On the Plot of Daw and La Foole: Some Strategies of Negotiation with Authorities*

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According to the title page, *Epicoene or The Silent Woman* was performed at The Whitefriars by "the Children of Her Majesties REVELS" in 1609. The play did not seem to be favourably received by the audience at the first performance. William Drummond says at the end of his conversation with Jonson that "When his play of a *Silent Woman* was first acted, there was found verses after on the stage against him, concluding that the play was well named *The Silent Woman*: there was never one man to say *plaudite* to it."[1] But if Jonson did not intend this as a joke, what made the audience disapprove of this play? The editor of *Epicoene* of the *New Mermaids* edition draws our attention to "the play's early and enduring popularity."[2] When I read the play over and over again so as to see it on the imaginary stage of my mind, I find that *Epicoene* is quite a delightful, funny, and reasonably instructive play. It contains amusing witticisms of Truewit, comical jestures of Mute, boistrous rantings of Captain Otter, ridiculous behaviour of Morose owing to his excessive fear of noise and the adroit manipulations of La Foole, Daw, the aristocratic Ladies and Morose by Truewit and Clerimont. The language used to represent these actions is almost overwhelmingly characterized by excess and imaginative ingenuity, that will never fail to provoke laughter almost line by line. As to the richness of this kind of language, Jonas A. Barish comments: "In short, the balanced style of *Epicoene*—of Truewit, at any rate—amounts to this: the doubling of elements—words, phrases, and clauses—causing a perpetual little dance in the language and a sense of rhythmic fullness, and at the same time a studious avoidance of exact congruence, creating an equally strong feeling of free-flowing

spontaneity."[3)]

This play is, furthermore, extremely well-organized, a fact which led Dryden to believe that it had "the pattern of a perfect play"[4)] in so far as it maintains the three unities of time, place and action. The setting of the play is the Strand in London, the time is nearly as long as the play's actual performance, about "three hours and a half," and the action is "the settling Morose's estate on Dauphine."[5)] The movement of the action can be divided into three parts, the first of which begins with a talk about Dauphine's melancholy over his fear of disinheritance and ends with the seeming failure of Dauphine's plot to thwart the disinheritance. The second movement begins in Act II, scene iv, with the disappointment of Dauphine when he finds out what Truewit has done and ends with Morose's marriage after he is assured of Epicoene's reticence and gentle behaviour. The third movement begins in Act III, Scene iv, with Morose's desperate search for grounds for divorce, when he discovered his wife to be "a manifest woman" (III. iv. 39) who roars and dominates him just like a roaring shrew: a bad wife typical in literature as well as in popular beliefs.[6)] This is the noisiest and most humorous part of the play, containing various funny events and the play-within-a-play of Daw and La Foole. Truewit has brought all the characters of the play to Morose's house by means of La Foole's feast. During the feast, Mr. and Mrs. Otter quarrel and the Ladies admonish Morose for his rude treatment of his wife so that the feast turns out to be the worst affliction for him. In this way Jonson has achieved the three unities all at once in quite a natural way. All the characters of the play are gathered at one place, and the sub-plots of Daw and La Foole, of Mr. and Mrs. Otter, and of Ladies are combined with the main plot of Morose. The *dénouement* of the play is achieved by Dauphine, who discloses the sexual identity of Epicoene so that Morose may divorce her, on condition that Morose gives him "whole estate," of which Dauphine is not "so unreasonable" (V. iv. 163) to take all.

This story of Morose, who fears noise and seeks a silent wife, is taken from two declamations of Libanius, a Greek rhetorician in the fourth cen-

tury and also from an Italian comedy.[7] In Libanius, Dyskolos (meaning "peevish, difficult") marries a silent wife only to find her unbearably voluble. He also tries to disinherit his son because his son has laughed at him. In *Epicoene*, the son is changed to a nephew, and Dyskolos's motive is changed to Morose's hatred of his nephew, and Dyskolos's motive is changed to Morose's hatred of his nephew's desire to become a knight. Morose says: "How I shall be revenged on mine insolent kinsman and his plots to fright me from marrying! This night I will get an heir and thrust him out of my blood like a stranger. He would be knighted, forsooth, and thought by that means to reign over me, his title must do it; no, kinsman, I will now make you bring me the tenth lord's and the sixteenth lady's letter, kinsman, and it shall do you no good, kinsman."(II. v. 96–103) This change of Morose's motive of disinheritance of his nephew is interesting enough to induce us to consider the sub-plot of Daw and La Foole in this play.

