DISGUISE IN BEN JONSON'S COMEDIES

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ABSTRACT

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Disguise is used extensively in Jonson's comedies, and it is the purpose of this thesis to examine why he may have chosen to employ this particular convention so freely, and how he uses it within the structure of each of five comedies: Every Man in His Humour, Volpone, Epicoene, The Alchemist and Bartholomew Fair. A general discussion of disguise introduces my subject, as I trace, briefly, the use of disguise from the primitive ritual to Jonson's comedies and masques. A discussion of the theatrical and satirical value of disguise follows. Disguise seems to fall into two distinct types, aggressive and protective disguise, and I have explained how Jonson favoured aggressive disguise in his comedies. I then divide aggressive disguise into five separate categories: the quick-change artist, the male-female disguise, the dying man, the spy, and the occupational disguise. The bulk of the paper examines these different kinds of disguise as they are used in Jonson's five major comedies.

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INTRODUCTION

The appeal that disguise had for Elizabethan dramatists is attested to by the hundreds of plays in which it appears in this spectacular period of English theatre. It served both the greatest and the lowliest of dramatists, played its part in such widely divergent genres as tragedy and farce, and was equally effective in comedy, as indispensible to Shakespeare in the composition of his romantic comedy as it was for the realistic or new comedy of Ben Jonson. But it was Jonson's use of the disguise convention which captured my imagination and caused me to give serious consideration to it as a suitable subject for a thesis.

Jonson's plays are full of impostors and one would be hard put to find a character who does not wear a disguise of one kind or another. The most persistent themes in the comedies are explorations of various forms of deception: Volpone simulates a dying man in order to deceive those whose greed far exceeds his own; Subtle pretends to know the secret of transmuting base metals into gold and dresses himself in special robes for his part; Merecraft poses as a projector intent on relieving unsuspecting victims of their money. The list is endless and could easily include characters from all of Jonson's comedies. Epicoene pretends to be a silent woman in order to attract the noise-hating Morose, and Brainworm disguises himself as an old soldier to hide his true identity from his master and ally himself with his master's son. These

are the knaves of Jonson's comedies who blatantly enlist the aid of disguise as a device to outwit their less clever victims, but the victims, too, sport their own brand of mask, masks of hypocrisy and imposture.

There are the birds of prey who pretend concern for the dying Volpone but wish him dead, and Morose who declares his antipathy to the noise of the human voice but never ceases to talk himself. There are Ananias and Tribulation Wholesome who pretend to a piety which disguises their avarice, and their Puritan brother Zeal-of-the land Busy who preaches abstinence and yet never fails to satisfy his appetites.

Masks of imposture are worn by another category of character in the comedies, more naive than the first type of victim mentioned, but equally foolish. These characters are obsessed with the desire to be something other than they are: Fungoso wants only to be a fashionable fop like Fastidious Brisk and struts about like a peacock always one step behind the latest fashion; the angry boy, Kastril, wants to learn the pugnacious arts of quarreling and displays an obnoxious and aggressive manner, convinced of his talent in this direction; Stephen and Matthew yearn to be sophisticated, Stephen actually using as his model the blustering braggart soldier, Bobadill, whom he apes prodigiously; and all of them behave in a ridiculous manner as they pretend to the characteristics of that which they desire to be and which is utterly foreign fo their natures.

Jonson's pet hates were hypocrisy and imposture. Scattered throughout his Discoveries are found a number of maxims related

to this aversion.

> Imposture is a specious thing; yet never worse, then when it faines to be best, and to none discover'd sooner, then the simplest. For Truth and Goodnesse are plaine, and open: but Imposture is ever asham'd of the light. (570,236-239)
>
> ...nothing is lasting that is fain'd; it will have another face then it had, ere long... (580.540-542)
>
> ...wee take pleasure in the lye, and are glad, wee can cousen ourselves... (607.1444-1445)[1]

Although the flavour of these utterances is decidedly moralistic, this morality does not intrude itself when Jonson dramatizes this theme of imposture in the comedies. When occasionally a touch of it does escape his pen it is most often found in an induction or a prologue and is never to be taken at face value. In fact, it is but another mask to be found in Jonson's comedies, the mask of the satirist.[2]

A study of the various masks to be found in Ben Jonson's comedies is an impossible task in a paper of limited length, but it was because of the importance of the mask in the very fabric of the plays that I was persuaded to explore Jonson's use of disguise rather than pursuing, for example, the use that Shakespeare puts the disguise convention to in his comedies. I will, however, have some reason to discuss disguise in the hands of Shakespeare briefly in the first section of my paper. Before plunging headlong into an examination of the disguise convention in Jonson's comedies, I prefer to offer up the first part of this essay to a general discussion of disguise, how it evolved, what its nature is, why

it is such a valuable theatrical device, and in particular, why it might have had so strong an attraction for Jonson in the composition of his comedies.

THE MASK

Disguise is the very essence of theatre and can be traced back to the beginnings of dramatic form. It was central to the primitive ritual which grew out of the belief that imitation was a powerful force able to vanquish evil spirits, conquer famine, destroy an enemy. It was believedthat if one dressed in the robes of a deity demons could be demolished and that if one wore the hide of an animal or imitated the sound of rainfall, meat and harvest were assured. Enacting the role of a hostile enemy and being struck by an arrow or spear of a member of one's tribe augured well for victory in actual battle.

This kind of sympathetic magic, taking the form of ritual, marked the beginning of the drama, and in it the mask was an essential property designed to resemble the animal, deity, or person the actor wished to represent. Donning the mask he would become, for the duration of the ritual, the creature he imitated. If he played the role of a god he would be invested with some of the supernatural powers of that deity; if he became the hunted animal, the movements and characteristics of the animal would be assumed; if he played the fearless warrior, a mask designed to strike terror in the heart of his enemy would be worn and his movements would spell out his victory.

Magic or wish-fulfillment was not the only form of ritual enactment in primitive societies; initiation of youth into

manhood was another important function of the ritual. The purpose of this particular ceremony was primarily to educate the young men of the community, to teach them the history of their tribe, its legends and myths; it was meant to familiarize them with the meaning of tribal loyalty and personal courage, and instil in them respect and fear of the gods. Masks were also used in these educative initiation rites in order that the actors might impersonate the historical and legendary figures and deities who played a prominent part in the tribal culture.[1]

I think it is worth noting these two very different kinds of ritual enactment which depended on masks to achieve their aims, for if one were to draw an invisible line from the primitive rite to the dramatic art of Ben Jonson, the two basic forms of ritual might be recognized as serving similar functions in Jonson's two forms of stage presentation, one so distinctly different from the other, and yet each using, in its own way, the tradition of the mask. Disguise is central to many of Jonson's comedies; it is an integral part of the court masque.

The masque served in the main to glorify the world of monarch and courtiers. If it was not meant to teach the members of the court their illustrious heritage, it was certainly meant to extol their virtues, to present the grandeur and dignity of the court world to those who belonged to it. The comedies, on the other hand, bear some relationship to cults based on wish-fulfillment, and in them we see characters in

disguise who assume false identities to fulfill their own desires and to pander to the desires of their victims. They conceal their own identities in order to appear to be that which their victims most want them to be. Figurative spears and arrows are directed at pretension and folly to weaken and expose them, and these enemies of mankind are stripped of the power to conquer and destroy.

The genre of the masque was born out of the simple act of disguising. The disguise was Jonson's basic material and he was obliged to create, out of the disguise, a dramatic presentation suitable to the occasion and for the audience for whom it was intended. This was a sophisticated court audience, and yet it took pleasure and delight in the act of masking, donning the garments of blackamoors, sailors, gypsies, or disguises symbolic of the virtues, in order to spend an evening in a fantasy world which reflected courtly values and provided the king and aristocracy with an entertainment in which they could participate themselves.

In spite of the vast differences in audience and purpose between comedy and masque, it would seem likely that the demands which the motif of disguise made upon Jonson in the composition of a masque would have had some influence upon the writer of the comedies. I will discuss certain advantages of disguise common in both comedy and masque later on in this section, but first I would like to consider very briefly the history of the mask as it relates to disguise for it was obviously the forerunner of the disguise motif in dramatic art.

The mask was as important in Greek theatre as it had been in the primitive ritual. These masks worn for comic and tragic roles were very large, covering the head of the actor completely. Costumes were padded. Because of the immensity of the theatres which often held audiences in excess of fifteen thousand spectators, the masks and padding served to project character and mood to the far reaches of the amphitheatre. Different character types had their own special mask: the tricky slave, the courtesan, the rustic, each had his own mask with which the audience was familiar. There were also certain emblems an actor might carry to identify his role; for example, Apollo carried a wand, Hercules a club.[2]

The mask then was a means of defining character rather than concealing it. In a sense it did conceal identity in that the actor who wore the mask obliterated his own personality and became the character his mask portrayed. The mask was chiefly an aid of mimesis, but one can see in it a thread of association with the motif of disguise. An actual disguise plot takes the mask one step further and imitation takes place within the larger mimetic design. One can easily draw further similarities between mask and disguise. For example, the flowing robes of the alchemist worn by Subtle not only conceal the artful confidence man who wears them but his costume (or mask) also identifies him as a scientist with the powers to transmute base metal into gold. In this case it is not the audience who is transported by the mask but

the willing victim within the play who is deceived because his greed makes him interpret the alchemic garb and Subtle's virtuoso performance as representing the means whereby great wealth may be effortlessly attained.

The second purpose of the early stage mask is also implicit in disguise. This purpose was to project mood and character so that both effectively reached their audience. Elizabethan theatres, unlike most of our theatres today, did not possess a proscenium arch and a curtain to focus an audience's attention, had no other lighting but daylight, and held audiences which sometimes numbered three thousand spectators. It was up to actor and playwright to seize the attention of a homogeneous, popular audience away from what was happening in the pit and the stalls to what was beginning to happen on the stage. Such a feat demanded ingenuity. There were many ways that this was achieved, and one of them was the heightened theatrical excitement created by disguise. Through the disguise the spectator is drawn into a participatory role; he becomes involved in and accomplice to the deception initiated by disguise, and both mood and character are projected successfully.

There are two comic masks belonging to early theatre I would like to mention here. The Phlyakes mask was a comic mask originating in the Greek colonies of Southern Italy and Sicily about 500 B.C.; the information we have concerning it has been recorded on vases by the Phlyakes vase painters. The name Phlyakes denotes both the players and their plays,

which were comedies usually miming mythological themes but in a burlesque fashion. The Phlyakes plays were comic reductions of heroic themes.[3] Many of these vase paintings depict the Greek gods or heroes in a way radically different from the heroic view normally held of these personages; for example, instead of the beauty and strength of the nude, the naked bodies of Zeus or Odysseus are painted with phalluses erect. This touch of obscenity has a startling effect: the hero appears rather foolish, bearing more kinship with lower animals than with the god-like creature he normally represents. Instead of a figure of adulation he becomes one of derision.[4] The reduction of man to animal is obviously an important one to Jonson who also used the mask for satiric purposes.

This reductive technique was used in another ancient comic tradition, the Atellanae, companies of comic players popular in Rome around 300 B.C.. They, too, burlesqued mythological themes although their repertoire included satires of every day life as well. Atellan farce was a combination of wit and rustic tom-foolery. Many of its techniques were meant to reduce honored themes, and language as well as the mask was used to this end. Sometimes the grandiloquent diction of the tragic genre was employed, reducing by bombast revered subjects; nonsense words were also devised for similar ends.

Each actor of the Atellanae had his own comic mask depicting one of the stock characters with whom the audience

was familiar. For example, there was the thieving slave, the fat, talkative fool, the glutton.[5] A modern day mask of this type would be the Charlie Chaplin character whose habitual traits are constant in each new comedy in which he plays a central role, and whose overlarge shoes and shuffling walk, cane and derby, identify him as the little tramp who keeps turning up in different comic situations. These stock comic characters became the earmark of the Commedia dell'arte, the Italian popular theatre of the Renaissance. The Commedia dell'arte also made lavish use of the disguise intrigue which the Atellanae developed for the comic stage.[6]

It is with the comedies of Plautus that the disguise motif was perfected, although who might have influenced him in this direction is not certain; of the Greek new comedy extant, only one comedy by Menander utilizes a disguise plot.[7] It seems more likely that it was the Atellan comedy which constituted his major source for this particular device. Maccus, the middle name of Plautus, suggests that his career in the theatre began in an Atellan company as an actor, for Maccus was a thin, clever clown, one of the stock Atellanae characters. This type of clever comic character is also a favourite in Plautus's own comedies. It may well be that disguise in Atellan comedy made him aware of its value as an instrument of theatrical effectiveness just as certain character types may have originated from the same source.

Plautus was a major influence on Ben Jonson who used the Roman comedies as models and guides. Terence wrote only

one play with a disguise plot: Eunuchus. Plautus wrote several. Four of his comedies have well-defined plots based on the disguise motif: Casina, Miles Gloriosus, Captivi, and Amphitruo.[8] The first two plays were important influences on Jonson. How this is so will be discussed in later chapters.

