

Cambridge University Press
 978-0-521-51743-0 - Ben Jonson and Envy
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 Excerpt
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CHAPTER I

Introduction

Ben Jonson has been accused of envy from at least the late seventeenth century, if not before. Tradition has it that John Dryden first interpreted Jonson's comment that Shakespeare had 'smalle *Latine*, and lesse *Greeke*' as 'sparing and invidious'.¹ Nicholas Rowe's statement that Jonson 'could not but look with an evil Eye upon any one that see'd in Competition with him' is typical of the way a number of eighteenth-century Shakespeare editors painted Jonson as ungenerous, ungrateful and even malevolent.² Moreover, Rowe places Jonson's 'evil Eye' in direct contrast to Shakespeare's generous one in narrating the story of how Shakespeare read an early play of Jonson's: 'Shakespeare *luckily cast his Eye upon it*, and found something so well in it as to engage him first to read it through, and afterwards to recommend Mr. *Johnson* and his Writings to the Publick' (my emphasis).³ In telling the tale of how Shakespeare helped the young Jonson get his start in the theatre, Rowe deftly holds up Shakespeare's charitable reading eye against Jonson's envious one. In a fascinating section entitled 'Proofs of Ben Jonson's Malignity, from the Commentators on Shakespeare' in the introduction to his edition of Jonson's *Works*, William Gifford presents

¹ Alexander Pope refers to this tradition when he writes: 'I cannot for my part find any thing *invidious* or *sparing* in those verses, but wonder Mr. Dryden was of that opinion' (my emphasis). Edmond Malone (ed.), 'Mr. Pope's Preface', *Plays and Poems of William Shakespeare in Ten Volumes* (London, 1790), vol. 1, p. 89. John Freehafer has suggested that it was not Dryden, but Leonard Digges who first spotted a slur in Jonson's judgement concerning Shakespeare's knowledge of the classical languages. John Freehafer, 'Leonard Digges, Ben Johnson [*sic*], and the Beginning of Shakespeare Idolatry', *Shakespeare Quarterly* 21 (Winter 1970), 63–75; p. 66. Jonson's description of Shakespeare's Latin and Greek is to be found in his elegy to Shakespeare: 'To the memory of my beloved, the AUTHOR MR. WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE: And what he hath left us', which first appeared in 1623 in the Shakespeare First Folio. *Ungathered Verse* (xxvi), Herford and Simpson, vol. VIII, p. 391 (line 31). All references to Jonson's works will refer to 'Herford and Simpson' and include the volume, page and, when appropriate, line number.

² Nicholas Rowe, 'Some Account of the Life, Etc. of Mr. William Shakespear' in *The Works of Mr. William Shakespeare in Six Volumes* (London, 1709), vol. 1, p. xiii.

³ *Ibid.*, p. xiii.

readers with choice examples of Jonson's 'supposed hostility to Shakespeare' handed down from one Shakespeare editor and commentator to another. Gifford writes that 'of all calumniators [of Jonson] Mr. Malone is the most headlong', but he seems to take particular delight in quoting Charles Macklin's virulent description of Jonson: 'He was splenetic, sour, over-run with envy, – the tyrant of the theatre – perpetually uttering slights and malignities against the lowly Shakespeare, whose fame was grown too great for his envy to bear.'⁴ There were, however, other early critics, like Gifford, who understood that Jonson's 'envy' was, in part, an editorial invention and a useful cornerstone in the literary sanctification of Shakespeare. In *Specimens of the English Poets*, Thomas Campbell refers to 'the established article of literary faith that [Jonson's] personal character was a compound of spleen, surliness and ingratitude'. He argues that Shakespeare's fame was constructed even out of Jonson's supposed envy:

The fame of Shakespeare himself became an heirloom of traditionary calumnies against the memory of Jonson; the fancied relics of his envy were regarded as so many pious donations at the shrine of the greater poet, whose admirers thought they could not dig too deeply for trophies of his glory among the ruins of his imaginary rival's reputation.⁵

Campbell shows the extent to which the construction of a cult of Shakespeare went hand in hand with a Jonson envious of his rival. Every unsavoury anecdote or veiled allusion served as a 'pious donation' to the 'shrine' of Shakespeare's fame. Out of the ashes of Jonson's reputation, Shakespeare's phoenix rises. As early as 1819, Campbell offers a corrective to any simplified opposition of Shakespeare to Jonson, yet, almost two centuries later, the myths of envy, as well as the archaeological hunt for more 'relics', are as widespread as ever.