"The device of the bride who turns out to be a boy comes from *Il Marescalco*(1533), Aretino's comedy about a misogynistic, homosexual gentleman-usher whom a playful nobleman forces to take a wife."[8] Ovid and Juvenal are incorporated into *Epicoene* when Jonson expresses two opposing ideas of art and nature concerning women's cosmetics.[9] In this way, *Epicoene* is arrayed with classical and Italian learning as is often the case with Jonson's other works.

But when we look closely into the plot of the settling of Morose's estate on Dauphine, we find this plot intertwined with three sub-plots which deal with contemporary issues. Here we see Jonson dealing with live issues of his times under the cover of classical learning. The first sub-plot is concerned with two knights, Daw and La Foole, and has the aim of criticizing the degeneration of newly created knights in King James's times. The second sub-plot is about the middle class people, Mr. and Mrs. Otter, and the criticism is directed to Mrs. Otter's aspiration to enter into high society and her domination of her husband. The third sub-plot is about upper class women, and its criticism and satirical innuendos are focused on their desire to dominate men and their deep-seated prur-

iency. Thus, dealing with a classical figure of a stingy man in the main plot, Jonson performs the functions of a comic writer, to please the audience and to correct the evils of his time.

The degeneration of knighthood on account of the sudden increase of their number in King James's reign was a serious issue. Wealthy middle class people were climbing the social ladder of hierarchy. The growth of women's power was felt everywhere: in the theatre, the number of women increased in the audience, and in the street there was an increase of transvestite women.[10)] For an authentic writer of comedy, to represent these problems in a comedy for the purpose of edification was far from an easy task. The author has to find out safe ways to negotiate with authority, that has power even to imprison or put to death any person who is opposed to it.[11)] The risk must have been at its highest when Jonson drew Daw and La Foole in *Epicoene*, because knights were not only among his audience, but also held various important social offices. Moreover, behind them there were powerful courtiers and King James himself who knighted them. Jonson needed some strategies to negotiate with these authorities. In this paper, we shall deal with the sub-plot of Daw and La Foole in terms of Jonson's negotiation with authority in the social background of his times.

Jonson's first strategy is the creation of Truewit and Clerimont, who manipulate and ridicule every other character except Dauphine for the sake of diversion. The first scene is important in the sense that it clearly defines the nature of the play's world. The strong desire for diversion which characterizes Truewit and Clerimont is established at the very beginning of the play through their sophisticated conversation on time. Truewit jeers at Clerimont who is amusing himself by forcing a boy to sing a song, saying "Why, here's the man that can melt away his time, and never feels it! What between his mistress abroad and his ingle ['catamite'] at home, high fare, soft lodging, fine clothes, and his fiddle, he thinks the hours ha' no wings or the day no post-horse."(I. i. 22–25) Clerimont asks "Why, what should a man do?" (30) To our surprise, Truewit's answer is a nonsensical one.

> Why, nothing, or that which, when 'tis done, is as idle. Harken after the next horse-race, or hunting-match; lay wagers, praise Puppy, or Peppercorn, Whitefoot, Franklin; swear upon Whitemane's party; spend aloud that my lords may hear you; visit my ladies at night and be able to give 'em the character of every bowler or bettor o' the green. These be the things wherein your fashionable men exercise themselves, and I for company.
> (I. i. 32–39)

It is worth noticing that Truewit and Clerimont are suffering from boredom so that they are always eager to find any kind of fun to divert themselves. They are not the kind of people who have to work hard to earn their living. Truewit, therefore, is far from preaching about time, still less serious in speaking of time's preciousness. He is not serious in propounding his idea of art, either, even if he consistently takes sides with art. We can safely say that his basic attitude to life is summed up as *carpe diem*. So is Clerimont's attitude. Dauphine is different from them in this point, for he does not "melt away his time," but works hard to gain his inheritance from his uncle.