By the time of the Italian Renaissance, disguise was a flourishing convention. Both Plautine comedy and the Italian novelle were responsible for its popularity. In the novelle, disguise was an important technique for developing elaborate plot intrigues and complications. Italian drama combined these two sources and an infinite variety of disguise plays were written for the stage.[9]

The vogue of the disguise plot was equally popular in Elizabethan drama. There was yet another influence of disguise in Elizabethan theatre apart from Roman and Italian sources; this was the old English morality play tradition where vice would appear disguised as virtue, to be unmasked at the play's end. Jonson uses this old English technique in Cynthia's Revels, and I would suggest that this influence is not absent from the disguises of Jonson's master rogues who cleverly disguise themselves to appeal to the desires and the weaknesses of their several victims.

Mask and disguise have different functions but the one grew out of the other; both are based on imitation. The mask was the means whereby the actor disguised himself to become the person or creature he imitated. Disguise is an imitation

within an imitation and appears as the theatrical form evolves from simple ritual to a more conscious and complex medium of expression.

Disguise quite naturally is a heightening of the theatrical excitement. When a character within a play pretends to be something other than he is, he must be doubly versatile. He is, in fact, playing two roles and he must be convincing in each. In his false identity he must convince his audience, not of his new identity but of his skill in deceiving other characters in the play with his new identity. This simple situation is wrought with dramatic possibilities and for the dramatist it is an invaluable source of comic (or tragic) intrigue.

THE THEATRICAL ADVANTAGES OF DISGUISE I

Jonson's practised familiarity with disguise in the masque must have alerted him to its value for comedy. He was certainly aware of the sheer delight derived from masking. Aristotle wrote that man, by his very nature, finds pleasure in the act of imitation and Ben Jonson no doubt would say the same. Not only do his actors assume a role and become the characters they play, but his characters, too, delight in role playing, revelling in the challenge of involving others in their impersonations with all the wit and ingenuity at their command. Jeremy the butler becomes Face, and Face becomes Lungs, an alchemist's assistant; Brainworm dons the disguise of an old soldier, the justice's man, a city sergeant; Volpone is a dying man, a mountebank, a clownish sergeant of the court. Each disguise is played with such verve and gusto that the audience cannot help but become involved and participate in the act of deception.

This joy derived from disguising is age-old. We need only think back to the time of our childhood and the games of make-believe we played. Even partial disguise was enough to transform us. We carried emblems to denote our identity: the feather and spear of the boy-cum indian, the dress of a parent, a doctor's stethescope, a soldier's helmet; thus we were translated from schoolboy to the role we played, transported from home or school to a battleground, a hospital, an adult world.

On Hallowe'en night we would become, after weeks of planning, a white-sheeted ghost, a witch on a broomstick, a gypsy maid colourfully arrayed, or a piratical buccaneer with patch over eye, using much ingenuity to create a costume which might inspire a battery of compliments from those who had the good fortune to observe us, or, equally delightful, which might strike terror in the soul of an innocent bystander or the lady next door who on answering her bell found a goblin on her doorstep. Perhaps the greatest joy in the disguise on this last night of October was to so conceal identity that the goblin was not recognized as the boy next door.

This child-like joy in disguising is not absent from Jonsonian comic characters. Some of the disguises in the plays may be motivated by greed, by the desire for material gain, but there is more joy in the act of disguising and the deception which ensues than in the actual possession of the gold conned from unsuspecting victims. Volpone says as much. The play opens on Volpone's adoration of his gold and yet we soon learn that the means by which he gained it are infinitely more important and precious to him than the gold itself when he says to Mosca: "I glory more in the cunning purchase of my wealth,/ Than in the glad possession, since I gain/ No common way."

The success of Volpone's disguise is measured by his skill in feigning a terminal illness; Face relies on concealment of his true identity to achieve similar ends.

Judging by the verve of his performance, I think it can be fairly said that he shares Volpone's delight in the means by which he outwits his victims. In the character of Brainworm the only apparent motive for his disguise appears to be the joy of masking; the reasons given for the purpose of his disguise seem decidedly secondary.

Jonson, himself, we are told by Drummond, was not above disguising himself for the purpose of gleefully perpetrating a practical joke. The episode referred to involved a lady who was a devout believer in astrology. Jonson, for his own amusement, disguised himself in flowing robes and white beard and posed as a learned astrologer. The lady in question was met by candlelight and led up a ladder to a small room where Jonson held his consultation with her. It would seem that his true identity, aided by the dimness of the lighting, went undetected.[1]

Unhappily, we are not informed as to the nature of the interview or of its outcome. Knowing how well Jonson armed his characters in the comedies with the knowledge befitting their disguise, one relishes the thought that when the lady left him her head was swimming with astrological jargon; perhaps she had been given a horoscope designed by Jonson instructing her to lead a bizarre and restricted existence until the termination of that particular horoscope. These results we can only guess at but what we do learn from the interlude is that Jonson was prepared to go to a great deal of trouble and expend considerable energy solely for the

comic delight derived from the success of his deception and the joy of disguising.

THE THEATRICAL ADVANTAGES OF DISGUISE II

In both comedy and masque there is audience-involvement in the action. This takes an explicit form in the masque although only implicitly present in the comedies. The courtiers disguised, who take part in the masque presentation, actually become one with the audience as the masque culminates in the courtly dance, marking the end of the entertainment. Masquers and audience join in the grand finale. This final mingling of the two groups is anticipated with pleasure by the audience before the masque begins. The anticipation heightens the excitement of the masque proceedings as the audience identifies with its amateur participants and attends the moment when audience and masquers will unite in the dance. Thus the audience takes no passive part in the festive occasion but is drawn into direct involvement with it.

No such event takes place in the comedies, but Jonson's knowledge of where the crowning success of the masque resides, that it is in no small way due to the participation of the audience in the action, makes use of this knowledge in the comedies. Disguise in the comedies provides the perfect means of establishing complicity between actors and audience; it serves to draw the spectator into an implicit form of participation.

Let me take as an example the trio of con artists in The Alchemist. Jonson exposes them to his audience at the very outset of the comedy. The play opens on a flyting match between Subtle and Face with Dol trying vainly to break it up and bring the two men back to their senses. It is a masterful piece of exposition. The audience is introduced to the three as they really are and learns the condition of each as he was prior to his new disguised identity. Vulgar epithets are flung at one another. Each is described by the other as he was before his image was recast into alchemist and alchemist's assistant.[2] The audience, armed with this knowledge is drawn into the deception and is prepared to take part and derive pleasure from the great hoax which will hoodwink clients and fleece them of their possessions. It is as if we were invited to watch Jonson robed and bearded cozen the lady who thought him an astrologer. We know that Subtle and Face are frauds; the clients who come to their improvised alchemic laboratory do not. We are in on the joke. If we do not participate directly in it, we are in the advantageous position of superiority and can take delight in the deception; being aware of the disguise we become in a way accomplice to it.

There is undoubtedly a joy inherent in the knowledge that Dol Common is a whore and Sir Epicure Mammon's libido is aroused by the belief that she is a lady of quality. There is pleasure in seeing a common prostitute act the part of a lady, but the delight is compounded when we witness her suc-

cess in deceiving the pompous knight and are privileged to be able to bridge the gap between what is and what it appears to be in the context of the play. It also permits the spectator to enjoy the double meanings which give edge to the dialogue and are pertinent to both the real and the disguised Dol.

The delight derived from disguising and the participation of audience in the action link the use of disguise in comedy and masque, but beyond this the two genres and their use of disguise are uniquely different. The masque reflects a very different world from that of the comedies; it is the expression of an abstract, ideal world. In the comedies, on the other hand, Jonson expresses a satiric view of reality. Disguise in the masque represents and is an extension of the wearer's identity, but the purpose of disguise in the comedies is to conceal identity in order to deceive.

I have attempted to relate disguise, as far as it is justified, in Jonson's two forms of theatrical composition to show how they have certain dramatic advantages in common and to suggest that familiarity with disguise in the masque may have been an influencing factor for the liberal use he makes of disguise in the comedies.

I have presented a number of reasons why Jonson may have found disguise a useful theatrical device in the construction of several of his comedies. It had a particular appeal for the dramatist who saw all men as impostors as well as for the practical joker who took delight in hoodwinking a lady ruled by astrology. The pleasure derived from the act

of imitation, and the value of disguise in terms of audience participation, are other good reasons why Jonson was drawn to disguise. I have also hinted at another, and that is the possibilities inherent in disguise in terms of intrigue and complications of plot. This includes the ease by which the complications of a disguise plot can be resolved.

Disguise is a contrivance which creates conflicts and yet provides within itself a foreseeable resolution of the conflicts the dramatist created. Disguise is deception. When a character is in disguise his aim is to deceive, to conceal his true identity. When other characters are taken in by the ruse, accepting the false identity for the true, they are deceived. In this way action is initiated and deception compounded. The plot, under the impetus created by simple disguise, has all manner of possibility to grow dramatically. It can become exceedingly complex, the one deception creating three or four others, which in turn multiply until the conflicts created in this way seem almost impossible to resolve. And yet, in spite of the snowball effect, the playwright has the key to its resolution almost before he begins to write; he need only make known his character's true identity and all the complications are resolved.[3]

THE SATIRICAL ADVANTAGES OF DISGUISE

One of Ben Jonson's tenets for the writing of comedy was what he called realism. He adhered to the classic rule that comedy should "shew an Image of the times." In his Prologue to Every Man in His Humour he denounces the practice of his contemporaries who violate this and other classic rules for writing comedy for the stage. He had nothing but scorn for the romantic comedy of his day which he criticized for being removed from reality. He did not approve of the way in which romantic comedy ignored the classical unities of time and place, so that a child grows to manhood in a matter of minutes defying credibility, or the locale is changed from one continent to another by the mere utterance of a chorus.

Jonson's comedy of realism avoided such flagrant disavowal of the classical unities. He had no intention of offering his audiences an escape route to some fantasy land of impossibilities; on the contrary, his purpose was to draw their attention to the folly he observed in daily life. Character, action and setting are blown up to larger than life proportions, but they are not merely the result of Jonson's lively imagination; they are drawn from Jonson's London and are recognized by the playwright as excellent matter for comic absurdity.

Scorning comedy which catered to the laughter of the multitude, that comedy which reduced "all witt to the

Originall Dungcart"[1] which provoked laughter for laughter's sake only, which, furthermore, removed the comic moment from truth and reality, Jonson began a one man campaign to restore comedy to what he believed to be its rightful place in the canons of dramatic literature. He would replace slapstick by wit, fantasy by realism, and make comedy serve to expose the follies of men for all to see and deride. Those unable to appreciate his aims he stoutly refused to concern himself with. He wrote for an audience capable of appreciating his wit and his insight into human weakness and folly.

He put his observations to work to create stage situations mirroring those of real life and he had plenty of material to work with; if he was looking for practices which invited satirical comment he did not have to look far. In his comedies his targets range from the science of alchemy to the burgeoning Puritan movement. On the level of the individual he disliked most avarice and stupidity, both of which encouraged hypocrisy and self-deception. Jonson worked through the institution to the individual, that is to say, he took the practice of alchemy, for example, and collected characters who, because of greed and stupidity were drawn to a pseudo-science that promised infinite riches quickly, and without labour. He also devised characters who were shrewd enough to capitalize on the avarice of others to satisfy their own. What naturally ensued was a web of comic intrigue where one initial deception gave way to two or three more and continued to multiply itself. Disguise proved a valuable

device for Jonson to aid him in fulfilling his aims. He used the disguise convention, paradoxically, to heighten his brand of realism in the comedies. He began with the setting, creating a world which was itself transformed, and yet clearly a reflection of real life.

The travesty, one of the ancient traditions of satire, (note the etymology of the word, derived from the French 'travestir' meaning to disguise) is the ideal setting for disguised characters. The travestied world is a world where values are grotesquely inverted, yet nevertheless dependent on the real world, the norm, to make the deviation meaningful and comic. In its earliest form, the trickster was the chief character of travesty, and one recognizes in Subtle and Face, in Volpone and Mosca, sophisticated versions of this primitive character type whose main function was to debunk values and traditions held sacred in his community, to treat established institutions with irreverence, using all his comic talents to make them appear absurd.[2]

The created worlds of most of Jonson's comedies are, to varying degrees, travestied worlds. Volpone is the prime example. In Volpone's world, the worship of God is replaced by the worship of gold, men betray the base characteristics of animals, love is something to be bought and sold, trust is nourished to better deceive, in fact every human value is desecrated with an exaggeration that plainly reflects its counterpart in the real world that Jonson satirizes. Volpone and Mosca are tricksters par excellence. They are machiavel-

lian manipulators who revel in mischief and cunning, exposing the values that men normally cherish as mere covers for vice. Even the two upholders of virtue in the play, Celia and Bonario, are rendered impotent in this world of inverted values.

