

## BEN JONSON'S *EVERY MAN OUT OF HIS HUMOUR* A member of the First Folio family

It is a commonplace of Baconian scholarship that Ben Jonson was overseer of his *atelier*, and principal of his “good pens”. Certainly, *Every Man Out Of His Humour* gives evidence of his deepest familiarity with the personal history of William Shakespeare, and shows his mastery of the allegoric techniques of the First Folio and apocryphal plays. *EMOH* is in fact, like them, a strict and closely wrought allegory of the redemption of Shakespeare from the Puritan night through the ministry of Sir Francis Bacon and the Gnostic tradition. Here we meet again old friends such as the horse-and-rider as symbol of the libido in action, as sourced by Bacon from Socrates’ famous metaphor in Plato’s *Phaedrus*; drunkenness, as dissolution in libido; the boar, as the libido in negative aspect which, irrupting the Puritan ego-in-denial, precipitates the breakdown (referring to the *coup* which befell Shakespeare in 1587); the bill or letter as the broader written word; “I” for the expected “Ay” (liberally used), as signifying the ithyphallos-libido, or broader invisible world or underworld, that realm which lies unseen below the surface of things, intellectual engagement with which was the central pillar of Bacon’s philosophy (as with the modern scientist, artist, or depth psychologist: and Bacon was godfather to them all); and so on.

The allegory of many a Shakespearean play, canonical or otherwise, is built up around the skeleton of a pre-existing historical chronicle. Fascinatingly, the bones of the *EMOH* allegory were provided by a contemporary event, the acquisition by Shakespeare of a family coat-of-Arms in 1599. That Sogliardo’s similar ennoblement may refer to this might be thought spurious, were it not for the explicit mention of his motto as the amusing ‘Not without mustard’, Shakespeare’s being ‘*Non sans droit*’, ‘Not without right’. Sogliardo as gentleman represents Shakespeare as Puritan *aet.* 15-23. It was the admirable Sir Edwin Durning-Lawrence, in his *Bacon is Shakespeare* (New York, 1910) who first located the roots of *EMOH* in this episode; but he mistook the bitter venom directed against Sogliardo to mirror Jonson’s putative contempt for Shakespeare as an illiterate hick: whereas it is in truth an expression of the revulsion felt by the whole Baconian circle towards Puritanism. Just so does Harold Bloom (*Shakespeare and the Invention of the Human*) cavil at the treatment of Shylock, who is in fact yet another in a long line of Puritan figures in the plays, and is despised by the author for this (allegoric) reason, rather than his (literal) race. Jonson’s affection toward Shakespeare is a staple of scholarship; and *EMOH* gives us no reason to doubt it.

Let us look closely at the main characters.

**1) Asper** With his vehemence, fearlessness in exposing “publicke vice[s]”, high philosophising (scientific and otherwise), and so on, he is a beautiful characterisation of Sir Francis Bacon. He appears under this name only in the prologue, but plays a key role in the play to come as

**2) Macilente** - the identification being made by his ‘...as I was Asper at the first’ (V, xi, 76). The name is formed from the Italian *macilento*, ‘emaciated’, ‘thin’; and we recall the ‘lean and hungry’ Cassius in *Julius Caesar*, who bears the value of the visual imagination, the primacy of which for the acquisition of Gnostic nobility is continually stressed throughout FF (this is the point of the numerous

Watches, torches, and flares, as well as the recurring character of Michael). The clean lines of his body mirror the hard-edged forms of the imagination, in contrast to the belly of Falstaff, who represents the blind libido. It is Macilente who will drive 'every man out of his humour', i.e. redeem the Puritan ego from its hell.

**3) Sogliardo** Durning-Lawrence translated his name as 'excrement'. I have not been able to confirm this; but if he is right, it would be utterly consistent with Jonson's contempt for the Puritan world-view. This is reinforced by the inane musings of the superficially learned Clove and Orange in Act III, as Sogliardo goes about acquiring his Arms. Further, his crest is a headless boar, '...without braine, wit, anything indeed, ramping toward gentility'. This association of the Puritan with the Boar, instanced first in *Venus and Adonis*, is a constant feature of FF: for the suppressed libido, as anathematised by Puritanism, will remain latent in the subconscious, malignant with Freudian potentiality, primed and ready to charge and plunge the ego into crisis.