This strategy of presenting such leisured gentlemen on the stage has two functional merits. One is that Jonson could say that everything on the stage is done by Truewit and Clerimont for the sake of their own diversion in case he is summoned on the charge of imputation. It is characteristic of Truewit to be quick at finding any little seed of diversion. In this sense, we might as well think that his "officious" action to discourage Morose from his marriage is instigated not so much by his friendship with Dauphine as by his desire for diversion. Truewit has done it almost purely to enjoy seeing Morose suffer from boisterous ranting, because he knows that Morose abhors noise. Examples to illustrate this tendency are abundant in this play. When Cutbeard brings the news that Morose likes Epicoene and hints at the possibility of their marriage, he proposes to "translate all La Foole's company and his feast hither today, to celebrate this bridal"(II. vi. 30–31) in a highly exhilarated mood, because "It would be made a jest to posterity, sirs, this day's mirth."(26) It means

that he finally finds an object of diversion worth staking all his wits on, which at the same time gives him lots of fun. So does Clerimont. He consents to his plan in the same hilarious mood, saying "For God's sake, let's effect it; it will be an excellent comedy of affliction, so many several noises."(II. vi. 35–36) The frequent mention of their pranks as "an excellent fit of mirth,"(III. iii. 85–86) or "rare sport," (III. vi. 44) is an effective reminder to the audience that everything is done for the sake of diversion, not out of any malice on the part of not only the plotters but Jonson.

Another merit of the first strategy lies in the fact that the presence of leisured gentlemen makes it easy for the audience to identify themselves with Truewit and Clerimont, not with Daw and La Foole. The world of *Epicoene* indicates that Truewit and Clerimont must find "this day's mirth" every day. So would have been the actual audience of this play; ladies, lords, knights, squires, waiting wenches, "city-wives," "men and daughters of Whitefriars," (Prologue: 21–23) who gathered to see the play for diversion. In this sense, they shared the same attitude of life Truewit and Clerimont. The would, therefore, have enjoyed the play with some sympathy.

The second strategy for Jonson in negotiating with authority is to make it difficult for the audience to recognize him in any of his characters. Jonson is, of course, not Truewit, nor is he Clerimont nor even Dauphine. Nor is he Morose, much less is he an *anal erotic* man with such characteristics as "pedantry," "parsimony," or "obstinacy.[12] Jonson carefully hides himself behind his characters so as not to incur a serious charge of imputation. Nevertheless, he has too much of an artist in him to lose his integrity as a writer of comedy, whose duty, as he recognizes it, is to "both delight and teach."[13] Jonson does "delight and teach" us in this play, but in the process he has made it very difficult for the audience to look beyond his characters at him. In this sense, we agree with Edmund Wilson who justly suggests that "Jonson merely splits himself up and sets the pieces—he is to this extent a dramatist—in conflict with one another."[14] Examining to what extent Jonson owes this idea of art to

Ovid and Juvenal, Jonas A. Barish states the same opinion.

> In trying to be Ovid, he succeeds only in being Juvenal; in trying to be Truewit, he succeeds only in being himself. ... Like Morose, Jonson is trying hard to be "courtly" in this play. The figures of Truewit, Clerimont, and Dauphine represent an attempt to express in positive and indulgent fashion the worldly values of the select audience before whom the play was acted, and Ovid was chosen as the appropriate vehicle by which to do so. But Jonson trying to be Truewit, talks like Morose, just as Morose does under the same circumstances.[15)]

He notices that Jonson "splits himself up" into various characters, and he also finds in Jonson both a realistic and satirical frame of mind which are in conflict with each other. This leads him to a somewhat negative estimation of this play. "The result is not a pattern of suspension and resolution most satisfying in comedy but a series of brilliant discords which, whatever their vitality in detail, fail to fuse into a unified whole."[16)]

Concerning the different views on art and woman among Truewit, Clerimont and Dauphine, John Enck attributes them to Jonson's "indecisiveness about official spokesmen at this point in his career."[17)] Katharine Eisaman Maus expresses a comment of the same kind.