The travestied world of The Alchemist comes closer to actual disguise. The setting is devised by the trio of con artists to resemble an alchemic laboratory. It is, in fact, an ordinary town house in disguise, but so transformed by alembics, a furnace, and all the paraphernalia needed to create the illusion, that each client who enters the house immediately perceives what it is intended to be and not what it is. Here too, values are grotesquely inverted. The institutions under attack are the pseudo-sciences of alchemy, astrology, necromancy (and man's acquisitiveness in relation to them.) It must be remembered, also, that these were quite legitimate pursuits in seventeenth-century London.[3] If in Volpone the travestied world is one of vice, in The Alchemist it is one of folly. Each reflects the real world as if through a distorted mirror which accentuates its blemishes; each is a complete world unto itself and yet serves as a comment on the "ragged follies of the time."

One of the major purposes of the satirist is to expose folly and hypocrisy. His aim is to strip his victims of all pretense. This technique is called reduction for it reduces man to the level of his nature; it strips from him the facade which tends to make him appear other and better than he really is.[4]

Jonson employs a number of devices to this end: inflated language, animal imagery, humours, are all meant to expose pretension. But perhaps the most brutal form of reduction in the comedies is Jonson's use of disguise.

The disguisers of the comedies are the knaves and they are far from virtuous. In fact, it is their intimate knowledge of vice which makes them so adept at using it to further their own ends. They know how to appeal to the baser instincts in men. Their choice of disguise is a result of their intuitive awareness of what it is their victim most wants them to be, be it a dying man, an alchemist, an astrologer or a Queen of Fairy. In other words, Jonson's rogues adapt their disguise to their victim, and the audience, seeing the nature of the disguise, is made aware of the true nature of the victim. The faces Jonson's hypocrites show to the world, which makes them acceptable to it, drop from them and they appear completely ridiculous.

The best example of disguise used to unmask folly is found in The Alchemist. In that play there is a constant shifting of disguise to suit the client. The first disguise to reduce the victim is found in the setting, so that the victim need only enter this makeshift den of alchemy to become immediately somewhat absurd. The audience knowing it to be a den of thieves feels something of contempt for the victim's gullibility, and his position is weakened at the very outset; but when he makes his desires known and the trio of con artists are very pleased to accommodate him, he

is reduced even further. By the time he has allowed himself to be fleeced of his last farthing by the virtuoso performances of the three, and has even allowed them to put him through certain outlandish circus turns as with Dapper's required preparation for the interview with his 'aunt' the Queen of Fairy, he has become an object of ridicule which nothing can rescue him from.

I will elaborate on disguise as an instrument of reduction in the following section of my essay. So far in this first section I have tried to give some background consideration to the subject of disguise, how it may have evolved, its nature, and why and how Jonson chooses to employ the device in comedy and masque. Now, I would like to discuss briefly the different kinds of disguise as they are used in Jonsonian comedy.

KINDS OF DISGUISE

Disguise seems to fall into two major categories which I will call protective disguise and aggressive disguise. The one involves the changing of appearance as a defensive measure. The fugitive on the run from justice may alter his appearance drastically in order to avoid detection; on a sub-human level, animals, through natural selection, are camouflaged as a defense against beasts of prey. Shakespeare in his comedies favours this mode of disguise. Viola, shipwrecked in a strange land, alone and defenseless, disguises herself as a boy as a protection against her vulnerability. The disguise offers her a certain strength and independence, for in the garments of a young man she can find employment of some kind until her situation is normalized. Rosalind and Celia, banished from the court, disguise themselves as young country boy and maid respectively as a means of protection from the unknown in the forest of Arden. Julia, in order to follow her lover Proteus to Milan dons a male disguise also for purposes of protection. Protective disguise is a form of escape from danger, from powers that can destroy. Aggressive disguise is rather a wielding of power; it is manipulative. It is an instrument of deception designed to play on weakness and desires. In real life this kind of disguise rarely takes on external proportions; it is more a dissimulation than a disguise. The tyrant or the ruthless business mogul will hide his hostile intentions in order to subjugate a people or succeed in a questionable

business transaction. It is this form of aggressive disguise which serves Ben Jonson in his comedies. Dissimulation becomes larger than life and the mask worn to deceive has all the external appurtenances which might further the deception.

These two categories of disguise may be most clearly illustrated by old folk tales and by mythology. I would like to use an old Georgian tale here to demonstrate my categories of protective and aggressive disguise in their most blatant form.

In the tale of "The Master and his Apprentice"[1] the wicked master, versed in all the magic of the devil himself, takes a young apprentice to whom he passes on the knowledge of magic which he possesses. He has no intention of losing the boy, but plans to keep him in service forever. The boy, however, is not of this mind and one day he runs away. He is caught and locked in a stable. There, the boy thinks of ways to escape. It is dark in the stable but one day, noting a small stream of light coming into his prison through a crack, he transforms himself into a small mouse and escapes through this tiny aperture. When his master finds him gone, he changes himself into a cat in order to pursue and catch his mouse. At the moment he has the mouse trapped in his jaws, the boy becomes a fish, dives into the water and swims away. The master becomes a net to catch his fish, but at the moment when he is about to ensnare his prey the fish turns into a pheasant and flies away. He is pursued

by his master who has taken the shape of a falcon. Seized by the falcon's claws, the pheasant becomes an apple falling into the lap of the king. The falcon quickly changes into a knife with which the king might eat his apple but before the king can cut into it, it has changed into millet seed. The master, in order to devour the seed, transforms himself into a hen and her chicks. All seeds are eaten except one which suddenly becomes a needle. Hen and chicks become the thread in the eye of the needle and at that very moment the needle sets itself on fire and the master as thread is destroyed. The boy resumes his own shape and being free at last, returns to his father's home.

It is not disguise which this tale illustrates but transformation or metamorphosis. However, the two types of disguise are nowhere better explained. One sees the hunter and the hunted, the aggressor of hostile intent and his prey who, for purposes of protection, also undergoes transformation.

For another example of these two forms of disguise one can turn to Ovid's Metamorhoses, a favourite source of inspiration for Renaissance writers. Ovid writes of the practice of the gods in ancient mythology to take varying shapes, normally to seduce beautiful but mortal women. The maidens, too, change their shape to escape their pursuers. For example, in the myth of Apollo, the god disguises himself as a mortal to pursue Daphne. The fleeing Daphne, by her father's intervention, is transformed into a laurel tree and so escapes the unwanted attentions of Apollo. This recurring pattern of the hunter and the hunted and the physical transformations

relating to aggression or protection which it contains is perhaps the most satisfactory way of supporting my division of the uses of disguise into two major categories. Jonson found aggressive disguise, the disguise of the hunter seeking his prey, a potent comic device and a number of his comedies are built around it. Shakespeare favoured protective disguise and manipulated it to enhance the romantic themes of his comedies.

The girl disguised as a boy was an excellent device to initiate romantic complications of plot and Shakespeare used it in every possible way to further his love themes. It served as much more than a protection against danger, but it did this too, and was the motive for most of the boy disguises donned by the various heroines of his comedies. A woman of good breeding in Shakespeare's England could not act freely without danger; this was a male's prerogative. Viola could not roam in a strange land in her own person; Rosalind was safer as a young lad in the forest of Arden; even Portia could not have sued for justice maintaining her own identity or any female disguise, for a woman advocate would not have been tolerated in a court of law.

This liberation of character through disguise is also instrumental in developing character. It is paradoxical but true that by disguising her true identity Shakespeare's heroine reveals much more of it than would be possible without the disguise. The boy's doublet and hose conceal Viola's sex from Orsino and Olivia and she is able to reveal her

innermost feelings without fear of exposure. The spectator views two separate dramatic identities and, being aware of both, he is also aware of the fusion or counterpoint of the two. Viola's instinctive femininity mingles with the masculine attributes of the disguise and this provides a richness and depth to her character. Muriel Bradbrook describes the effect of these contrasted identities as one of "shot silk, as the boyish wit or the feminine sensibility predominates," and she sees the disguise serving the real character in much the same way as a sub-plot serves a plot.[2]

The girl disguised as a boy was also an effective instrument of comic irony, not the satirical reductive irony of Jonson's comedy of realism, but a more gentle, sympathetic variety befitting romantic comedy: Viola confesses her love for Orsino which she can do freely for she purports to speak of a sister she might have; Olivia falls in love with the unwilling Viola in disguise when all the overtures of love from Orsino fall on deaf ears; forced into a duel, Viola betrays her femininity by what appears to be cowardice, and Sir Andrew matches her timidity.

In the same play Shakespeare does utilize incidental disguise in a Jonsonian vein, that is, for satirical purposes. Malvolio is the target and Shakespeare reduces his Puritan spirit by derisive laughter through the medium of disguise. He is tricked into a disguise himself and dons yellow stockings, cross-gartered which make him appear ridiculous. Festes, disguised as Sir Topaz in the final scenes of the

play helps to reduce him ever further. But it is Viola's disguise which is central to Twelfth Night. For a discussion of aggressive disguise I would prefer to return to its master, Ben Jonson.

Jonson's characters fall into two general groups: the victims and the victimizers. I have noted that even the victims wear masks, but they are not the protective masks of the hunted; they are masks of hypocrisy and pretension and do not normally employ physical aids. The victimizers, on the other hand, make lavish use of external aids to attract their prey and to conceal their base motives. Perhaps another little folk tale may serve as a useful illustration.[3]

There was once a poor washerman who owned a little donkey. In order to feed his beast he dressed him in a lion's skin at nightfall and led him to a field of corn. The farmer who owned the field dared to do nothing, fearing this king of beasts. The donkey was exceedingly well-fed. One day a watchman, determined to destroy the lion once and for all, dressed himself in a grey cover and awaited the appearance of the animal. The donkey ate his full and then perceiving in the dimness of evening what appeared to be a female donkey in the distance, he trotted innocently towards it in order, perhaps to satisfy other natural appetites, and was killed by the watchman's arrow. The watchman, of course, thought his donkey disguise was appealing to a lion, and the foolish little donkey was not responsible for the mask he wore. Otherwise, there are interesting parallels to be drawn.

Jonson's foolish victims are responsible for their masks of pretension, but they too fall just as naively into the trap set for them and they too are unmasked. The watchman was initially deceived by the donkey and took him for a lion; Jonson's knaves are more astute. The hypocritical masks worn by their victims are instantly recognized and used against them, bringing them to destruction. The donkey yearned for a playmate; the yearnings of Jonson's victims are much more insidious, but like the watchman in disguise the knaves play upon these desires and the disguises they wear are shaped to conform with the grossest of these desires.

It is the masks properly belonging to actual disguise which will provide the basic material for this study. However, the fact that the masks of pretension invite the more physical disguises and are actually fed by them will demand comment in the course of this essay.

I have chosen to divide Jonson's use of aggressive disguise into five separate groups. These I will identify by the following titles:

1. The quick-change artist.
2. The male-female disguise.
3. The dying man.
4. The spy.
5. The occupational disguise.

These five groups will sometimes overlap, will occasionally include variations which I will nevertheless include in the group they most closely resemble. I intend merely to intro-

duce these different kinds of disguise here. They will be discussed in more detail when I turn to a study of the major comedies.

The Quick-change Artist

The quick-change artist is skilled in rapid shifts of identity. He is a character who finds as much joy in the act of disguising as he does in achieving the ends for which the disguise was designed. Brainworm is the quick-change artist of Every Man in His Humour. His quick-changes resemble a series of metamorphoses: in his own person he is Brainworm, servant to Edward Knowell Sr; in order to ingratiate himself with his master's son he disguises himself as Fitz-sword, an old soldier; he appears next as the Justice Clement's man, Formal, and then, finally, as a city sergeant. Not until the play's end, when he is threatened with imprisonment, does he reveal his identity to his old master and return to his original shape.

Face, in The Alchemist is perhaps an even better example of the quick-change artist. He is in reality, Jeremy, the butler, who serves a prosperous London gentleman, Lovewit by name, owner of the house in Blackfriars where most of the action of the play takes place. Because the plague rages through London, Lovewit has retired to the safety of the country leaving Jeremy behind in full charge of the house. Jeremy quickly takes advantage of the situation, transforms the house into a laboratory for alchemic experiments, grows a beard and disguises himself, sometimes as Face, an army captain, to hustle up trade for this newly incorporated

fraud and sometimes as Lungs, lab assistant to the alchemist Subtle.

These two false identities which Face (alias Jeremy) assumes demand even more skill and versatility than did Brainworm's various disguises for he is forced to be almost in two places at the same time. He must convince his victim that he is Face, the army captain, whose only concern is to enrich the 'clients' he brings to the alchemist. Then, in an instant's miraculous change, he must conceal the army captain and become Lungs, Subtle's laboratory assistant. As well as the assumption of these two roles, he must also conceal his original and true identity as Lovewit's butler. This transformation back and forth between two identities, and the dizzying quick changes involved, describes one of Jonson's most successful adaptations of the disguise convention.

