

BEN JONSON'S "VOLPONE" AS A REFLECTION OF THE SOCIAL AND MORAL HISTORY OF THE JACOBEAN ERA

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Abstract: Ben Jonson's Volpone (1605) is the most famous, best performed, and most studied of all his plays. Billed as a didactic comedy, "Volpone" is actually an intellectual and sharp satire that somehow forces the audience to reconsider their moral views. With Volpone, Ben Jonson created a new form of comedy and managed to combine all three genres in it. This study focuses on the play "Volpone" as a reflection of the social and moral history of a particular society (London) with our main paradigm.

Keywords: Volpone, human greed, satirical and moral comedy.

"Volpone" is a powerful moral exploration of human greed and fox cunning. Although it is not a traditional form of comedy, it is a work that manages to combine the form of comic satire with morality. It contains the characteristics of a fairy tale, and through his work, he teaches morality. seeks to teach. It gave a different twist to what people expect from a dramatic comedy or a moral play. Rather than a traditional moral satire, the play is called a satire because it is based on the playwright's personal opinions. In this comedy, Johnson presents his audience with an unconventional approach to the subjects he satirizes, creating a new form of comedy that combines aspects of all three genres. Ben Jonson's Volpone has been regarded as a masterpiece for centuries. Volpone can rightly be seen as a turning point in Jonson's career on the public stage. In addition to describing some negative human traits in the work,

Johnson is concerned here not that critics will question the unity of the various characters and structures between them, but that they will find the plot too sharp, moving, and instructive for comedy. Johnson wants his audience to see how greed affects traditional values. This became the center of discussion throughout the drama.

Johnson aimed to create a new kind of comedy. He creates both satirical and moral comedy. This new type of comedy was seen as Johnson's best work. The subplot is connected with the moral side of the tale. It is in the plot that we can see Johnson trying to show his audience the dangers of life, just like the characters in the main character. Barish says: "It is possible on a thematic level that there are potentials related to the main themes of the play and their eccentricities." While Shakespeare's direction in seventeenth-century comedy was to constantly mix the serious and the comic, find the soft edges, and turn it into romance and pastoralism, Jonson's works are the English dramatic an'

In fact, Jonson's comedies laid the foundation for social comedy on the English stage. Although Volpone's satire is ultimately moral, its immediate purpose is primarily concerned with society and its laws. The city of Venice was imprinted on the British mind with its extreme wealth, beauty and corruption. Venice's reputation for impurity is matched by its powerful system of government, and Volpone's disaster reflects not only Johnson's strong morality, but also the magnificence of Venetian punishment. But Jonson was not the first English playwright to appreciate the suitability of Venice for a play about greed and powerful control.

Indeed, the English story itself is used to distinguish the setting of Venice from London, and this is the most clever way. Although Volpone's text satirizes greed and corruption in general, it can be read as an overtly anti-Catholic speech based on two main lines. For example: It is not difficult to notice the desecration of the Catholic Eucharist and the reference to the corruption of the priesthood in the idea represented by the image of the fox. It will have elements of the anti-fascist drama tradition

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of the Tudor Reformation. For example, one can cite debates on doctrines in the dramatic field. At first glance, the work seems to be a mixture of sacred and profane images. Hedrick says that the theme of "selfishness" is to emphasize the evils in people. In *Volpone*, Jonson made egotism the main symptom of vice, and we see that his horror did not arise from the threat to human life, but from the necessity of time and the desire to save life at all costs.

When reading the characters of the play, you can feel the Venetian atmosphere as authentic as possible. According to Dutton:

"Venice was under the struggle between Protestants and Catholics during the Counter-Reformation". In Volpone, we can see an author concerned with "transmitting through comedy the anatomy of the cruelty of time." The brutality that Johnson is trying to explain is the overemphasis on the importance of money.

Jonson makes it clear that he does justice to the play he tackles, not in the way that was customary in the theater of the time, but in the right way. He tries to "disarm the moral critics of the theater," says Watson.

Volpone is an unconventional and innovative Jacobean comedy in which Jonson uses animal fables as the central plot to satirize the perverted nature of society. When the protagonist's plans fail, Johnson breaks with the fairy tale tradition. *Volpone* tells them (the audience) that in Jonson's comedy a strict moral conclusion takes a conventional and convenient form because in the real world it does not, Jonson hides his realism again through comedy. By making this work more impressive, Johnson made a turning point in his work. He also aimed to create a new type of comedy. He created both satirical and moral comedy. In *Volpone*, not only is the trickster of folklore fully adapted to the English stage as a hero, rather, the ups and downs of his fate were redistributed as a satirical context taken from the environment of modern society. *Volpone* presented himself as neither a romantic hero nor a tragic hero, despite his brilliance, the depth of his enthusiasm, and the so-called flaw and unfortunate disaster, in the character of the hero - the Trickster, the comedy subgenre is hidden by its themes and conventions. The population increased and the city became the center appeal to people of all social classes. With the separation, the traditional feudal ties between the villagers began to break down. This caused the city to expand and London was founded.

It was considered an important center for both the poor and the rich with this growing class of people came the mobility of the social idea. People started going for the status they could have the financial power account because they didn't have it. Unlike Seneca, Johnson was conservative in the face of social change and did not like it and would reject changes in the composition of the class.

In Johnson's world, not only fraudsters, but also victims play a role. In most cases, it is their greed and hypocrisy, not to mention their endless claims, that make them victims of false self-image. They judge everything superficially outwardly and easily believe everything they are told. More importantly, Johnson's fraudsters and victims lack stability, thereby creating a moral hazard to society. Their greed, hypocrisy, and manipulative nature manifest as their apparent lack of consistency, and they are punished by Johnson.

Volpone's insidious nature is revealed by Jonson at the beginning, through his name. *Volpone* means fox in Italian.

The fox is an animal that has long been considered a liar

In these tales, the fox uses role-play to trick its victims.

As one of the most famous stories about animals, he can give up something very valuable to a crow, or Dick with flattery like Chaucer's *The Nun's Tale*. In addition, "foxes pretend to be dead by rolling on the ground in order to catch birds. Birds who think the fox is dead end up being prey to the fox themselves. This parallelism, usually observed in the works of the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, inspired Jonson to call *Volpone's* character a sly fox. Jonson saw the fox as a symbol or allegory of the deceitfulness of humans who inherit death, and he depicted this in a similar way to the

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theme of hunting in the play. Jonson expected his audience to recognize this action of the fox and therefore see parallels with the hunt, I believe this medium century and the Renaissance as the most common problem in society. The animal imagery in the work points to a broad root system of folk culture and folklore, based on classical and medieval animal tales, fox stories, and zoological traditions, especially the parodic-heroic animal epic.

Contrasting the fox's sly nature with Volpone's loss of self-control, skillfully portrays the constant evil character behind the mask.

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