrote his verse first in prose, as Camden had taught him.⁴⁸ The lower forms at Westminster were restricted to varieties of prose compositions.⁴⁹ Westminster had two legacies that may have had an influence on Jonson, and they both stemmed from an earlier headmaster, Nicholas Udall. Udall very likely initiated the emphasis upon a grammar-school study of Greek⁵⁰ (for which Camden eventually wrote an authoritative grammar⁵¹ and in which Jonson considered himself accomplished), and Udall wrote the first regular English comedy. Though opinion is divided on whether Udall's Royster Doyster was prepared for the boys at Eton,⁵² where he was headmaster prior to his appointment to Westminster, or for the boys at Westminster,⁵³ it is known that the Westminster scholars regularly staged comedies. The regulations of 1561 required the boys to stage Latin plays each Christmas,⁵⁴ and Roman comedy, especially Plautine and Terrentian, was the standard fare.⁵⁵ Jonson must have been exposed to, if he did not participate in, these comedies during his stay at Westminster.

The seriousness with which the study of prose matched the study of verse in the Westminster curriculum is illuminated by T. W. Baldwin. Summing up the Eton-Westminster method of instruction, he describes the first three forms as being devoted to the speaking and writing of grammatical Latin. In the third form, the boys were expected to "string

enough sententiae together to call the result a theme," modeling their prose themes of the fourth form on Erasmus. Although the study of versification was introduced in the fourth form, the writing in both the fourth and fifth forms was restricted to prose; furthermore, fifth form prose was to exhibit rhetorical polish. In the sixth form, the boys began to compose, in equal amounts, verse and prose.⁵⁶

Baldwin also traces part of the daily schedule for the boys in the upper forms at Westminster. Between nine and eleven, the master

. . . expounded a Latin or Greek author, alternating prose and verse. From one to three the boys went through the assigned lesson, parsing, construing, etc. for grammar, examining the rhetorical figures, translating from verse to prose or the reverse, from Greek to Latin or the reverse, etc. . . . From four to five, they repeated from memory rhetorical matters, such as figures, proverbs, sentences, etc. Also, they had practice in impromptu writing through having to translate dictamina from Latin to Greek or having to turn Latin or Greek verse into English verse. Finally, a theme was assigned upon which they were the next morning to make Latin or Greek proses [sic] or verses, according to the alternation of languages and types of composition.⁵⁷

Baldwin's own summary of this rigorous routine is nearly complete--"The boys studied all the best Latin writers in prose and verse and learned to model their own styles upon them. Here is the fundamental formal literary training of the Renaissance"⁵⁸--if one remembers to add that the boys engaged in this regimen would have been, according to the statutes, no older than eighteen.⁵⁹

Even this brief account of the manner of Jonson's education at Westminster clarifies such hints as Milton

Crane's about Jonson's use of prose and verse: "What appears to underlie Jonson's willingness to restrict himself to prose or verse is a certain self-consciousness about his craft."⁶⁰

The grammar-school discipline which demanded that composition be restricted, now to prose, now to verse, but which alternated them continually throughout each day's sessions, would engender self-consciousness about the nature of the medium in which one was writing at the moment. Jonson's grammar-school education was probably a heavy influence on the adult poet/critic who, according to Edward Partridge,

. . . never spoke of the freedom of the imagination or even the power of genius alone, but who felt that a poet ought to be brought down through "the disciplines of Grammar, Logicke, Rhetoricke, and the Ethnicks, adding somewhat, out of all, peculiar to himselfe."⁶¹

Such is Jonson's reflection, not of an anti-Romantic personality quirk, but of the grammar-school training which laid the foundation for his own poetic practice.

Jonson and others educated in much the same manner devised the language or languages of the Elizabethan-Jacobean stages. Debate will probably flourish forever about whether or not the speech of Elizabethan Englishmen is anywhere reflected in the language of Elizabethan drama. Crane states with assurance that "The world of the Elizabethan play was created in a language which was patently never spoken in Elizabethan England. . . ."⁶² Edward Partridge agrees, asserting that Jonson's

. . . dramatic speech is a unique language never heard off the stage. . . . [A]t no time is it the speech of men, although numerous connections

can be made between it and the idiom, the imagery, and the rhythm of colloquial speech.⁶³

On the other side, A. C. Partridge prefaces the following to his meticulous study of Jonson's dramatic language:

The dramatic work of Ben Jonson is the more valuable because of his practical attitude to the problems of language. In his plays, masques, and entertainments he treated linguistic foibles realistically and critically. There is hardly a doubt that the speech in these works is an authentic document; we appear to have in them the opportunity of studying Elizabethan and Jacobean English practically as it was spoken.⁶⁴

Since the verisimilitude of the general dramatic idiom of the age, and Jonson's dramatic idiom in particular, may be forever in doubt, attention is better directed toward the applications to which the language, especially in its prose and verse forms, was put.

Henry Wells notices that the applications of prose and verse in the age differed according to subject matter:

Elizabethan prose has a myriad of varied uses, all, however, distinct from those of verse. Only two types of subject matter it refuses as foreign to its own nature, namely tragic passion and conventional and sentimental romance.⁶⁵

Wells' assessment seems both to encourage a search for the different subject matters that Jonson saw fit to render in prose or verse, and to support the comment, in passing, that Jonson's two tragedies are verse plays. Wells also notes that few of the comedies written at the outset of the seventeenth century are wholly in prose or verse, and that a comedy in which prose and verse were mixed (with prose dominant) was the norm; but he suggests that a rationale underlies the four Jonson comedies that depart from the

norm: ". . . never romantic, they are more or less serious. The more serious, as The Alchemist and Volpone, are in verse, the more farcical, as Epicoene and Bartholomew Fair, in prose."⁶⁶ Although Crane cannot find a principle directing Jonson's mixed or single use of prose and verse, he, too, hints that a rationale must exist. His own tentative reference to the concept of unity of effect is in line with the claim that a personal application of language decorum guided Jonson's choice:

[Jonson] may have thought that the mixed form diminished the unity of effect; it is hard to believe that any less serious motive could have caused him to eschew prose almost altogether in The Alchemist.⁶⁷

On the other hand, Wells is not at all so tentative, and he is very close to the mark in his overview of the dramatic uses of prose and verse in the age:

The playwrights chose their medium with unflinching tact. Where romance, fantasy, and idealism dominate, verse is the leading medium; where intellectualism, realism, and satire dominate, the dramatists prefer prose. Verse depicts the passions, prose the manners of men.⁶⁸

Since there is no romance and fantasy in Jonson's comedy, one is left with Wells' term, "idealism," as the concern of Jonson's verse comedies, an imprecise term if it means that their focus is on the difference between perfection and reality. Jonson's verse comedies deal more with departures from moral ideals. Wells' connection of "intellectualism" with prose admirably suits Jonson's prose comedies, wherein characters misuse their intellectual capabilities.

Summarizing the nature of the language of comedy, Barish remarks that, throughout the period of Elizabethan comedy, "Verse was the norm and prose the exotic intruder."⁶⁹ The methods of controlling prose, learned in grammar schools, had not yet been adapted fully to the play-length treatment of comic subjects. Barish further recalls that, although Lyly had devised a "highly mannered prose" for audiences at court and subjects of fantasy, it remained for Shakespeare and Jonson to develop prose suited to matters both high and colloquial (with Shakespeare predominantly adapting older techniques of symmetric rhetorical ornamentation and Jonson predominantly devising asymmetrical patterns to disrupt older standards and to create illusions of natural speech).⁷⁰ When Lyly used his intricate, polished prose style for drama, he showed the good sense to apply it to a world of dramatic fantasy rather than a world of dramatic realism.⁷¹ Jonson apparently follows Lyly's lead in the mature comedies, connecting distinct subjects with distinct prose styles. The loosely balanced prose of Epicoene presents a world where characters' abuses of their intellectual abilities complicate the natural order of things. Their poorly applied reason gives rise to foolish affectations. Morose crowns the play's irrationality with his ill-thought-out resolution to marry a silent woman and disinherit his nephew because of his incorrect conclusion that his nephew is responsible for all the unnecessary noise in his life. Not fantasy, but something definitely more fanciful than the

comic world of Bartholomew Fair, Epicoene shows Jonson tailoring meditative prose specifically to complement the unity of effect that he needed for one type of an examination of the manifestations of irrationality. Another examination of irrationality in Bartholomew Fair is presented in terse, cacophonous, asymmetrical prose which, according to Barish, "allows for a greater range for representing the irregularity characteristic of the speech of fools."⁷²

The techniques and purposes of this prose which can so well represent the irregular speech of fools are best explained in Morris Croll's essay, "The Baroque Style in Prose."⁷³ Although Croll does not deal with dramatic prose, Barish has shown the unquestionable applicability of Croll's work to the study of Jonson's dramatic prose. While Barish's Ben Jonson and the Language of Prose Comedy provides detailed examples of Jonson's use of the patterns of baroque prose, Croll's original discussion of the subject helps to gauge the purpose which such prose was likely to serve.

A prose style emerged during the late Elizabethan and early Jacobean periods that consciously rejected the full, round, flowing, suspended periods which were the hallmark of Ciceronian stylistics. Grammar-school boys of Elizabethan England had been indoctrinated in the Ciceronian style; and with its classical pedigree, its scholastic approbation, its polished form, and its oratorical nature, the Ciceronian style offered Renaissance Englishmen the epitome of language used by an intelligent and educated man in service to his

country and to his conscience. Widely imitated in school exercises, the Ciceronian style had been adapted to the differences between Latin and English. The preeminent language taught in the grammar schools was Latin, wherein a word's grammatical function is determined by its inflectional form, and word order is somewhat discretionary. Renaissance English had lost its old inflectional system and had become an analytic language, wherein a word's grammatical function is determined by its position in a phrase or clause. Thus, adaptation was necessary to maintain the sense of an English period cast in Ciceronian form "where the syntax remains incomplete up to some well-defined turning point, with phrases and clauses tending to mass themselves in parallel formation on both sides of the turning point."⁷⁴ But grammar-school training had also instilled the habit of working linguistic expression first into one form, then into another; and Seneca, who was read in grammar school alongside Cicero, provided a different, yet respectable, model for working and reworking prose expression. In Seneca's terse and aphoristic passages was a model to imitate and adapt that offered an alternative to the architecturally planned, mediate expression of the Ciceronian style; it offered a way of expressing immediate, "live thought." Instead of pouring a subject into the Ciceronian form, a writer might, with Senecan stylistics, let the form of expression be shaped by the verbalization of the subject as it came to mind. Those nondramatic writers

who rejected scholasticism, rhetorical polish, and the prescribed practices of oratory (Bacon, for example) chose to adapt the alternate model to their purposes. Croll calls the vehicle they developed "baroque prose."

As Croll explains, the purpose of the baroque prose stylists "was to portray, not a thought, but a mind thinking it."⁷⁵ They believed that if the form of a thought changed between conception and expression, the expressed thought was different from the conceived thought. They believed that the round, cumulative periods of the Ciceronian model so removed thought from the moment it presented itself to the mind as to alter the initial truth of the thought and to destroy its freshly imagined vigor. To avoid this stylistic mediation that they perceived to be the central defect of Ciceronian prose, they utilized two manners of baroque prose expression, the curt style and the loose style.⁷⁶

The curt style employs short syntactical members, omits connectives, states the whole idea of the period in the first member by attaching succeeding members in imaginative succession rather than logical progression, and is asymmetric.⁷⁷ The loose style employs connectives (coordinating conjunctions, correlatives, relative pronouns, and subordinating conjunctions) to build on an idea rather than to indicate tight logical relationships. It frequently inserts absolute participial phrases, seeking to show the quick clarification or qualification of an assertion as it first comes to life in thought. The loose style, strongly

associated with skeptical thought, proposes to show the order of thinking during which an idea presents itself to the mind.⁷⁸ As the concise, abrupt, curt style is modeled on Seneca's classical Stoic writings, so the informal, meditative, loose style is characteristic of seventeenth-century skepticism or Libertinism, the expressed opposition to previous schools or systems of philosophy.⁷⁹

The proponents of anti-Ciceronian, baroque prose did not concern themselves with the most basic assumptions underlying their endeavors. Judging Ciceronian expression defective because it was studied, planned, balanced, ornamented, and polished--removed from the immediacy of thought--they assumed that a style which seemed earnest, spontaneous, asymmetrical, plain, and rough would remedy the problem. However, as Croll's analysis shows, they simply substituted one type of rhetorical planning and execution for another. To employ, consistently, short syntactical members, to omit connectives for one purpose and to employ them for another, to state a period's whole idea in its first syntactical member, to make following members suggestive rather than logically connected to the first member, to use absolute participial constructions regularly, and to create everywhere asymmetry in phrasal and clausal patterns is to apply a studied and well-planned rhetoric. Barish comments that the anti-Ciceronians did not question their assumption that the process of thinking may be separated from the words embodying a thought, nor did

they consider why syntactic devices producing irregularity in expression should be any more representative of the mind's "natural" procedures than syntactic devices producing balance and antithesis.⁸⁰ Though their devices supposedly portrayed the immediate activities of mind, the baroque stylists did not seem to notice that restricting themselves to these devices made their expressions actually as mediate, actually as "unnaturally" representative of the moment of thought, as the Ciceronian style. In Barish's summary, "They assumed that regularity was artful, irregularity natural and spontaneous, and they wrote accordingly."⁸¹