> As Jonson gradually reconceives the function of comedy, however, minimizing both its didactic possibilities and its potential for corruption, his extravagant hypocrites begin to lose some of their moral menace. ... In *Epicoene* and after, the really stuborn interpretive problems tend to center not on pure opportunists but characters like Truewit in *Epicoene*, Lovewit in *The Alchemist*, ... for whom the articulation of moral truth is complicated by a highly developed sense of what is appropriate in particular circumstances. In other words, they are all characters of in situations analogous to Jonson's own; the plays reflect the dilemmas of their author.[18)]

In her opinion, Jonson's dilemma lies in his efforts to harmonize two antithetical duties of the author of comedy, to delight and teach, without giving too much license to the function of delighting for fear of moral cor-

ruption. "Jonson's artistic priorities—delightfulness, profitability, truth to nature, appropriateness defined in a variety of ways—exist in a state of unresolved mutual tension."[19] In my opinion, whether the change of his attitude about art and its moral function is called "unresolved mutual tension," "dilemma," or "indecisiveness," the change of the atmosphere of his comedy seems to result largely from his efforts to conceal himself behind his characters as he works more and more as a masque writer, negotiating with authority.

In fact, criticism of *Epicoene* has devoted itself so much to the play's artistic elements that it tends to overlook the social background in which the play was created. We take the case of La Foole into consideration here in detail with a view to explaining the "self-fashioning" of Jonson in this play. If we speak of Jonson's self-fashioning in this play, taking full advantage of the ten "governing conditions" of Stephen Greenblatt, the following breif account will do. "Self-fashioning is achieved in relation to something perceived as alien, strange, or hostile." What is perceived as the "alien, strange, or hostile" by Jonson is the degeneration of knighthood, so he tries to fashion his self by attacking it in his play. The parodic name of Daw and La Foole is understood as "a distorted image of the authority," for authority inheres in the knights in the sense that authority has created them. The attack on the foolish knights is delivered by true gentlemen, Truewit and Clerimont, who are the "power generated to attack the alien in the name of the authority," for the social status of the gentlemen is, at least, as high as that of the knights. They are therefore qualified to be the attackers of "the alien" in the name of the true knight. In this sense, the attack itself internalizes "both submission and destruction" in its relation to authority, for Jonson submits to authority by making the status of Truewit of his own creation as high as the two knights, but the real purpose of Truewit's criticism is subversion of the authority that inheres in the two knights. Thus, in writing *Epicoene*, Jonson stands in a precarious situation "in the point of encounter between an authority and an alien."[20]

La Foole is referred to and addressed with an honorific epithet, "Sir,"

by other characters because he is a knight. But he is consistently represented as a foolish foppish person who does not deserve to bear the title of knight, much less to be called a gentleman. This is clearly stated by Clerimont when he introduces La Foole for the first time. "He is one of the Braveries, though he be none o' the Wits. He will salute a judge upon the bench and a bishop in the pulpit, a lawyer when he is pleading at the bar, and a lady when she is dancing in a masque, and put her out."(I. iii. 28–32) He is extremely rich, and unreasonably generous, of course for the fulfilment of his sexual desire, and extravagant enough to give ladies "some two or three hundred pound's worth of toys, to be laughed at"(37–38) when about eleven pounds a year is enough for a couple with four children to live decently in the country side.[21) "He has a lodging in the Strand" (34) to see ladies to "china-houses or the Exchange" (35–36) and to invite them to supper, if there is a chance.

By 1609, the Strand had established its status as a well-known upper class lodging area where the aristocracy who had become sick of "the boredom and loneliness of country life" gathered to seek for every chance of pleasing themselves: not to speak of plays and bear-baitings, but "coronations, funerals, royal marriages—dazzling spectacles that attracted huge crowds from the country."[22) Lawrence Stone gives valuable information on this street.