Mosca, too, in Volpone shares some of the characteristics of the quick-change artist. Although he never uses physical properties for purposes of disguise, his aspect changes like quicksilver from one mode of behaviour to another depending on the nature of his victim. In fact, all of Jonson's master rogues excel in rapid shifts of role and properly belong to this group.

The Male-female Disguise

This is a disguise donned by a male character so that he may pose as a female. The best example of this disguise motif is in Epicoene. In this comedy a male impersonates

a female possessing all the virtues of silence in order to attract the noise-hating Morose. The disguise is given a double edge, for after the wedding takes place between Epicoene and Morose, the bride reveals her talkative nature. The revelation that the bride is in fact a young man in disguise is not divulged until the final scene of the play. Jonson uses this kind of 'secret' disguise in two other comedies: in The Staple of News, the audience is not aware that the beggar is actually Penniboy Sr. until quite late in the play; in The New Inn the plot is based on a whole family in disguise and neither audience nor characters are aware of it until the final denouement.

A more traditional example of the male-female disguise in Jonson's comedies is found in The Devil is an Ass. Its use, however, is only incidental to the comedy. Fitzdottrel, the chief gull of the play, imagining he will soon become a Duke (of drowned lands) fears that his wife will be unsuitable as a Duchess, not having the manners of the aristocracy. (He never doubts his own ability to comport himself in a manner befitting a duke.) Merecraft, the projector, and clever rogue of the piece, produces a fictional English widow well-versed in Spanish etiquette to instruct Mistress Fitzdottrel in the proper behaviour for a duchess. He sees a way of enriching himself further at Fitzdottrel's expense. Fitzdottrel is to present this lady with a valuable ring for her services which is meant, of course, to end up in Merecraft's pocket. Wittipol, a young gallant in love

with Fitzdottrel's wife, offers to play the role of the 'Spanish lady' in order to enjoy the presence of Mistress Fitzdottrel once again. This he does with marked success.

The male-female disguise is used here to complicate the intrigue but it is also important as a means of exposing both confidence man and his victim. As a side effect it helps to further the love theme of the sub-plot.

Wittipol's disguise has something in common with the disguise in Epicoene; however, it serves a different function in The Devil is an Ass for in the latter comedy the audience is aware of the disguise and can anticipate the resulting complications of plot.

The Dying Man

This disguise differs from the others in that the character in disguise does not conceal his identity but his condition. It deserves its own category because of the magnificence with which Volpone plays this role. The dying man is a disguise designed to attract legacy hunters armed with expensive gifts. Expecting his imminent death, Volpone's victims are very accommodating.

Man's natural tendency is to disguise the inevitable dying process. This is not only so in today's cult of youth; it was a conscious striving in the renaissance and the literature of the period attests to this. Clerimont's song of Lady Haughty's "peec'd beautie" and Capt.Otter's description of his wife's removable parts from Epicoene are examples from Jonson's own plays. The two men are repulsed by the

artificial good health of these two ladies, a result of painting, patching, powders and perfumes used to conceal the natural signs of age and decay. Bosola's railings at the old woman in The Duchess of Malfi is a more emphatic example of this tendency to hide what is not sweet and sound. Volpone's disguise goes counter to the natural tendency. He wheezes and sputters, and oil is applied to his eyelids to aid in the appearance of his decay. Because of the unexpectedness of such a disguise, it has every chance of success. It also causes an element of shock in an audience more accustomed to disguise which simulates health and beauty to conceal that which is not so, than its opposite. Another advantage of such a disguise is that it allows for striking contrast between the real and the feigned condition of Volpone.

Related to this disguise group is feigned death. Pennyboy Sr. in The Staple of News pretends to his own death so that he might come back disguised as a beggar and observe how his son handles the inheritance left to him. Feigned death was a common theatrical device of the Commedia dell'-arte. One of its purposes in Italian comedy was to uncover hypocrisy, particularly that of the dead man's relatives.[4] The motive of the feigned death disguise differs from that of the dying man and perhaps should be included in the category of thespy in disguise.

The Spy

The spy in disguise conceals the identity of a character

normally in a position of authority so that he might note the true state of affairs in the absence of his ominous presence. This kind of disguise was popular in Elizabethan drama. The most notable example that comes to mind is the spy motif in Measure for Measure. The Duke Vincentio disguises himself as a friar and is able to observe justice in the hands of the ruler he appoints to replace him in his absence. The virtuous Lord Angelo becomes corrupt through the power of his newly-appointed office and abuses justice. However, because the duke notes all that occurs, he is able eventually, to rectify the situation. This disguise is interesting because it begins as a protective disguise; it is meant to save Vincentio the disagreeable task of enforcing an edict that has long lain idle and which he fears might impair his popularity with the people. It soon has cause to change into aggressive disguise when the duke is forced to intervene in the cause of justice. Aggressive disguise is rarely found in Shakespeare's romantic comedies. The satirical nature of Measure for Measure provides a better ground for aggressive disguise. Jonson's spy gives an ironic twist to the convention. Justice Overdo conceals his identity by donning the garments of a fool, and we soon learn that this is the habit which most surely identifies him. Instead of rooting out vice at Bartholomew fair, he mistakes vice for virtue and it is he, himself, who ends up in the stocks.

The Occupational Disguise

This is one of Jonson's favourite disguises for it gives

him ample opportunity to display his learning and his mastery of language. The character in his disguise pretends to knowledge of a particular occupation and assiduously learns all the jargon of the trade. Subtle is the most obvious example. As an expert in alchemy, astrology and necromancy, he has mastered the esoteric jargons associated with these questionable occupations and quite overwhelms his victims (and the audience) by his great erudition.

Merecraft as a projector also overawes by the schemes and jargon of that dubious profession. Numerous examples could be found of this type of disguise in Jonson's comedies: In Epicoene Cutbeard and Otter assume the disguises of lawyer and parson and their language, smattered with Latin, suits their disguise; Brainworm disguised as an old soldier employs the language of that occupation: Volpone as a mountebank is yet another example of the occupational disguise.

There are a few incidental disguises, other than those listed here, which I will give brief mention to in my study of the comedies. For example, mistaken disguise, when a character suspects disguise but in fact there is none; partial or blatant disguise, when the costume is scant and far too makeshift to deceive anyone so that the ensuing comedy bears a close resemblance to farce. These will be discussed briefly along with the five major groups of disguise in the following section of this paper.

EVERY MAN IN HIS HUMOUR

The first version of Every Man in His Humour was produced in 1598. This date is worth noting because it was at this time that the quick-change artist was having his heyday on the English stage. The plays in which he performed were fast-paced comedies, and he as the central character was a wily rogue who rapidly changed from one costume to another, into a new identity and another complication of plot. Very likely these plays were influenced by the quick-change disguises of Italian comedy.[1] In the Commedia dell'arte, the zany excelled in impersonation and his genius at mimicry was responsible for the numerous disguises which he was ready to perform at the slightest provocation.[2] The rash of quick-change disguise plays on the London stage in the last few years of the sixteenth century may well have been due to the fact that the Admiral's Men, the company which presented these comedies, had an actor (much like the zany of Italian theatre)[3] whose special gift was impersonation.

Every Man in His Humour was produced by the Lord Chamberlain's Men, rivals of the Admiral's Men. It is not a quick-change disguise play as such, but one can see in the creation of Brainworm some of the characteristics of this genre of comedy. It is possible that Jonson was influenced by the vogue of the quick-change artist and introduced some of its comic aspects into his comedy of humours.

Every Man in His Humour was Jonson's first comedy which

followed classical precepts. He was firmly committed to comedy as an artistic genre in its own right and it is certain he would have had nothing but scorn for the formless disguise plays which had laughter as their sole aim. Nevertheless, Jonson's strong sense of the comic led him to recognize the value of disguise for comedy and it may be that his critical spirit prompted him to teach the playwrights of low-comedy how such disguisings could be employed in the interests of comic art.

The model for the character of Brainworm was probably the tricky slave Palaestrio in Miles Gloriosus, who delights in the art of manipulation.[4] Like Plautus's slave, Brainworm is the manipulator of the action in Every Man in His Humour; in fact, both are actually referred to as 'architects'[5] and each displays an inordinate joy in being so. The wily Palaestrio never appears in disguise, but disguise is a central action of the play. It may well be that the disguise of quick-changes developed from Miles Gloriosus.[6]

In the Roman comedy a young man's sweetheart is abducted by the braggart soldier, Pyrgopolynices.[7] When she slips out of his house to visit her rightful lover, she is discovered by one of the soldier's slaves. In order to deny his charge that it was she he had seen in the arms of another, she pretends at Palaestrio's instigation to be her own twin sister. From this point on in the play she makes rapid shifts between her real and her assumed identity. This rapid alternation

of identities may have been the original source of the quick-change disguise motif. Jonson combines the spirit and form of Miles Gloriosus with the sixteenth century vogues of quick-change disguise and humours in order to create Every Man in His Humour, but whatever his sources, the comedy and its characters are uniquely Jonson's creations.

If his first major comedy does not have the sharpness and tang of his later plays, it is nevertheless a comedy worthy of our interest. Characters like the town and country gulls, Mr Matthew and Mr Stephen, the pompous Capt Bobadill, and the absurdly jealous Kitely provide the play with an abundance of very entertaining comedy, perhaps much more of the guffaw variety than justly fits Jonson's comic theory. In these characters, certainly in Matthew, Stephen and Bobadill, we have a type of alazon or impostor that Jonson was to continue to ridicule in his later plays. Their humours of affectation, as they pretend to qualities they do not possess, make them splendid comic targets. It is the straining of Matthew and Stephen to be sophisticated and the gap that exists between their naivete and the identities they assume to impress others which prompts a good deal of comic irony in the play.

For example, when he first hears the copious curses of Bobadill, Stephen adopts a stance ridiculously out of keeping with his own nature for he finds Bobadill's manner of speech impressive; he decides to impress others in the way that he, himself, is impressed and he attempts to utter

copious oaths with equal flair. The results are disastrous; his new and ill-fitting identity merely serves to emphasize the foolishness of his character. Matthew commits similar idiocies although his most outrageous act is to steal the verses of others and cite them as his own, claiming: "I made them extempore this morning." Bobadill who swaggers and brags his way through the action, but who is in fact a notorious coward, also provides much comic irony; and the fact that one fool takes pains to imitate another, as Stephen and Matthew (and even Cob) imitate Bobadill, adds yet another comic dimension to the imitative aspect of disguise.

It is Jonson's eirons or knaves who actually practise the arts of disguise; it is they who don aggressive disguises, employing actual physical aids in order to deceive their foolish victims by concealing their true identities. Brainworm is no exception although his motives are less well-defined than those of Jonson's more wily rogues. In Every Man in His Humour it is the child-like joy derived from disguise and imitation which seems to motivate Brainworm's quick changes from one false identity into another.

The motive behind Brainworm's initial disguise is, for all intents and purposes, to ally himself with his master's son against the father who plans to follow and spy upon the young Edward Knowell. Brainworm in disguise intends to lie in wait and intercept his master to prevent him from reaching his destination. No satisfactory reason is given to explain why he would do this. We soon learn, however, of

Brainworm's youthful spirit and love of fun. He is much closer in temperament to young Knowell than to his master and this makes his transfer of allegiance as the motive for his disguisings relatively easy to accept. Nevertheless, one is tempted to believe that it is the sheer love of masking and of mischief which is responsible for his disguisings.