This powerfully evocative myth of Jonson's envy of Shakespeare is most probably the reason why scholars have not examined in any detail Jonson's frequent references to envy and its cognates. Envy has been so visibly associated with Jonson's personal envy that it has been nearly impossible to disassociate the tradition of the envious man from any examination of the persistent thematic issues derived from envy in Jonson's works. In other words, the *topos* of envy has been so *visible* as a critical term to describe Jonson's personal animosities and malicious nature that envy within the

⁴ William Gifford, *The Works of Ben Jonson, With Notes Critical and Explanatory and a Biographical Memoir in Nine Volumes*, ed. F. Cunningham (London: Bickers and Son, 1875), vol. 1, pp. cciv, ccxiii.

⁵ Thomas Campbell, *Specimens of the English Poets*, 7 vols. (London: John Murray, 1819), vol. III, pp. 142–3.

Introduction

3

works themselves has been rendered *invisible*. While the biographical subject and the presence of envy in his texts are not unrelated phenomena, there needs to be a clearer division between envy as a biographical characteristic ascribed to Ben Jonson and textual manifestations of a preoccupation with envy. The life and temperament of the author might indeed produce the works of Ben Jonson, but they are by no means sufficient to explain them.

A MODEL OF CREATION

This image of a Jonson envious of Shakespeare exists side by side with two other images, both in their way quite contradictory to that of the splenetic rival. The first is the legendary *persona* of the convivial playwright, the frequenter of taverns and drinker of sack, whom contemporaries and later critics alike referred to amiably as 'Ben'. This image is in part due to Jonson's own efforts at immortalizing and publicizing himself as well as to the way he was remembered in poems appended to his works and those in the collection, *Jonsonus Virbius*, commemorating his death. At the same time, Jonson has also been perceived as a neo-Stoic, virtuous and 'centred' moralist.⁶ Clearly, he modelled himself upon the classical authors as guides to literary decorum and moral probity. He was almost certainly influenced by Sidney's argument in *An Apologie for Poetrie* (1595) that poetry in its larger sense of 'fiction' was necessarily linked to the teaching and understanding of virtue.⁷ Yet, to read Jonson as writing primarily for the reformation of public and court morals has perhaps prevented our appreciating fully his self-interested programme as a writer.⁸ Jonson may indeed have wished

⁶ Thomas Greene, 'Ben Jonson and the Centered Self', *SEL* 10 (1970), 325–48.

⁷ Sir Phillip Sidney, *An Apologie for Poetrie* (London, 1595). See the following passages for the association of poetry with virtue: 'But even in the most excellent determination of goodnes, what Philosophers counsel can so redily direct a prince, as the fayned *Cyrus* in *Xenophon*? Or a virtuous man in all fortunes, as *Aeneas* in *Virgil*?', sig. D4; 'I think it may be manifest, that the Poet with that same hand of delight, doth draw the mind more effectually, then any other Arte dooth, and so a conclusion not unfitlie ensueth: that as vertue is the most excellent resting place for all worldlie learning to make his end of: so Poetrie, beeing the most familiar to teach it, and most princelie to move towards it, in the most excellent work, is the most excellent workman', sig. F2; '... the ever-praise-worthy Poesie, is full of vertue-breeding delightfulnes', sig. L2'.

