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PLAYS BY RENAISSANCE AND  
RESTORATION DRAMATISTS  
*General Editor: Graham Storey*

JONSON  
VOLUME 2

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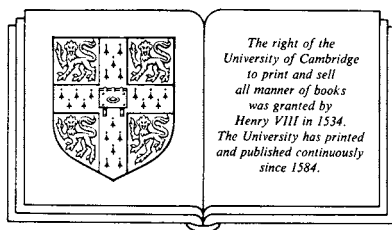
THE SELECTED PLAYS OF  
BEN JONSON  
VOLUME 2

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*The Alchemist*  
*Bartholomew Fair*  
*The New Inn*  
*A Tale of a Tub*

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## PREFACE TO THE SERIES

This series provides the best plays (in some cases, the complete plays) of the major English Renaissance and Restoration dramatists, in fully-annotated, modern-spelling texts, soundly edited by scholars in the field.

The introductory matter in each volume is factual and historical rather than critical; it includes, where appropriate, a brief biography of the playwright, a list of his works with dates of plays' first performances, the reasons for the volume editor's choice of plays, a short critical bibliography and a note on the texts used. An introductory note to each play then gives the source material, a short stage-history, and details of the individual editions of that play.

Short notes at the foot of the page are designed to gloss the text or enlarge on its literary, historical or social allusions. Editors have added explanatory notes and have commented on textual variants.

The volumes are intended for anyone interested in English drama in two of its richest periods, but they will prove especially useful to students at all levels who want to enjoy and explore the best work of these dramatists.

Graham Storey

## INTRODUCTION

### Life

Ben Jonson was born between October 1572 and May 1573, the posthumous son of an impoverished gentleman who had 'turned Minister' of religion. His mother's remarriage to a master bricklayer of Westminster and the temporary apprenticeship to his stepfather's craft which the young man would later undergo left him especially sensitive to imputations of meanness of birth, but despite being 'brought up poorly' he was educated (through the good offices of an unknown benefactor) at Westminster School under the great schoolmaster William Camden; with this man, and with other scholars of his circle, such as John Selden and Robert Cotton, Jonson maintained an enduring friendship. Before appearing in the books of the theatre financier Philip Henslowe in 1597, Jonson had served as a soldier in Flanders (during which service, he later claimed, he had killed an enemy in single combat), and spent some time as a strolling player. He had also married; his wife, 'a shrew yet honest', was to bear him at least two children, both of whom died in infancy.

The first title connected with his name was the 'sedytious' comedy *The Isle of Dogs*, part authorship of which earned him two months' imprisonment in 1597. In the next two years he saw prison twice more: once for debt, once for the manslaughter of a fellow actor, Gabriel Spencer, killed in a duel after a quarrel. During this third imprisonment he became a Catholic (he was later to act as a government agent against the Gunpowder conspirators, and returned to the Church of England around 1610). By 1599 he was already being listed as among 'our best for Tragedie', but his earliest surviving successes were comedies performed by the Lord Chamberlain's Men, *Every Man in his Humour* (1598) and *Every Man out of his Humour* (1599); the latter was the first of three 'comical satires' that broke away from the norms of Elizabethan romantic writing represented by his own *The Case is Altered* (1598), a play he chose not to include among his collected works. In the other comical satires, *Cynthia's Revels* and *The Poetaster*, both staged in 1601 by the Children of the Chapel, Jonson attempted to work out his highly individual and experimental ideas of comic form, but found himself embroiled with John Marston and Thomas Dekker in the so-called 'War of the Theatres'. Hostilities were not so acrimonious that Jonson was unwilling to collaborate with Marston in *Eastward Ho!* (1605), but he did retire temporarily from



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the stage after *Poetaster* to live on the patronage of Sir Robert Townshend and Lord Aubigny.