> S'Lid, I cannot choose but laugh, to see my selfe translated thus, from a poore creature to a creator. (II.iv.1-2)

The travesty in Every Man in His Humour has saturnalian overtones as the lowly servant usurps the master, or 'creator' role. Brainworm's joy in his disguise is derived both from the ensuing revels and from the power invested in him as a kind of lord of misrule. This is his first entrance in disguise and it is a masterful transformation. He is no longer Brainworm, the servant; he is dressed in the uniform and armour of an old soldier. Three or four patches mark his face which is covered with a smoky varnish (III.ii.36-37) aiding in the alteration of his appearance. He is obviously delighted with his new identity and the pleasure he expresses here in his disguise is repeated a number of times throughout the play as he nips on and off the stage in one or other of his roles. Not only does Brainworm look his part, but in word and gesture he captures it to perfection. When his disguise is revealed to Edward, his young master declares that Brainworm as an old soldier has

> ...every tricke of their action, as varying

> the accent, swearing with an emphasis, indeed all, with so speciall, and exquisite a grace, that (hadst thou seene him) thou would'st have sworne he might have beene Sergeant-Major, if not Lieutenant Coronell to the regiment. (III.v. 18-23)

This observance of the disguise in terms of costume, language and gesture is typical of Jonson. He insisted on probability which was in keeping with his doctrine of realism. We learn from Drummond that Jonson at one time "...had ane intention to have made a play like Plaut(us') Amphitrio but left it of, for that he could never find two so like others that he could persuade the spectators they were one."[8]

For Plautus, no problem existed when he wrote his comedy based on the twin motif. All that was necessary was to supply his actors with identical masks.[9] The English Renaissance stage had no such physical aid. This did not deter Shakespeare from writing Twelfth Night. His romantic comedy relied on the imagination of the audience to fill in the details and to suspend disbelief for the duration of the play. Jonson found such practices as distasteful as those which ignored the classical unities of time and place. But even Shakespeare would have joined Chapman in his attack on the "...stale refuge of miserable poets (who) by change of a hat or cloak...alter the whole state of a comedy....Unless (continued Chapman) your disguise be such that your face bear as great a part in it as the rest, the rest is nothing."[10]

This view was shared by all dramatists and players in

Elizabeth's England dedicated to theatre. There was a strong trend towards careful characterization and naturalism in the interpretation of roles and those who neglected to "suit the action to the word, the word to the action"[11] were criticized for the unnaturalness of their performances. The Fortune and the Red Bull were the companies most often under attack; Shakespeare's company, on the other hand, was applauded for the depth of characterization in the interpretation of roles and it would seem that the actors of the Chamberlain's Men were noted for the honesty and realism of their performances.[12]

The care that Jonson takes with Brainworm's disguises testifies to the importance he attached to this kind of realism. Not relying on the integrity of the actors of the Chamberlain's Men who produced the play, he gives detailed stage directions in the actual text of his comedy to indicate how the actor should appear in his disguise and how he should perform his part. We even learn that Fitz-sword in an adventure from out of his past was wounded in both thighs which suggests that the disguise, when donned by Brainworm, is aided by a marked limp.

Brainworm first tests his disguise on young Edward Knowell and Master Stephen. His performance is entirely convincing and his real identity is not discovered. In fact, he even manages to sell a worthless sword to Stephen who is captivated by its supposedly colourful history. Old Knowell proves more difficult. Although the disguise is a success, Brainworm is

forced to enlarge on past misfortunes in order to worm his way into his master's consideration. Bursting into tears, he relates his ill-luck and tries to wheedle a "small piece of silver" from his erstwhile employer, but all he manages to pry from him is the advice to be manly and find honest labour. The labour, finally, is provided by Knowell himself who decides to enlist Brainworm-Fitz-sword to spy upon his wayward son.

Brainworm is out of his mind with delight at his success. The irony of the situation, effected by the disguise, is obvious: Knowell's old servant has become his new servant; the master, deceived by the disguise, plans to use Brainworm who plans to use his master; hired to spy upon Edward, he welcomes his new position so that he might spy upon his master. Spy he will be, but hardly in the way the old man anticipates. Not only does he now have the means to accomplish his purpose, but, above all, it also happens to be great sport.

> Bray. O that
> my belly were hoopt now, for I am readie to
> burst with laughing! never was bottle or
> bagpipe fuller. (II.V. 133-135)

The situation is laden with irony, but just as desirable dramatically is that Brainworm's hilarity is shared by his audience; there is nothing more infectious than a good laugh.

Brainworm is without question the manipulator of the plot. He sends Knowell Sr. to Cob's on the pretext that his son will be found there;next he manages to get Formal, Justice Clement's man drunk and strips him of his clothing; disguised as Formal, he delivers a 'counterfeit' message to Kitely sending him off to Justice Clement's in order to clear the way

for young Edward Knowell and Bridget who supply the slight love theme in Every Man in His Humour.

As Formal he encounters Matthew and Bobadill who want him to procure a warrant for Downright's arrest, both highly indignant at Downright's exposure of their cowardice. In this scene Jonson uses disguise to literally strip the victims of their clothing. Brainworm refuses to consider the warrant without payment, and the two gulls, without twopence in pocket, must pay by relinquishing some belonging: Bobadill his silk stockings, Matthew a jewelled earring. Bobadill in particular is made to appear ridiculous in his semi-naked state.

Wellbred, meanwhile, arranges a meeting for the lovers of the play, and taking over from Brainworm, sends his sister off to Cob's in search of her errant husband, having planted the idea in her mind that Kitely is deceiving her. When Kitely returns having discovered the message false, he immediately suspects his wife and rushes off to Cob's to apprehend her in the act of infidelity.

The scene which ensues at Cob's home is one of the highlights of the comedy. Old Knowell, who never suspects Brainworm's disguise, quickly identifies Kitely who enters muffled in his cloak as his son in disguise. Kitely, wildly jealous of his wife, takes old Knowell as her "hoary-headed letcher." Cob, entering, is told his wife is a bawd and he beats her soundly, and the whole stage erupts with the misconceptions triggered off, primarily, by Brainworm's disguises and manipulations.

Another change of disguise and Brainworm dressed in a gown which distinguishes the occupation of a city sergeant, and carrying a mace, a city sergeant's staff of office, returns to carry out the arrest of Downright. Stephen, dressed in Downright's cloak, is mistaken for him momentarily, but the angry, blunt man himself appears on the scene, sees Stephen in his cloak and demands that Brainworm arrest him for theft.

All of these cases of temporary confusion of identity add another dimension to the motif of disguise in the play and link disguise with humours. These outrageous errors of mistaken identity are made without any deliberate effort to conceal identity. A man's humour clouds his judgment and plays tricks with his perception; he will believe what he wants to believe: Kitely consumed by jealousy will believe that an old man is the love object of his young wife; an old man obsessed with the idea that his son is a wastrel made so by bad company will identify any furtive motion in a figure whose face is concealed as his son's; Matthew and Bobadill possessed by the spirit of vengeance easily mistake Downright's cloak for the man. It is hardly difficult, then, for Brainworm in his carefully conceived disguises to be the architect of the action and manipulate these men by feeding their humours.

In Act III Scene iv Cash, ruminating on his master's humour, is met by Cob who is himself in choler, although he is unable to put the right name to it. Cash does it for him.

> Cob. Nay, I have my rewme, & I can be angrie as well as another, sir.
> Cas. Thy rewme, Cob? thy humour, thy humour? thou mistak'st.

> Cob. Humour? mack, I thinke it be so, indeed: what is that humour? some rare thing, I warrant.
> Cas. Mary Ile tell thee, COB: it is a gentleman-like monster, bred, in the speciall gallantrie of our time by affectation; and fed by folly,
> Cob. How? must it be fed?
> Cas. Oh I, humour is nothing, if it bee not fed. (III.iv.14-24)

For the most part, a character's own humour is the folly, which feeds itself, so that every act is construed in the light of the obsession. But Brainworm in disguise can provide the fuel which ignites the humour, by arranging the situation in which folly may breed.

The increasing complications of plot result in a confrontation with clear-sighted justice, as all characters bring their grievances before Justice Clement. When Clement passes judgment on Brainworm as city sergeant, arresting him for pretending to possess a warrant for Downright's detention, Brainworm is forced to reveal all and he unmasks. Despite the density of the complications caused principally by Brainworm's various disguises, the revelation of his true identity serves to dissipate them all and the action is brought dexterously to its end. Rather than receiving punishment for his mischief, Brainworm is pardoned by Justice Clement who cannot but commend him for the "wit o' the offence," as old Knowell stands amazed at the mastery exhibited by his own servant who managed to deceive him by his disguise.

> Kno. Is it possible! or that thou should'st disguise thy language so, as I should not know thee?

> Bra. O, Sir, this has beene the day
> of my metamorphosis! (V.iii.81-84)

This final scene reveals a number of things. First, it once again emphasizes the excellence of Brainworm's disguises, particularly his disguise as Fitz-sword, an occupational disguise utilizing the jargon of soldiery. No mere change of a cloak has been the means to transform Brainworm, who compares his quick-changes to divine transformation. It also reaffirms Brainworm's delight in his disguisings; above all, it expresses Ben Jonson's love of wit. The fools Stephen, Matthew and Bobadill are not excused for their behaviour as is Brainworm. In fact, in the first version of his play, Jonson has the astute judge mete out some sufficiently harsh sentences:

> Well now my two Signior Out-sides, stand foorth, and lend me your large ears, to a sentence, to a sentence: first you signior shall this night to the cage, and so shall you sir, from thence to morrow morning, you signior shall be carried to the market crosse, and be there bound: and so shall you sir, in a large motlie coate, with a rodde at your girdle; and you in an olde suit of sackcloth, and the ashes of your papers....(V.v.355-363)

Stephen is sentenced to the wearing of motley, the garment of the fool, Matthew to sackcloth and the ashes of his execrable verse; Bobadill, too, is included in this punishment. In the earlier version of the play we get a comic twist to the disguise motif as the punishment forces the victims out of doublet and hose and into the clothing which more surely identifies them. However, in the folio of 1616, Jonson re-

wrote this ending, perhaps deciding that their folly in itself was punishment enough. In the revised version, these characters are merely barred from the wedding festivities that are about to begin as the play ends.

Jonson learns to put the disguise motif to more potent use in his later comedies. Disguise as an instrument of reduction is not a major technique in Every Man in His Humour. The plays that follow will provide better illustrations of this aspect of disguise and its use for satirical purposes. Brainworm is, however, the forerunner of the quick-change artist which Jonson perfects in the character of Face, and this brief study prepares us for another look at this technique in The Alchemist.

VOLPONE

Preying on dying men in order to fall heir to their fortunes was not a notable Elizabethan practice and it is more than likely that the idea for the plot of Volpone came from classical sources. Both Horace and Juvenal deride this form of avarice in their satires; Lucian in his Dialogues of the Dead handles this theme; and one of the episodes of Petronius's Satiricon is based on the Roman malpractice of legacy hunting. In Satiricon, Eumolpus comes to the city of Croton which is overrun with would-be heirs and those they prey upon; with the prospect of growing rich without effort, he pretends to be an old man in failing health whose son has just died. He has violent fits of coughing, talks endlessly of gold, spends much of his time at his account books, and makes out a new will every month, all to excel in the role which will attract those who hope to benefit by his death. He soon has a number of hopefuls vying with each other to feast him and shower him with gold.[1] Volpone, like Eumolpus, also takes pains to attract legacy seekers in order to enrich himself at their expense. For this purpose he disguises his lusty good health by playing the role of a dying man.

In his study Disguise Plots in Elizabethan Drama, O.V. Freeburg does not consider Volpone as a disguise plot. His definition of disguise limits the convention to the actual concealment of identity. He admits that disguise has many relatives and he imposes a limitation on his study to prevent

it from taking on a scope larger than his book can develop adequately. I will not impose this restriction here. Volpone as far as this essay is concerned has a disguise plot which is based on concealment of the Magnifico's condition. It is his brilliant performance of a dying man which brings the birds of prey circling to await his end.

The satirical device of travesty has its best illustration in this particular play by Jonson. I have already noted the relation of travesty to disguise from which the name is taken and the fact that Volpone provides the best example. The world which Volpone inhabits is a grotesque inversion of the world of reality and yet it serves to reflect many of the evils of that world. Values and sacred institutions are transformed, becoming fantastic distortions of all that one normally cherishes as valuable. The spiritual man is reduced to an animal and it is gold which is the object of worship, displacing God and Christian values.

The play opens on Volpone's morning devotions; they parallel Christian devotion and shock the audience into an awareness of travesty.

> Good morning to the day; and next, my gold:
> Open the shrine, that I may see my saint.
> Haile the worlds soule, and mine. More glad then is
> The teeming earth, to see the long'd-for sunne
> Peep through the hornes of the celestiall ram,
> Am I, to view thy splendor, darkening his:
> That, lying here, amongst my other hoords,
> Shew'st like a flame, by night; or like the day
> Strooke out of chaos, when all darkenesse fled
> Unto the center. O thou sonne of Sol,
> (But brighter than thy father) let me kisse,
> With adoration, thee, and every relique
> Of sacred treasure, in this blessed roome. (I.i.1-13)

The gold has its shrine; it is Volpone's saint, and the world's soul whose brilliance outdoes the splendour of the sun, reducing it to darkness by comparison. The language of this opening passage is loaded with religious images. The gold is a 'relic', a 'sacred treasure' and its 'shrine' a 'blessed room.' Volpone bows before it with 'adoration' acting out his religious devotions before a golden calf.

> Deare saint,
> Riches, the dumbe god, that giv'st all men tongues:
> That can'st doe nought, and yet mak'st men doe all things;
> The price of soules; even hell, with thee to boot,
> Is made worth heaven! Thou art vertue, fame,
> Honour, and all things else! Who can get thee,
> He shall be noble, valiant, honest, wise -- (I.i.21-27)

This travesty, brilliantly conceived by Jonson, sets the scene for the grotesqueries that will ensue. Hyperbole gives the scene a heroism which the object of worship belies. Human values are turned upside down and all the virtues normally attributed to God's wisdom are here lavished on gold. The world is transformed, its soul reduced to gross matter, its people to animals, blatantly named so by Jonson to describe the nature of this world.