Barish hastens to add, however, that in Jonson

. . . a mild paradox emerges: despite his fervent belief in the hard labor of composition, for which he was both admired and ridiculed by his contemporaries, he adopted a rhetorical mode associated with improvisation. Probably . . . he worked as hard to roughen and irregularize his prose as others did to polish and regularize.⁸²

As he applies Croll's studies to Jonson's comedies, Barish points out that "the curt period lends itself to the expression of quick shifts in feeling, afterthoughts, self-corrections, unexpected interpolations or dislocations of attention."⁸³ Such expression is consistent with Jonson's recurrent scrambling of expected word order. As his fools frolic through their undisciplined minds, their shifts, afterthoughts, corrections, interpolations, and dislocations of attention serve "to promote oddness of emphasis, to undermine expectations of 'normal' arrangement."⁸⁴ These tactics enable Jonson to create the vantage point that

Woodbridge deems essential for the audience of comedy:

". . . one stands off from the object and perceives its incongruities as such, and the basis of all comedy is the perception of this incongruity."⁸⁵ Within the curt style, Jonson found syntactic structures capable of readily characterizing the "angry or indignant, impatient or volatile, or merely distracted," as well as rendering "the idiotic flapping about of a half-witted mind" or the "language of abuse."⁸⁶ On the other hand, the loose style of baroque prose lent itself to comic declamation, formal but foolish. Barish's survey of the age finds appearances of the curt style in English dramatic prose throughout the 1590s; the adaptation of the loose style to stage comedy, however, seems to be Jonson's own doing.⁸⁷

Popular in Ciceronian stylistics are balanced correlative constructions, such as the "as . . . so" and "though . . . yet" constructions. The correlative constructions appear in the nondramatic baroque loose style, as Croll notes, in weakened applications, more like syntactic place holders than indicators of logical connection. When they appear in Jonson's dramatic prose, the correlative constructions are regularly imbalanced, asymmetrical. They serve as more than place holders, but they are denied the power to erect balanced, logically connected expression. Barish explains that when Jonson employs the correlatives, he

. . . contrives to balk the kind of satisfaction that arises from a regular design fully

articulated. Instead of a sense of fulfillment, he seeks effects of tension, instead of the feeling of repose as the pattern rounds itself out, a feeling of energy from breaking the pattern.⁸⁸

Barish further remarks that "Jonson's prose is irregular on principle," necessitating "stricter attentiveness of the reader to such a style, since he cannot let his mind coast in the suspension of a periodic sentence. . . ." ⁸⁹ To exploit the intricacies of folly, Jonson chooses the baroque prose styles which allow for an exceptionally wide latitude of shifts and turns within quick, economical utterances that are an essential for language of the stage. Clarity, another essential for the language of the stage, may suffer in such prose that requires an audience's close attention to the manner of expression in order to understand well the matter being expressed. Frequently, Jonson paid the price for confusing his audience and obscuring his matter. But in other essentials, in vigor and the ability to show fine distinctions in the manner of expression, Jonson's baroque prose excels.⁹⁰

CHAPTER III

EVOLUTION OF JONSON'S PROSE-VERSE DECORUM

In Every Man in His Humour (the original Italian version, Quarto 1601), Jonson begins the development of his unique dramatic prose. His vigor and fine distinctions in expression lead Barish to observe that Jonson's depiction of character is through individual idioms, with prose predominating over verse by more than a three-to-one ratio and becoming at once "the staple of language from which verse is a deviation."⁹¹ Twice, within the first sixty lines of the play, Lorenzo Senior mentions items that seem, to him, unreasonable. The first is his son's study of poetry. Lorenzo Senior admits that he, too, studiously applied himself to poetry in his younger days; age, however, made him wiser:

But since, Experience hath awakt my sprit's,
And reason taught them, how to comprehend
The soueraigne vse of study.⁹²

Learning that Stephano, who speaks in prose, has bought a hawk (so as to practice a gentlemanly skill) but does not know how to care for the bird, Lorenzo Senior wishes that

he would "Learne to be wise, and practise how to thriue" (I.i.59). Thus, at the outset of the play, Lorenzo Senior, who considers himself rational, is speaking in verse; Stephano, speaking in prose, is already exposed as a fool, abusing whatever rational powers he has; and the audience awaits the verdict on Lorenzo Junior, supposedly locked away somewhere in his study of poetry. It should be noted that verse is not consistently aligned, at this point in Jonson's career, with the exploiting of vice, but prose is already aligned with the exploiting of folly, the exhibiting of fools.

The next occurrence of prose in the play is in Lorenzo Senior's reading of the letter that Prospero has sent to Lorenzo Junior (I.i.142-75). The prose delivery of the contents of a letter breaks no new ground in dramatic technique. The letter functions as a plot device, arriving in the father's hands because he and his son have the same name, arousing the father's suspicions, and motivating him to check on his son as the scheme of the letter is carried out. Furthermore, the letter contains references germane to the association of prose with subjects of folly. Prospero promises, "I thinke I haue a world of good Iests for thee: oh sirha, I can shew thee two of the most perfect, rare, & absolute true Gulls, that euer thou saw'st, if thou wilt come" (I.i.153-56). His letter closes with the further persuasion,

If this melancholy rogue (Lorenzo here) doe not come, graunt, that he doe turne Foole presently,

and neuer hereafter, be able to make a good
Iest, or a blanke verse, but liue in more
penurie of wit and Inuention, then eyther the
Hall-Beadle, or Poet Nuntius. (I.i.171-75)

Prospero promises to entertain Lorenzo Junior with gulls, simple-minded creatures who can be made to believe almost anything. He cajoles young Lorenzo by admonishing him that, if he does not sport with the simpletons, it will be fitting for him to become a fool himself.

Later in the play, Pizo defines a "humour" in prose: ". . . it is a monster bred in a man by selfe loue, and affectation, and fed by folly" (III.i.157-58). If Pizo's definition is Jonson's (and it seems to be at the time), then the humours themselves are fed by deficiency of understanding, want of good sense, and weakness or derangement of mind (in the terms of the OED definition of "folly"). Pizo, like Lorenzo Junior, speaks in both prose and verse in the play. His oath to Thorello, just prior to his definition of "humour" for Cob, is in regular blank verse:

By my soules safetie sir I here protest,
My tongue shall ne're take knowledge of a word
Deliuier'd me in compasse of your trust.
(III.i.90-92)

Since Pizo is made to speak in verse as well as prose, it is worth noting that his prose definition of "humour" is delivered to Cob, a waterbearer who regularly speaks in prose, reflecting the traditional decorum of prose for characters of low social rank. Yet the prose dialogue between Pizo and Cob is also in line with Jonson's first

practice of another type of language decorum: i.e., prose is the apt medium for matters of folly.

Significantly, Lorenzo Junior speaks consistently in prose while carrying out the mischief of the play with Prospero, his compatriot. Prospero and young Lorenzo, thus, use the manner of language spoken by all the fools as they reveal these characters' simple-mindedness. However, when Lorenzo Junior rises to his diatribe against false poets and false poetry (V.iii.312-43), he declaims in blank verse. Defiling poetry may be an act of fools, but its ramifications, "As she appeares in many, poore and lame, / Patcht vp in remnants and olde worne ragges" (V.iii.320-21), are moral; and defending poetry is very much a moral obligation, as young Lorenzo's blank verse declamation indicates.

Jonson extends his applications of prose in Every Man out of His Humour. Prefixed to the printed versions of the play are the dramatist's brief character sketches of the dramatis personae, which Herford and Simpson refer to as "a daring and somewhat questionable innovation," noting that they "superficially recall the 'Characters' of Theophrastus, soon to be expressly imitated by Hall and his successors."⁹³ Jonson's petite Characters suggest that he was closely in touch with the various contemporary applications of nondramatic prose and willing, albeit in this instance without solid dramatic need, to show himself in the vanguard of prose-form exploration.

During his initial speech in the first Grex, Asper

proclaims,

. . . my language
 Was neuer ground into such oylly colours,
 To flatter vice and daube iniquitie:
 But (with an armed, and resolued hand)
 Ile strip the ragged follies of the time,
 Naked, as at their birth. . . . (13-18)

Just as Lorenzo Senior's first verse speeches in Every Man in His Humour present a judge exposing unreasonable behavior, so does Asper's first verse speech in Every Man out of His Humour present another judge proposing to expose folly. In both plays, the possessors of reason speak verse, and the pretenders to reason are assigned prose. In both plays, the exhibition of folly is accomplished in prose.

The principle of decorum that aligns prose with the exposure of folly appears early in Jonson's comedy. The fixing of verse to exposures of vice develops more slowly, perhaps because vice is not a central subject of comic investigation in Jonson's earlier comedies. Woodbridge notices that successful exposure of folly is accomplished by the "witty rogues" in Every Man in His Humour and by the consistently "malignant" Macilente in Every Man out of His Humour; however, vice brings about its own ruin in Volpone, moral tone absents itself from Epicoene, the vicious are outwitted in The Alchemist, and a relatively painless calling to account of the fools occurs in Bartholomew Fair.⁹⁴ In the latter four comedies, Jonson gives separate, play-length treatment to the subjects of folly and vice.

The Characters prefixed to the printed texts of Every Man out of His Humour illustrate a weakness in the play's

fitness for the stage. These sketches are set pieces, static analyses of traits, and the play itself suffers from being mainly a showpiece for language and character, more a tableau vivant than a drama. Barish finds Jonson in full command of dramatic prose in the play--with prose dominating verse by almost a six-to-one ratio and functioning well to reveal character--but in poor command of plotting, because Jonson invented rather than adapted a plot and failed to give it the suspense necessary to initiate movement from one point to the next.⁹⁵

In Cynthia'a Revels, some of this dramatic deficiency is corrected, but the play still depends more on moments that illustrate foolishness than on movement of plot that shows folly engendering complications and crises. Linguistically significant, as Barish points out, prose and verse are not now mixed in any scene. A character allowed to speak in verse speaks in prose during the time prose-speaking characters are on the stage and resumes verse only when the prose speakers are absent.⁹⁶ Pizo shows this same discrimination in Every Man in His Humour as he addresses Thorello in verse with Cob absent and Cob in prose with Thorello absent (III.i). But Jonson does not regularly hold to that pattern in Every Man in His Humour. In I.iv., Pizo Thorello, and Giuliano begin a prose conversation, and Thorello and Giuliano continue in prose after Pizo exits, but then switch to blank verse as Thorello explains to Giuliano the fears he has about the visits of Prospero and Prospero's

friends to his house. With the advent of Cynthia's Revels, though, Barish notices that

A new criterion . . . for distinction between prose and verse has evolved. In the world of the court, presided over by a divine Cynthia, where truth and virtue reign unchallenged, only verse is spoken. In the world of folly that hovers illicitly about the edges of the true court, only prose is heard.⁹⁷

The Prologue contends that the author's muse ". . . shunnes the print of any beaten path; / And proues new wayes to come to learned eares . . ." (10-11), and promises "Words, aboue action: matter, aboue words" (20). If Every Man out of His Humour suffers from being too much a tableau vivant, Jonson is not yet ready to discard the technique. First in importance is the matter of his play; then come the words; and last comes the action. Such a proclamation as closes the Prologue of Cynthia's Revels is an understandable statement if Jonson is concerned that the basic subject of folly or vice at the heart of his plays is aptly revealed through the language rather than the actions of his characters. Moreover, the action expected on the comic stage in Jonson's time included slapstick buffoonery. Concentrating, as he does, on the subject matter, Jonson belittles this expectation and works to replace it with the comedy of language, wherein the audience may not only laugh at how a character articulates his vicious or foolish nature, but also learn to be and to speak otherwise. Baum finds that, by the time of Bartholomew Fair, Jonson had devised a way "to thwart the audience's desire to see pranks enacted," by replacing "aimless

buffoonery" with "comedy implicit in the dialogue," and by including "satiric overtones."⁹⁸ While working out the technique that controls Bartholomew Fair, Jonson writes comedies that are more like satiric set pieces than drama. It is noteworthy that while the technique is being developed-- in Every Man out of His Humour, Cynthia's Revels, and Poetaster--Jonson calls each play a "comicall satire" as opposed to a "comedy," the designation that he records on the title pages of Every Man in His Humour, Volpone, Epicoene, The Alchemist, and Bartholomew Fair. His attention to the specific problems of comic language may be hinted at in his choice of "comicall satire" for the plays in which he is exploring what manner of language is best suited for the display of different subjects.

Poetaster is the last of the plays in which Jonson is still developing his principle of language decorum that aligns prose with folly and verse with vice. Unfortunately, the play was, for Jonson's habits, hurriedly composed to give him a first-strike advantage as the war of the theaters was heating up. Reacting to the rumor that Dekker was composing a play for the Lord Chamberlain's Men that would disparage him, Jonson quickly determined to fire the first volley.⁹⁹ Nonetheless, he still observes the language decorum that gives verse to the court of Caesar and prose to the household of Albius, with a mixture of prose and verse in varying proportions when representatives of these extremes cross paths. He also shows his distaste for the inflated diction of Marston. Jonson's Horace administers a

purgative to Crispinus (Marston) that causes him to vomit up "retrograde," "reciprocall," "incubus," "glibbery," "lubricall," "defunct," "magnificate," and a host of other "crudities" (V.iii.391-565). At the end, Virgil admonishes Crispinus,

You must not hunt for wild, out-landish termes,
To stuffe out a peculiar dialect;
But let your matter runne before your words. . . .
(V.iii549-51)

Even here, in his vituperous attack on Dekker and Marston, Jonson does not depart from the dictum with which he closes the Prologue of Cynthia's Revels.