⁸ Martin Butler notes Jonson's self-interested calculations concerning his own posterity with regard to his role as courtly panegyrist: 'Jonson [in his 'Epistle to Master John Selden'] professes to feel untouched by the revelation that his poems sometimes praised men more than they deserved, but he was demonstrably disinclined to allow his own writings to testify against him in this way, since when he compiled the collected edition of his works he excluded at least two panegyrics lauding men who had fallen from favour since the poems were written, the Earl of Somerset and Sir Edward Coke.' Martin Butler, 'Ben Jonson and the Limits of Courtly Panegyric' in Kevin Sharpe and Peter Lake (eds.), *Culture and Politics in Early Stuart England* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1994), pp. 91–115; p. 96.

to see himself as embodying the role of the *didaskalos*, the ancient term for playwright in ancient Greece; but his canny self-representation in prologues, for instance, should not deter us from excavating other motives and other pressures which may have influenced and shaped his art.⁹ Jonson's virulent response to attacks on *The New Inn* (1629), for instance, would seem to reveal a keen interest in the reception of his works in the public mart not to mention it being at odds with the 'centred' self, philosophically writing poems in imitation of Horace.¹⁰ Within the limits of the masque genre he was certainly bound to praise the courtiers participating in masques and the politics of their royal patrons. Yet, the image of the writer as proselytizer of virtue and reformer of court manners is problematic in light not only of the sheer fantasticalness of many of the anti-masques or most of the characters in *Bartholomew Fair* (1614), but also, as Bruce Boehrer has argued, the writer's fascination with the scatological and the crude.¹¹ And, as with Rabelais, the carnivalesque aspect of much of Jonson's work may be seen as the reverse of the sombre, almost misanthropic face that emerges in a play like *Volpone* (1606).

It is this darker aspect of Jonson that both Edmund Wilson and William Kerrigan brought more fully to light, providing a necessary antidote to the image of a morally upright poet and playwright.¹² Wilson's attempt to understand the psychological sources of Jonson's literary production from a Freudian standpoint led him to identify Jonson as an obsessive 'anal-erotic'. Though not perhaps his most remarkable piece of criticism, Wilson's essay owes its notoriety to his temerity in opposing the pervasive image of Jonson as a virtuous and ethical writer. Harold Bloom comments approvingly on Kerrigan's essay: '[D]issenting from our modern portrait of Jonson as sane and virtuous, [he] returns us to the reality of the poet's abiding melancholy.'¹³ Both Wilson and Kerrigan took what

⁹ Graham Ley, *A Short Introduction to the Ancient Greek Theater*, rev. edn (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006), p. 14.

¹⁰ See Jonson's 'An Ode. To himself', *Underwood* (xxiii), Herford and Simpson, vol. VIII, p. 174. 'Come leave the lothed stage, / and the more lothsome age' (lines 1–2). Dates in parentheses of Jonson's plays and masques in the text will refer to the date of *performance*, which in certain cases coincides with the date of first publication. I will refer to publication dates when the discussion involves the *printed* text specifically.

¹¹ Bruce Thomas Boehrer, *The Fury of Men's Gullets: Ben Jonson and the Digestive Canal* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 1997).

¹² Edmund Wilson, 'Morose Ben Jonson', *The Triple Thinkers* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1948), pp. 213–32; William Kerrigan, 'Ben Jonson Full of Shame and Scorn', *Ben Jonson: Studies in the Literary Imagination* 6 (April 1973), 199–218.

¹³ Harold Bloom (ed.), *Modern Critical Interpretations: Ben Jonson* (New York: Chelsea House Publishers, 1988), p. 2. One could argue that this approach reinvokes, under another name, the

might be called a *sinister* approach to Jonson. The present book may be said to inscribe itself in such an approach. I will be arguing that *envy* and *envious* are words the writer uses to describe the way the spectator will *look at* and the reader will *read* his work. Scholars of Jonson have referred to the way the writer anticipates his reception and the means he uses to control it in what Gérard Genette has termed the paratext.¹⁴ I would like to show that the source of this anxiety for Jonson lies in a very specific authorial image of the spectator and reader.¹⁵ The writer's perception is that the audience's *vision* is naturally *depraved*, so that they *see* obliquely and thus necessarily distort, pervert and deform the meaning of the text.