> More important than this subletting of the older palaces was the astonishing early seventeenth-century growth of urban building on leasehold in the west end to the north of the Strand. This provided a mass of high-class dwelling-houses fit for noblemen, court officials, and important members of the squirearchy. Covent Garden, Queen Street, Drury Lane, and St. Martin's Lane were built with this clientele exclusively in mind, and part cause and part effect was a great increase of peers occupying leasehold property.[23)

We may easily understand that La Foole takes pride in living in the Strand when he talks to Clerimont. "Excuse me, sir, if it were i' the Strand, I assure you."(I. iv. 6) At the same, he seems to have just come

out of the country so that he has not yet fully learned the proper speech of upper-class London. Clerimont calls La Foole's attention to his awkward speech: "doubtfulness o' your phrase, believe it, sir, would breed you a quarrel once an hour with the terrible boys, if you should but keep 'em fellowship a day."(I. iii. 13–16)

How has La Foole acquired his enormous wealth? Jonson is accurate on this point as well. Questioned by Dauphine and Clerimont about his pedigree, for their enjoyment of hearing it, La Foole mentions it briefly in his answer.

> They all come out of our house, the La Fooles o' the north, the La Fooles of the west, the La Fooles of the east and the south—we are as ancient a family as any in Europe—but I myself am descended lineally of the French La Fooles—and we do bear for our coat yellow, or or, checkered azure and gules, and some three or four colours more, which is a very noted coat and has sometimes been solemnly worn by divers nobility of our house.... ...
> I have been a mad wag in my time, and have spent some crowns since I was a page in court to my Lord Lofty, and after my Lady's gentleman-usher, who got me knighted in Ireland, since it pleased my elder brother to die—I had as fair a gold jerkin on that day as any was worn in the Island Voyage or at *Caliz*, none dispraised, and I came over in it hither, showed myself to my friends in court and after went down to my tenants in the country and *surveyed* my lands, let new leases, took their money, spent it in the eye o' the land here, upon ladies—and now I can take up at my pleasure. (*Italics mine*: I. iv. 35–42, 54–64)[24)]

La Foole's tedious talk about his pedigree is apparently a parody of the search of rich landlords for any plausible ancient pedigree to be knighted. It is not just that La Foole is characterized as a typical landlord who is rich because of his vast estate, but, behind this funny figure of La Foole, it is implied that he is the worst type of landlord who takes every chance of raising rents, taking advantage of the rising prices of the time. The audience of Jonson's times had no difficulty in gaining a gruesome picture of a harsh landholder from his speech. It is worth while to quote Keith Wrightson here, who speaks of the condition of landlords of the

time.

> By the later sixteenth century, population expansion had already tilted the balance of power between landlords and tenants in favour of the former. Gentlemen who had earlier been forced to choose between granting long leases and favourable rents or seeing parts of their estates pass out of cultivation, now found themselves able to charge higher entry fines and rents and to insist on shorter leases. This trend continued and accentuated in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. The willingness and abilities of landlords to exploit the situation, of course, varied. Some were sufficiently conscious of their traditional social obligations to their tenants to hesitate before tightening up their estate-management policies.[25)]

It is not difficult to imagine that La Foole is far from this type of benign landlord. At least, we could say that the criticism implied in his nonchalant speech is directed toward many landlords who surveyed their lands to raise income. Wrightson also informs us of "surveys" made by landlords of the time.

> Many sought to establish the nature of their positions by ordering surveys of their estates, and the period after 1590 in particular saw the making of numerous manorial surveys at which tenants presented themselves to show evidence of their tenures. ... Fortified with their surveys, most landlord and estate managers took every opportunity to raise income.[26)]

In addition, the rise in rents were quite rapid. Wrightson's example will make us realize its seriousness. "On the Petre estate in Essex, properties which had produced rents of £ 1400 in 1572, brought in £ 2450 in 1595 and as much as £ 4200 in 1640."[27)] When we glance at the social environment in which this play was written, it is not difficult to imagine that the words of La Foole had far more serious connotations and implications than we imagine today. Moreover, if we take into our consideration the fact that most of the audience of the play were presumably consisted of upper class people, including such landlords from the country and rich

knights, since the Whitefriars was a private theatre, the criticism of the avaricious knights had to be couched in somewhat hidden terms. This is why La Foole's mention of his source of wealth is brief and cursory.