Travesty conceals true values and at the same time reveals them; it is the mask which unmasks. The creation of a world so removed from the norm exposes similar deviations from spiritual and ethical values in the real world. The exaggeration in the world of the play identifies such perversion of values as something monstrous. This is a dehumanized world where men no longer possess qualities which raise them to a level removed

from their animal natures. The characters in the play are so akin to animals that any simulation of human qualities is but a thin disguise to conceal their base motives. The concern the legacy hunters show for the dying Volpone attempts to disguise the crow, the raven and the vulture whose instinctive desire is to devour him and his gold. Corbaccio is the loving father who willingly disinherits his son in his lust for gold; Corvino guards his wife and his honour jealously, but she is merely another possession, less valuable than gold for he is prepared to sell her and his honour and cuckold himself for gold; Voltore assumes the role of a representative of justice, but debases the law without a qualm to gain his own advantage. Any human qualities they may possess are completely negated by their animal natures; their human disguises are transparent and betray them.

Volpone is the sly fox with a massive appetite for the starkly physical world of the flesh and gold. He feeds on all that relates to man's baser instincts. His pretense of affection for his would-be heirs disguises the sly and predatory nature he shares with his namesake. Because of his desire for Celia, he trades his disguise of physical decay for that of a charlatan, both disguises representing the extent of his depravity. However, he is the only character who actually admits to disguise and he aptly chooses masks which best reveal his base nature.

Mosca is the fly who feeds on the fox, disguising as loyalty the intention to bleed his master dry if he can. He

puts on a new face for each of the victims, convincing them all of his dedication to their cause. The best demonstration of a human quality in Mosca is his wit, but even this betrays itself as the cunning of an animal who thinks of nothing but the capture of its prey.

The dwarf, the eunuch and the hermaphrodite, Volpone's bastard offspring, emphasize the perversion of this world and of Volpone. They are the personification of a deformed world and are beyond all possibility of human disguise being twisted creatures in both body and mind.

The movement of the play is always downward to the point that hell becomes a more attractive proposition than heaven, a fitting haven for the animals which will inhabit it. The paradox is that this nether world of the play is expressed in such imaginative and heroic terms that it exudes a magnetism causing both attraction and repulsion for the audience who views it. The wit and versatility of both Volpone and Mosca prompts admiration rather than abhorrence; only the birds of prey incite our scorn as their roles are reversed and instead of devouring their prey, they are preyed upon by the clever fox and his parasite.

When Volpone acts out his death throes he delights in his disguise, manipulating his victims through their own greed. They bring him valuable gifts to win his favour and secure his estate, while both he and Mosca encourage them in their hopes with an unsurpassed brilliance and craft. This keeps them coming and the gifts flowing in to add to the wealth

which has already been accumulated in this way. Their performances sparkle. Volpone costumes himself in special robes for his part: a gown, furs, and nightcap conceal his glowing animal health. Mosca applies a special lotion to his eyes to aid the deception. The bed is prepared and Volpone with his various symptoms is decked upon it ready to greet his first visitor of the day.

> Now, my fain'd cough, my phthisick, and my gout,
> My apoplexie, palsie, and catarrhes,
> Helpe with your forced functions, this my posture.
> Wherein, this three yeere, I have milk'd their hopes.
> He comes, I heare him (uh, uh, uh, uh)O. (I.ii.124-128)

The new role is adopted and the lusty adorer of his gold is transformed into a dying man to greet his first victim. Voltore, the vulture. The contrast between Volpone's two identities is superb. Now the voice is weak and thin, hardly discernible to any but Mosca. He even pretends to be nearly blind as he gropes for Voltore, not seeing him. The audience sees this specious groping for what it is, a reaching out to clutch the huge antique plate, the present brought to him by Voltore. Voltore, on the other hand, believes it to be a display of affection for himself. In this way, disguise lends itself extraordinarily well to the comic intention; the audience is aware of the real character as well as the feigned, and therefore the action has a double significance, one for each of his roles. The victim has no such knowledge and reacts to the feigned identity only.

There are other comic advantages to Volpone's disguise

For example, in this scene and others, the bird of prey, believing Volpone incapable of hearing or comprehending him, speaks out freely to Mosca about his hopes for Volpone's death and his gold. This aspect of disguise is demonstrated in all scenes where the birds of prey hover over Volpone's sick bed, but most brilliantly so when Corvino comes to pay his call.

Mosca helps to reassure Corvino that Volpone hears nothing.

> Corv. Art sure he does not
> heare us?
> Mos. Sure, sir? why looke you, credit your
> owne sense.
> The poxe approch, and adde to your diseases,
> If it would send you hence the sooner, sir.
> For your incontinence, it hath deserv'd it
> Throughly, and throughly, and the plague to boot.
> (You may come neere, sir) would you would once close
> Those filthy eyes of yours, that flow with slime,
> Like two frog-pits; and those same hanging cheeks,
> Cover'd with hide, in stead of skin: (nay, helpe, sir)
> That looke like frozen dish-clouts, set on end.
> Corv. Or, like an old smok'd wall, on which
> the raine
> Ran downe in streakes. Mos. Excellent, sir,
> speake out; (I.v.50-62)

Corvino's reserve is cut loose and insults gather force as they fall from his lips. The comedy of the scene is heightened by the participation of the audience in the deception. Comic appreciation is derived from the knowledge that Volpone is, in fact, in the best of health. As evil as he is, the audience is on Volpone's side, not only because his victims are as evil as he, but primarily because of their gullibility. The combination of ignorance and vice is insupportable. Jonson's birds become objects of ridicule as Volpone's disguise unmasks their base natures.

A scene like the one just quoted also contains elements of farce; one laughs at the absurdity of the scene before him. Although Jonson abhorred laughter for its own sake, he was a past master at including farcical situations and imbuing them with significance. There is no question that he found disguise the perfect technique to combine delight with ironic comment.

Disguise is employed in a number of lesser capacities throughout the play where the disguise actually conceals identity for one purpose or another. In the mountebank scene, Volpone disguises himself in order to catch a glimpse of the beautiful Celia, Corvino's wife, who is kept very close to her quarters by a jealous husband. Mosca describes her beauty to Volpone in such exalted terms that Volpone is sexually aroused and he decides he must have her. She is, Mosca tells his master, "bright as your gold! and lovely, as your gold!" No other simile could have worked so well on Volpone. The problem to be overcome is that he is supposed to be atdeath's door and the only way he might know her is by disguising his true identity. Just as he delights in playing the role of a dying man, he throws himself into the part of a mountebank with enormous zeal and some little preparation before hand, for as he mounts the platform in the middle of the square beneath Celia's window, he is so well-versed in the patter of a mountebank that Mosca says of his performance: "Scoto himselfe could hardly have distinguish'd!"

Garbed in an embroidered suit, jewelled, feathered and

bearded, Volpone becomes Scoto de Mantua. Both Mosca and Nano don disguises as they make their entrance onto the stage to supervise the building of another, smaller stage on which Volpone will play his part.

When Volpone enters disguised as the mountebank doctor, he is followed by a crowd he has already gathered. He turns to Nano and throws him a command: "Mount, Zany." I spoke of the zany (or zanni) of the Commedia dell'arte who was skilled in mimicry when I discussed the quick-change artist of multi-disguise plays. Scoto of Mantua was also connected with these Italian professional comedians. The mountebank stages were sometimes used by the Commedia dell'arte and the mountebank, himself, often had his own company of players to entertain his audience and add to his profit. Such companies included "actors...rope walkers, jugglers, and charlatans who put up platforms in the public squares in order to sell their oils, unguents and pomades."[2] There is some evidence that Scoto of Mantua was the head of such a company which visited England[3] and it is quite possible that Jonson's familiarity with the mountebank comes from actually seeing him at work.

Volpone mounts the stage that was erected for him in the piazza and gives a brilliant performance. Jonson's gift for jargon is amply demonstrated in this scene; Sir Politic Would Be is overcome with admiration for Scoto's polished presentation and one suspects that Jonson deliberately elicits this praise from Sir Pol in order to ensure that the audience, too, will admire his flair for language.

> Volp. These turdy-facy-nasty-paty-lousy-farticall rogues, with one poore groats-worth of un-prepar'd antimony, finely wrapt up in severall 'scar toccios, are able, very well, to kill their twentie a weeke, and play; yet, these meagre starv'd spirits, who have halfe stopt the organs of their mindes with earthy appilations, want not their favourers among your shrivel'd, sallad-eating artizans: who are over-joy'd, that they may have their halfe-pe'rth of physick, though it purge 'hem into another world, 't makes no matter.
> Pol. Excellent! ha' you heard better language, sir? (II.ii.59-68)

Just as Volpone revels more in the means by which he gains his wealth, through his masterful manipulation of the legacy seekers, so he delights in his performance of Scoto de Mantua designed to bring him closer to the possession of the beautiful Celia. Style is all. Even at that moment when she is there, alone with him in his room, Volpone seems to derive as much pleasure from his performance and his projection of how they will act out their sexual union, than, one would think, he could possibly derive from the act itself. The voluptuous and hyperbolic language paints a love tryst as ingenious and as varied as all his previous performances put together. The imagined shapes Volpone proposes they take to heighten their lust and to save it from any possible satiation has the same kind of motive which causes him to display similar versatility as he fleeces his victims of their gold. The way, the means, the method, far exceeds any satisfaction to be had from the actual attainment. Volpone sets the scene and proposes the scenario for their union.

> ...my dwarfe shall dance,
> My eunuch sing, my foole make up the antique.
> Whil'st, we, in changed shapes, act OVIDS tales,
> Thou, like EUROPA now, and I like JOVE,
> Then I like MARS, and thou like ERYCINE,
> So, of the rest, till we have quite run through
> And weary'd all the fables of the gods.
> Then will I have thee in more moderne formes,
> Brave Tuscan lady, or proud Spanish beauty;
> Sometimes unto the Persian sophies wife;
> Or the grand-signiors mistresse; and, for change,
> To one of our most art-full courtizans,
> Or some quick Negro, or cold Russian;
> And I will meet thee, in as many shapes:
> Where we may, so trans-fuse our wandring souls,
> Out at our lippes, and score up summes of
> pleasures... (III.vii.219-235)

The passage contains a direct reference to Ovid's widely read work on disguise, Metamorphoses, a book undoubtedly influential in nurturing disguise themes in Renaissance literature. Volpone would here transform himself into a Jove or a Mars, finding disguise as essential for his amorous pleasures as did the god Zeus who took the form of a swan in order to possess Leda, the form of a bull to have Europa. But Volpone would even outdo Zeus. His transformations are no mere devices to conceal identity as a means to an end; the means is an end in itself. Thus with the disguises of a dying man, a charlatan, and the proposed disguises which will incite to passion, Jonson weaves the disguise motif into the fabric of his play.

If Volpone's dying man disguise reflects his moral depravity, so do his projected disguises for heightening the eroticism in his love play with Celia. This dressing up in varied disguises is a form of sexual deviation reminiscent of Jean Genet's Le Balcon. Volpone only contemplates its

delights; the subject of Genet's play is the actual acting out of obsessive fantasy roles which ordinary life has denied his insignificant, twisted characters. Genet aptly sets his scene in a brothel; the tone of his play is as mocking and as brutal as Jonson's, but it lacks the comic dimension which makes Volpone a less terrifying experience.

Volpone is not alone in his enthusiastic role playing; in many respects Mosca exceeds him. He is all things to all people and changes face as the occasion demands with a nimbleness of the born spirit of mischief. He, too, delights more in the performance than that which motivates it, although the end he has in mind is clearly defined; it is gold, and if possible he will bilk his own master out of it. However, it is his own cleverness and cunning, not gold, with which he is completely captivated.

> I feare, I shall begin to grow in love
> With my deare selfe, and my most prosp'rous
> parts,
> They doe so spring, and burgeon; I can feele
> A whimsey i' my bloud: (I know not how)
> Successe hath made me wanton. I could skip
> Out of my skin, now, like a subtill snake,
> I am so limber. (III.i.1-7)

He is no ordinary parasite

> But your fine, elegant rascall, that can rise
> And stoope (almost together) like an arrow;
> Shoot through the aire, as nimbly as a starre;
> Turne short, as doth a swallow; and be here,
> And there, and here, and yonder, all at once;
> Present to any humour, all occasion;
> And change a visor, swifter, then a thought!
> (III.i.23-29)

Here is a consuming passion, not just for himself, but for the

sheer love of masking, for agile and versatile performance; Jonson's main characters, to whom we most relate, are all actors to their fingertips and delight in the assumption of many roles. Disguise thrives in such a setting; it becomes a major instrument in the definition of his rogues. The occasion and nature of the disguise also defines the victims of Jonson's comedies. Their baseness and foolishness are revealed as the knave in disguise feeds their greed and folly.