This image of the misreader may very well reflect the way Jonson read or misread those writers who preceded him. It would seem, at first glance, that Harold Bloom's 'anxiety of influence', which posits an often troubled relationship between strong writers and the (father) ghosts of the literary past, may be useful in understanding certain aspects of Jonson's anxious relationship with previous literary giants and their monuments. According to Bloom:

Poetic Influence – when it involves two strong, authentic poets, – always proceeds by a misreading of the prior poet, an act of creative correction that is actually and necessarily a misinterpretation. The history of fruitful poetic influence, which is to say the main tradition of Western poetry since the Renaissance, is a history of anxiety and self-saving caricature, of distortion, of perverse, willful revisionism without which poetry as such could not exist.¹⁶

Yet, there are a number of problems with the Bloomian model with regard to Jonson. First, the usefulness of this model for the early modern period remains a vexed question. Thomas Greene, for instance, does not see it as adequately describing the relationship between the humanist poet and the classics of antiquity: 'The humanist poet is not a neurotic son crippled by a Freudian family romance, which is to say he is not in Harold Bloom's terms Romantic. He is rather like the son in a classical comedy who displaces his

envious Jonson depicted by Rowe, Dryden and Malone. But I will be referring to the 'abiding melancholy' *manifested in the texts*, not in the poet himself. The key is to separate, again, the man from the texts and a biographically focused study from a textual one.

¹⁴ Gérard Genette, *Seuils* (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1987).

¹⁵ Certain terms, such as 'anxiety', borrowed from the the realm of psychoanalysis, but which have become appropriated by literary criticism to describe textual phenomena, will be used in this book.

¹⁶ Harold Bloom, *The Anxiety of Influence: A Theory of Poetry* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1973), p. 30.

father at the moment of reconciliation.¹⁷ On the other hand, while Greene argues for the inappropriateness of Bloom's 'Romantic' model for an early modern author, Thomas Cartelli sees Bloom's omission of Jonson from the ranks of strong, anxious poets as an odd oversight: 'Harold Bloom contends that Jonson had "no anxiety as to imitation" (p. 27) and thus fails to register a most interesting case-study in the politics of influence. Indeed, Jonson's chronic imitation of his Roman masters conceivably served as a defensive buffer against the competing influence of his contemporaries upon his work, and constituted a complex strategy by which he might maintain distinction in his ongoing battle for recognition.'¹⁸ Yet, the problem with Bloom's model lies deeper than this argument suggests since the anxiety with which recent Jonson scholars are particularly concerned is with what Lucy Newlyn has called the 'anxiety of reception'.¹⁹ Newlyn sees the weakness in Bloom's model in its singular orientation toward the relationship poets have to the 'past', but, she points out:

[A]nxieties experienced by writers centre as much on the future as on the past – not just because an author's status, authority, and posthumous life are dependent on readers, but because writing exists in dialogue with others whose sympathies it hopes to engage.²⁰

Newlyn's account has the virtue of attempting to see both sides of readerly reception: reception by the writer of past authors as reader as well as the anxiety experienced by the writer with regard to his or her own future reception by readers. Newlyn thus suggests a model in which the relationship writers have with their future is indicated by their relationship, as readers, to the past:

writers are peculiarly alive to their own status as readers, and as often as not this leads to an awareness of their revisionary relationship to the materials that they read. Such awareness brings with it, as an inevitable cost, the apprehension that all writing – including their own – is contingent, provisional, open to reconstruction. Potentially, then, the writing-reading subject is divided in its response to the release of subjectivity which occurs in acts of interpretation. Writers who are *robustly revisionary* in relation to past authors can be prescriptive when it comes to imagining their own reception; and this equivocation with respect to interpretative

¹⁷ Thomas Greene, *The Light in Troy: Imitation and Discovery in Renaissance Poetry* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1982), p. 41.