**4) Fastidius Briske** The unseen world as misconceived by Puritanism. His frequent changes into new suits of clothes, and affectation of the manners of the Court, reflects the superficiality of the Puritan world-view. In stark contrast we have Petruchio ("church killer"), who in *The Taming of the Shrew* goes to his marriage with Kate Minola, a typical Queen of Hell-Grail Queen, in rags. Fastidius is in truth not accepted but ignored by the Court ladies, first among whom is

**5) Madonna Saviolina** - whose name is based on the Italian *savio*, 'wise'. She is honoured in the Gnostic tradition as Sophia, Goddess of Wisdom. It is constantly emphasised throughout FF that the Holy Grail of the hero's (Shakespeare's) questing is the wisdom based on knowledge of the unseen world, as described in the written word; and Saviolina is cognate with Portia, Cordelia, Imogen, and all the other Queens of Hell-Grail Queens in FF. Her first name signifies that she is "Mother of Christ".

**6) Fungoso** Jonson duplicates the Fastidius principle in this character. His name is formed from the Italian *fungo*, "mushroom"; and we find in I, ii, 162: '...these mushroom gentlemen,/That shoot up in a night to place, and worship'. The Fungoso/Fastidius principle is the upstart Puritan travesty of the unseen world. His vain struggles to keep up with Fastidius' sartorial excesses intensifies the comic effect; but the real power of Jonson's strategy is that it enables the introduction of his father

**7) Sordido** - who bears the momentous allegoric weight of the Boar: 'I know him, 'tis Sordido, the farmer,/A Boore, and brother to that swine was here.'" (I,iii,7). He is brother to Sogliardo, for the Boar is Shakespeare's personal demon. The almanac he considers in I, iii, represents the Gnostic written word; the rain it predicts which he trusts will fall, the "charge of the Boar". It is strongly suggested in *Much Ado* and elsewhere, that the book in question is Apuleius' *The Golden Ass*, with its graphic depiction of the seduction of the hero Lucius by Fotis, an Aphrodite-figure: the scenario being that the eight-years Puritan Shaksper (as he was then) came across this passage, and succumbed to an act of auto-erotism, as of old: which Fall triggered a vicious "charge of the Boar", to plunge him into psychic collapse. Sordido's rain will never come: for the subject's espousal of Puritanism (Sogliardo as gentleman) is intended as a defence against the Boar. This protection will however prove delusory, in a thoroughly Freudian way; and the absence of any vivid portrayal of the inner "charge of the Boar", - which bulked so large in Shakespeare's memory, and features in plays with a significant contribution from him, such as *Much Ado*, - from *EMOH* is consistent with its wholly non-Shakespearean authorship.

Money represents always in FF the power of a principle; and Sordido's constant gifts of money to his son Fungoso to purchase new clothes represents the essence of the defence mechanism: the depowering of the Boar by Puritan denial of the true nature of the unseen world.

**8) Puntarvolo** Durning-Lawrence mistakenly identified him with Bacon. His name is formed from the Italian *puntare*, "point", and *voglio*, or the Latin *volo*, "I want" (cf. the Puritan figure Malvolio in *Twelfth Night*). He represents the phallos, which is always tending to tumescence. The Sea of Marmara-Hellespont-Black Sea complex powerfully evokes the vagina-cervix-uterus. The ancients strongly registered this, as in the myth of Jason, whose quest to the Black Sea to retrieve the Golden Fleece is to be interpreted as a Journey of the Hero back to the world anterior to birth, in the way of Coleridge's Ancient Mariner. Puntarvolo's projected similar journey represents the act of love, in the context of Shakespeare's declension from Puritanism to erotism; his failure to go through with it, the breaking of this cycle by the acquisition of Gnostic nobility.

It is constantly emphasised throughout FF that it is only the Gnostic world-view which can bring dominion over the unseen world; whereas the Roman Catholic or Puritan, in their failure to intellectually engage that world, must remain forever subject to it. This is the point of the plethora of "I"s for "Ay"s in *I-3HVT* in association with the Catholic Church. The stillbirth of Puntarvolo's journey is effected by the poisoning of his dog (an underworld symbol) by Macilente, which intervention beautifully portrays the transformational ministry of Bacon and the Gnostic tradition. I show in *UDGCB* that this Baconian ideal of dominion over the passions almost certainly had its roots in the 'Knight of the Sun' (twenty-eighth) degree of the Ancient and Accepted Scottish Rite of Freemasonry, in which the candidate is warned: '*Ye who have not the power to subdue passion, flee from this place of truth*' (Knight and Lomas, *The Second Messiah*, Arrow 1997).