Barish observes that the prose in Poetaster, which is given the charge of exposing those who abuse their own small portion of intellectual ability, is now colloquial and reliant upon the choppy syntax of the curt style.¹⁰⁰

Crispinus responds to Horace in the curt style:

Troth, HORACE, thou art exceeding happy in thy friends and acquaintance; they are all most choice spirits, and of the first ranke of Romanes: I doe not know that poet, I protest, ha's vs'd his fortune more prosperously then thou hast. (III.i.234-38)

Illustrating Croll's anatomy of a curt period, Crispinus' remark employs short syntactical members, omits connectives, has the whole idea of the statement in the first member, follows the first member with suggestions that come to mind from it, and is asymmetrical rather than balanced.

After Poetaster, Jonson composed his first tragedy, Sejanus (1603), a verse play. Sejanus was received coolly, as Catiline, Jonson's second tragedy would be received seven

years later. However, following his first verse tragedy, Jonson composed his first mature verse comedy, Volpone (1605), unlike the mixed prose-verse comedies which he had been writing from Every Man in His Humour through Poetaster. Barish speculates that Jonson's abandonment of the mixture of prose and verse after Poetaster might signal his "growing preference for concentration and singleness of effect" or "his changing view of the theater and of his own role as playwright."¹⁰¹ Later, Barish adds that

. . . where the chief stigma of folly is mimicry, as it is with most of the gulls in the early plays, prose is the normal vehicle. The return to verse in Volpone, hence, marks a momentary shift of Jonson's attention away from specifically linguistic caricature.¹⁰²

In Volpone, then, Jonson is focusing his attention on something other than the way in which fools' sloppy thinking is revealed in the manner of their speech. He had already developed some adeptness at using the variations of baroque prose rhetoric to portray the fool in the act of foolish thought. He had just composed, in verse, a tragedy wherein he explored violations of conscience and ethical conduct. Now, with Volpone, he continues to explore the moral matters of conscience, but in the genre of comedy. He avoids the prose he has developed for the display of folly, utilizing, instead, the verse medium already established (in tragedy) for matters of morality. His first comedy in the all-verse form reveals a "dark" comic world where nearly everyone lacks a conscience, where the ethical standard is degeneracy.

Verse enables him to maintain the "singleness of effect" that Barish mentions. With Volpone, the comic playwright assumes the mantle of the moralist.

Edward Partridge sums up the problem which Volpone presents to its theater and reading audiences: "The special quality of Volpone is not easy to define. Is it a comedy?"¹⁰³ Though he hastens to add that no one would attempt to prove it a tragedy or near tragedy, he notes that the usual terms applicable to comedy are insufficient to explain the techniques of Volpone. The play is obviously a comic work, but just as obviously a work focused on vice--specifically greed and licentiousness--which has not been generally the single focus of a comic play, not generally the sole subject matter asked to carry the weight of a comedy. Barish contends that when, in the preceding plays Jonson wants to provide both deplorable situations and a commentary on them, his

. . . shifts between prose and verse become a rough counterpart to the shifts from a given situation to the comment upon it. Prose registers the folly embodied in palpable form, and verse affords glimpses of a positive moral norm from which the fools have strayed.¹⁰⁴

Such moral norms were revealed in the first verse speeches of Lorenzo Senior and Asper. In Volpone, however, the moral norm is the immoral, and greed--a moral issue--motivates the fools' abuses of their powers of reason. Thus, the palpable form of vice, not the palpable form of folly is the central focus of this verse comedy. As Thomas Greene identifies the

subject matter basic to this play, "Volpone asks us to consider the infinite, exhilarating, and vicious freedom to alter the self at will once the ideal of moral constancy has been abandoned."¹⁰⁵

Only when Volpone disguises himself as a mountebank and stands on the street, peddling his potion in hopes of catching a glimpse of Celia, is prose fitting because Volpone is deliberately assuming the guise of one noted for skirting around reason and logic. Jonson has already developed the close association of prose and abused reason that Volpone evidences as a mountebank. Having aligned the verse of his earlier comedies with matters of the moral and rational norm in a given play, Jonson utilizes verse in Volpone to explore a range of departures from morality in human conduct. He now has operable his principle of language decorum for comedy: the dramatic prose which he has been developing alongside contemporary experiments with nondramatic prose styles and prose genres is fit to reflect abuses of thought, of reason, of logic; dramatic verse, already entrenched in tragedies of the age as fitting the speech of noble personages on matters of state and conscience, he adapts to reflect the abuses of conscience, of morality, of ethics in comedy.

With Volpone, Jonson also changes a basic structure of his comedies. In the world of Cynthia's Revels, the court of Cynthia functions as the center of justice and truth, and the fools set on the periphery, venturing in to

be exposed by contrast to the court. Caesar, Virgil, and Horace provide such a center in Poetaster, and again the fools are peripheral. In the sharpened focus of Volpone, however, deceivers are moved, as Enck explains, "from the periphery to the center"; and with the source of justice kept peripheral to the play's action, the central, morally depraved characters betray themselves.¹⁰⁶ A new structure for the comic world evolves as Jonson limits the focus of the play to vice.

Against the verse background that establishes the depth of Volpone's depravity, Jonson contrasts the mountebank scene beneath Celia's window. The application of language decorum calls for a different manner of expression as the reprobate contrives to pass himself off as a charlatan. Barish terms the prose speech an exercise in "verbal fraud," finding that in this scene "Volpone contrives to use--and pervert--virtually every effect known to classic oratory."¹⁰⁷ Enck adds that the speech "moves with firm logic, wholly false, of course, and by the errors, underscores misapplied knowledge and criticizes pseudo learning which perverts rhetoric to subservient ends by a crude ingenuity."¹⁰⁸ For the type of character Volpone assumes and for the abused logic exposed in his speech, prose is the decorous medium of articulation, according to the principle of language decorum which Jonson has formulated.

Jonson's next play, Epicoene, bothers some because it deals not with significant moral and intellectual problems

expected in his comedies, but with what William Slights terms "mildly contemptible trivia."¹⁰⁹ However, as Jonson has already shown himself adapting contemporary experiments with the prose Character, so, in Epicoene, does he work with the levity and sophistry of another formal prose genre of the Renaissance, the paradox. In one form of the prose paradox, such subjects as dirt, lice, or folly are praised in the fashion of a classical encomium. In another form, propositions contrary to good sense are asserted and defended by various applications of tortured logic. Aside from the humor inherent in the paradox itself, the genre offers a means of strengthening the truth of a matter by illustrating the ridiculous means necessary to defend its opposite. For Slights, Jonson's first all-prose play is, in a sense, an extended prose paradox in which folly is not punished, but rather allowed to expose itself.¹¹⁰ This observation about Epicoene parallels Enck's observation about Volpone. By moving the locus of justice in Volpone from the center to the periphery of the play's structure, Jonson allows depravity to betray itself; by moving wisdom out of the center, if not simply out, of Epicoene, Jonson allows folly to expose itself. Epicoene has no structural center of wisdom like Cynthia's court or Caesar's court. In moving toward that "concentration and singleness of effect" which Barish sees happening with the abandonment of mixed prose-verse plays, Jonson has removed, or moved to the periphery, the sources of virtue and truth in his comic

worlds. He can, thus, allow vice and folly to expose themselves across the full canvas of a given comedy and achieve that ridiculous and scornful imitation of human errors which, Sidney claimed, makes it "impossible that any beholder can be content to be such a one." In so altering the structure of his comic worlds, Jonson applies his principle of language decorum to maintain focus on the type of human transgressions called up for exposure before an audience. Verse maintains focus on moral transgressions by holding constant a refined, polished manner of speech while the matter being spoken reveals a faulty code of ethical conduct. Prose, especially the baroque forms that Jonson works with, maintains focus on intellectual shortcomings by holding constant the sense of spontaneity and rough asymmetry while the spoken matter ranges freely through the disorders common to misapplied or undisciplined reason.

Barish judges that the London setting of Epicoene, the broad social spectrum of characters, and the prose dialogue which treats contemporary subjects all mark Jonson's move toward "realism."¹¹¹ Having said as much, Barish qualifies his terminology, for Epicoene impresses at least as many readers for being fanciful as it does for being realistic. Because it offers a "convincing imitation of human experience," not because it literally transcribes phenomena, Epicoene is realistic; and it reflects a departure from the earlier prose comedies of Lyly by establishing a manner of articulation that captures nuance and provides "a mode of

discourse tailor-made for bored, fashionable wits who enjoy a precarious detachment on the edges of poverty and their own insecurities."¹¹² In the prose form of the language itself resides the topical "reality," the imitation of contemporary human experience in the abuse of intellect that gives weighty consideration to ineradicable nuisances (such as Morose's lengthy diatribe against all noise, except the sound of his own voice, of course) or that gives short-sighted responses to long-standing inequities (such as the "code" of the Ladies Collegiate by which they aspire to the same promiscuous and frivolous pastimes that male gallants, but not respectable women, of the day enjoy). With no metrical form to alter the immediate articulation of such abuses of reason, they stand out fully for what they are, and they are finally ill-considered responses to certain conditions of the age or of man as a social creature who needs to find sensible ways of living within the social structure. Mark Anderson maintains that, although Dryden (in An Essay of Dramatick Poesie) praises the play's single action in which Dauphine gains Morose's estate, the settling of Morose's estate is secondary to the exposure of fools; when Epicoene is unmasked, "as elsewhere in the play, the action is designed to expose comically the folly in characters' misjudgments of themselves and others."¹¹³

Epicoene is followed by The Alchemist, the former being first staged in 1609 and the latter in 1610. But sometime during the period of his mature comedies, Jonson rewrote

Every Man in His Humour. When the revision occurred that changed the Italian version into the English version, no one knows. Sir E. K. Chambers argues for 1605, when the play was revived for a performance before King James.¹¹⁴ F. G. Fleay proposes a pre-1603 date because the sovereign in the revised play is the Queen; but since the 1633 production of A Tale of a Tub likewise refers to the Queen as sovereign, Fleay's rationale is not convincing.¹¹⁵ Simpson contends that Jonson probably prepared the English Folio version in 1612, noting that the revision shows the influence of Epicoene (with the likelihood that Epicoene preceded it) and that it "contains no work, and no allusions to events, of later date" than 1612.¹¹⁶ If the revision of Every Man in His Humour did follow the composition and performance of Epicoene, Jonson would have had behind him his first all-verse comedy and his first all-prose comedy. He would have become experienced in applying his decorum of language form and subject matter, which one would expect to see reflected in the revision.

Herford and Simpson find that, in the revision, Jonson not only

. . . removes obscure and harsh phrases, he shows a definite bent towards colloquial, even homely, idiom, and a decided dislike for the rhetorical, abstract, or bookish phrase into which he had often fallen in the earlier version.¹¹⁷

Barish notes more details in the revised text, but finds that the proportion of prose to verse remains roughly the

same, three to one.¹¹⁸ He also explains that, aside from rhythmic and orthographic changes, three categories of revision predominate: first, dialogue revisions making speech more vivid or precise; second, revisions correcting flaws in character decorum or filling out sketchy characterization; and third, revisions transforming or adding new dimensions to characterization.¹¹⁹ The following examples of differences in the Quarto and Folio texts of Every Man in His Humour serve to illustrate the types of revision mentioned by Herford and Simpson and by Barish.

Lorenzo Senior begins the Quarto version thus:

Now trust me, here's a goodly day toward. Musco
 Call vp my sonne Lorenzo: bid him rise:
 Tell him, I haue some businesse to imploy him in.
 (I.i.1-3)

His counterpart, Knowell, initiates the Folio script thus:

A goodly day toward! and a fresh morning! BRAYNE-WORME,
 Call vp your yong master: bid him rise, sir.
 Tell him, I haue some businesse to employ him.
 (I.i.1-3)

As is traditional in Elizabethan-Jacobean drama, each play sets the time of day in the speech of a character. The original "Now trust me" lends little to the purpose of Lorenzo's speech, and eliminating this phrase to add "and a fresh morning" makes Knowell's speech fulfill its purpose with the vividness and precision that Barish mentions. Moreover, the bookish gives way to the colloquial in the letter incorrectly delivered into the father's hands. Prospero's letter to young Lorenzo begins,

Sirha Lorenzo, I muse we cannot see thee at
 Florence: S'blood, I doubt, Apollo hath got

thee to be his Ingle, that thou comest not
abroad, to visit thine old friends. . . .
(I.i.142-44)

Wellbred's letter to young Knowell begins

Why, NED, I beseech thee; hast thou for-sworne
all thy friends i' the old Iewrie? or dost thou
think vs all Iewes that inhabit there, yet?
(I.ii.70-72)

The revised letter is not only more direct and conversational, it is also shorter (some twenty-one lines instead of the original thirty-three), yet its detail is more vivid. After he reads the letter which his father has just read, Lorenzo Junior comments,

Here is a style indeed, for a mans sences to leape ouer, e're they come at it: why, it is able to breake the shinnes of any old mans patience in the world. My father read this with patience? Then will I be made an Eunuch, and learne to sing Ballads. (I.ii.55-59)

Young Knowell's reaction is less rigid, more vivid, and decidedly more colloquial:

Here was a letter, indeede, to be intercepted by a mans father, and doe him good with him! Hee cannot but think most vertuously, both of me, and the sender, sure: that make the careful Costar'-monger of him in our familiar Epistles. Well, if he read this with patience, Ile be gelt, and troll ballads for MR. IOHN TRVNDLE, yonder, the rest of my mortality. (I.iii.58-64)