¹⁸ Thomas Cartelli, 'Bartholomew Fair as Urban Arcadia, Jonson Responds to Shakespeare', *Renaissance Drama*, n.s. 14 (1983), 151–72; p. 160.

¹⁹ Lucy Newlyn, *Reading, Writing, and Romanticism: The Anxiety of Reception* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000).

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. vii.

freedom is sometimes reflected in the way they *imagine or theorize the reader's role* [my emphasis].²¹

What Newlyn terms here as 'robustly revisionary' was called, in antiquity and later in the Renaissance, *aemulatio*. According to Wayne A. Rebhorn: 'In Renaissance rhetorical and educational theory, emulation is classified as a form of imitation, an identification with one's model at the same time that one attempts to surpass it... emulation means identification with another person, a model, or an ideal; it can indicate a form of brotherhood or comradeship or even love. On the other hand, it simultaneously means rivalry; it is a competitive urge that... can also, when taken to an extreme, entail feelings of hatred and envy.'²² If, as Newlyn suggests, there is a correspondence between the way an author reads the past and the way he or she expects to be read in the future, then a certain type of 'revisionary' writer might well imagine the reader's role as informed by envy and contentiousness.²³

Rather than considering, as others have already done, Jonson's imitation and transformation of past writers, I intend to focus on his perception and conception of his own audience.²⁴ While Jonson's own reading habits and his conception of his reader are necessarily associated, the aim in this book is to consider the nature of the reciprocal relationship between author and reader in which Jonson perceives the reader's role as being one dominated by invidiousness. As a direct result of this image of his audience and reader, Jonson's writings are marked by a *rhetoric of discontinuity* in which the creation and production of text is, in part, catalyzed by rupture in response to

²¹ *Ibid.*, pp. vii–viii.

²² Wayne A. Rebhorn, 'The Crisis of the Aristocracy in *Julius Caesar*', *Renaissance Quarterly* 43 (1990), 75–111. Also cited in Rona Goffen, *Renaissance Rivals: Michelangelo, Leonardo, Raphael, Titian* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002), p. 4. See G. W. Pigman III on the problematic association of *aemulatio* with 'envy, strife and contentiousness' in 'Versions of Imitation in the Renaissance', *Renaissance Quarterly* 33 (1980), 1–32; p. 24.

²³ In his essay on the 'Uncanny', Freud describes the device of projection specifically with reference to envy in a very similar manner: 'Whoever possesses something at once valuable and fragile is afraid of the envy of others, in that he projects onto them the envy he would have felt in their place.' Sigmund Freud, 'The Uncanny (1919)' in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, ed. James Strachey, 24 vols. (London: The Hogarth Press, 1955), vol. xvii, pp. 217–56; p. 240. Cited in Alan Dundee, 'Wet and Dry, the Evil Eye: An Essay in Indo-European and Semitic Worldview' in *Interpreting Folklore* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1980), pp. 93–133; p. 100.

²⁴ See, among others, Robert C. Evans, *Habits of Mind: Evidence and Effects of Ben Jonson's Reading* (Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 1995) and *Jonson, Lipsius and the Politics of Renaissance Stoicism* (Wakefield: Longwood Academic, 1992); A. W. Johnson, *Ben Jonson: Poetry and Architecture* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994); James Riddell and Stanley Stewart, *Jonson's Spenser: Evidence and Historical Criticism* (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1995).

the perceived appearance of an invidious gaze. The Jonsonian text is generated by and through a series of engagements with the spectator's and later, the reader's, imagined queries or objections. At times, these engagements take the form of strategies to 'ward off', 'avert', 'trick' or 'appease' that same gaze through the use of marginalia and other paratexts, but also through a momentary arresting of the flow of narrative to turn toward perceived and imaginary objections. In emphasizing an inherent discourse of almost ritual conflict I would like to note that I do not imagine a perfect, peaceful scenario of writing without this outside gaze. In other words, this eye is one which the writer must 'battle' and 'baffle', but at the same time it is a gaze that uncovers a lack that must be filled. As such, the envious spectator both presents a form of danger to the writer but also, paradoxically, serves as the source or engine of *copia*. In writing not just *against*, but in *response to* a judging spectator or reader (ready to uncover authorial weakness or spur the writer to emulative feats) envy emerges as a generative force. It is therefore an envious muse, withholding and inspiring at the same time.