The product of retirement was the massive, scholarly and almost equally experimental tragedy *Sejanus* (1603), a play which, though unsuccessful at the Globe, seems to have been a personal catalyst for the establishment of the mature Jonsonian comic form in *Volpone* (1605), *Epicoene* (1609–10), *The Alchemist* (1610) and *Bartholomew Fair* (1614), of which only *Epicoene* was written for a children's troupe. The plays of this decade deservedly established Jonson in the eyes of contemporaries as the foremost literary figure of the age; only the demanding classical tragedy *Catiline* (1611) failed to find an 'understanding auditory', while *The Masque of Blackness* (1605) had already initiated what would become a twenty-year career as foremost writer of masques for performance at court. However, his relationship with the court remained ambivalent, as his conservative predilection for a stable, responsible monarchy was compromised by his moral idealism and his realism about the nature of the Jacobean dispensation. *Sejanus* brought him to the council table in 1604 to explain passages deemed treasonable, and jokes against the new king's Scottish favourites in *Eastward Ho!* left him in prison and in danger of losing his ears.

By 1616, Jonson was poet laureate in all but name. He had a small court pension; poems and dedications attest to his friendships with powerful aristocratic families such as the Sidneys, the Herberts and the Cecils; he had travelled on the continent as tutor to the son of Sir Walter Raleigh (not without misadventure). The folio volume of his *Works*, meticulously edited and published in 1616 (the same year as the *Works* of King James), marked a moment of personal culmination. And yet, after *Bartholomew Fair*, *The Devil is an Ass* (1616) seems a curiously impoverished comedy, and there are suggestions of an attempt by Jonson to modify or redefine his form. Both of these plays hint at a dissatisfaction with the playwright's public, and after 1616 Jonson ceased temporarily to write for the professional stages altogether.

In the following ten years honours continued to come – he was fêted by the Scots gentry and banqueted by the city of Edinburgh during his walking tour to the north in 1618–19, and he received an honorary MA from the University of Oxford in 1619 – but his dramatic output was confined to masques for Whitehall, and the years 1618–20 seem to have been occupied with literary projects other than plays (such

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as an English grammar and a versified life of Henry V); when in 1623 a fire in his house destroyed his current projects, only 'parcels of a play' were among them. Moreover, having become so closely identified with the court, Jonson now began to find that his position was being undermined from within Whitehall. King James granted him the reversion of the office of Master of the Revels in 1621 and there were rumours of a knighthood, but Jonson's relationship with the new order arising under Prince Charles and the Duke of Buckingham was uneasy, and his place at court was made difficult by his personal and intellectual disagreements with his collaborator in the court masques, the architect Inigo Jones. Although in the 1620s he presided happily over a literary society, the 'Tribe of Ben', at the Apollo Room of the Devil Tavern, he was severely piqued by the failure of the court to invite him to contribute to the preparations being made in 1623 to welcome Charles's intended bride, the Spanish Infanta, and after the death of James in 1625 the slender financial allowance he received from the crown fell increasingly into arrears. Jonson was rather out of place in the polite, elegant and attenuated atmosphere of Caroline Whitehall. Only once, in 1631, did Charles invite him to write a court masque, and on this occasion Jonson's poor relationship with Inigo Jones came to a head in a major public row over artistic responsibility for the masque; from this quarrel Jonson emerged the loser. Several of Jonson's friends (such as Cotton, Selden and Edward Hyde, the future Earl of Clarendon) were moderate critics of the court in the late 1620s, and after the Duke of Buckingham's assassination in 1628 Jonson was among those questioned about the authorship of verses in praise of his assassin. A series of begging letters and poems at this time testifies to his reduced circumstances, and though he was appointed to the unlikely office of Chronologer of the City of London in 1628, his salary was withheld from 1631 to 1634 owing to non-performance of his duties. By this stage he had suffered a stroke and was confined to his bedchamber; a project for a second volume of his works collapsed in 1631. A combination of circumstances was conspiring to force him back to the professional stage again.