Speaking of the elder Knowell in the revised text, Richard Dutton notices features that apply broadly to the entire revision. First, the Folio text shows Jonson's greater grasp of character decorum in the language that exhibits an eccentric or deranged mind; second, greater terseness of speech more aptly reveals the impatient and suspicious mind; and third, seemingly less studied rhetoric

and less use of balance combine with the first two points "to achieve a harsh, realistic style of verse, analogous to the baroque, anti-Ciceronian prose. . . ." ¹²⁰ So, while he maintains the same proportion of verse and prose in the revision, Jonson reworks the verse to parallel the baroque style of the prose, focusing the play more sharply on the central matter of right and wrong reason. He avoids mixing rational and moral matters as he does in the original. Concluding that the revision "remains an indictment of follies, rather than an insight into human nature," Dutton seems to begrudge the play's single focus on abuses of the powers of intellect when, perhaps, this single focus is the play's most praiseworthy accomplishment. ¹²¹ Barish's comments about the effects of the differentiation between young Knowell's and young Lorenzo's characterizations are more fitting to the accomplishments of the Folio text:

Having cast off his poetical fervor, [young Knowell] ceases for the most part to be a spokesman for Jonson's ethical view of poetry. Having acquired, on the other hand, a mastery of ambiguous insult, together with his equally changed companion Brainworm, he becomes the satiric expositor engaged in the unmasking of fools. As Knowell and Brainworm now stand out more clearly than ever in the ranks of the witty, so the gulls recede further into the dim legions of the witless. ¹²²

That young Knowell's role is focused on matters of reason (not on matters of reason and morality as is Lorenzo Junior's) is strikingly revealed in the scene before Clement wherein false poetry is called to account. In the Quarto version, Clement complains that a conceit of Matheo's verse is so dark

he needs a torch to help him see it. Lorenzo Junior cries that, if Matheo's verse be called poetry, ". . . then call blasphemie, religion; / Call Diuels, Angels; and Sinne, pietie" (V.iii.305-06). Lorenzo Senior chides his son with a remark about how low poetry ranks "In general opinion" (V.iii.311). Then, Lorenzo Junior delivers, in verse, his lengthy moral defense of "Blessed, aeternall, and most true deuine" poetry (V.iii.312-43), after which Clement burns Matheo's verses. In the Folio version, Clement reads a verse of Matthew's, proclaims it stolen, after which young Knowell interjects (in prose), "A Parodie! a parodie! with a kind of miraculous gift, to make it absurder then it was" (V.v.26-27), and Clement torches the lot of Matthew's manuscripts. Then, elder Knowell chides, "There's an embleme for you, sonne, and your studies!" (V.v.35-36). Clement, not young Knowell, replies,

Nay, no speech, or act of mine be drawne against such as professe it worthily. They are not borne euerie yeere, as an Alderman. . . . I will doe more reuerence, 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 haue it with the fact. (V.v.37-45)

To Clement's defense of honest poetry, young Knowell simply responds, "Sir, you haue sau'd me the labour of a defence" (V.v.46). As a part of the comic center of the play, and with the primary responsibility of helping to expose fools, young Knowell has no part in the defense of poetry, a responsibility given to young Lorenzo. Poetry's defense comes, in prose, from Justice Clement, identified in the

Folio's list of characters as "An old merry Magistrat." All the ethical overtones are gone as Jonson concentrates the focus of his revised Every Man in His Humour on folly rather than vice and reworks the prose, and what verse that remains, into the baroque style in order to apply his principle of language decorum. By adapting what he had developed in the baroque style of prose not only to the prose of the play but also to its verse, Jonson indicates that the comedy is an exhibition of follies, not vices. The removal of the moralistic verse defense of poetry--one very likely dear to Jonson himself--indicates how important the single focus on folly is to his conception of unity of effect for the play.

With The Alchemist, Jonson again shifts to verse and again produces back-to-back verse plays on matters of morality and ethical conduct. In the earlier pair of verse plays centered on moral matters, Jonson had written first a tragedy, Sejanus, and then a comedy, Volpone. His second excursion into verse drama brings forth first a comedy, The Alchemist, and then a tragedy, Catiline. This pairing of verse comedies with verse tragedies during Jonson's mature period is reflected in Herford and Simpson's remark, "The Alchemist, and still more Volpone, are sinister to the verge of tragedy."¹²³ Indeed, they were both accompanied by a tragedy in the course of Jonson's career as a playwright.

Enck observes that in the verse of The Alchemist,

The language moves with a firmness compounded largely from technical terms whose very association and arrangement suggest whole

atmospheres and worlds, probable or improbable, which require no prodding by digressions. The characters, varied as they are, speak in one identical manner. . . .¹²⁴

His observation recalls the way in which, through the steady meter of verse, Jonson holds the manner of speech constant in Volpone in order to sound the depths of depravity in the morals of his various characters. As the primary moral concern of Volpone is greed, its manifestations and ramifications, so is greed central to the moral concern of The Alchemist. However, the greed in Volpone is for something immediately tangible, the Fox's estate that each of the legacy hunters wants to possess and the gold, silver, and plate of the legacy hunters that the Fox wants to possess. The greed in The Alchemist, on the other hand, is for something immediately intangible, by way of which tangible ends may be secured. Observing that Sir Epicure Mammon's desire for the philosopher's stone illustrates the most obsessive greed in the play, Brian Gibbons explains that all the dupes of The Alchemist are guilty of greed, and so are the tricksters who use their own familiarity with greed to control it in the dupes.¹²⁵ With the help of the mediating agent to be provided by alchemy, the dupes hope to satisfy their greed. Intellect is abused in the process, but the basic concern of this verse comedy is the unmasking of the greed that lies beneath whatever misapplied rational faculties appear in the course of satisfying it.

The distinction is important, especially if one is uneasy with the following correct assessment but incorrect

application in Woodbridge's critical investigation:

Jonson's comedy . . . is judicial but not always moral, that is, it always subjects its persons to judgment according to some standard, but this standard is quite as apt to be an intellectual one as a moral one. Among those which apply an intellectual standard, The Alchemist and Bartholomew Fair are preeminent; among those which apply the moral standard, Volpone stands alone among the comedies. . . .¹²⁶

In light of Gibbons' conclusion that "The vital drive of The Alchemist is towards the exposure and ridicule of greedy fools and their fantasies,"¹²⁷ one suspects a critical viewpoint that excludes the "greedy" and restricts The Alchemist to applying an intellectual standard to the judgment of its "fools." One is even more suspicious after reviewing Jonson's development and application of a language decorum that applies verse to moral matters and prose to intellectual matters. The Alchemist and Volpone belong in the category of Jonson's comedies which apply the moral standard, and Bartholomew Fair--to which should be added, at the very least, Epicoene and the Folio version of Every Man in His Humour--belongs in the category of Jonson's comedies which apply the intellectual standard. Bartholomew Fair provides the expected prose language for a play exposing abuses of intellect. Before applying any other critical apparatus to this comedy, before subjecting it to the readings it has received that range from topical satire (especially harsh on the Puritans¹²⁸) to myth-ritual (with special interest in the contrast between sterility and fertility¹²⁹), one should investigate the play as an assault on a selected group of intellectual abuses.

CHAPTER IV

THE ANATOMY OF FOLLY IN BARTHOLOMEW FAIR

Freda Townsend, who is credited with a resurrection of critical interest in Bartholomew Fair, calls it "the play furthest removed from classical canons."¹³⁰ Thayer sees the play as "the summing up of Jonson's career to 1614 as a comic writer," and he speculates that it may have been omitted from the first Folio, not simply because time prohibited the inclusion, but because it inaugurates a new or greatly modified comic world whose "implications go far beyond those of the earlier plays."¹³¹ Barish remarks that in Bartholomew Fair "the reformers are reformed by the fools,"¹³² capping the mountain of criticism that finds in the play a congenial, less authoritative posture than Jonson had assumed in his earlier comedies. However, as early as Volpone, Jonson had moved the source of judgment and justice to the periphery of his comedies in order to give fools and rogues center stage as they expose themselves for what they really are.¹³³ Finding much criticism to be concerned with placing "Bartholomew Fair between the poles of judicial

satire and indulgent comedy," Nicholas Grene proposes that the play be approached from the "comic contract" set up in the Induction, wherein Jonson reaffirms his "principles of art, his disapproval of obscenity and slapstick, his dislike of fantasy and mixed dramatic form" at the same time that he "cajoles, bullies, and blackmails" the audience into being ideally receptive to the comedy.¹³⁴ By mentioning what Jonson disapproves and by indicating how concerned Jonson is for his audience to be ideally prepared, Grene implies that a sense of order is necessary to understand the panoramic Bartholomew Fair. Guy Hamel points out that the matter of the play is disorder brought into shape by a "sprawling action" to reveal "the scope and limits of order in human affairs, the role of right judgement in establishing such order, and the adjustments that the wise allow in recognition of the irrational and chancy."¹³⁵ In the sprawl of characters and actions, Barish sees a microcosm of contemporary London and a corresponding microcosm of contemporary theater in the puppet play of Act V. He adds that, in the tradition of Latin satirists, Jonson uses the puppet play to react to a generation of worn-out mythological, larger-than-life themes of the theater by devising a life-as-it-is burlesque of them; however, Jonson multiplies the irony of his own burlesque attack by upbraiding, simultaneously, worn out myth, coarse popular taste, drama written down to such taste, and those who would censure theater for the wrong reasons.¹³⁶

Such a sample of critical opinion represents only the tip of Bartholomew Fair criticism. Even though much criticism comments on the multitude of characters and situations, there is general agreement that the play depicts follies, an agreement strengthened by the play's being in the prose medium which Jonson reserved for unmasking folly. Its characters more frequently talk at one another than with one another, leading Sackton to observe that, for Jonson, "Persuasive speech is less important than characteristic speech."¹³⁷ As one would expect, persuasive speech is more important in the comedies focusing on abuses of ethics (Volpone and The Alchemist), where dupes must be convinced, while characteristic speech is more important in the comedies focusing on abuses of reason (Every Man in His Humour, Epicoene, and, of course, Bartholomew Fair), where fools must reveal their foolishness. A passage in Discoveries indicates Jonson's rationale for employing characteristic rather than persuasive speech in comedy intended to expose the workings of fools' minds:

Language most shewes a man: speake that I may see thee. It springs out of the most retired, and inmost parts of us, and is the Image of the Parent of it, the mind. No glasse renders a mans forme, or likenesse, so true as his speech.¹³⁸

Verse would introduce an uncharacteristic factor into the speech of a fool; persuasive prose would distract from the focus on a fool's inept mental processes. The exposure of folly requires a characteristic manner of speech, a prose medium capable of mirroring a fool's mind.

Running throughout the play is a cant term for a faddish pastime, "vapours," a simple predisposition to disagree, for the sake of articulating disagreement, with what has just been said.¹³⁹ These vapours persuade no one; they merely reveal foolish uses of various characters' powers of reason.¹⁴⁰ Knockhem, described in the list of characters as "A Horse-courser, and ranger o' Turnbull," uses the word shortly after he first appears on stage: "Let's drinke it out good Vrs, and no vapours!" (II.ii. 23-24). Eugene Waith notes that "vapour" is a staple of Knockhem's vocabulary, used so often as to become

. . . almost meaningless--a kind of verbal tic, but ordinarily it carries the suggestion of two related meanings . . . a senseless urge to contradict, to quarrel, to be touchy . . . or a bent of character, a predisposition, or merely a whim, but in any event an aberrant form of behavior due to some sort of imbalance.¹⁴¹

In sum, Waith finds "vapours" applicable to Knockhem, Wasp, Quarlous, Overdo, Busy, and the puppets. The word resonates through the play as various forms of misapplied or misdirected intellectual talent manifest themselves. It repeatedly calls attention to a display of wanton thought and speech. In doing so, the word and the behavior connected with it recall Jonson's remark in Discoveries:

Wheresoever, manners, and fashions are corrupted, Language is. It imitates the publicke riot. The excesse of Feasts, and apparell, are the notes of a sick State; and the wantonnesse of language, of a sick mind.¹⁴²

With Bartholomew Fair's comprehensive examples of undisciplined language to illustrate the manifold occasions

of ill-formed thought, Jonson anatomizes folly.

The first "sick mind" that Jonson presents to the audience is the Stage-keeper's. In the Induction, the Stage-keeper reveals himself as a man of old-fashioned, gross, public tastes--one who speaks "in plaine English" (Ind. 9). He judges the play to be "a very conceited scuruy one" (Ind. 9) and says that the author presents nothing of what the audience expects to see at the Fair, no sword-and-buckler ruffian, no itinerant dentist, no juggler or ape, no bawdy shenanigans between male and female merchants of the fair, no obscene clowning and slapstick. If the audience can be made to laugh at the Stage-keeper's rustic manner and simple-minded criteria for comedy, they will not be inclined to call the same ridicule upon themselves by echoing his expectations. (As it turns out, the play has much of what he complains is missing.) Thus, when the Book-holder and Scrivener enter and dismiss the Stage-keeper as a simpleton fit only to sweep the stage and gather up broken apples, the audience is mindful not to show themselves to be so lowly as he. However, the Book-holder immediately keeps the audience's expectations from moving to the opposite extreme of the Stage-keeper's, saying that the play is written "iust to his Meridian, and the Scale of the grounded Iudgements here, his Play-fellowes in wit" (Ind. 56-57). Quickly, Jonson gives his audience a fool, to whom they can feel smugly superior, so that they may be dissuaded from disparaging the play on the same basis as he

does. Just as quickly, however, Jonson gives their sense of superiority a tweak by noting that the play is written down to such people as the groundlings in the theater and the Stage-keeper. The effect is to evoke humor and to throw the audience off balance, to elicit smug laughter at the Stage-keeper and then, suddenly, to remind the audience that they are like the object of their laughter.