The separation of the writing and reading selves within the paradigm of envy may be described as the division of the writing 'I' in conjunction with and in conflict with an envious 'eye'. Rather than a paradigm of 'usurpation' described by Georges Poulet and Maurice Blanchot in which the very integrity of the writing subject is placed into question, we find in Jonson's works evidence of a continuous oscillation between the 'I' or the 'we' of the writer and the source of oblivion, imagined as the curious and potentially malicious spectator or reader.²⁵ This 'I', it must be noted in advance, is not that of the historical writer, but rather the 'I' of his poetic voice. The marker, 'I', or some kind of reference to the writer of the text throughout the masque marginalia, for example, attests to the authorial consciousness of the existence of another person. At times this person is one with whom the writer can identify (a reader like himself), but, as we have seen in the problematic slipperiness of the idea of emulation, this other person can simultaneously become a curious and even potentially malicious reader to whom the writer must explain, justify or excuse himself. The masque marginalia is generated out of the oscillation between the authorial 'I' and a curious 'eye': 'This *Dame* I make to beare the person of *Ate*, or *Mischiefe* (for so I interpret it) out of Homer's description of her: *Iliad*.'²⁶ Or: 'There wants not inough, in nature, to authorize this part of our

²⁵ For her commentary on Poulet and Blanchot, see Newlyn, *Reading, Writing, and Romanticism*, pp. vii–viii.

²⁶ *The Masque of Queenes*, Herford and Simpson, vol. vii, p. 286 (line 95 n. n).

Introduction

9

fiction, in separating *Niger*, from the *Ocean*.²⁷ We will discover the extent to which this movement between author and imagined reader is generative of text, not just in the margins, but within the texts themselves.

'The design of the whole'

Twenty years ago, Stephen Greenblatt astutely urged critics to 'abjure' romantic ideas of solitary genius, motiveless art and transcendent representation: 'This book argues that works of art, however intensely marked by the creative intelligence and private obsessions of individuals, are the products of collective negotiation and exchange.'²⁸ At the present critical moment we are not so much in danger of losing sight of the material and social forces which shape literary works as we are in danger of losing sight of the textual traces of the phantasmagoria of the individual or individuals who wrote them. While the present study seeks to distance itself from a literary-biographical reading of Jonson and envy, it will aim to recuperate the way the text is indeed marked by 'the creative intelligence and private obsessions' of an author. These traces can best be distinguished in examinations of a whole *œuvre*. Yet, many scholars of Jonson limit themselves to a particular genre or period of Jonson's work. This, of course, is a natural enough impulse as well as, often, an editorial necessity. Indeed, one of the positive legacies of Foucault's questioning of what an author is has been a useful interrogation of our assumptions about the *nature* of authorship and *what* even constitutes the authorial *œuvre*: does it consist of the works the author has published himself, his drafts (*brouillons*), his notes, the appointments written in the margin of his notebook (*cahier*) or even the odd laundry list?²⁹ Yet, Foucault's important interrogations, as well as a renewal of interest in the material circumstances of the production of literary works, including performance, have both had the side-effect of contributing to the fragmentation of Jonson's corpus. Jonson's works increasingly figure in thematic studies for the purpose of illuminating a socio-historical trend to which they can lend an appropriate quotation. He has become the subject for a chapter in a book on the early modern period rather than a viable

²⁷ *The Masque of Blacknesse*, Herford and Simpson, vol. vii, p. 172 (line 118 n. 1).

²⁸ Stephen Greenblatt, *Shakespearean Negotiations: The Circulation of Social Energy in Renaissance England* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988), p. vii. For his list of 'abjurations' to literary critics, see p. 12.

