# IN CHANGÈD SHAPES: THE TWO JONSONS' *VOLPONE* AND TEXTUAL EDITING

Karen Pirnie

The complexity of textual editing of Shakespeare's work has become visible to non-editing scholars in recent years thanks to the theoretical writings of scholars like Randall McLeod [Random Cloud], Peter Stallybrass, Margreta de Grazia, and Gary Taylor. Less attention has been paid to Ben Jonson's work, perhaps because he "authorized" himself with the 1616 Folio edition of his *Works*, including poetry and drama. Early Jonson editors C. H. Herford, Percy Simpson, and Evelyn Simpson opted to use the spelling and punctuation of the 1616 Folio, and most subsequent editors have followed their lead. Textual problems in Jonson's work may appear minimal, making this choice acceptable, since his changes between quarto (when it existed) and folio are mainly in accidents—spelling and punctuation—rather than wording.[1] One speech, however, from the attempted rape scene in *Volpone*, illustrates both the effect of Jonson's attention to punctuation and the challenges it presents to editors. The various editorial uses and abuses of the hapless Celia demonstrate the need for a new edition of Jonson's work,[2] one that presents Jonson's own editorial processes and allows readers to grapple with the choices Jonson made in 1616 as he transformed his plays into texts and himself into an author.[3]

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[1] Since, as Randall McLeod has pointed out, typographic considerations often influenced spelling, the quarto-to-folio changes most reliably attributable to Jonson are those involving punctuation. Kevin Donovan agrees: "Where multiple authorities exist for a text, a modern editor will choose his copy-text on the basis of accidentals, freely introducing authoritative substantive revisions from other texts." "Jonson's Texts in the First Folio," in *Ben Jonson's 1616 Folio*, ed. Jennifer Brady and W. H. Herendeen (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1991), 26.

[2] This issue was proposed and discussed by Ian Donaldson, Martin Butler, and others at the Ben Jonson Conference at the University of Leeds in July, 1995.

[3] Although beyond the scope of this paper, the issues raised by de Grazia and Stallybrass in their 1993 article, "The Materiality of the Shakespeare Text," *Shakespeare Quarterly* 44 (1993): 255–83, concerning the identity of texts, word forms, characters, and authors also apply to Jonson's work.

At the climax of act 3, Celia utters her longest speech of the play, 21 lines. After having listened to Volpone's seductive song (which Jonson liked so much that he adapted it for a second appearance in the folio as part of *The Forrest*), Celia responds with a Jonsonian complex of ironic humor, stoic philosophy, and Christian orthodoxy demonstrating her wit as well as her self-control even in this critical situation. In the 1607 Quarto, this speech is punctuated with a series of dashes (see fig. 1). When Jonson revised the play for publication in the folio *Works*, he changed the dashes to semicolons, colons, and commas (see fig. 2), demonstrating his own control over the text in this—for him—critical transition from playscript to fixed literary text.

Herford and Simpson choose in general to follow what they call "the authoritative Folio of 1616"[4] for their edition of the play, including this speech. In their introduction to the text, however, they seem dismayed at the "cold, logical punctuation" Jonson added to this speech in his editing for the Folio. Although aware that "he worked minutely over the punctuation, recasting it systematically, especially in the longer speeches,"[5] Herford and Simpson seem to prefer the Quarto's suggestion of "hurried delivery" punctuated mainly by dashes for what they call "Celia's cry of agony when she flings herself at Volpone's feet and implores him to spare her."[6] They reprint part of the Quarto version admiringly:

> If you haue ears, that will be pierc'd—or eyes,
> That can be open'd—a heart, may be touch'd—
> Or any part, that yet sounds *man*, about you—
> If you haue touch of holy *Saints*—or *Heauen*—
> Do mee the grace, to let me scape—if not,
> Be bountifull, and kill mee—you do knowe,
> I am a creature, hether ill betrayed. (Q 3.7.240–6)

[4] Ben Jonson, *Ben Jonson*, ed. C. H. Herford, Percy Simpson, and Evelyn Simpson (Oxford: Clarenden, 1925–52), 5:xv. Unless otherwise noted, references to specific works will be from this edition, abbreviated H&S, with volume and line numbers indicated. Quotations from Volpone will indicate whether from the Quarto (Q) or Folio (F) with the line numbers.