Subsequently, the Scrivener reads the famous Articles of Agreement between the author and the audience. First, the audience is asked to stay for the length of the play, to hear it out. They may praise or censure in proportion to what they paid for admission. Those who paid for multiple admissions are allowed to praise or censure for all whose way they paid, so long as those who did not pay remain silent. No one in the audience is to "censure by Contagion, or vpon trust, from anothers voice, or face, that sits by him" (Ind. 98-99), and everyone is to be fixed in his judgment, praising or censuring tomorrow and next week what he praises or censures today. Having asked for fixed judgments, Jonson then makes fun of fixed tastes:

Hee that will sweare, Ieronimo, or Andronicus are the best playes, yet, shall passe vnexcepted at, heere, as a man whose Iudgement shewes it is constant, and hath stood still, these fiue and twentie, or thirtie yeeres. Though it be an Ignorance, it is a vertuous and stay'd ignorance; and next to truth, a confirm'd errorr does well; such a one, the Author knowes where to finde him. (Ind. 106-12)

Next, Jonson asks the audience to agree to expect no more than they know and no more than a fair can offer. He

dismisses, item by item, the things that the Stage-keeper had complained were lacking in the play. He has substituted a horse-courser and his entourage for the ruffians, a pig-woman and her tapster for the tooth-drawer, a justice of the peace for the juggler and ape, and so on through his cutpurse, ballad singer, hypocrite (Puritan), and puppets. He finally cautions the audience not to try deciphering his characters, speculating what real person is the model for any character, and not to object to any language that "sauours of Smithfield, the Booth, and the Pig-broath, or of prophanenesse" (Ind. 151-52). Moreover, though the Hope Theater is not Smithfield, Jonson reminds his audience that the sometime bear pit of the Hope is just "as durty as Smithfield, and as stinking euery whit" (Ind. 159-60); thus, he may claim to have "obseru'd a speciall Decorum" (Ind. 158-59) in the places in which his comedy is set and staged.

The Articles of Agreement have continued the attractive yet admonishing tone inaugurated by the Stage-keeper. "Judgment" has been reiterated so frequently as to establish it as a primary concern of the author. Jonson has demanded that this comedy and its characters be judged and that the judgments be made on the basis of each spectator's attentiveness to this play and its material. The Articles are said to "appeare reasonable" (Ind. 61-62) before they are read, but they are as much a spoof of reasoning as they are a reasonable meeting-ground for author and audience. As with letters and official proclamations in other dramas

of the age, prose is the medium for this partly real, partly bogus contract which Jonson proposes between himself and the audience.

On the heels of the Articles of Agreement comes the first person of the play, John Littlewit, proclaiming, "A pretty conceit, and worth the finding!" (I.i.1). It turns out that he is congratulating himself for noticing that the marriage license he has just prepared for Bartholomew Cokes and Grace Wellborn is taken out on St. Bartholomew's Day. To him, "Iohn Little-wit, Proctor Iohn Little-wit: One o' the pretty wits o' Pauls, the Little wit of London" (I.i.11-12), this coincidence of preparing Bartholomew Cokes' license on St. Bartholomew's Day is a great discovery; but the thrice iterated "Littlewit" of his monologue serves to establish that the coincidence would be of no great matter to any but "the Little wit of London." Just as the derogatory aspect of the pun in his name escapes him, so does the pun in "I ha' such luck to spinne out these fine things still, and like a Silke-worme, out of my selfe" (I.i.1-3). "Still" serves as well for "dead" as it does for "yet," and the luck of spinning out dead conceits is hardly good luck at all. Moreover, having just missed these two puns, he praises himself that no "quirk or quiblin" (I.i.13) escapes him. Littlewit sees conceit spinning as a silkworm operation; but spiders also spin--spin webs--and Littlewit has just been caught in his own web as he explores the possibilities in his own name and reveals that he really is

"the Little wit of London." Missing the implication of the appellation, missing the pun on "still," and missing the further suggestion of "spin," he claims to miss no trick of language. In Littlewit resides the degenerated remains of the linguistic sensitivity that produced the grand accomplishments of Elizabethan language. Littlewit is incapable of linguistic grandeur, and it is in the medium of prose that Jonson can incorporate the offhand "still" or "spin" to anatomize Littlewit for the fool he is with the other edge of the meaning of each word. Throughout the play, Littlewit will characterize himself by constantly undercutting himself with his own words.

Littlewit's wife enters at this point, and he exclaims, "Win, Good morrow, Win. I, marry, Win! Now you looke finely indeed, Win!" (I.i.18-19). As he was taken with the reiteration of his own name, so he is taken with repeating his wife's name, pronouncing it eight times in some eight lines of prose when she comes on stage. Barish claims that Littlewit's "most obvious and certainly . . . most imbecile mannerism consists of the continual hopping up and down on his wife's name, almost as a mark of punctuation. . . ." ¹⁴³ Though her name could be repeated in verse, meter would dictate, to some extent, where it could appear; the absence of regular meter in prose serves to heighten the foolish affectation of interjecting "Win" whenever the whim strikes Littlewit, to no real purpose in his speech. Idle repetition of words and names, as well as simple-minded

grasping for foolish, incidental conceits mark Littlewit's language. They are the more remarkable, more effective signs of a fool in prose where they regularly appear in a medium that is otherwise irregular and (in Jonson's judgment as a baroque prose stylist) properly concerned with communicating the matter at hand rather than calling attention to the manner, the devices employed in stating it. Jonson notes in Discoveries the popular preference that gives rise to foolish language such as Littlewit's: "Right and naturall language seem(s) to have least of the wit in it: that which is writh'd and tortur'd, is counted the more exquisite."¹⁴⁴

After Win has endured Littlewit's gushing good-morning speech, she remarks that he is a fool. He replies, "No, but halfe a one, Win, you are tother halfe: man and wife make one foole, Win. (Good!)" (I.i.28-29). His "Good!" is a self-congratulation he employes throughout the play whenever he catches himself or another making a play on words. In this case, the play is on man and wife making one flesh, after Genesis, 2:24, "Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh." The perversion of "flesh" into "fool" is strikingly an instance of ill-applied wit or intellect, yet Littlewit praises himself with his exclamation, "Good!" Jonson sums up in Discoveries Bacon's impediments to learning, which, in turn, apply to the folly of Littlewit:

It was well noted by the late L. St. Alban, that the study of words is the first distemper of

Learning: Vaine matter the second: And a third distemper is deceit, or the likenesse of truth; Imposture held up by credulity. All these are the Cobwebs of Learning, and to let them grow in us, is either sluttish or foolish.¹⁴⁵

Littlewit is guilty of focusing on words, on vain matter (his conceits), and on the imposture of truth. For all his self-praise, he is simply a fool prostituting his intellectual capabilities.

Next in the presentation of characters comes Winwife, a suitor to Win Littlewit's mother. His comment that Win, in her new hat, has "a soft veluet head, like a Melicotton" (I.ii.16) draws forth Littlewit's praise and self-chastisement: "Good y'faith! now dulnesse vpon mee, that I had not that before him, that I should not light on't, as well as he! Veluet head!" (I.ii.17-19). Winwife's conceit does not rank among the finer examples of figurative language (it must have been banal by the standards of the age), but that is no matter to Littlewit; it is a figure he did not come up with. In Joel Kaplan's view, Littlewit's

. . . myriad puns . . . display his wit at the expense of his judgment, his ability to see superficial resemblances at the expense of his capacity to discern material differences. Littlewit's promiscuous word play reduces meaning to mere sound jingles, much as the fair at its worst lowers all pursuits to the level of simple noise, and readies the way for his puppet show where these aesthetic practices will be carried to their logical conclusions.¹⁴⁶

From Winwife's banality and Littlewit's word play, the language moves to staccato tension as Quarlous makes his entrance. He bursts upon the stage in a rush of questions, "noes," and "nots." His first words are to Winwife: "O Sir,

ha' you tane soyle, here? it's well, a man may reach you, after 3. houres running, yet! what an vnmercifull companion art thou . . ." (I.iii.1-4). He starts his next speech with a "no," the next with a "not"; he recounts his previous night's drinking with Littlewit and Winwife; and he seems to parody Littlewit's repetition of Win's name by his own repetition of Littlewit's first name: ". . . before Truth, if you haue that fearfull quality, Iohn, to remember, when you are sober, Iohn, what you promise drunke, Iohn; I shall take heed of you, Iohn" (I.iii.32-35). Apparently, during the previous night's drinking, Littlewit and Quarlous had agreed that Quarlous should kiss Win at their next meeting, to which Win raises some objection, remarking, "Y'faith, you are a foole, Iohn" (I.iii.52). Littlewit giggles in reply, "A Foole-Iohn she calls me, doe you marke that, Gentlemen? pretty littlewit of veluet! a foole-Iohn" (I.iii.51-54). Quarlous fires back a bawdy volley, "She may call you an Apple-Iohn, if you vse this" (I.iii.55). Waith glosses "apple-john" as "an apple which becomes very shriveled when kept,"¹⁴⁷ and Quarlous may very likely gesture to Littlewit's crotch as he makes the allusion because Winwife responds, "Pray thee forbear, for my respect somewhat" (I.iii.56). That plea sets Quarlous off on a forty-six line diatribe against Winwife's "widow-hunting," a mother lode of baroque prose devices, including:

I'll be sworne, some of them, (that thou art, or hast beene a Suitor to) are so old, as no chaste or married pleasure can euer become 'hem: the honest Instrument of procreation, has (forty

yeeres since) left to belong to 'hem, thou must visit 'hem, as thou wouldst doe a Tombe, with a Torch, or three hand-fulls of Lincke, flaming hot, and so thou maist hap to make 'hem feele thee, and after come to inherit according to thy inches. (I.iii.70-77)

In Quarlous' speech, Barish finds one example of the capability of baroque prose "to suggest incipient rather than finished thought, the ideas seeming to leap and tumble at random from the tongue, scarcely half formed in the brain beforehand."¹⁴⁸ The whole idea of Quarlous' period on old women is in the first member--they are long past being able to provide sexual gratification. Attached to this syntactic unit are a succession of imaginative units suggesting implications of the first. Connectives are lacking at the beginning as the mind conceives the imaginative implications of the first member; when connectives do appear, toward the end, they do not indicate tight, logical relationships, but rather the mind winding down on the vigor of making associations to the first idea. The period has no symmetry, and the parenthetical interpolations show a mind hurriedly clarifying a thought newly arisen. Again, the irregularity of the prose style reveals a type of mental process as verse could not.

Humphrey Wasp, tutor to Bartholomew Cokes, arrives to obtain the marriage license that Littlewit has drawn up. Declining to read it, when a conscientious person might be expected to, Wasp asks Littlewit the amount of the fee, and Littlewit brushes off his inquiry, sending Win to get the box for the license from Solomon, their servant. Wasp will

not be delayed, so Littlewit reminds him that he knows the price already. Wasp then launches into his own characteristic manner of baroque prose expression, a manner that shifts attention quickly from one thought or feeling to another, riddled with afterthoughts, self-corrections, and unexpected interpolations--all of which Barish finds amenable to the curt style of dramatic baroque prose:¹⁴⁹

I know? I know nothing, I, what tell you mee of knowing? (now I am in hast) Sir, I do not know, and I will not know, and I scorne to know, and yet, (now I think on't) I will, and do know, as well as another; you must haue a Marke for your thing here, and eight pence for the boxe; I could ha' sau'd two pence i' that, an' I had bought it my selfe, but heere's fourteene shillings for you. Good Lord! how long your little wife staies! pray God, Salomon, your Clerke, be not looking i' the wrong boxe, MR Proctor. (I.iv.19-28)

Littlewit seizes upon the sexual pun on "box." As he does whenever he catches a quip, he exclaims "Good!": "Good i'faith! no, I warrant you, Salomon is wiser then so, Sir" (I.iv.29-30). So intent is he at catching Wasp's bawdy pun that he fails to be offended at what it suggests (its content or matter), yet he gives no sign of noticing his own ludicrous juxtaposition of the servant's name "Solomon," and the word "wiser."

In Discoveries, Jonson records a statement applicable to Wasp's manner of speech:

. . . disordered speech is not so much injury to the lips that give it forth, as to the disproportion, and incoherence of things in themselves, so negligently expressed. Neither can his mind be thought to be in tune, whose words doe jarre; nor his reason in frame, whose

sentence is preposterous; nor his Elocution
 cleare and perfect, whose utterance breakes
 it selfe into fragments and uncertainties.¹⁵⁰

All the more ironic is the presence of such disordered,
 negligent speech as Wasp's in the person charged with
 tutoring Cokes. Barish finds nothing but perversity to
 account for Wasp's language with its "incessant
 tautologizing . . . thudding repetitions, [and] farcing of
 every statement with mouthfuls of senseless expletives";
 Wasp, to his credit, does not affect "learned or modish
 language," but neither does he take any pains to speak with
 propriety.¹⁵¹ Prose is the fitting medium to expose the
 folly of which Wasp is guilty because it calls attention to
 all his inconsistency, whereas verse attempting to do the
 same thing would call attention to itself for being rough,
 irregular, and jarring--in other words, poor verse.