We have already pointed out two stategies of Jonson in negotiating with authority. The third strategy can be specified as the restriction of the criticism of the degeneration of knighthood to Queen Elizabeth's reign, so that the intended criticism could be achieved only by the audience's projection of the past into the present. La Foole mentions in the above speech that he was knighted in Ireland, and went to the Island Voyage and also took part in the expedition to Cadiz. The three places are all associated with the Earl of Essex, and it is apparent that these places are deliberately chosen because of his third strategy. The unmindful creation of new knights by the Earl of Essx was infamous as Stone points out. "Worst of all was Essex's behaviour in his brief and inglorious Irish expedition of 1599 when he created as many as eighty-one knights, without even the justification of a military victory and against the express orders of the Queen."[28] But King James was much more infamous for the creation of new knights, and the subsequent degeneration of the value of knighhood was more serious. The audience of Jonson's *Epicoene* would remember that James created and unbelievable number of knights in the first year of his reign. Stone comments:

> With the accession of King James on 24 March 1603, royal parsimony was suddenly replaced by the most reckless prodigality: in the first four months of the reign he dubbed no fewer than 906 knights. By December 1604 England could boast of 1,161 new knights, which means that the order had suddenly been increased almost three-fold.[29]

It follows that the figure of La Foole not only gives cutting innuendos to his degraded character as a knight, but also satirizes the new knights created in King James's reign. Stone also points out that the title has been degraded in its honourable status to that of an object for sale. King James gave the right of nominating knights to his courtiers. "From them these

rights passed, like stocks and shares, into general currency among London financial speculators, so that in 1606 Lionel Cranfield bought the making of six knights from his friend Arthur Ingram for £ 373. 1 *s.* 8 *d.*"[30] Having been imprisoned twice, Jonson must have been aware of the danger of offending authority, consequently, that he is very careful in putting the criticism of newly created upstart knights into this play. At the same time, it seems that he, as the author of comedy, cannot be indifferent to their degeneration. This is why La Foole's knighthood is restricted to the scandals of Essex, which had become remote and, therefore, safe enough for Jonson to use in this play.

In fact, this comic representation of adulterate knights has some theatrical merits. As the sale of knighthood flourished, naturally their value declined and as a consequence, time-honoured knights of an ancient family origin became indignant both at the degeneration of the title and at the newly created knights, who bought the title and knew nothing about the decorum of a knight except the pleasure of strutting about in the street in London. The same kind of indignation must have been shared by the middle and lower class people, who were forced to be unwilling witnesses of their extravagant ways of life. Those who felt indignation and frustration at the upstart knights were able to discharge their offended feelings safely by laughing at La Foole. Evidently he gives us a accurate inventory of the characteristics of an foolish and unscrupulous knight.

The fourth strategy for Jonson in negotiating with authority is to embed the plot of the two knights in the main plot of a play that is full of classical learning so that the criticism of the foolish knights may not be too blatant. The fact that many critical discussions have been devoted to the question of Jonson's classical inheritance regarding the main plot should be taken as evidence of the success of this strategy.

The two knights are consistently mocked and parodied in this play, but we need to examine the play closely to know in what way they are criticized by Jonson. The highlight of their mockery is the play-within-a-play of Act IV. Scene v, where both Daw and La Foole are manipulated by Truewit into believing that one is trying to revenge himself on the

other. Here, Truewit perfectly plays the role of a poet by making them fear each other by the power of words. The words themselves are so fantastically exaggerated that no reasonable person would believe them true except foolish cowards. Truewit frightens Daw in this way.