Jonson's late plays (*The Staple of News*, 1626; *The New Inn*, 1629; *The Magnetic Lady*, 1632; *A Tale of a Tub*, 1633; and the unfinished *Sad Shepherd*) have been overshadowed by the catastrophic failure of *The New Inn*, which was hissed from the Blackfriars stage, provoking angry

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exchanges in verse between the playwright and several of his spectators. The other plays, if not fully successful, were better treated and, though they do not equal Jonson's best work, as a group all five do not deserve the label 'dotages' which Dryden stuck on them. They are, rather, an astonishing period of renewed activity in a career already remarkable for its length, and mark a courageous and hard-won return to a changed theatre by a master playwright working under conditions of considerable difficulty. The formal innovations that they involve (their country settings, romantic plots, and nostalgia for earlier or better times) suggest a dramatist reassessing both his own theatrical preferences and his relationship to the dominant cultural modes of an unsympathetic age.

Though in the 1630s Jonson was shamefully neglected by the court (one courtier in 1632 expressed surprise to hear that he was still alive), his last years were not devoid of friends and supporters. His last patron, the Earl of Newcastle, provided financial help and commissioned two entertainments for presentation to the king when he visited the earl's Nottinghamshire estates; and Jonson's friendship with Edward Hyde put him in touch with a circle that included the Earl of Falkland, Kenelm Digby, John Earle, Tom May and Thomas Carew. It seems to have been largely from this group that the initiative came for the volume of posthumous elegies, *Jonsonus Virbius*. Jonson died on 6 August 1637. 'All or the greatest part of nobility and gentry then in the town' attended his funeral at Westminster Abbey. His goods were valued at £8 8s 10d.

#### The text of this edition

Jonson was unique in his own time for the close personal interest he took in the publication of his plays. Consequently, apart from *A Tale of a Tub*, which was first published after Jonson's death as part of the so-called third volume of the second edition of his *Works* (1640–1), the early published texts of the plays in this volume carry an unusually heavy weight of authorial intention in the matter of accidentals, even taking into account the unreliability of seventeenth-century typesetting. *The Alchemist* was first published in 1612, then lightly revised for inclusion in the great folio volume of *Works* (1616). In 1631, *Bartholomew Fair* was prepared in connection with a projected second volume of works, but the bedridden Jonson was dissatisfied with the inadequacies of his printer, John Beale, and the

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scheme collapsed with most of the already printed sheets being left unissued; they remained in the hands of successive printers until 1640, when they became part of the second volume of the second edition of the *Works*. *The New Inn* was published separately in octavo in 1631, and this time Jonson was much better served by a new printer, Thomas Harper. He had revised the text, and he made corrections in proof.

In preparing my text, I have tried to conserve as much as is appropriate in a modernised edition of Jonson's intentions as manifested in these early editions. As far as possible (in slightly different textual circumstances) this volume follows the procedures adopted for volume I of *The Selected Plays of Ben Jonson*. The main differences from other modernised texts are

(1) This edition preserves some of Jonson's contracted verbal forms, particularly observing *yo'are* and *yo'were* which distinguish tenses obscured by the modernised *you're*, and for which Jonson exhibits a marked preference.

(2) Proper names are conservatively modernised, especially where modernisation involves a significant difference in pronunciation (as is the case with *Ursla*, in *Bartholomew Fair*, where I have followed G. R. Hibbard's New Mermaids edition in acknowledging the force of Jacobean pronunciation).

(3) In punctuating I have endeavoured to respect Jonson's indications of dramatic emphasis as far as is consistent with modernisation. A very strong case can be made out for the practical value of Jonson's punctuation. Jonson had sophisticated notions of the function of punctuation (for which see his *English Grammar*), and evolved his own highly developed system of pointing which, though it seems heavy to modern readers and has been dismissed as merely rhetorical or grammatical, can repeatedly be shown to carry real theatrical force. For example, though Druggier's language embodies the hesitation with which he unfolds his dreams to the cunning man, it is Jonson's sudden rash of ungrammatically-sited commas that causes him to stumble and stutter helplessly before us (*The Alchemist*, I.iii.6–16). Similarly, the proliferation of Mammon's subordinate clauses that expand one after another seemingly to infinity is allowed not only by the loose syntax that barely governs his speech but also by Jonson's casually interlocked commas and semicolons that offer no serious containment to his inexhaustible mind (II.ii.41–87). On the other hand, the brilliant but erratic

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flashes of bravura wit that issue from Quarlous result in sustained passages of barely coherent syntax underpinned by a jumble of commas, colons, semicolons and stops which it would be unreasonable to put down in its entirety to the inadequacies of the printer (*Bartholomew Fair*, I.iii.151–68). So too in *The New Inn* Jonson's freer use of marks of exclamation signals the heightened and slightly strained emotionalism that afflicts participants in the game of honour and love (I.vi.139–48, IV.iv.256–64).