Bartholomew Cokes arrives at Littlewit's house with
 his sister, Mistress Overdo, and his betrothed, Grace
 Wellborn. Wasp is perturbed that they came seeking him.
 He wonders if they were afraid he had made off with the
 fourteen shillings for the license and its box, and he
 defies Mistress Overdo's request that he speak more
 peaceably (her husband, Adam, being a justice of the
 peace):

Mary gip, goody she-Iustice, Mistris French-hood!
 turd i' your teeth; and turd i' your French-hoods
 teeth, too, to doe you service, doe you see?
 Must you quote your Adam to me! you thinke, you
 are Madam Regent still, Mistris Quer-doo; when
 I am in place? no such matter, I assure you, your
raigne is out, when I am in, Dame. (I.v.15-20)

Wasp continues to show himself as bent upon applying his thought to insults and threats rather than to reason. Because Mistress Overdo is something of a social climber, Wasp insults her fashionable French hood. His favorite expletive, "turd i' your teeth," is to no other purpose but shocking insult, and his warning that he, not Mistress Overdo, is in charge of Cokes' affairs becomes the more ridiculous as he continues to reveal himself as mentally unfit for such an obligation.

Cokes wants to see the license, something that Wasp was, himself, adamantly opposed to doing. Informed that it contains nothing but hard words, Cokes replies, "I would see the length and breadth on't, that's all; and I will see't now, so I will" (I.v.37-38). For all this resolute determination, Cokes simply dismisses his request when Wasp again tells him he cannot see the license: "Then I'll see't at home, and I'll look vpo' the case heere" (I.v.40-41). Cokes is at once established as irresolute, easily distracted, and childish. He announces that his other reason for being out and about is to go to the fair, his fair: "I call't my Fayre, because of Bartholmew: you know my name is Bartholmew, and Bartholmew Fayre" (I.v.65-67). At this loosely made association, not even yet a figure of speech, Littlewit protests, "That was mine afore, Gentlemen: this morning I had that i'faith, vpon his Licence, beleeeue me, there he comes, after me" (I.v.68-70). The prose works, here, as no verse could to reveal the sputtering claim of a

little mind that is afraid its little accomplishment will be credited to someone else. Quarlous and Winwife warn Littlewit against overdoing and overbuying wit, but while this short exchange is going on--over a matter stemming from Cokes--Cokes' attention wanders to Win. He muses, within earshot of Grace, how pretty Win is, and he wishes he could marry her. He is incapable of prolonged attention to anything, even his betrothed.

Cokes' group leaves for the fair, followed immediately by Quarlous and Winwife. Littlewit and Win scheme to gain the permission of Rabbi Zeal-of-the-land Busy to go to the fair. Busy is the Puritan courting Win's mother, Dame Purecraft, and supposedly against such profane entertainment as the fair affords. The Littlewits plot to use Win's pregnancy as the cause for a sudden craving to eat the famous roast pig at the fair, knowing that the mother will seek a way to satisfy the daughter's craving and that the suitor will seek a way to satisfy the mother. The whole subterfuge will get the Littlewits to the fair, with Purecraft's and Busy's blessings, so that they may watch a puppet play which Littlewit has written. To reveal this real purpose to Busy would preclude any consent from him because all forms of dramatic entertainments were anathema to the Puritans.

The ruse begins as Littlewit ushers Purecraft to Win. In the manner of the Puritan enthusiasts, Purecraft enters with a flourish: "Now, the blaze of the beauteous discipline,

fright away this euill from our house!" (I.vi.1-2). After some discussion, Purecraft tells Littlewit to call Busy, and when Littlewit comes back without him, Purecraft wonders that he will not come. Littlewit charges the delay to Busy's need to clean his beard, for he had been found "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 Malmesey on his right" (I.vi.34-36). Busy had been a baker before the spirit seized him, and one envisions a gluttonous girth to the man. His speech patterns recall the solemnity of biblical phrasing and ponderous Puritan sermons. But, as might be expected, all that Busy has mastered is the manner. He has no command of logic and no commitment to any subject matter. He can use the forms of pulpit prose delivery to justify or condemn anything. Asked for his opinion of the legitimacy of Win's satisfying her craving by eating pig at the fair, he launches into a solemn consideration:

Verily, for the disease of longing, it is a disease, a carnall disease, or appetite, incident to women: and as it is carnall, and incident, it is naturall, very naturall: Now Pigge, it is a meat, and a meat that is nourishing, and may be long'd for, and so consequently eaten; it may be eaten; very exceeding well eaten: but in the Fayre, and as Bartholmew-pig, it cannot be eaten, for the very calling it a Bartholmew-pigge, and to eat it so, is a spice of Idolatry, and you make the Fayre, no better then one of the high Places. This I take it, is the state of the question. A high place. (I.vi.48-57)

It just so happens that a "high place" was not the state of the question put to him, but perhaps Busy needs a breath here. He gives the impression of dividing and resolving the

question, somewhat in the manner of the medieval scholastics who never went completely out of favor with Catholic, Anglican, or reform churchmen. "Verily" serves to set an appropriately religious tone, but what follows that word has little to do with truth. Busy spouts tautology for definition ("the disease of longing, it is a disease"), affixes unrelated terms appositionally ("a carnall disease, or appetite"), and assumes that which requires support or example ("incident to women")--all to the end of saying that longing is natural. His various repetitions produce the illusion that a subject is being carefully analyzed from many different angles--but only the illusion. Busy also manages to repeat "disease" three times, "carnall" twice, "naturall" twice (the second time with the empty modifier, "very"), "meat" twice, "eaten" four times (three in empty phrases of affirmation, all of which are erased by the fourth use) in the course of saying something relatively simple. Without belaboring the other members of this period, one may accurately restate Busy's analysis of the issue as follows: longing is natural; pig may be eaten, but not in a setting that smacks of idolatry. Barish notes that, in the continual repetition of words and in the regular employment of apposition, Busy makes no real point about anything, his oratorical manner simply serving "to lull the listener into a narcotic doze" and his incessant repetitions creating "a trancelike rhythm that conceals the vacancy of meaning beneath."¹⁵² Moreover, what little he says in such

expansive manner, is easily subject to reversal. When Littlewit and Purecraft implore him to make the satisfaction of Win's craving "lawful," Busy responds, "Surely, it may be otherwise . . ." (I.vi.67). After some more pseudo-religious, pseudo-logical gymnastics, he decides that pig may be eaten at the fair and states that "In the way of comfort to the weake, I will goe, and eat. I will eate exceedingly, and prophesie. . . . I will therefore eate, yea, I will eate exceedingly" (I.vi.92-97). Busy's greatest accomplishment is fooling himself. The Littlewits had known already that he would grant them his permission to go to the fair. Before the day is over, Purecraft will dissolve her allegiance to him and confess that she saw through him all the while, and a puppet in the hands of a hobby-horse dealer will defeat him in debate.

Only one of the "outsiders," visitors to the fair, remains to be introduced. He is Mistress Overdo's husband, Adam, justice of the peace, magistrate of the Pie Powders (dusty foot) court. He has disguised himself as a madman and is already at the fair, black book in hand, to discover enormities. He is pretentious, assuming a degree of self-importance that his minor court post does not support. He begins and ends a soliloquy that comprises the whole first scene of Act II with "in Iustice name, and the Kings; and for the common-wealth!" Since his court handles mainly pimps, prostitutes, pickpockets, and ruffians, his stately battlecry is assuredly overdone. He betrays himself in the

double meaning that leaps out from "They may haue seene many a foole in the habite of a Iustice; but neuer till now, a Iustice in the habit of a foole" (II.i.7-9). He echoes the same illogic that marks Busy: "There is a doing of right out of wrong, if the way be found" (II.i.11-12). He complains that on the testimony of a foolish constable or a sleepy watchman he has been fooled: "As a while agoone, they made mee, yea me, to mistake an honest zealous Pursiuant, for a Seminary: and a proper yong Batcheler of Musicke, for a Bawd" (II.i.33-35). Busy, in the previous scene, had made much of an ecclesiastical question of high place; Overdo puts himself in a secular high place:

This wee are subiect to, that liue in high place,
all our intelligence is idle, and most of our
intelligencers, knaues: and by your leaue, our
selues, thought little better, if not errant
fooles, for beleeuing 'hem. (II.i.36-39)

Such a comment resounds with double meaning. Overdo has no real claim to high place. His intelligence will prove to be, indeed, idle. Those persons of the fair whom he chooses to believe will show him to be an errant fool. When his wife and her party arrive at the fair, the disguised Overdo is orating against bottle-ale and tobacco. In the pompous manner of formal oration, he delivers lines such as "Thirst not after that frothy liquor, Ale" (II.vi.11) and "Neither doe thou lust after that tawney weede, tobacco" (II.vi.21-22). However, he undermines his own inflated style with a content that notes a snail or a spider or a newt may be lurking in the bottle and that an alligator may have pissed on the

tobacco leaves before they were gathered. The spectacle of his oration attracts a crowd, and Cokes has his first purse lifted. Wasp, not knowing the madman whose oration started it all to be his charge's brother-in-law, beats Overdo. Such is the pattern for confusion in everything Overdo attempts during the fair.

After Overdo's introductory soliloquy to Act II, the "insiders," the people of the fair, are introduced. Leatherhead and Joan Trash exchange insults and threats over their wares and over granting each other's booth an open view for customers. The language of the low-class hawkers seems to parody Busy's propensity for piling modifiers on a repeated word. Busy's phrasings, "it is naturall, very naturall" (I.vi.50), "and so consequently eaten; it may be eaten; very exceeding well eaten" (I.vi.52-53), and "Very likely, exceeding likely, very exceeding likely" (I.vi.102), are paralleled by the Costermonger's "Buy any peares, peares, fine, very fine peares!" (II.ii.32), Joan Trash's "Buy any ginger-bread, guilt ginger-bread!" (II.ii.33), and Nightingale's "Buy any ballads; new ballads?" (II.ii.41). The parallel further renders Busy's affected language foolish. Ursula, mistress of the roast-pig booth and accomplice to nearly all the criminal activities of the fair people, comes on stage complaining that "Hell's a kind of cold cellar" (II.ii.44) to her roasting pit, bellowing to Mooncalf, her tapster, and whining to Nightingale, the ballad-seller:

My chayre, you false faucet you; and my mornings draught, quickly, a bottle of Ale, to quench mee, Rascall. I am all fire, and fat, Nightingale, I shall e'en melt away to the first woman, a ribbe againe, I am afraid. I doe water the ground in knots, as I goe, like a great Garden-pot, you may follow me by the S.S.S. I make. (II.ii.48-53)

Knockhem, the horse dealer, enters into lively repartee with Ursula over his rumor that she had died from overindulging in ale and entrails. At one point in the exchange, Ursula refers to Knockhem as a cutpurse, and Overdo, overhearing, thinks he has discovered an enormity. Mooncalf sets Overdo right, and Overdo then congratulates himself on being prudent enough not to be fooled. Then, Edgworth, the cutpurse, enters; and, of course, Overdo mistakes him for a proper young man:

What pittty 'tis, so ciuill a young man should haunt this debauchd company? here's the bane of the youth of our time apparent. A proper penman, I see't in his countenance, he has a good Clerks looke with him, and I warrant him a quicke hand. (II.iv.30-34)

Mooncalf readily agrees that Edgworth has a quick hand, for Mooncalf knows his vocation. A constant feature of Overdo's ineptness is revealed here. He is disguised so that by appearing to be a harmless mad fool he can infiltrate the ranks of criminals at the fair. But his mind is so limited as not to recognize that the criminals who wish to move freely among the ranks of visitors will likewise appear to be other than what they are.

Quarlous and Winwife arrive at the fair ahead of the others who had departed from Littlewit's house. Soon, Quarlous and Ursula have become engaged in what Knockhem

terms "foule vapours!" (II.v.93). Quarlous calls her the body of the fair and the mother of the bawds, a walking sow of tallow fit to be made into axle grease; he asks Knockhem if she is his bog or quagmire because "hee that would venture for't, I assure him, might sinke into her, and be drown'd a weeke, ere any friend hee had, could find where he were" (II.v.95-97). Ursula responds that she hopes to see the likes of Quarlous and Winwife

. . . plagu'd one day (pox'd they are already, I am sure) with leane playhouse poultry, that has the boany rumpe, sticking out like the Ace of Spades, or the point of a Partizan, that euery rib of 'hem is like the tooth of a Saw: and will so grate 'hem with their hips, & shoulders, as (take 'hem altogether) they were as good lye with a hurdle. (II.v.105-10)

More smutty insult back and forth ensues until, finally, Knockhem and Quarlous come to blows, and Ursula, armed with a pan of hot grease, falls in the fracas and scalds herself. This exchange between Quarlous and Ursula sets the tone for the succeeding battles of wits between insiders and outsiders at the fair. Noise and insult will prevail over reason and logic at nearly every point; each character will remain locked into the unique, characteristic speech pattern with which he has been introduced; the thieves will have such sport with Cokes as to rob him of everything but his doublet and hose; and the three most vocal opponents of the fair--Wasp, Busy, and Overdo--will spend time in the stocks. Even more, the respectable wives, Win Littlewit and Mistress Overdo, will be pressed into service as prostitutes, and Overdo will put his signature and seal to a carte blanche

warrant allowing Quarlous the custody of Grace Wellborn, whom he will betroth to Winwife. Such will be the ramifications of the outsiders' follies.