When Bonario rushes into the scene having discovered Volpone in lusty health, chasing the fair and virtuous Celia around the bed and rape is imminent, Celia is snatched from the jaws of the cunning fox and the ruse of the dying Volpone is exposed. All appears to be lost; good has vanquished evil and the moral seems clear. The forces of good are all-powerful and the pair of villains are undone. A romanticized version of life would have it so, but Jonson is ever the realist; his 'good' characters are paled by his master rogues into insignificance. It is his villains who have dimensions of grandeur and heroism; the goodness of Celia and Bonario is insipid by comparison. Nevertheless, Volpone seems beaten at the moment of Bonario's intervention and all does indeed seem lost.

> Volp. Fall on me, roofe, and bury me in ruine,
> Become my grave, that wert my shelter. O!
> I am un-masqu'd, un-spirited, un-done,
> Betray'd to beggery, to infamy -- (III.vii.275-278)

Mosca is equally distraught; he feels responsible for the entire debacle. It looks as though the turning point in

their fortunes has been reached. This is a favourite crisis with Jonson. At the moment when all seems at an end, the cunning of the rogue comes forth and saves the situation. Corbaccio enters and Mosca's fertile brain hatches a new scheme to rescue the three year old hoax and bring it back to credibility. Corbaccio is given a rather distorted account of the events which have just taken place. He is told that his son, Bonario, enraged by the news that he had somehow discovered, that his father had disinherited him, had come into Volpone's home like a madman vowing he would kill his father. When Corbaccio hears of his son's behaviour and intentions, he is obviously much relieved in conscience regarding the unnatural steps he had taken in the matter of his will. He even feels quite self-righteous about making Volpone his sole benefactor. Mosca still has to deal with Bonario, and his problems are multiplied when Corvino enters and overhears Mosca's avowals of fidelity to Corbaccio. With his usual flattery, he manages to make Corvino believe that he is involved in a plot to enrich Corvino himself; by Corbaccio's will, Corvino will be that much richer. Corvino, because of his greed which makes him believe what he wants to believe, is easy game for Mosca.

Mosca also sees a way of discrediting Bonario. When Voltore arrives on the scene, he proceeds to tell him of Bonario's rage at being disinherited and how it is likely to result in genocide. He then reassures Voltore that if these actions come to pass it will be in Voltore's interests because it is

he who is Volpone's heir. In his cunning, Mosca also sees a way of altering the significance of the events which have just past. He then recounts the story of Corvino's wife, Celia, making it appear that an innocent visit was described as a rape by Bonario in order to do harm to Volpone's reputation to spite his father's decision to disinherit him. Mosca's inventive cunning has paved the way out of the crisis. The evil intentions of master and parasite do not seem quite as threatened now because of Mosca's wit and the greed of his victims. A new performance is designed which takes all parties to trial. Each has a role to play.

> Mos. Is the lie
> Safely convai'd amongst us? is that sure?
> Knowes every man his burden? (IV.iv.3-5)

Voltore plays the chief role as advocate; he wears no disguise except the lie. It is Volpone who must play out the most difficult deception when he is carried on a couch into the senate and his skill at disguising his true condition is given its most severe test. The ruse succeeds and the only two characters representative of goodness in the play are exposed publicly as shameful and brazen. The success of this most difficult performance makes Volpone bold and he decides he will enjoy more sport; he will have Mosca announce his death and pretend to be heir to Volpone's fortune, so that he might amuse himself by the destruction of all the hopes of his would-be heirs.

This time it is Volpone who stage-manages the scene, sending Mosca off to put on a gown and dress for his part.

> Get thee a cap, a count-booke, pen and inke,
> Papers afore thee; sit, as thou wert taking
> An inventory of parcels: I'll get up,
> Behind the cortine, on a stoole, and harken...
> (V.ii.82-24)

Mosca is costumed in cap and gown and all his essential stage properties are made ready. The victims arrive, and one by one their hopes are crushed in plain view of Volpone who gloats over their destruction as he spies on the scene from behind the curtain.

Mosca plays his part with aplomb as always; the audience views the scene from the superior vantage point of sharing in the deception, and awaits the reaction of the victim as the light of truth dawns upon him and he realizes he has been deceived.

Not content with striking down his victims, Volpone must torture them further. Again disguise is employed. Mosca in the robes of a Clarissimo with a red cap upon his head, the signs of his new station, Volpone in the habit of a Commandadore which disguises not only his station but his identity as well, go abroad together to torment their abused victims.

Mosca enjoys his new status too well and plans how he may guard it and dupe Volpone out of all. Even a fine marriage seems in the offing; the fourth avocatore sees in Mosca's new condition the ideal match for his daughter. Mosca is determined to keep Volpone dead and Volpone is forced to unmask in the senate hall. He sees that all is lost, but he will have Mosca join him in his ruin. The [illegible]e plot is exposed and each of its participants is senten[illegible]to different

forms of severe punishment.

Thus disguise serves many functions in Volpone; primarily it serves to enhance the versatile performance of characters whose chief joy is to act out a variety of roles. This joy extends to the audience, itself, who frequents the theatre to take pleasure in the art of acting and imitation. The roles within roles provide a heightening of this pleasure for the spectator. The adoption of various masks also invites the spectators to participate in the many hoaxes for they are always aware of the character's two identities. The complexities of the intrigue are multiplied through the disguise device, and yet their resolution requires only that the disguised person unmask and make his real identity known. As a technique of satire, disguise is unsurpassed. The avarice of each of the victims is exposed as he mistakes the disguise for the true condition or identity of the two rogues and he is reduced to matter for ridicule. All these benefits are implicit in the use of disguise in Volpone but the dexterity of Jonson's use of disguise is apparent in the texture of the play as a whole: the setting is a travesty, the situation a hoax, the characters themselves actors and disguise their costume, the theme is deception and self-deception while disguise reveals the one and the other. The potency of disguise is also given explicit reference in the play. Says Mosca:

> Hood an asse, with reverend purple,
> So you can hide his two ambitious eares
> And, he shall passe for a cathedrall Doctor.
> (I.ii.111-113)

Even a fool given the proper costume can disguise his folly to pass for a wise man. What a man appears to be, others are too ready to accept as such and it is this knowledge that encourages the two rogues to indulge in disguise. Although their performances are brilliant they know that most men are basically fools, prepared to believe what they see on the surface without probing to the reality beneath. Mosca in the robes of a Clarissimo is made respectable, a desirable match for a judge's daughter.

But it is not only the victims who are unmasked by Volpone's disguise; his assumed condition of physical decay is the true reflection of his moral depravity and his animality: "Those filthy eyes...that flow with slime/Like two frogpits... those same hanging cheeks/Cover'd with hide, in stead of skin..." (I.v.57-59). Volpone's Scoto disguise is also revealing, exposing him as the charlatan he really is.[4]

The sub plot of Volpone contains disguise as well. It takes quite a different form to what we have encountered in the comedies so far and therefore it is worth brief mention here. Mosca, to rid Volpone of Lady Politick's unwanted attentions, sends her flying after her husband whom he claims is in the company of a "most cunning courtezan." Lady Pol apprehends her husband with Peregrine, a gentleman traveller, and her jealousy clouding her vision, she is convinced he is the seductive wench in man's apparel. The situation is extremely comic because it is so absurd; here we have a case of disguise where in fact there is none. Jonson had the kernel

of this mistaken disguise in Every Man in His Humour when Old Knowell who is absolutely taken in by Brainworm's disguise does, at one point in the play (IV x), mistake Kitely for his son in disguise. The idea is not carried through in that play as it is in this scene from Volpone.

In spite of Peregrine's denial of her charge, Lady Pol persists in believing him to be a courtesan in disguise. It is Mosca who finally dissuades her, by assuring her that the harlot he had spoken of had been arrested and that Peregrine was definitely not a whore in man's clothing. If Lady Pol had any semblance of dignity before this episode, it is shattered by this scene and she becomes an object of ridicule.

One other instance of disguise in the sub plot should be mentioned here. Peregrine, having been given the seeds of an idea from this absurd case of mistaken identity, decides to have a little sport with Sir Pol and dons the disguise of a merchant. He convinces the knight that the young gentleman traveller he encountered earlier was in truth a spy who had been set upon him.

> And, he has made relation to the Senate,
> That you profest to him, to have a plot,
> To sell the state of Venice, to the Turke...
> (V.iv.36-38)

He claims that there is a warrant out for Sir Pol's arrest on these grounds, and Sir Pol, hearing a knocking at the door, and prepared for such emergencies, hides himself under a tortoise shell.

> with this cap,
> And my blacke gloves, I'le lye, sir, like
> a tortoyse,
> Till they are gone. (V.v.57-59)

The scene is delightfully absurd, and the foolish knight, like his lady, is bared of all pretension. The Politick Would Bes are a different kind of bird; they are a couple of foolish parrots, their humours not so heinous as those of the birds of prey. The mirth provoked by their exposure is more wholesome; we laugh at folly and not at crime.

EPICOENE

The male-female disguise was undoubtedly the most popular disguise in renaissance drama. The fact that all female roles were played by boy actors must have encouraged the use of this particular disguise. Shakespeare introduces the girl disguised as a boy again and again in his romantic comedies; the boy disguised as a girl, as in Epicoene was also a fairly common device on the renaissance stage by the time that Jonson employed it although his source is generally considered to be Plautus's Casina. However, Jonson's comedy is very different from Casina or any of the male-female disguise plots which preceded it. In Epicoene, Jonson uses the disguise of a boy impersonating a woman but it is a guarded surprise and the audience is kept totally ignorant of Epicoene's real identity until the final scene of the comedy. Complications of plot are not incurred by the disguise but are rather initiated by Morose's 'humour', his violent aversion to noise.[1]

Epicoene's disguise does not effect comic irony or reduction until, at the last moment, her disguise is revealed and we learn her true identity. Not only does Jonson deprive his audience of the knowledge that Epicoene is really a boy, but Dauphine keeps his cohorts Truewit and Clerimont in the dark about Epicoene's identity, and Truewit complains of this deception in the last speech of the play.

> Well, DAUPHINE, you have lurch'd your friends of the better halfe of the garland, by concealing this part of the plot! (V.v224-226)

Freeburg wonders if this speech might reflect Jonson's doubt as to the desirability of using a disguise plot wherein the audience is robbed of the possibility of participation. Considering Jonson's association with the masque, where participation is mandatory and in fact in great measure responsible for its success, considering also the successful application of disguise in his other comedies as audience is informed and becomes accomplice to the ensuing deceptions, it may well be that Jonson was questioning the value of the surprise ending. Would the fact of knowing of the disguise during its performance have heightened the pleasure and comic effectiveness of Epicoene? Not only does the silent woman become strong-willed, noisy and highly vocal, to the absolute consternation of Morose who has just married her for the silent qualities he thought she possessed, but if we, the audience, had also known that this chatterbox of a woman was a boy in disguise, I wonder if the situation would have been more comic. I think not; knowing this we would have realized too soon that Morose was destined to escape the hell he so richly deserved. There is a slightly malicious or self-righteous satisfaction derived from the belief that being wedded for life to a chattering female was a punishment he had earned through his self-centred and obnoxious humour.

The revelation of the disguise at the end of the play has some very distinct advantages in this comedy. It causes the spectator to review certain episodes he has just witnessed with extraordinary delight as the comic aspects of those episodes are intensified in the light of this new knowledge. The avowals of Daw and La Foole provide the best example. Each admits that he has enjoyed the favours of Epicoene before her marriage. Learning that Epicoene is a boy in disguise strips them absolutely bare of their pretensions in the eyes of characters and audience alike and the scenes where their declarations took place leap to memory, not only enjoyed again, but thedelight this second time is far greater.

In Epicoene's first entrance (II.v) she wears a mask and at Morose's request removes it. One wonders why Jonson has her enter masked. The audience has heard much of her by this stage of the play and anticipates her entry into the action. Perhaps Jonson's purpose is to momentarily delay the revelation of her identity to make the moment more dramatic; perhaps it his little in-joke because the unmasking does not in fact reveal her identity. We have so little information about this aspect of Elizabethan stage performance. The mask was an intrinsic property of the Commedia dell'arte; it was also central to the court masque. Was it also commonplace in comedy or does it have a unique function in Epicoene? It is hardly of major importance to the play but considering the subject of this paper, it is worth at least a token acknowledgment.

There is another instance of costuming which is worth

mention in passing. As Morose's humour is revealed to us in the dialogue between Clerimont and Truewit in the first scene of the play, we learn that Morose's humour is identified by his headgear. Truewit says of Morose:

> Tru. I met that stiffe peece of formalitie, his uncle, yesterday, with a huge turbant of night-caps on his head, buckled over his eares.
> Cle. O, that's his custome when he walkes abroad. Hee can endure no noise, man. (I.i.143-147)

It also reminds one of the emblems and masks in Greek theatre used to identify the characters who wore them. Thus, Morose's humour, his aversion to noise (which does not extend to his own person and his own propensity to talk) is identified by a grotesque form of head wear which provokes laughter by its very appearance and aids the actor in provoking laughter by what he does and what he says.