[5] Ibid., 5:8.

[6] Ibid.

CEL. If you haue eares, that will be pierc'd— or eyes,
That can be open'd— a heart, may be touch'd—
Or any part, that yet ſounds *man*, about you—
If you haue touch of holy *Saints*—or *Heauen*—
Do mee the grace, to let me ſcape—if not,
Be bountifull, and kill mee—you do knowe,
I am a creature, hether ill betrayd,
By one, whoſe ſhame I would forget it were—
If you will daigne mee neither of theſe graces,
Yet feede your wrath, Sir, rather then your luſt—
(It is a vice, comes nearer manlineſſe-)
And puniſh that vnhappy crime of nature,
Which you miſcall my beauty--Flea my face,
Or poiſon it, with oyntments, for ſeducing
Your bloud to this rebellion —Rub theſe hands,
With what may cauſe an eating leproſie,
H 3[4]
E'ene to my bones, and marrow— Any thing,
That may diſ-fauour mee, ſaue in my honour.-
And I will kneele to you, 'pray for you, pay downe
A thouſand howrely vowes, Sir, for your health—
Report, and thinke you vertuous— VOLP. Thinke me cold,
Froſen, and impotent, and ſo report me?
That I had *Neſtor's hermia*, thou wouldſt thinke.
I do degenerate, and abuſe my *Nation*,
To play with oportunity, thus long:
I ſhould haue done the act, and then haue parlee'd.
Yeeld, or Ile force thee. CEL. O, iuſt God. VOLP. In vaine-
BON. Forbeare, foule rauiſher, libidinous ſwine,
Free the forc'd lady, or thou dy'ſt, Impoſtor.
But that I am loath to ſnatch thy puniſhment
Out of the hand of *Iuſtice*, thou ſhouldſt, yet,
Be made the timely ſacrifice of vengeance,
Before this *Altar*, and this droſſe, thy *Idoll*.
Lady, lets quit the place, it is the den
Of villany; feare nought you haue a guard:
And he, ere long, ſhall meete his iuſt reward.
VOLP. Fall on mee, roofe, and bury mee in ruine,
Become my graue, that were my ſhelter. O,
I am vn-maſqu'd, vn-ſpirited, vn-done,
Betray'd to beggary, to infamy—

1. 1607 Quarto. Repr. from Ben Jonson, *Volpone or The Foxe*, printed for Thomas Thorpe, 1607 (Ann Arbor: University Microfilms).

CEL. If you haue eares that will be pierc'd; or eyes,
That can be open'd; a heart, may be touch'd;
Or any part, that yet ſounds man, about you:
If you haue touch of holy ſaints, or heauen,
Do me the grace, to let me ſcape. If not,
Be bountifull, and kill me. You doe know,
I am a creature, hither ill betrayd,
By one, whoſe ſhame I would forget it were,
If you will daigne me neither of theſe graces,
Yet feed your wrath, ſir, rather then your luſt;
(It is a vice, comes neerer manlineſſe)
And puniſh that vnhappy crime of nature,
Which you miſcal my beauty: flay my face,
Or poiſon it, with oyntments, for ſeducing
Your bloud to this rebellion. Rub theſe hands,
With what may cauſe an eating leproſie,
E'ene to my bones, and marrow: any thing,
That may disfauour me, ſaue in my honour.
And I will kneele to you, pray for you, pay downe
A thouſand hourely vowes, ſir, for your health,
Report, and thinke you vertuous——— VOLP. Think me cold,
Froſen, and impotent, and ſo report me?
That I had NESTOR'S *hernia*, thou wouldſt thinke.
I doe degenerate, and abuſe my nation,
To play with oportunity, thus long:
I ſhould haue done the act, and then haue parlee'd.
Yeeld, or Ile force thee. CEL. O! iuſt God. VOLP. In vaine——
BON. Forbeare, foule rauiſher, libidinous ſwine,
Free the forc'd lady, or thou dy'ſt, impoſtor.
But that I am loth to ſnatch thy puniſhment
Out of the hand of iuſtice, thou ſhouldſt, yet,
Be made the timely ſacrifice of vengeance,
Before this altar, and this droſſe, thy idoll.
Lady, let's quit the place, it is the den
Of villany; feare nought, you haue a guard:
And he, ere long, ſhall meet his iuſt reward.
VOLP. Fall on me, roofe, and bury me in ruine,
Become my grauе, that wert my ſhelter. O!
I am vn-maſqu'd, vn-ſpirited, vn-done,
Betray'd to beggery, to infamy———