Inevitably, there has to be some lightening and regularising of Jonson's pointing for the convenience of the modern reader, but simply to repunctuate from scratch, following modern principles, is to forfeit an important dimension of the Jonsonian text: a comparison between the contemporary editions and any of the more radically repointed modern versions reveals starkly the loss of dramatic immediacy and even clarity which is involved. I have tried to punctuate positively rather than negatively: that is, as far as possible to respect punctuation which could be held to have potential as theatrical signals, and only to revise Jonson's punctuation where it threatens to obscure the sense. Where the conventions of punctuation have changed (such as our use of ' . . . , . . . ! ' where Jonson might write ' . . . ! . . . , ') I have modernised but attempted to do so in the spirit of such pointing. However, these strictures apply with greater force to *The Alchemist* and *The New Inn* (where Jonson oversaw the publication) than they do to *Bartholomew Fair* (where he complained about the printer's shortcomings) and the posthumously published *Tale of a Tub*.

I have followed the discretion of other editors of *Bartholomew Fair* in leaving Jonson's stage-Irish, Welsh and Scots largely as he prints it, and I have tried to acknowledge what seem to be conscious archaisms in *A Tale of a Tub* (this means, for example, printing 'bride-ale' for 'bridal').

The standard edition of Jonson, to which all subsequent editors are indebted, not least for its substantial introductions and notes, is the monumental 11-volume Clarendon text, *The Works of Ben Jonson* (ed. C. H. Herford, and Percy and Evelyn Simpson, Oxford, 1925–52), hereafter referred to as Herford and Simpson or H&S. A remarkable achievement for its time, this edition is not likely to be superseded in the foreseeable future. The principal editions before Herford and Simpson were those of Peter Whalley (7 vols., 1756), William Gifford (9 vols., 1816),

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and Francis Cunningham's revision of Gifford (3 vols., 1871). A modernised version of Herford and Simpson in four volumes with inadequate commentary has been prepared by G. A. Wilkes (1981–2). The many single-volume editions of individual plays are listed in the introductions to each play; inevitably I have drawn heavily on most of these and would like to acknowledge here my very considerable indebtedness to the labours of those who have gone before.

**Select bibliography***Biography*

It is remarkable that the life of this many-sided figure has attracted so little serious attention. At the moment, the choice of biographies is between Marchette Chute's *Ben Jonson of Westminster* (London: Robert Hale, 1954) and Rosalind Miles's *Ben Jonson, His Life and Work* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1986); the former inclines to the leisurely and sentimental, the latter to the workmanlike and breezy. Richard Helgerson has studied Jonson's processes of self-definition as a writer in *Self-Crowned Laureates* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983), and Jonathan Goldberg, in his dense and provocative book *James I and the Politics of Literature* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1983), has investigated Jonson's contribution to the language and iconography of Stuart kingship. The shape of Jonson's career has been examined in relation to the cultural and political pressures of the day by Philip Edwards in *Threshold of a Nation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979) and by David Norbrook in *Poetry and Politics in the English Renaissance* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1984), but there is still plenty of room for a full-scale literary and intellectual biography, if a scholar can be found brave enough to attempt it. Much the best direct approaches to Jonson the man are through the comments of contemporaries collected in Herford and Simpson (XI, pp. 305–494) and in *The Jonson Allusion-Book* (ed. J. F. Bradley and J. Q. Adams (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1922)), and through Jonson's *Conversations with William Drummond* (Herford and Simpson, I, pp. 128–78), his own informal, unreliable but utterly fascinating self-assessment.