> He has got somebody's old two hand sword, to mow you off at the knees.
> And that sword hath spawned such a dagger!—
> But then he is so hung with pikes, halberds, petronels, calivers, and muskets, that the looks like a justice of peace's hall; (I'/. v. 100–04)

Hearing this, Daw asks Truewit to be a mediator, and by his suggestion he willingly consents to losing "a thumb or a little finger."(IV. v. 115) rather than proposing a duel. The same is true also of La Foole. He dares not to accept the proposal of duel, so he accepts to beat his own head "against a fair flat wall"(286) instead of the hilt of Daw's sword. Finally, they consent not only to receiving kicks or tweaks with their eyes being blindfolded, but also to giving up their swords rather than opposing the other party. In fact, it is Dauphine who kicks Daw and tweaks La Foole and deprives them of their swords. Moreover, the play-within-a-play is performed before the Ladies who have been gathered by Truewit with the hope that they will fall in love with Dauphine. In this way, Jonson shows that the two knights lack not only manhood but also virility by their cowardly behaviour and the metaphorical use of the loss of their swords. They are "modern" knights, in a Shakespearian sense, quite contrary to the idea of traditional knights, who were men of valour, and had accomplished valiant feats in several ways.

Another characteristic feature of La Foole and Daw satirized in the play is their propensity to tell a lie to defame women on whom they could not satisfy their sexual desire. Clerimont flatters La Foole and Daw in order to draw from them some stories of their sexual experiences. They hint at their sexual experiences but do not specify them explicitly. Daw says "We must not wound reputation."(V. i. 63) La Foole answers the same.(77) It is not until Clerimont asks them "how many times, i'faith?

Which of you led first? Ha?"(79–80) that La Foole says, "Sir John had her maidenhead, indeed."(81) and Daw says, "Oh, it pleases him to say so, sir, but Sir Amorous knows what's what as well."(82–83) The fact that Epicoene is a boy disguised as a silent woman is not yet revealed to the audience so that their confessions will surely make the audience surprised by their stories of Epicoene's licentiousness. But the falseness of their confessions becomes apparent at the end of the play when Dauphine reveals that Epicoene is a boy. They are severely criticized by Truewit at that time:

> You are they that, when no merit of fortune can make you hope to enjoy their bodies, will yet lie with their reputations and make their fame suffer. Away, you common moths of these and all ladies' honours. (V. iv. 220–24)

We know that this kind of sexual tactics was actually resorted to by unsatisfied men in Jonson's times.[31] In this way, La Foole and Daw, by violating the decorum of keeping secret the relationship with sweethearts, as well as by telling lies to defame women's reputation, are disqualified not only as knights but also as gentlemen.

To summarize, it is apparant that La Foole and Daw are constantly mocked, parodied and satirized on the grounds of holding the title of knight without proper knowledge of liberal arts and the sense of decency and decorum, and that the motive of this mockery is Jonson's impatience with the unscrupulous and degenerated knights of King James' reign. But to criticize them in a plain, unsophisticated fashion would surely involve the danger of imprisonment, loss of his position in the court, or at least, the displeasure of the authorities. This is why Jonson used various strategies in representing the two foppish and unscrupulous knights. The fact that Jonson seemed to have escaped any serious charge of imputation, thanks to "particular sleight / Of application" (Another [Prologue]: 11–12) indicates that his strategies functioned effectively, provoking only sarcastic verses thrown on the stage after the first performance. New knights might have disapproved of this play, but many of the audience

would have enjoyed the farcical presentation of Daw and La Foole. We have discussed only the sub-plot of Daw and La Foole, but this study, although in a limited sense, reveals something of Jonson's "self-fashioning" in the peculiar political, theatrical and economical environment in which he lived. For Jonson, the self is poised between an independent author of comedy and a servant of the public as well as the authorities. His sense of identity is to "delight and teach" both the public and the authorities. He perceives that the unworthiness of newly created knights is one of his time's ills, so he criticizes it by representing foppish and foolish knights named Daw and La Foole in his play. But as a servant of the authorities, such as King James, Master of Revels and other mighty courtiers, he knows the power of authority and the risks of writing a comedy which he thinks to be a work of art. This tension leads him to writing *Epicoene* by using, at least, four strategies of negotiation with authority.