2. 1616 Folio. Repr. from Ben Jonson, *The Workes of Benjamin Jonson*, imprinted at London by Will Stansby, 1616 (Ann Arbor: University Microfilms).

In contrast, Jonson's Folio of 1616 does not suggest that Celia "fling" herself at all; pauses where Jonson added semicolons, commas, and a colon do, indeed, change the effect of this speech, as Celia pauses to think before she speaks:

> If you haue eares that will be pierc'd; or eyes,
> That can be open'd; a heart, may be touch'd;
> Or any part, that yet sounds man, about you:
> If you haue touch of holy saints, or heauen,
> Do me the grace, to let me scape. If not,
> Be bountifull, and kill me. You doe know,
> I am a creature, hither ill betrayd,... (F 3.7.240–6)

This textual "cold logic" seems to be exactly the element of Celia's character (and, with it, his own) that Jonson intended us to see and hear. Such care in her speech gives added reasoning to Celia's character, as well as added resonance to the religious terms she uses. Where the Quarto's dashes isolate phrases, the Folio's punctuation clarifies the series of subordinate conditional clauses, and with them Celia's double entendre questioning of Volpone's male "parts." Her logic is Jonson's, essential to her role as the moral center of the play.

In contrast, although Jonson's 1616 changes in other characters' speeches are not as densely numerous as in this one of Celia's, there is a definite trend toward making the characters appear more emotional (and thus less rational) by exchanging commas for exclamation points. Volpone's opening paean to gold includes two such changes (F 1.1.25, 26), and in the seduction scene Jonson removed commas, and with them thoughtful pauses, from Volpone's speeches (F 3.7.146, 198, 226). Mosca's celebration of himself in the beginning of act 3 includes one new exclamation (F 3.1.29). Lady Would-be's speeches exhibit a similar pattern of quarto commas changed to exclamation points in the Folio (F 3.4.22, 35, 85, 96). In his *English Grammar*, Jonson himself defines the exclamation point as an indicator of "admiration" to replace the period at the end of a sentence.[7] The wonder, astonishment, or surprise (from the *OED* definition) this change in punctuation contributes to Volpone, Mosca, and Lady Would-be only make these characters appear that much less thoughtful.

Modern editions seem to compromise somewhat in their estimation of Celia's delivery, omitting some of Jonson's Folio punctuation

[7] H&S 8:553.

from her act 3 speech. The Yale edition omits many of Jonson's commas, replacing semicolons with commas and the colon with a semicolon:

> If you have ears that will be pierced, or eyes
> That can be opened, a heart may be touched,
> Or any part that yet sounds man about you;
> If you have touch of holy saints, or heaven,
> Do me the grace to let me 'scape. (240–4)[8]

The Norton version retains Jonson's semicolons, but leaves out commas and changes the colon to a semicolon ending line 242:

> If you have ears that will be pierced; or eyes
> That can be opened; a heart may be touched;
> Or any part that yet sounds man about you;
> If you have touch of holy saints or heaven,
> Do me the grace to let me 'scape. (240–4)[9]

The Oxford Authors edition of *Volpone* comes closest to Jonson's Folio, omitting only two of his commas:

> If you have ears that will be pierced; or eyes
> That can be opened; a heart, may be touched;
> Or any part, that yet sounds man, about you:
> If you have touch of holy saints, or heaven,
> Do me the grace to let me 'scape. (240–4)[10]

The effect of editorial modernization is thus often to present a Celia closer to Herford and Simpson's ideal, a Celia less "cold" and "logical" than Jonson wanted her to be.