²⁹ Michel Foucault, 'Qu'est-ce qu'un auteur?' in Arnold I. Davidson and Frédéric Gros (eds.), *Philosophie: Anthologie* (Paris: Gallimard, 2004), pp. 290–318; pp. 295–6. For a version in English: 'What is an Author?' in Josue Harari (ed.), *Textual Strategies: Perspectives in Post-Structuralist Criticism* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1979).

subject as an author of a distinct, complex and interrelated body of work. Monographs dedicated to themes and subjects which traverse the poems, masques and plays have been increasingly rare in the growing specialization of both Jonson and early modern studies, although there are some notable exceptions.³⁰

It is this kind of fragmentation and specialization that T. S. Eliot inveighed against in his conception of how to read Ben Jonson. It was Eliot who reawakened interest in Jonson in the twentieth century in his short essay, 'Ben Jonson', in *Elizabethan Dramatists*. He attempted to find a new perspective on the author who had the misfortune to have been 'damned by the praise that quenches all desire to read the book; to be afflicted by the imputation of the virtues which excited the least pleasure'.³¹ He was convinced that to understand Jonson truly, more classical scholarship or historical understanding of the period was *not* what was required of Jonson's readers:

his poetry is of the surface. Poetry of the surface cannot be understood without study; for to deal with the surface of life, as Jonson dealt with it, is to deal so deliberately that we too must be deliberate, in order to understand ... The immediate appeal of Jonson is to the mind; his emotional tone is not in the single verse, but in *the design of the whole*. But not many people are capable of discovering for

³⁰ Without doubt, the new *Cambridge Edition of the Works of Ben Jonson*, edited by David Bevington, Martin Butler and Ian Donaldson will go a long way to remedying this situation. Once the entirety of Jonson's production is easily available in a modern and digitally word searchable format, considerations of Jonson's work across genres will inevitably multiply. Literary biographies tend naturally to cut across generic lines and traverse periods: Marchette Chute, *Ben Jonson of Westminster* (New York: E. P. Dutton and Co., 1953), Rosalind Miles, *Ben Jonson: His Life and Work* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1986), David Riggs, *Ben Jonson: A Life* (Harvard: Harvard University Press, 1989) and W. David Kay, *Ben Jonson: A Literary Life* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1995). In non-biographical studies of Jonson's works, both Katharine Eisaman Maus and Bruce Thomas Boehrer, for example, have cut across generic divisions and, in the case of Maus, dealt with Jonson's *œuvre* in its quasi-entirety. See Maus, *Ben Jonson and the Roman Frame of Mind* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984) and Boehrer, *The Fury of Men's Gullets*. Recently, Tom Lockwood in *Ben Jonson in the Romantic Age* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005) has examined the reception of Jonson's works in the nineteenth century. Other studies which have traversed generic boundaries in the study of Jonson are: Alexander Leggatt, *Ben Jonson: His Vision and His Art* (London: Methuen, 1981), Jongsook Lee, *Ben Jonson's Poetics: A Literary Dialectic of Ideal History* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1983) and Michael McCandles, *Jonsonian Discriminations: The Humanist Poet and the Praise of True Nobility* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992). Robert C. Evans in *Ben Jonson and the Politics of Patronage* (Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 1989) goes so far as to defend his decision to focus almost exclusively on Jonson's poems by noting the relative lack of scholarship on the poems: 'the dramas and entertainments have been the object of some of the richest and most provocative criticism devoted to Jonson over the last several decades, whereas the poems have only recently begun to attract the same kind of intensely sustained scrutiny'. He notes that to have ignored the masques and plays completely from his discussion of the poems 'would have opened me – and rightly so – to charges of neglecting crucial aspects of [Jonson's] life and art' (pp. 10–11).

³¹ T. S. Eliot, 'Ben Jonson', *Elizabethan Dramatists* (London: Faber and Faber Ltd., 1963 [1934]), pp. 67–82; p. 67.