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*Criticism*

Jonson has always received sympathetic commentary from practising poets. Detailed criticism begins with Dryden's account of *Epicoene* in *An Essay of Dramatic Poesy* (1668). To Coleridge, Jonson seemed a 'Mammoth or Megatherion', but he praised his 'sterling English diction' and accounted *The Alchemist* one of 'the three most perfect plots ever planned' (R. F. Brinkley (ed.), *Coleridge on the Seventeenth Century* (Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press, 1955), pp. 637–49). T. S. Eliot's ambivalent praise in his famous essay of 1919 (collected in *Selected Essays* (London: Faber and Faber, 1932)) has had an ambivalent effect on succeeding criticism; but A. C. Swinburne's *A Study of Ben Jonson* (1888–9), though ridiculed by Eliot, deserves to be much better known, not least for its enthusiasm and its endearingly eccentric preference for *The Staple of News*.

The seminal work for modern scholarship has been L. C. Knights's *Drama and Society in the Age of Jonson* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1937), which made the first serious attempt to assess Jonson's plays in the light of their socio-economic context. Knights's approach has been refined by Brian Gibbons in *Jacobean City Comedy* (London: Rupert Hart-Davis, 1968), and criticised by Don E. Wayne, 'Drama and society in the age of Jonson: an alternative view' (*Renaissance Drama*, n.s. 13 (1982), pp. 103–29). Nicholas Grene examines the implications of Knights's failure to take *Bartholomew Fair* seriously in 'L. C. Knights's *Drama and Society in the Age of Jonson*' (*Themes in Drama*, I (1979), pp. 291–8).

Dryden's neo-classical account of the principles of Jonsonian comic form was attacked by Freda L. Townsend in *Apologie for Bartholomew Fayre: The Art of Jonson's Comedies* (New York: The Modern Language Association of America, 1947), but Townsend's structural formula of 'unity in variety' has itself been modified by Wallace A. Bacon in 'The magnetic field: the structure of Jonson's comedies' (*Huntington Library Quarterly*, 19 (1955–6), pp. 121–53). Gabriele Bernhardt Jackson's wide-ranging *Vision and Judgment in Ben Jonson's Drama* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1968) includes a brilliant analysis of the structural mechanics of Jonsonian comedy; some of her analyses have been built upon by Gail Kern Paster in 'Ben Jonson's comedy of limitation' (*Studies in Philology*, 72 (1975), pp. 51–71). Jonson's formal debt to the Tudor

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morality play is investigated by A. C. Dessen in *Jonson's Moral Comedy* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1971), while Leo Salinger has examined the influence of Aristophanes in 'Comic form in Ben Jonson' (reprinted in his *Dramatic Form in Shakespeare and the Jacobeans* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986), pp. 157–64). Thomas M. Greene traces one structural pattern in 'Ben Jonson and the centred self' (*Studies in English Literature*, 10 (1970), pp. 325–48).

Amongst recent book-length studies, the most important has been Anne Barton's *Ben Jonson, Dramatist* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), which traces throughout Jonson's career his twin rages for order and chaos, radically revising the traditional stereotype of an aloof, Horatian dramatist. A similarly complex Jonson emerges from Richard Dutton's rather uneven book, *Ben Jonson: To the First Folio* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), while he is altogether less genial a figure in Douglas Duncan's *Ben Jonson and the Lucianic Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979) which tellingly investigates the humanist roots of Jonson's strategies for teasing his audience towards judgement. A range of Jonsonian topics is treated by Alexander Leggatt in *Ben Jonson: His Vision and His Art* (London: Methuen, 1981) and by George Parfitt in his brief but suggestive collection of essays, *Ben Jonson: Public Poet and Private Man* (London: Dent, 1976). Katharine Eisaman Maus's *Ben Jonson and the Roman Frame of Mind* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984) is an important study of Jonson's personal investment in classical Latin literature, while the most recent study, Peter Womack's *Ben Jonson* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1986), attempts to approach Jonson from within a Bakhtinian perspective.