The remainder of this long speech goes even further to establish Celia's role as the spokesperson for Jonson's ideal virtue, first by expressing overt moral instruction, and then by making her sound very much like a nun. After referring to her degenerate husband ("whose shame I would forget it were"), Celia suggests to Volpone, in another conditional sentence,

> If you will daigne me neither of these graces,
> Yet feed your wrath, sir, rather then your lust;
> (It is a vice, comes neerer manlinesse)

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[8] Alvin Kernan, ed., *Ben Jonson: Volpone* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1962).
[9] Adams, Robert M., ed., *Ben Jonson's Plays and Masques* (New York: Norton, 1979).
[10] Ian Donaldson, ed., *Ben Jonson* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985).

> And punish that vnhappy crime of nature,
> Which you miscal my beauty: ... (F 248–52)

Jonson's parentheses, retained by the Norton edition (edited by Robert M. Adams) but omitted from the Yale (edited by Alvin Kernan) and Oxford (edited by Ian Donaldson) editions, suggest that the second sly allusion to virility in the word "manlinesse" might be staged as an aside to the audience, reinforcing the impression of a witty mind controlled enough to make jokes while in danger. The literal meaning of Celia's words conveys an important Renaissance moral distinction: anger (or wrath) is a sin of the mind, more fully human than the physical sin of lust committed by Volpone because it signifies the failure of reason. Celia, of course, is the only character besides the author who understands this spiritually vital distinction.

More specifically, Celia, like the medieval nuns discussed by Jane Schulenberg,[11] invites Volpone to

> ...flay my face,
> Or poison it, with oyntments, for seducing
> Your bloud to this rebellion. Rub these hands,
> With what may cause an eating leprosie,
> E'ene to my bones, and marrow: any thing,
> That may disfauour me, saue in my honour. (F 252–7)

Regardless of whether or not the audience is aware that mutilation was a defense against rape utilized by nuns, Celia's offer of prayers in gratitude for such treatment certainly sounds like the services offered by cloistered nuns:

> And I will kneele to you, pray for you, pay downe
> A thousand hourely vowes, sir, for your health,
> Report, and thinke you vertuous— (F 258–60)

This parallel between Celia and nuns eliminates the normal Renaissance suspicion of a talkative woman's chastity, at least for Jonson, still a Catholic in 1607. Jonson has been able to allow a female character to voice his own moral standard without compromising her in light of the repressive patriarchal social standards of his day.

In the folio *Works*, then, Jonson created a body and a voice for himself. Celia's wit and self-control in the Folio parallel the wit and

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[11] Jane Tibbets Schulenberg, "The Heroics of Virginity: Brides of Christ and Sacrificial Mutilation," in *Women in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance*, ed. Mary Beth Rose (Syracuse: Syracuse Univeristy Press, 1986), 29–72.

control Jonson exerted over the corpus of his texts in publishing the Folio. But what has happened to the frightened ingénue Celia of the Quarto, whose halting phrases were abruptly ravished by thrusting male dashes? Jonson seems to have killed her off in promoting his self-crowning Folio publication, but some editorial approaches do not let him get away with this murder. Instead, they resuscitate her, breathing life back into the frantic victim, in an attempt to reunite the 1607 Jonson with his 1616 twin into a monovocal composite.

In 1983, R. B. Parker used Quarto dashes in Celia's speech for his Revels edition of Volpone, explaining that his basic copy-text is "the 1616 folio text, with 1607 quarto readings occasionally preferred."[12] The series founding editor's goal in 1958 "to apply to Shakespeare's predecessors, contemporaries and successors the methods that are now used in Shakespeare editing"[13] evidently referred to what is now called Greg-Bowers eclecticism. Parker notes accurately that "Q's punctuation of this speech with dashes suggests Celia's breathless panic";[14] based on this judgement, he grafts Quarto punctuation into this part of Jonson's Folio text, repairing the damage done by Jonson's 1616 evil twin.