**9) Fallace** Sister to Fungoso. Her name is the Italian *fallace*, "misleading", "deceptive". She is the sham Goddess of Puritanism, and is cognate with Juliet in *R&J*. She is constantly being wooed, in vain, by her husband

**10) Deliro** - whose name is derived from the Italian *delirio*, "frenzied", "wild". He is Shakespeare in thrall to the libido, which possession always threatened during his Puritan phase, however much he may have denied it. Fallace is, of course, in love with Fastidius, and spurns him. Her '... you would have me/(Like to a puddle, or a standing pool)/To have no motion, nor no spirit within me' (II, iv, 110) well expresses the character of the Goddess under the Puritan tyranny.

**11) Carlo Buffone** A typical Falstaff figure. He bears the allegoric value of the libido.

How can we be sure of these and other allocations? Apart from the explicit indications in the text, as well as context and precedent, the plethora of "I"s for "Ay"s are a great help. Let us look for example, at the Prologue, where we find the following from Mitis, in agreement with a statement by Cordatus: 'I, I pray you proceed'. The name is the Latin *mitis*, "mild", "gentle". Jonson says in his introduction that he 'Is a person of no action, and therefore we have reason to afford him no character'. Let us look now at the third character in the Prologue, namely Cordatus, whose name is the Latin *cordatus*, "prudent", "wise". He and Mitis would seem to qualify Sir Francis Bacon, who is portrayed, as we have seen, by Asper, the principal character in the Prologue. We have seen above that dominion over the passions was a Baconian ideal; and, in this light, the allegoric value of Mitis becomes plain, as the ithyphallos-libido, over which Bacon has total control.

The thorny subject of auto-erotism is prominent in *EMOH*. Jonson was evidently, like Bacon, perfectly *au fait* with the details of Shakespeare's erotic life, and it provided rich material for his comedy. Thus, it is said that Puntarvolo 'will court his own lady, as she were a stranger never encountered before' (II, i, 138). This recalls Doll Tearsheet of *1&2HIV*, the Goddess of the auto-erotist, Who is ever a maiden, ever deflowered for the first time. The elaborate ritual of Puntarvolo's wooing of his wife seems to be a mere fishing for praise of himself. The Puntarvolo principle is vividly depicted in '... when he is mounted, he looks like the sign of the George' (II, i, 131): the horse-and-rider bearing here its usual value of the libido in action. (This is also the point of the *nouveau* gentleman Sogliardo's abjuration of the hobby-horse in II, i).

We remember that the Gads Hill robbery in *IHIV* is a detailed depiction of an act of auto-erotism, with Shakespeare c. act.14. (See *UDGCB* for a full explication). It is therefore with great amusement that we read the following, with regard to Sogliardo's man Shift (IV, v, 36 ff.):

*Sogl.* Why, I tell you, sir, he has been the only Bidstand that ever kept New-Market, Salisbury-Plaine, Hockley i' the hole, Gads-Hill; all the high places of any request: has had his mares and his geldings, he, ha' been worth fortie, threescore, a hundred pound a horse, would ha' sprung you over a hedge, and ditch, like your grey-hound, he has done five hundred robberies in his time, more or less, I assure you.

Shift adopts the name 'Resolution' to his master's 'Countenance'. Their relationship will be sundered by the machinations of Macilente in the final Act. There can be no doubt that he represents the tendency of Shaksper toward auto-erotism, a weakness which Shakespeare would disavow (ideally, though not in practice). His employment by Sogliardo *after* he has become a gentleman is another example of the author 'returning to square one' to make a point. Sogliardo's 'I, he [*Shift*] is my Pylades...' (IV, v, 57) is another instance of "I" for "Ay" as ithyphallic symbol.