All of the books noticed above give space to *The Alchemist* and *Bartholomew Fair*. The imagery of *The Alchemist* is studied separately in a chapter of Edward B. Partridge's *The Broken Compass* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1958), and the thematic significance of the play's concern with language is described in Ian Donaldson's 'Language, noise and nonsense: *The Alchemist*' (in Earl Miner (ed.), *Seventeenth Century Imagery* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1971), pp. 69–82). William Empson's characteristically provoking essay '*The Alchemist* and the critics' appeared in *The Hudson Review*, 22 (1969–70), pp. 595–608. These three are collected with other commentaries on the play and a fine introductory



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essay in R. V. Holdsworth (ed.), *Jonson: 'Every Man In His Humour' and 'The Alchemist', A Casebook* (London: Macmillan, 1978). The play's structure is analysed by R. E. Knoll in 'How to read *The Alchemist*' (*College English*, 21 (1960), pp. 456–60), and D. F. Finnigan considers Surly's contribution in 'The role of Surly in *The Alchemist*' (*Papers on Language and Literature*, 16 (1980), pp. 100–4). Contrasting accounts of the ending are provided by Judd Arnold in 'Lovewit's triumph and Jonsonian morality: a reading of *The Alchemist*' (*Criticism*, 11 (1969), pp. 151–66) and Wayne A. Rebhorn in 'Jonson's "Jovy boy": Lovewit and the dupes in *The Alchemist*' (*Journal of English and Germanic Philology*, 79 (1980), pp. 355–75). In two closely related essays, Richard Dutton ('*Volpone* and *The Alchemist*: a comparison in satiric techniques', *Renaissance and Modern Studies*, 18 (1974), pp. 34–62) and R. L. Smallwood ('"Here in the Friars": immediacy and theatricality in *The Alchemist*', *Review of English Studies*, 32 (1981), pp. 141–60) suggest how the play's illusion of a familiar and exactly contemporaneous setting works to undermine the audience's complacent superiority to the play's gulls. Harry Levin has drawn telling comparisons with Shakespeare in 'Two magian comedies: *The Tempest* and *The Alchemist*' (*Shakespeare Survey*, 22 (1969), pp. 47–58).

The outstanding essay on *Bartholomew Fair* is a brilliant chapter in Jonas Barish's *Ben Jonson and the Language of Prose Comedy* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1960) which ranges far beyond Barish's immediate concern with Jonson's prose; however, Barish takes the play to be rather more indulgent towards its fools than do Gibbons, Duncan and Dutton in the volumes cited above. An influential earlier essay on the play's concern with authority is Ray L. Heffner Jr's 'Unifying symbols in the comedy of Ben Jonson' (reprinted in R. J. Kaufmann (ed.), *Elizabethan Drama: Modern Essays in Criticism* (London: Oxford University Press, 1961), pp. 170–86). No less than five essays have found a point of departure in the play's staging. Richard Levin analyses the structure of the action in intricate detail in *The Multiple Plot in English Renaissance Drama* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1971). R. B. Parker in 'The themes and staging of *Bartholomew Fair*' (*University of Toronto Quarterly*, 39 (1969–70), pp. 293–309), Guy Hamel in 'Order and judgment in *Bartholomew Fair*' (*University of Toronto Quarterly*, 42 (1973–4), pp. 48–67), and Joel H. Kaplan in

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'Dramatic and moral energy in Ben Jonson's *Bartholomew Fair*' (*Renaissance Drama*, n.s. 3 (1970), pp. 137–56) all examine ways in which Jonson's staging reinforces his thematic concerns. Leo Salingar argues a connection between the bustling crowd on stage and Jonson's pre-occupation with defining his literary public in 'Crowd and public in *Bartholomew Fair*' (*Dramatic Form in Shakespeare and the Jacobean*, pp. 189–205). Ian Donaldson considers the play as a festive comedy in *The World Upside Down* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1970) and discusses the implications of its court performance, as does William Blissett in 'Your Majesty is welcome to a fair' (*The Elizabethan Theatre*, IV (ed. G. R. Hibbard, Ontario, 1974), pp. 80–105). Jonathan Haynes develops a rather more sceptical view of the play's carnivalesque features in 'Festivity and the dramatic economy of *Bartholomew Fair*' (*ELH*, 51 (1984), pp. 645–68). The play's vapours are studied from the point of view of theme by James E. Robinson in '*Bartholomew Fair*: comedy of vapours' (*Studies in English Literature*, 1, no. 2 (1961), pp. 65–80), and in relation to seventeenth-century science by Patrick Grant in *Literature and the Discovery of Method in the English Renaissance* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1985), pp. 48–76. The religious resonances of the play's language are explored (rather over-ingeniously) by Jackson I. Cope in '*Bartholomew Fair* as blasphemy' (*Renaissance Drama*, 8 (1965), pp. 127–52).