Parker's procedure seems to be a holdover from the period covering the late 1940s to about 1970, when textual editing was dominated (albeit with some dissenters) by W. W. Greg's notion of eclectic editing, in which the editor combines elements from different copy-texts, such as punctuation (accidents) from a holograph manuscript, and word choices (substantives) from a later printed version, to construct a single text that expresses the editor's version of authorial intent.[15] Greg's single-text, eclectic editing theory was not accepted by all editors, even early in the period. More significantly for Jonson scholars, Greg himself opted out of the problem of variant printed texts by choosing Jonson's Folio over the Quarto (for plays), approving of Percy Simpson's decision to use the Folio as copy-text for his edition of Jonson's Works.[16] Fredson Bowers later called this

[12] R. B. Parker, ed., *Volpone, or The Fox*, by Ben Jonson (Manchester University Press, 1983), 7.

[13] Ibid., vii.

[14] Ibid., 212 n.

[15] Summarized by D. C. Greetham in *Textual Scholarship: An Introduction* (New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1992), 334.

[16] Fredson Bowers, whose name is linked with Greg's as part of the "Greg-Bowers" school of editing, explains both Greg's original essay and its problems in his 1978 paper "Greg's 'Rationale of Copy-Text' Revisited," *Studies in Bibliography* 31 (1978): 90–161.

decision an "expedient" choice "likely to mislead a reader."[17] Herford and Simpson had begun their work long before Greg's eclectic theory of editing was published; otherwise, they might well have retained Celia's breathless dashes. Since they, like Greg later, thought Jonson had exercised great control over the Folio's printing, they assumed that it represented the text intended by the author. Nevertheless, enthusiastic followers of Greg have continued to improve on Herford and Simpson's—and Jonson's—choice of copy-text where Celia is concerned.[18]

Even more eclectic is a 1978 edition, in which John W. Creaser replaces the dashes with ellipses.[19] Creaser justifies this mélange of 1607 and 1616 texts by claiming that the "'dramatic' punctuation is confirmed by a stage direction,"[20] although Jonson's only proximate stage direction describes Bonario as "He leapes out from where Mosca had plac'd him" (F 3.7.267 s.d.). Perhaps Creaser refers to his own direction "[Haltingly]" before Celia's speech (F 3.7.240 s.d.). Creaser explains his editorial rationale in his lengthy introduction, but readers of the text see only the unified final product of his compromise between Quarto and Folio.

Since about 1970, textual editors have been redefining the terms Greg used to justify his eclectic creation. D. C. Greetham, in his introduction to textual scholarship, says that eclectic editing "was virtually co-terminous with...the New Criticism, with its similar endorsement of the singular 'text itself,'"[21] and a theoretical shift coincided with the advent of post-structuralism in Anglo-American

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[17] Ibid., 110.

[18] They seem also to be improving on Greg's original notion. Although eclectic editing is now commonly associated with determining authorial intent, in his Inaugural Address to the Bibliographical Society in 1932, Greg called "books and manuscripts...material objects only...'pieces of paper or parchment covered with certain written or printed signs. With these signs [the editor] is concerned merely as arbitrary marks; their meaning is no business of his'" (quoted by James Thorpe, *Principles of Textual Criticism* [San Marino, California: The Huntington Library, 1972], 61–2). Greg himself, however, later combined art with science in his own editing work, according to Thorpe (62). Margreta de Grazia discusses this search for authenticity in her article "The Essential Shakespeare and the Material Book," *Textual Practice* 2 (1988): 69–86.

[19] John W. Creaser, ed., *Volpone, or The Fox*, by Ben Jonson (New York: New York University Press, 1978).

[20] Ibid., 61.

[21] Greetham, 341.

academia. Indeed, beginning in 1969, Michel Foucault and Roland Barthes redefined "text" and "author," rendering "intent" irrelevant.[22]

Even very conservative textual editors have redirected the notion of "intent" from the meaning of words to the words themselves. Any editorial effort to determine an author's meaning is no longer considered valid, but many editors would still seem to agree with James Thorpe that "the ideal of textual criticism is to present the text which the author intended."[23] This ostensibly new editorial theory, of course, still presupposes a stable author and text, what de Grazia has called the "enabling figment of the bibliographic and critical imagination."[24] Thorpe seems to refer to this "figment" when he asserts, "While the author cannot dictate the meaning of the text, he certainly has the final authority over which words constitute the text of his literary work."[25] Editorial options, according to this text-based approach, should be limited to determining what "marks" the author wanted on the page. When an editor makes the unavoidable aesthetic choices, such as diction or, one supposes, whether a character appears frantic or serene, the work in question can no longer be considered the product of one man's art.[26] Conservative editors still aim at authorial intent, but have moved the target slightly.