As the play progresses, the characters, excepting, perhaps, Grace Wellborn, are again and again guilty of what Jonson calls, in Discoveries, "negligent speech." He ties such speech firmly to abused, misapplied, and inept reason:

Negligent speech doth not onely discredit the person of the Speaker, but it discrediteth the opinion of his reason and judgement; it discrediteth the force and uniformity of the matter, and substance.¹⁵³

Littlewit, in his trivial punning and conceit-spinning, neglects to include any substantial matter in his speech. Quarlous and Winwife neglect the possible repercussions of Quarlous' baiting Ursula. Wasp is almost everywhere negligent of audience, propriety, and the matter at hand. Busy and Overdo are so caught up in the oratory of the pulpit and of the court, respectively, that they neglect matter for mannerism. Cokes neglects nearly everything mature in vocabulary, syntax, and focus for the mirth and pique of the nursery. In their speech, the outsiders show (some more often than others) their incompetence at reasoning and judging. Indeed, Grace Wellborn's infrequent speaking may be the one sign of good sense among the visitors to the fair. She seems to reflect a remark by Demaratus that Jonson records in Discoveries: "A foole could never hold his peace. For too much talking is ever the Indice of a foole."¹⁵⁴ Although Barish and several

other commentators on the play find Grace to be a "false note" in Bartholomew Fair,¹⁵⁵ there may be a rationale for her reticence.

The speech of Cokes reveals the folly that arises from childish innocence. Barish sees Cokes as the consummate gull--an heir to country wealth, credulous, predominantly infantile, occasionally precocious, a master of childish language, and incapable of lengthy spans of attention; his language lacks transitions between ideas because, in his mind, the appearance of a new thought drives out the preceding one.¹⁵⁶ Robbed of everything down to his inner garments, Cokes meets Littlewit, who is attending to the final preparations for his puppet play. Littlewit lends him money to see the play and informs him that Wasp has been confined in the stocks. Cokes' reply illustrates the childish quality of his mind: "For what i'faith? I am glad o' that; remember to tell me on't anone; I haue enough, now! What manner of matter is this, Mr. Littlewit? What kind of Actors ha' you? Are they good Actors?" (V.iii.47-50). It first crosses Cokes' mind to wonder why Wasp was put in the stocks. It next crosses his mind to be glad that his testy tutor should be humiliated. Then, he simply passes over the subject, deciding that he can find out about it later; for the moment, the promise of a play and his curiosity about the "actors" engross him. By the end of the scene, he has named the puppet-actors after toys: "Hero . . . my fiddle! and Leander my fiddle-sticke: Then Damon, my drum; and

Pythias, my Pipe, and the ghost of Dionysius, my hobby-horse" (V.iii.133-37).

In the speech of the Littlewits is revealed the folly that arises from a blend of the simple and the affected. Win is only a little more than a puppet herself. At Littlewit's insistence, she wears a fine velvet cap. At his urging, she plays the part of a pregnant mother with a craving for Bartholomew pig. When he leaves her with the flesh-peddlers, Knockhem and Whit, they transform her into a prostitute with a gown and the promise of a coach. When she says that she "can be Hypocrite enough" (I.v.160-61) as she prepares for the ruse to fool Busy and Purecraft, she alludes not only to her certainty that she can deceive the Puritan (for whom the age often used the pejorative, "hypocrite") but also to her innate ability to play roles, from the original Greek meaning of "hypocrite." The association of this malleable, role-playing personality with the puppet-playwright, Littlewit, sets up a play-length demonstration of the follies that the simple-minded are heir to when they aspire to be, or let themselves be cast into the role of, something they are not. On a scale of fools, the Littlewits would be found a degree above Cokes, who is a fool for being what he is. The Littlewits show the addition of the follies of mimicry and affectation to the folly of innocence.

However, Littlewit's linguistic mannerisms and trivial conceit-making have the saving grace of being kept within his own natural, middle-class idiom, and his wife seems

naturally suited to be a role player. Busy and Overdo, on the other hand, carry the follies of mimicry and affectation to extremes. Barish claims that prose was "an absolute necessity" for the language of Busy because

The stupefying sing-song of the rhythm needed to be free of metrical interference in order to establish itself so totally. Busy ends by being perhaps the most complete linguistic imposter in Jonson. . . . The vocal disguise distorts but does not obliterate the "true" voice. With Busy, one feels that every syllable is ersatz, maliciously manufactured out of alien matter to produce an impenetrable mask.¹⁵⁷

Busy, the one-time baker, the continual glutton, thoroughly affects the mannerisms of the Puritan pulpit. A careful reader will note that in Busy's linguistic affectation is his paramount folly. Busy's folly of affecting a manner of speech foreign to his intellectual capabilities is what Jonson primarily exposes in this Puritan imposter. Thus, Sackton's point that Busy's language should not be regarded "merely as a satire on the speech of the Puritans"¹⁵⁸ is well taken. Through Busy, Jonson displays the folly of affecting a manner of speech for which the intellect provides no controlling substance, no constant of matter. Busy is a fool who forces himself into a role and a mode of speech that he is not equipped to handle. That the mannerisms he affects are Puritan is significant but secondary to the folly of his affectation. Again, a passage in Discoveries highlights the type of folly exposed through Busy:

Many men beleeve not themselves, what they would perswade others; and lesse doe the things, which

they would impose on others: but least of all, know what they themselves most confidently boast. Only they set the signe of the Crosse over their outer doores, and sacrifice to their gut, and their groyne in their inner Closets.¹⁵⁹

The progression down to "least of all, know what they themselves most confidently boast" gives the secondary causes (not believing and not doing) and the radical cause (not knowing) of the folly evidenced by Busy's speech and behavior.

Another form of extreme affectation is Overdo's. Barish terms the deluded magistrate "autointoxicate," remarking that "Busy is unthinkable without an audience, but Overdo is his own best audience. . . ." ¹⁶⁰ Although Busy fools no one but himself (even the Littlewits manipulate him, and Purecraft sees through him), he needs to be addressing an audience to do it. Overdo comes on the stage in a soliloquy (II.i.1-49), orates against ale and tobacco for the benefit of the "civil" young Edgworth and causes the loss of Cokes' purse (II.vi.1-92), and resolves to "make no more orations" in another soliloquy (III.iii.1-41). In the stocks, he speaks continually to himself: "In the mid'st of this tumult, I will yet be the Author of mine owne rest, and not minding their fury, sit in the stockes, in that calme, as shall be able to trouble a Triumph" (IV.i.43-46). Overdo employs an extensive array of the classical rhetorical devices, among which Sackton catalogues allusion, paradigma (example), correction (self-correction, designed to turn a discussion another way), hypophora (the rhetorical question

that one answers oneself), epizeuxis (repetition for emphasis), auxesis (exaggeration), parathesis (apposition), and apostrophe (addressing a person or thing not present).¹⁶¹ As Littlewit always strives, even strains, for a clever pun or conceit, so Overdo employs his classical devices to affiliate himself with Cicero, Virgil, Ovid, Horace, Persius, and Juvenal. But, being affected, all his pompous rhetorical devices and classical authorities are out of place, just as he is. In fact, rather than keep him in the stocks, the appointed peace-keepers of the fair first attempt to take him to the court over which he should have been presiding; finding him unexpectedly absent there, they return him to the stocks. Barish concludes that,

By ridiculing Overdo's intimacy with Latin authors and his half-baked Stoicism, Jonson shows a new recognition that learning is not enough to preserve a man from folly, just as the fatuous endearments of the Littlewits teach us, more forcibly than elsewhere in Jonson, that stupidity can coexist with innocence.¹⁶²

Busy and Overdo are both guilty of striving to master a form of expression, assuming that truth resides in the form. Neither the form of Puritan sermonizing nor the form of stately oratory brings them closer to the truth of anything. Jonson indicates, in two statements in Discoveries, how much broader a purpose Busy and Overdo serve than satire on Puritans and burlesque on civil justice. The first statement applies to their affected manner of speaking: "Of the two (if either were to bee wisht) I would rather have a plaine downe-right wisdome, then a foolish and affected

eloquence."¹⁶³ The second statement applies to the result of their choosing "foolish and affected eloquence" over truth:

Truth is mans proper good; and the onely immortall thing, was given to our mortality to use. No good Christian, or Ethnick, if he be honest, can misse it: no States-man, or Patriot should. For without truth all the Actions of mankind, are craft, malice, or what you will, rather then Wisdome.¹⁶⁴

Affecting only the form of religious and judicial expression shows the waste of Busy's and Overdo's intellects. They can claim no wisdom; they can reach no truth.

Wasp reveals another kind of autointoxicate folly. His favorite utterance is "I," as shown in his response to the loss of Cokes' first purse. He had warned Cokes that he would lose something if he attended to the spectacle of Overdo's oration against ale and tobacco. When Cokes finds his purse gone and curses cutpurses, Wasp seizes the opportunity to deliver, in typically overbearing and garbled fashion, an I-told-you-so scolding:

Blesse 'hem with all my heart, with all my heart, do you see! Now, as I am no Infidell, that I know of, I am glad on't. I, I am, (here's my witsse!) doe you see, Sir? I did not tell you of his fables, I? no, no, I am a dull malt-horse, I, I know nothing. Are you not iustly seru'd i' your conscience now? speake i' your conscience. Much good doe you with all my heart, and his heart that has it, with all my heart againe. (II.vi.106-13)

However, his language serves more to whip himself into a frenzy than to communicate with his listeners.¹⁶⁵ He seems determined, once given the chance to speak, to make himself heard as long as possible; and by placing questions toward

the ends of his statements, he seems to demand responses that will give him something to which he can continue speaking. If Overdo's acquaintance with Latin classics shows learning to be no guarantee against folly, then Wasp, who scorns even to read the marriage license and who never attests to the value of books and knowledge (an ironic trait in a tutor) must show that simple scorn for the follies of others is no safeguard against one's own foolishness.¹⁶⁶

Quarlous and Winwife at first seem to have the ability to listen and speak to the occasion. However, as Gibbons observes, when Quarlous decides to participate in the game of vapours, he gives up his ability to be a detached commentator on the action before him.¹⁶⁷ Thus, Quarlous is not free of folly, but he has the perceptiveness, generally, to recognize it and to be a fool by choice. He can be fully a part of a foolish world, but his choosing to be so gives him the opportunity to realize personal gains from that world. Significantly, Winwife, who is never so verbally aggressive as Quarlous, gains the hand of reticent Grace Wellborn. Quarlous wins Purecraft and her estate of six thousand pounds.

Barish finds that, in the language of the fair people,

The ear is assaulted unceasingly by linguistic anomalies, by every form of corrupt vocabulary, syntax, and diction, by dialect deformations and drunken brayings. But . . . this linguistic muddle no longer carries very much moral stigma, because it is no longer correlated with the really capital vice of mimicry.¹⁶⁸

Except for his unnecessary introduction of "moral stigma"

and "vice" into a discussion of a play focused on the unmasking of follies, Barish's statement is sound. The game of vapours that has attracted Quarlous and Wasp finds, from the fair people, such language as "Why, where are you, zurs? doe you vlinch, and leaue vs i' the zuds, now?" (IV.iv.10-11) and "I'le ne maire, my waimb warkes too mickle with this auready" (IV.iv.82-83). Knockhem speaks of Ursula's leg as he would of horseflesh: ". . . body o' me, she has the Mallanders, the scratches, the crowne scabbe, and the quitter bone, i' the tother legge" (II.v.179-81). But everywhere, the speech of the fair people is their own, not what they mimic or affect. The fair people reveal something of the same foolishness of Quarlous; they can waste their intellect on senseless vapours, but they all display the basic ingenuity necessary to people who must survive from moment to moment, day to day by their wits. Like Quarlous, they can seize upon an opportunity for gain; the fair itself presents such an opportunity to them, and so they are there, peddlers, pickpockets, pimps, and prostitutes. Unlike Quarlous, their folly stems from expending their native ingenuity on the situation at hand. Having no fortune but their wits, they waste what intelligence they do not apply to survival on idle pastimes, for which their vaporous entertainment of insult and contradiction is a sure sign.

In the anatomy of folly that is central to Bartholomew Fair, Jonson has not only made use of his principle of

language decorum that reserves prose for unmasking fools, but he has also demonstrated the absolute necessity of utilizing prose for revealing the root causes of folly. None of the speech mannerisms which show the inept and misdirected workings of his various characters' minds could be accomplished in verse. Littlewit's repeated interjection of his wife's name at random places, Wasp's peculiar hammering with "I," Busy's piling of modifiers upon repeated words placed irregularly throughout his pronouncements, Overdo's slipping into and out of oratorical delivery, the fair people's characteristic dialects and explosive invectives, and Cokes' childish babble would either disrupt the flow of verse or be sacrificed to achieve the metrical regularity of verse. A conscientious baroque prose stylist, as Discoveries everywhere shows, Jonson accepts the premise that thoughts first come to mind in words and short syntactic units. A conscientious comic playwright, he devises an action that brings together an assortment of fools articulating their thoughts in just the forms that they occur to their foolish minds. The result is a dissection of folly that transcends topical satire and probes as deeply as myth into a basic, universal feature of humanity.

NOTES

¹Eugene M. Waith, ed., Ben Jonson: Bartholomew Fair (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1963), p. 1.

²Edward B. Partridge, The Broken Compass: A Study of the Major Comedies of Ben Jonson (New York: Columbia University Press, 1958), p. 63.

³Basil Willey, The Seventeenth Century Background: Studies in the Thought of the Age in Relation to Poetry and Religion (1934; rpt. Garden City, N. Y.: Doubleday Anchor Books, 1953).