The most exciting recent development in Jonsonian criticism has been the gradual recuperation of the last plays from Dryden's charge in the *Essay of Dramatic Poesy* of being Jonson's 'dotages'. Earlier attempts at a defence of *The New Inn* by Edward B. Partridge (*The Broken Compass*, pp. 189–205) and Larry S. Champion (*Ben Jonson's 'Dotages': A Reconsideration of the Late Plays* (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1967) had granted the essential truth of Dryden's position while falling back desperately on to ironic readings of the play. Succeeding critics have been more willing to credit Jonson's seriousness, and have begun to read the last plays as an extraordinary and belated (if only partly successful) departure into new artistic territory against a background of complex changes in society, audience and theatrical taste. This has been taken furthest by D. F. McKenzie in '*The Staple of News* and Jonson's late plays' (in William Blissett (ed.), *A Celebration of Ben Jonson* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1973), pp. 83–128) and by

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Anne Barton in the book cited above. Professor Barton's emphasis on the Shakespearean dimension of *The New Inn* was partially anticipated by C. G. Thayer in *Ben Jonson: Studies in the Plays* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1963), while the play appears as a kind of culmination in Mary Chan's *Music in the Theatre of Ben Jonson* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1980). The concern with theatricality in *The New Inn* has been sensitively treated by Harriet Hawkins ('The idea of a theatre in Jonson's *The New Inn*', *Renaissance Drama*, 9 (1966), pp. 205–26) and by Douglas Duncan ('A guide to *The New Inn*', *Essays in Criticism*, 20 (1970), pp. 311–26), though (to Hawkins) Lovel's speeches and (to Duncan) the last act still sound like parody. Patrick Cheney examines one detail of Lovel's arguments in 'Jonson's *New Inn* and Plato's myth of the hermaphrodite' (*Renaissance Drama*, n.s. 14 (1983), pp. 173–94), and Jon S. Lawry reads the play as a critique of what he (rather unhelpfully) terms 'modernism' in 'A prospect of Jonson's *The New Inn*' (*Studies in English Literature*, 23 (1983), pp. 311–27). *A Tale of a Tub* still awaits full revaluation, but has been sympathetically handled by Anne Barton, by Muriel Bradbrook (*The Living Monument* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976), pp. 249–52), and by L. A. Beaurline (*Ben Jonson and Elizabethan Comedy* (San Marino: The Huntington Library, 1978), pp. 274–86).

Finally, mention should be made of an important study of the theatre history of Jonson's plays, R. G. Noyes's *Ben Jonson on the English Stage 1660–1776* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1935). There is a fairly recent consolidated bibliography of Jonson by William L. Godshalk in T. P. Logan and Denzell S. Smith (eds.), *The New Intellectuals* (Lincoln, Nebraska: University of Nebraska Press, 1977), pp. 3–116.

*Addendum*

Three important studies have recently appeared, and must be added here. On *The Alchemist*, Robert N. Watson's 'The Alchemist and Jonson's conversion of comedy', in B. K. Lewalski (ed.), *Renaissance Genres* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1986), pp. 332–65. On *Bartholomew Fair*, Peter Stallybrass and Allon White's *The Politics and Poetics of Transgression* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1986). And on *Bartholomew Fair* and *A Tale of a Tub*, Leah Marcus's *The Politics of Mirth* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986).