The much less conservative and more contemporary Random Cloud [Randall McLeod] says the same thing: "But if Taste usurps Art, it becomes a Negation, Artifice becomes Artofficial, and Ideology covers Reality."[27] But when Jonson becomes an editor and revises a stage script into a printed text, which is artifice and which is ideology? The actors' working scripts, or foul sheets, maintain their potential for subversion, while the writer's printed sheets are regis-

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[22] See Roland Barthes, "The Death of the Author," in *Image-Music-Text*, trans. Stephen Heath (New York: Hill and Wang, 1977), 142–8; and Michel Foucault, "What is an Author?" (1969) in *The Critical Tradition: Classic Texts and Contemporary Trends*, ed. David H. Richter (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1989), 978–88.

[23] Thorpe, 50.

[24] Margreta de Grazia, "The Essential Shakespeare and the Material Book," *Textual Practice* 2 (1988): 71. De Grazia traces the chronological development of editorial theories fully in her book *Shakespeare Verbatim: The Reproduction of Authenticity and the 1790 Apparatus* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991).

[25] Thorpe, 10.

[26] Perhaps because their project itself depends on an implicit acceptance of the stability of some text, editors still have not answered Foucault's question "What is a work?" (979).

[27] Random Cloud [Randall McLeod], "The Marriage of Good and Bad Quartos," *Shakespeare Quarterly* 33 (1982): 431.

tered with the official Stationer's Company. Jonson himself (like Greg and Thorpe) redefines his terms and priorities to promote his career, actually "suppressing the theatrical production," in the words of Stephen Orgel.[28] His English Grammar is, according to the title page, based "on his observation of the English language now spoken and in use,"[29] privileging speech over writing. Even the title page of the 1616 Folio Volpone says that the play was "Acted in the yeere 1605. By the K. Maiesties Servants,"[30] acknowledging prior oral transmission of this text. In poems and in the process of publishing the plays, however, Jonson privileges readers over audiences, positing writing as the fixed, controlled medium for expressing his own ideas. So perhaps Jonson's work is always already "Artofficial"; in that case, is modern editing redundant?

Such rhetorical questions are annoying but unavoidable when considering Jonson's plays. Unlike Shakespeare's plays, whose author apparently abandoned them at birth, Jonson's best known plays returned home to live with Dad as adults. The problem, of course, is that Jonson himself published or oversaw publication of (at least) two versions of Volpone; editors and readers tend to feel they must decide which one to read. In 1972, Thorpe defined this problem in terms of text: "he has in fact written separate works, among which there is no simple way to choose the best."[31] Thorpe still assumes that one must choose, but it seems time to come up with a new question.

Gary Taylor casts the problem of multiple authorized editions differently, concluding that "each version establishes, in effect, a different 'author.'"[32] Thorpe's simple prescription for editors seeking to maintain "the integrity of the work of art" by determining "those intentions which are the author's, together with those others of which he approves or in which he acquiesces"[33] becomes meaningless when author's is authors' and he is (or they are) the "others."

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[28] Stephen Orgel, "What is a Text?" in *Staging the Renaissance: Reinterpretations of Elizabethan and Jacobean Drama*, ed. David Scott Kastan and Peter Stallybrass (New York: Routledge, 1991), 84.

[29] H&S 8:463.

[30] H&S 5:11.

[31] Thorpe, 48.

[32] Gary Taylor, "The Rhetoric of Textual Criticism," *Text: Transactions of the Society for Textual Scholarship* 4 (1988): 40.

[33] Thorpe, 31.