⁴[Richard Puttenham], The Arte of English Poesie (1589; rpt. New York: Da Capo Press, 1971), p. 208. Puttenham entitles the twenty-first chapter of his third book "Of the vices or deformities in speach and vwriting principally noted by auncient Poets." He begins this chapter, "It hath bene said before how by ignorance of the maker a good figure may become a vice, and by his good discretion a vicious speach go for a vertue in the Poeticall science."

⁵Ben Jonson, Timber: or, Discoveries, in Ben Jonson, ed. C. H. Herford and Percy and Evelyn Simpson, VIII

(Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1947), 575.

⁶Robert E. Knoll, Ben Jonson's Plays: An Introduction (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1964), p. 147.

⁷See, especially, Alan C. Dessen, Jonson's Moral Comedy ([Evanston, Ill.]: Northwestern University Press, 1971).

⁸Knoll, p. 161.

⁹Elisabeth Woodbridge, Studies in Jonson's Comedy, Yale Studies in English, No. 5, ed. Albert S. Cook (1898; rpt. New York: Gordian Press, 1966), p. 29.

¹⁰Larry S. Champion, Ben Jonson's "Dotages": A Reconsideration of the Late Plays (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1967), p. 14.

¹¹Champion, p. 15.

¹²C. G. Thayer, Ben Jonson: Studies in the Plays (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1963), p. 15.

¹³C. H. Herford and Percy Simpson, eds., Ben Jonson, I (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1925), 289. See also "apprentice," I, 313.

¹⁴"Ben Jonson's Conversations with William Drummond of Hawthornden," Herford and Simpson, I, 143; I, 168 n. See also "The Case Is Altered," I, 305.

¹⁵John Dryden, An Essay of Dramatick Poesie, in The Works of John Dryden, ed. H. T. Swedenberg, Jr., et al., XVII (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1971), 59.

¹⁶See Claude J. Summers and Ted-Larry Pebworth, Ben Jonson, Twayne's English Authors Series, No. 268, ed. Arthur

F. Kinney (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1979), pp. 101 ff.

¹⁷As in "To the Reader," prefaced to the Q1612 and Folio versions of The Alchemist.

¹⁸J. B. Bamborough, Ben Jonson (London: Hutchinson University Library, 1970), pp. 9-10.

¹⁹Gabriel Bernard Jackson, Vision and Judgment in Ben Jonson's Drama, Yale Studies in English, No. 166, ed. Richard S. Sylvester (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1968), p. 126.

²⁰Mina Kerr, Influence of Ben Jonson on English Comedy, 1598-1642 (1912; rpt. New York: Phaeton Press, 1967), p. 16.

²¹Kerr, pp. 16-17.

²²Herford and Simpson, I, 288.

²³John J. Enck, Jonson and the Comic Truth (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1957), p. 51.

²⁴Bamborough, p. 11.

²⁵Horace, Art of Poetry, in Criticism: The Major Texts, ed. Walter Jackson Bate, enlarged edition (New York: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, 1970), p. 52 and p. 53.

²⁶Sir Philip Sidney, The Defence of Poesy, in Prose of the English Renaissance, ed. J. William Hebel, et al. (New York: Appleton, Century, Crofts, 1952), p. 298.

²⁷Sidney, p. 274.

²⁸Sidney, p. 301.

²⁹Herford and Simpson, I, 342.

³⁰Herford and Simpson, I, 132, 134, 149. See also L. A. Beaurline, Jonson and Elizabethan Comedy: Essays in

Dramatic Rhetoric (San Marino: The Huntington Library, 1978), p. 317 n. Beaurline notes that the issue of decorum arose in Jonson's conversations with Drummond, Mitis's comments in Every Man out of His Humour (I.iii.157), Face's comment in The Alchemist (V.v.159), in Jonson's setting The Alchemist in Blackfriars, Epicoene near Whitefriars, and in the connection between the filth of Smithfield and the Hope Theater in Bartholomew Fair.

³¹Sidney, p. 284.

³²Jonson, Discoveries, in Herford and Simpson, VIII, 634.

³³Alexander H. Sackton, Rhetoric as a Dramatic Language in Ben Jonson (New York: Columbia University Press, 1948), p. 42.

³⁴Helena Watts Baum, The Satiric and the Didactic in Ben Jonson's Comedy (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1947), p. 39.

³⁵See, especially, Puttenham, chapter twenty-three of book three, pp. 218-31.

³⁶Beaurline, pp. 22-23.

³⁷Jonas A. Barish, Ben Jonson and the Language of Prose Comedy (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1960), pp. 92-93.

³⁸Sidney, p. 273.

³⁹Sidney, p. 274.

⁴⁰Jonson, Discoveries, in Herford and Simpson, VIII, 635.

⁴¹Jonson, Discoveries, in Herford and Simpson, VIII, 638.

⁴²Constance Bullock, English Literary Prose in the Making (London: George G. Harrap and Co., Ltd., 1928), p. 11.

⁴³Charles Sears Baldwin, Renaissance Literary Theory and Practice: Classicism in the Rhetoric and Poetic of Italy, France, and England, 1400-1600, ed. Donald Lemen Clark (1939; rpt. Gloucester, Mass.: Peter Smith, 1959), pp. 37-38.

⁴⁴T. W. Baldwin, William Shakspeare's Small Latine and Lesse Greeke (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1944), I, 372. Baldwin comments, "It will be seen that the curriculum aimed to provide a literary training as Erasmus had demanded."

⁴⁵Bamborough, p. 10.

⁴⁶John Sargeaunt, Annals of Westminster School (London: Methuen and Co., 1898), p. 11.

⁴⁷Sargeaunt, pp. 38-39.

⁴⁸"Ben Jonson's Conversations with William Drummond of Hawthornden," Herford and Simpson, I, 143 and 168. Jonson explained to Drummond that he wrote verse first in prose, as Camden had taught him at Westminster. Seutonius had recorded the same practice in Virgil.

⁴⁹Sargeaunt, p. 39.

⁵⁰Sargeaunt, p. 8.

⁵¹T. W. Baldwin, I, 385.

⁵²Edmund Creeth, ed., Tudor Plays: An Anthology of Early English Drama (New York: W. W. Norton and Co.,

⁷⁰Barish, p. 2.

⁷¹Barish, p. 9.

⁷²Barish, p. 95.

⁷³This essay is best read in the context of Croll's other essays on the development of anti-Ciceronian prose. See Style, Rhetoric, and Rhythm: Essays by Morris W. Croll (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1966), pp. 207-33, for a reprint of Croll's 1929 essay "The Baroque Style in Prose" and other essays pertinent to post-Renaissance developments in prose styles.

⁷⁴Barish, p. 48.

⁷⁵Croll, p. 210.

⁷⁶Croll, pp. 210-11.

⁷⁷Croll, pp. 212-15.

⁷⁸Croll, pp. 219-24.

⁷⁹Croll, pp. 222-30.

⁸⁰Barish, p. 65.

⁸¹Barish, p. 65.

⁸²Barish, pp. 65-66.

⁸³Barish, p. 51.

⁸⁴Barish, p. 69.

⁸⁵Woodbridge, p. 22.

⁸⁶Barish, pp. 53-54.

⁸⁷Barish, p. 68.

⁸⁸Barish, pp. 72-73.

⁸⁹Barish, p. 76.

⁹⁰See Barish, pp. 8-9, for a discussion of the demands on dramatic rhetoric in the sixteenth century.

⁹¹Barish, p. 98.

⁹²Ben Jonson, Every Man in His Humour, Quarto 1601, in Ben Jonson, ed. C. H. Herford and Percy and Evelyn Simpson, 11 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1925-52), I, 197.

Subsequent references to Jonson's plays are from this edition and are noted by act, scene, and line numbers following the material cited.

⁹³Herford and Simpson, I, 374.

⁹⁴Woodbridge, pp. 29-30.

⁹⁵Barish, p. 104.

⁹⁶Barish, pp. 113-14.

⁹⁷Barish, p. 114.

⁹⁸Baum, p. 37.

⁹⁹Herford and Simpson, I, 415.

¹⁰⁰Barish, p. 123.

¹⁰¹Barish, p. 142.

¹⁰²Barish, p. 187.

¹⁰³Edward B. Partridge, p. 70.

¹⁰⁴Barish, p. 146.

¹⁰⁵Thomas M. Greene, "Ben Jonson and the Centered Self,"

Studies in English Literature 1500-1900, 10 (1970), 337.

¹⁰⁶Enck, p. 115.

¹⁰⁷Barish, p. 143.

¹⁰⁸Enck, p. 119.

¹⁰⁹William W. E. Slights, "Epicoene and the Prose

Paradox," Philological Quarterly, 49 (1970), 178.

¹¹⁰Slights, pp. 178-87.

¹¹¹Barish, p. 144.

¹¹²Enck, p. 136.

¹¹³Mark A. Anderson, "The Successful Unity of Epicoene: A Defense of Ben Jonson," Studies in English Literature 1500-1900, 10 (1970), 351.

¹¹⁴Herford and Simpson, I, 333 n.

¹¹⁵Herford and Simpson, I, 332.

¹¹⁶Herford and Simpson, I, 333.

¹¹⁷Herford and Simpson, I, 361.

¹¹⁸Barish, p. 130.

¹¹⁹Barish, p. 131. Barish provides detailed examples of these categories of revisions, pp. 131-141.

¹²⁰A. Richard Dutton, "The Significance of Jonson's Revision of 'Every Man in His Humour,'" The Modern Language Review, 69 (1974), 244-45.

¹²¹Dutton, p. 247.

¹²²Barish, p. 141.

¹²³Herford and Simpson, I, 356.

¹²⁴Enck, p. 170.

¹²⁵Brian Gibbons, Jacobean City Comedy: A Study of Satiric Plays by Jonson, Marston, and Middleton (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1968), pp. 169-70.

¹²⁶Woodbridge, pp. 30-31.

¹²⁷Gibbons, p. 170.

¹²⁸See Gibbons, p. 186: "The main satiric force is

directed towards Puritanical attitudes to art and life: the didactic purpose of Jonson is to demonstrate that here, in 1614, these attitudes are more of a threat to the Commonwealth than even the crassest stupidity, fashion-following or pretentiousness which he had ridiculed in the Comical Satyres of 1599-1601."

¹²⁹See Thayer, pp. 136-49.

¹³⁰Freda L. Townsend, Apologie for Bartholomew Fayre: The Art of Jonson's Comedies (New York: The Modern Language Association of America, 1947), p. 72.

¹³¹Thayer, p. 128.

¹³²Barish, p. 238.

¹³³See above, p. 48; Enck, p. 115.

¹³⁴Nicholas Grene, Shakespeare, Jonson, Moliere: The Comic Contract (Totowa, N. J.: Barnes and Noble Books, 1980), pp. 1-15.

¹³⁵Guy Hamel, "Order and Judgment in Bartholomew Fair," University of Toronto Quarterly, 43 (1973), 48.

¹³⁶Barish, pp. 232-36.

¹³⁷Sackton, p. 154.

¹³⁸Jonson, Discoveries, in Herford and Simpson, VIII, 625.

¹³⁹Jackson, p. 123.

¹⁴⁰Barish, pp. 217-19, sees a new theory of motivation tied to vapours. The old humours connoted affectations that made characters withdraw from each other; the vapours connote a perversity that makes characters "intrude on each

other . . . meddle, and quarrel." He continues, "To carry the distinction between humors and vapors into the linguistic sphere, one may suggest, somewhat diagrammatically, that if the cardinal sin of the humors characters is mimicry, that of the vapors characters is solecism."

¹⁴¹Waith, p. 192 n.

¹⁴²Jonson, Discoveries, in Herford and Simpson, VIII, 593.

¹⁴³Barish, p. 197.

¹⁴⁴Jonson, Discoveries, in Herford and Simpson, VIII, 581.

¹⁴⁵Jonson, Discoveries, in Herford and Simpson, VIII, 627.

¹⁴⁶Joel H. Kaplan, "Dramatic and Moral Energy in Ben Jonson's Bartholomew Fair," Renaissance Drama, NS 3 (1970), 152.

¹⁴⁷Waith, p. 42 n.

¹⁴⁸Barish, p. 193.

¹⁴⁹See above, p. 33; Barish, p. 51.

¹⁵⁰Jonson, Discoveries, in Herford and Simpson, VIII, 628.

¹⁵¹Barish, p. 216.

¹⁵²Barish, pp. 198-99.

¹⁵³Jonson, Discoveries, in Herford and Simpson, VIII, 629.

¹⁵⁴Jonson, Discoveries, in Herford and Simpson, VIII, 574.

155 Barish, pp. 222-23.

156 Barish, pp. 220-22.

157 Barish, pp. 203-04.

158 Sackton, p. 156.

159 Jonson, Discoveries, in Herford and Simpson, VIII,
564.

160 Barish, pp. 204-05.

161 Sackton, pp. 154-55.

162 Barish, p. 209.

163 Jonson, Discoveries, in Herford and Simpson, VIII,
574.

164 Jonson, Discoveries, in Herford and Simpson, VIII,

580.

165 Barish, pp. 204-05, explains that while *Busy's* language is designed to lull his listeners into a trance, *Wasp's* is designed to "jolt himself into a frenzy."

166 Thayer, p. 139, discusses the scorn of antiquity and learning in *Busy* and *Wasp* as "original ignorance" (for original sin) in the myth-ritual approach to the play.

167 Gibbons, p. 185.

168 Barish, p. 225.

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