Let us follow the progress of the Boar. In I, iii, Macilente inveighs at length against Sordido, whose servant then presents him with letters from the 'Justices' ordering him to release his grain-hoards to the markets, to feed the starving citizens; but Sordido refuses, and determines to bury his harvest-wealth under the ground to prevent its discovery. The letters represent the Gnostic written word wielded by Sir Francis Bacon (Macilente) against the unseen world in negative aspect (the Boar: Sordido). The harvest bears here, like money elsewhere, the power of a principle; and the Boar retains dominion over the ego, in the absence of the Gnostic tradition: 'Peace, fool, get hence...' (Macilente to himself, 86). The identification of the wealth with the underworld is signified by its burial, as well as by several precisely placed "I"'s for "Ay"'s, for example:

*Sordido*                      Here's a device,  
To charge me bring my grain unto the markets:  
I, much, when I have neither barn nor garner...

The Chorus make the distinction between Macilente's hatred of Carlo Buffone, and his envy of Sordido for his wealth: for Bacon's philosophy had as its aim dominion over the underworld (Buffone); and he wished Shakespeare's ego to be informed by the Gnostic world-view, based on engagement with that underworld, rather than by the Puritan, which anathematizes and denies it (to generate the Sordido principle).

In II, iii, Fungoso's successful importuning of his father Sordido for money is followed immediately (235) by Sordido's 'I wonder it rains not!': for the Boar is being neutralised (albeit delusorily) by Puritan denial of the underworld.

Finally, in III, vii, the Boar is destroyed through the ministry of the Gnostic tradition. Sordido determines to hang himself. He receives a typically importunate letter (Gnostic written word: e.g. Apuleius' *The Golden Ass*) from Fungoso, whose demands he this time refuses. That the libido or unseen world will be reborn, new-divested of its negative mantle, is signified by the intense Crucifixion imagery used by Sordido (7). The rustics' rescue of him from the noose recalls Gloucester's survival after his 'fall' in *KL*. Now the unseen world will be engaged by the intellect, to the health and prosperity of the ego, and the macrocosm of the broader society:

*Sordido* My barns and garners shall stand open still...  
I am by wonder chang'd; come in with me  
And witness my repentance: now I prove,  
"No life is blest, that is not grac't with love.

Let us look closely at the events of the final Act, as Puritan Shaksper is vanquished (taken 'out of his humour') by the therapeutic strategy of Bacon. Through the intrigues of Macilente -

1) Puntarvolo's dog (underworld) is poisoned, and the journey up the Marmara Sea prevented (flaccidity reigns: victory over the passions).

2) Sogliardo is diagnosed out of his gentility by Madonna Saviolina (Puritan ego transformed). Tobacco, as a new fashion imported by Raleigh, bears the same value in *EMOH* as the 'mushroom' (Fungoso), - of the upstart Puritan world-view; and Macilente's advice to Sogliardo to foreswear smoking in her presence is therefore consistent with the allegory.

3) Sogliardo and Shift are sundered (auto-erotism abjured).

4) Puntarvolo beats up on Carlo Buffone (victory over libido by transformed ego). The feast in the Mitre, courtesy of Carlo, bears the value of dissolution in libido (wine), and wounding by the Boar ('good fat loyne of porke'). Carlo's odd solo pantomime of a disagreement between two toppers represents the conflict disrupting the ego, centred around the negative libido. Significantly, it is terminated by the entry of Macilente, whose long obloquy against pork is wholly consistent with the allegory. The conflict, and arrival of the Constable, will drive them out of the Mitre, having consumed nothing: for the new dispensation prevails.

5) Deliro is forced to pay the innkeeper. The money represents the unseen world:

*Deliro* This is all, i' the bill here? is't not?  
*George* I, sir.

- For Puritan Shaksper, still subject to the libido or unseen world, is now acquiring dominion over that world, and is therefore no longer to be associated with it. This is a technique with which *I-3HVI* in particular has made us familiar.

6) Fastidius Briske is arrested, and forced to pay his debts to Deliro, now 'out of his humour' (power being ceded from the Puritan sham underworld to the transformed ego).

7) Fallace is rebuffed by Deliro, amidst a hail of invective from Macilente (fraudulent Goddess of Puritanism repudiated).

*EMOH* is a tight and exquisitely wrought allegory in the way of the FF plays, which gives us new insight into the workings of Bacon's *atelier*. The entire Jonsonian *oeuvre* now begs to be examined.

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