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Notes:

1. Ian Donaldson, ed., *The Oxford Authors*: *Ben Jonson* (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1985), p. 611.
2. R. V. Holdworth, ed., *The New Mermaids*: *Epicoene or The Silent Woman* (New York: Ernest Benn, 1979), p. xx. All quotations of *Epicoene* in this paper are from this edition.
3. Jonas A. Barish, *Ben Jonson and the Language of Prose Comedy* (Cambridge, Harvard Univ. Press, 1960), p. 151.
4. John Dryden, "An Essay of Dramatic Poesy"(1668) in D. J. Enright and Ernst De Chickera, ed., *English Critical Texts*: *16th Century to 20th Century* (Oxford Univ. Press, 1962), p. 88.
5. John Dryden, ed. cit., p. 91.
6. Linda Woodbridge, *Women and the English Renaissance: Literature and the Nature of Womankind, 1540 1630* (1984: Illini Books ed., Chicago: Univ. of

Illinois Press, 1986), chs. 1–4-.

7. *Epicoene*, ed. R. V. Holdsworth, p. xxxiii.
8. *Epicoene*, ed. R. V. Holdsworth, p. xxv.
9. Jonas A. Barish discusses this subject in detail in "Ovid, Juvenal, and *The Silent Woman*," *PMLA*, LXXI(1956), 213–24.
10. Linda Woodbridge, ch. 10.
11. David Riggs, *Ben Jonson: A Life*, (Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 1989), chs. 7, 8. We can assume from these chapters that Jonson came to realize various far-reaching threats of authority, including his own imprisonment, before he wrote *Epicoene*.
12. Edmund Wilson, "Morose and Ben Jonson" in *The Triple Thinkers: Twelve Essays on Literary Subjects* (1938; rev. Ney York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1948) pp. 217–18.
13. Jonson says in *Discoveries* that "The parts of a comedy are the same with a tragedy, and the end is partly the same. For they both delight and teach;" *The Oxford Authors*: *Ben Jonson*, p. 589.
14. Edmund Wilson, p. 215.
15. Jonas A. Barish, "Ovid, Juvenal, and *The Silent Woman*," *PMLA*, LXXI (1956), 224.
16. Jonas A. Barish, loc. cit.
17. John Enck, *Ben Jonson and the Comic Truth* (Madison: Univ. of Wisconsin Press, 1957), p. 147. Quoted by Katharine Eisaman Mause, *Ben Jonson and the Roman Frame of Mind* (Prinston: Princeton Univ. Press, 1984), p. 189.
18. Katharin Eisamane Maus, p. 68.
19. Katharin Eisamane Maus, p. 67.
20. All the quotations from Greenblatt is taken from Stephen Greenblatt, *Renaissance Self-Fashioning: From More to Shakespeare* (Chicago: The Univ. of Chicago Press, 1980), p. 9.
21. Keith Wrightson, in *Hutchinson Social History of England: English Society 1580–1680* (1982; rpt. London: Hutchinson, 1986), says: "Of this sum perhaps £ 11 would be needed to feed a man, wife and four children, leaving a surplus of £ 3–4." p. 33.
22. Lawrence Stone, *The Crisis of The Aristocracy* (abridged ed., London: Oxford Univ. Press, 1967), pp. 185–86.
23. Lawrence Stone, p. 188–89.
24. "Caliz" is "Cadiz" where the Earl of Essex and Howard captured in 1596.
25. Keith Wrightson, p. 130.
26. Keith Wrightson, p. 131.

27. Keith Wrightson, p. 131.
28. Lawrence Stone, p. 40.
29. Lawrence Stone, p. 41.
30. Lawrence Stone, p. 41.
31. C. R. Quaife, in *Wanton Wenches and Wayward Wives: Peasants and Illicit Sex in Early Seventeenth Century England* (New Brunswick: Rutgers Univ. Press, 1979), says that "The frustrated male was out for vengeance. The most common method which restored the male ego was to spread the false story that the girl had in fact submitted and been seduced." p. 72.