Volpone is an especially useful place to start dealing with these new questions, as it illustrates their potential significance to critics. Don Wayne situates the 1606 theatrical production of Volpone as a turning point in Jonson's perception of himself and his society.[34] After 1606, according to Wayne, Jonson

> begins to show signs of a disturbed awareness that his own identity as poet and playwright—and therefore his personal transcendence of the still rigid social hierarchy in which he lived and wrote—depended on the same emerging structure of social relationships that he satirized in his plays.[35]

Wayne says that the later plays "lack the moral attitude" of *Volpone*, suggesting that this indicates increasing shakiness in Jonson's confidence in his own moral authority as playwright. What, then, are we to make of *Volpone* as Jonson revised it in 1616? This is not a simple question for new historicists, nor for editors. Celia's "rational" punctuation seems to shore up Jonson's moral authority, but at the same time that very punctuation emphasizes the contractual nature of her conditional clauses: if this is the case, let me go; if not, carry out this sentence; if you do, I'll pay you with prayers. Although, as Wayne points out, the contract in the 1614 *Bartholomew Fair* is "a satiric device" exposing the arbitrary basis of contract law,[36] in the 1616 edition of *Volpone*, a similar logical obligation is evidently enforced by divine authority, maintaining the related authorities of king and poet. Reading *Volpone* as a new play created in 1616 thus complicates readings of other plays written after 1606.

So the 1607 Jonson and the 1616 Jonson collaborated on the Volpones we have today, and "an editor must decide whether he wants to preserve the work of both authors or prefers only one."[37] Another question arises with Richard Newton's observation that Jonson was both poet and his own editor when he included Volpone's song "To Celia" in The Forrest, part of the 1616 Folio along with Volpone, which of course he edited as well, from the 1607

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[34] Don E. Wayne, "Drama and Society in the Age of Jonson: Shifting Grounds of Authority and Judgement in Three Major Comedies," in *Renaissance Drama as Cultural History: Essays from Renaissance Drama 1977–1987*, ed. Mary Beth Rose (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1990), 3–29.

[35] Ibid., 7.

[36] Ibid., 18–9.

[37] Taylor, 41.

Quarto.[38] Now a twentieth-century textual editor of Volpone has two authors and an editor to deal with: Jonson does indeed seem to be "collaborating with himself over time, a committee of one," as de Grazia and Stallybrass describe one conception of Shakespeare.[39] The point here is that Jonson's lively, interactive texts offer editorial challenges as complex as those attributed to Shakespeare.

With the dense punctuation changes, Celia's twenty lines make the complexities of editing Jonson's voluminous Works clearly visible. Cloud's solution for Shakespeare scholars is to present both versions, giving the reader not only the text but also some awareness of the process of writing:

> If both versions were retained, the benefits for the reader would be more than commensurate with the difficulty of having to read 'what Shakespeare wrote,' for the reader would thereby gain some access to the problematic of his art.[40]

As Cloud points out convincingly, a singular edited version, whether an eclectic composite or a transcription of one of the author's various texts, presents itself as a coherent entity. Whether in textual notes, appendices, or prefatory rationales provided by the editor, the variants will be seen by the reader in fragmentary form: "Chopped into messes, a bad quarto seems only a series of disconnected one-line boners, never a coherent dramatic shape."[41] Noting that readers have been content for centuries with the two accounts of Creation in Genesis and the four accounts of Christ's life in the Gospels, Cloud proposes "the *infinitive* text...a polymorphous set of all versions."[42] Exactly how this all-inclusive text would be printed, Cloud leaves undefined, but the concept should inform a new edition of Jonson's writing.[43]

Department of English
University of Alabama

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[38] Richard C. Newton, "Making Books from Leaves: Poets Become Editors," in *Print and Culture in the Renaissance: Essays on the Advent of Printing in Europe*, ed. Gerald P. Tyson and Sylvia S. Wagonheim (London and Toronto: Associated University Press, 1986), 246–64.

[39] De Grazia and Stallybrass, 279.

[40] Cloud, 427.

[41] Ibid., 422.

[42] Ibid.

[43] I am most grateful to Gary Taylor, Robert C. Evans, and Bruce Boehrer for their helpful suggestions and reading of earlier versions of this paper.