There are two other scenes in the play which utilize disguise apart from the central male-female disguise upon which the comedy is structured. The practical joke which Clerimont, Truewit and Dauphine play on Daw and La Foole is one instance of disguise used as an instrument of comic reduction. The other use of disguise in Epicoene is found in the scene of deception practised on Morose by Cutbeard and Otter as they pretend to lawyer and parson respectively in order to instruct Morose in the methods whereby divorce may be obtained.

The first scene is set up to play upon the foolishness and pretensions of Daw and La Foole. They are to be made sport of, and plans are laid as a playwright might devise a scene for a play. Truewit will be the leading player and will manipulate

the two gulls like puppets on the strings.

> here will I act such
> a tragi-comoedy betweene the Guelphes, and the Ghibellines,
> DAW and LA FOOLE-- which of 'hem comes out first,
> will I seize on: (you two shall be the chorus behind the arras, and whip out betweene acts, and
> speake.) (IV.v.30-34)

Truewit's first task is to lay the groundwork for the scene and prepare his puppets for their roles. Each one is informed that the other is out for blood; both are reduced to fear and trembling by the supposedly violent intentions of the other, and go into hiding. As the scene progresses, the audience within the play is swelled as the Collegiate ladies are brought in to watch the spectacle of their favourites being stripped of their pretensions and reduced to absurdity. In a sense, this reduction extends to the ladies, themselves, who have shown their favours to the two, deceived by the sophisticated posturings of Daw and La Foole.

Truewit continues to stagemanage his tragi-comedy; Dauphine is sent offstage to don his disguise.

> There's
> a carpet i' the next roome, put it on, with this scarfe over thy face, and a cushion o' thy head,
> and bee ready when I call AMOROUS. Away-- (IV.v.256-259)

John Daw is then prepared to receive the disguise and the kicks that will accompany it. The disguise is makeshift and ludicrous and the appearance of it and the purpose of it heighten immeasurably the comic intent of the scene. Daw, of course, believes the wearer of it to be his adversary, Amorous La Foole.

The kicks are administered and Daw submits to them meekly. The scene has a strong element of farce in it, but the wit of it exonerates it from the implication that it is laughter for laughter's sake only.

The ladies are not present to witness the stripping of John Daw; Jonson saves their entrance for the La Foole sequence. In this way the jest is not permitted to lose its flavour for the spectators. They have had the pleasure of seeing Daw's reduction in private. With the presence of the ladies, the following scene not only serves a similar function with the pompous La Foole, but the reaction of the Collegiate ladies provides the action with a double edge, a double reduction.

As a satirist, Jonson is consistent in his exposure of folly; his main intention in Epicoene is to expose the biggest fool of them all, Morose. But the exposure of the minor fools underlines and reinforces his major purpose. In both cases, Jonson uses the device of disguise.

The other scene of secondary disguise in the comedy is directed against Morose. Discovering that he has married that which he most abhors, a chattering female, he wishes to be released from his marriage vows and be free of her.

> Tru. Why, sir, if you would be resolv'd indeed,
> I can bring you hether a very sufficient Lawyer, and
> a learned Divine, that shall inquire into every
> least scruple for you. (IV.vii.20-22)

This is not an unusual ploy for Jonson in his use of disguise in the plays. The disguise is dictated by the desires of the

character to be deceived; in this case, Morose, in his yearning to be free of Epicoene, looks to the law and the church for help. The deception already has the promise of success as Morose blinds himself to all but that which may liberate him. Again Truewit engineers the scene; he chooses Cutbeard and Otter to perform the leading roles.

> Clap but a civill gowne with a welt, o' the one; and a canonical cloake with sleeves, o' the other: and give 'hem a few termes i' their mouthes, if their come not forth as able a Doctor, and compleat a Parson, for this turne, as may be wish'd, trust not my election....The Barber smatters latin, I remember.
> Dau. Yes, and OTTER too. (IV.vii.43-52)

There is the implication in this speech that clothes make the man and I would like to comment on this recurring theme of the power of clothes in Jonson's comedies. Truewit has no doubt that the 'civill gowne' and the 'canonical cloake' will transform a barber and a sea captain into lawyer and parson respectively, and that Morose, no different from most men, will accept their outer wear for the inner man. I have already quoted Mosca, in one of his philosophical moments, making the same observation.

> Hood an asse, with reverend purple,
> So you can hide his two ambitious eares,
> And, he shall passe for a cathedrall Doctor.

In other words, any fool can deceive another simply by the garments he chooses to wear.

The idea that clothes disguise the true nature of the man is certainly not unique to Jonson. Shakespeare's Lear makes

a similar comment which might be termed the tragic counterpart of Mosca's satirical-comic utterance.

> Through tatter'd clothes great vices do appear;
> Robes and furr'd gowns hide all. Plate sin with gold,
> And the strong lance of justice hurtless breaks;
> Arm it in rags, a pygmy's straw does pierce it.
> (IV.vi.162-165)

The 'reverend purple' and the 'robes and furr'd gowns' are badges of high office in church and state and the man who wears them is too quickly accepted as representing God's justice or man's. The robe becomes his disguise to conceal ineptitude or corruption. Strip the symbolic gown from him and he is an ordinary man like anyone else, forced to rely on his own merit. The implication goes even further: dress him in rags, and even the just and virtuous man will be spurned. Both passages are a condemnation of our readiness to accept what appears on the surface, rather than probing for the reality that lies beneath. Less than a century after Shakespeare and Jonson explored the theme of dress, Swift was to give it new life in his satirical writings, most notably in A Tale of a Tub.[2]

This theme of dress in Jonson's comedies, goes beyond the kind of clothing which defines a particular office. For example, Jonson deplored foppery and could not abide the dandy who found his identity in his apparel, so that by donning a rich velvet cloak he believed himself to be enriched in character as well. He found more reprehensible the fact that this im-

posture was actually successful in deceiving the multitude. In a number of his comedies, Jonson exposes the vain fop beneath the fine exterior, denouncing the frivolous belief that clothes are an indication of a man's character. Handsome and fashionable attire was just another means of attempting to disguise ignorance or blemish of character and Jonson was quick to deny it can be hidden, or that good clothes can be a substitute for good character or wit. More than the anger it provoked in him, he recognized the comic and satiric possibilities of the strutting dandy, this external representation of the fool hidden beneath his ruffles.

Fastidious Briske in Every Man Out of His Humour is one such character, carefully drawn by Jonson to demonstrate the power of clothes. According to Briske

> rich apparell has strange vertues: it makes him that hath it without meanes, esteemed for an excellent wit: he that enjoyes it with means, puts the world in remembrance of his means: it helps the deformities of nature, and gives lustre to her beauties... (II.vi.45-49)

Jonson satirizes this vain misconception of his age, that man is the measure of the clothes he wears, and Briske ends up where he belongs, in a debtor's prison for living beyond his means.

This theme is also central to Cynthia's Revels, and the courtiers who strut their way through the comedy with superficial values, clothes, and mannerisms are duly exposed at the play's end when they appear before Cynthia and her court. They are "impostors all, and male deformities..."

There are two such 'male deformities' in Epicoene, the fops Daw and La Foole. Clerimont asks of Truewit in Act II Scene iv of the play as Daw exits: "Was there ever such a two yards of knighthood measured out by time, to be sold to laughter?" Jack Daw's clothing, his 'two yards of knighthood' proclaims him a knight, but what he remains in spite of, or possibly because of his ruffles, is a gull to be made sport of. It is his obvious pretensions, his conception of how a knight should dress and how he should comport himself, which are responsible for his outrageous posturing; and it is just these things which make him attractive to the Collegiate ladies who accept the clothing and the conduct for the man, and therefore deem him worthy of their company. There is an obvious irony here, for in Epicoene it is they who epitomize 'deformity' and Jonson concentrates the full force of his attack on these ladies, questioning their pretensions and their 'peec'd beautie.' Clerimont composes a song about it.

> Still to be neat, still to be drest,
> As you were going to a feast;
> Still to be pou'dred, still perfum'd:
> Lady, is it to be presum'd,
> Though arts hid causes are not found,
> All is not sweet, all is not sound. (I.i.91-96)

Clerimont favours simplicity fearing that what is hidden by artifice is not 'sweet' and 'sound', but Truewit argues with him and will not have it so, choosing the artificial above the natural. "Is it for us to see their perukes put on, their false teeth, their complexion, their eyebrows, their nails," he asks of his friend Clerimont. His argument is

persuasive, perhaps because having to view the lady without her false teeth and wig is hardly a pleasant sight to contemplate. Lady Otter is one such abomination in her natural state according to her husband.

> A most vile face! and yet shee spends me fortie pound a yeare in Mercury, and hogs-bones. All her teeth were made i' the Blacke-Friers: both her eye-browes i' the Strand, and her haire in Silver-street. Every part o' the towne ownes a peece of her...
> She takes her selfe asunder still when she goes to bed, into some twentie boxes; and about next day noone is put together againe like a great Germane clocke: (IV.ii.91-99)

If Jonson might agree with Truewit, that the lady put together out of her twenty boxes is a vast improvement upon her natural state, he makes it abundantly clear in this and other of his comedies that the artifice may eventually become one with the man and he is in danger of having no identity apart from it. Fastidious Briske's character is the product of his tailor; Lady Haughty might be Lady Humble without her teeth, for it is the disguise of her patchings and paintings which are partly responsible for her vanity; and perhaps Sir John Daw, a foolish knight, would be less of a fool without his 'two yards of knighthood'. It is not artifice itself that Jonson attacks; Truewit's argument may well be Jonson's when he claims that artifice (like art) can be an improvement on nature. It is the affectation which arises from it and which transforms the artificer into a fool or a fraud that Jonson deplored.

Something of the potency of clothing is noted by Truewit when he costumes Otter and Cutbeard in the robes of parson and

lawyer. "The knaves doe not know themselves, they are so exalted, and alter'd." However, for the purposes of their disguise this is all to the good and Truewit is satisfied that the self-delusions of his actors promise exceptional performances.

Thus, with the outer garments of the professions they will pretend to, with dyed beards to change their appearance, and with the advantage of the Latin language to enhance their disguises, Cutbeard and Otter are made ready for the scene which will ensue.

Truewit coaches his two actors before the entrance of Morose. Again the disguise takes the form of a play within a play, linking disguise with its origins, heightening the theatrical and comic quality of the scene.

> Come, master Doctor, and master Parson, looke to your parts now, and discharge 'hem bravely: you are well set forth, performe it as well. If you chance to be out, doe not confesse it with standing still, or humming, or gaping one at another: but goe on, and talk alowd, and eagerly, use vehement action, and onely remember your termes, and you are safe. Let the matter goe where it will: you have many will doe so. But at first, bee very solemne, and grave like your garments...Here hee comes! set your faces, and looke superciliously, while I present you. (V.iii.11-22)

Cutbeard and Otter, armed with these stage directions, and delighted with their new and 'exalted' condition, know how they are expected to play their parts. Jonson uses his intimate knowledge of the theatre and acting to set his scene; it is also likely that he does this deliberately, as Shakes-

peare does in Hamlet, for example, in order to make it very clear to the players how he wishes the scene to be performed. It is the most effective way for the playwright to make his views known. Director and actor rarely care to have the writer intrude once the play is in their hands. It is their job to interpret it once it is accepted for production. Knowing Jonson's temperament, he was not likely to allow himself to be ousted in this way; how it will be played is written into the text, itself, and the dramatist still maintains control of the production. The directions are detailed and explicit; they demand that a scene be played in a certain way.

Morose enters and the scene proceeds as directed. Cutbeard and Otter play out a duet in legal jargon, generously sprinkling Latin phrases throughout their speech. This is reminiscent of the way in which Jonson will perfect this technique in The Alchemist where Subtle and Face will synchronize and harmonize alchemic jargon in an amazing feat of teamwork and knowledge of alchemy in order to con their victims out of pocket. For the layman there is little which impresses more than professional jargon. It is the perfect accessory to disguise if one's target is to catch a fool; it is also Jonson's way of feeding a humour. In this scene, Morose is obsessed by the desire to shed a talkative wife and he will use any legal, even questionable means to effect this. The nonsense syllables aspect of the duet completely escapes him, while the audience is as much entertained by it as by Morose's oblivion to it.

Cut. The first is impedimentum erroris.
Ott. Of which there are severall species.
Cut. I, as error personae.
Ott. If you contract your selfe to one person, thinking her another.
Cut. Then, error fortunae.
Ott. If shee be a beggar, and you thought her rich.
Cut. Then, error qualitatus.
Ott. If she prove stubborne, or headstrong, that you thought obedient.
Mor. How? is that, sir, a lawfull impediment? One at once, I pray you gentlemen.
Ott. I, ante copulam, but not post copulam, sir.
Cut. Mr.Parson saies right. Nec Post nuptiarum benedictionem. It doth indeed but irrita reddere sponsalia, annull the contract: after marriage it is of no obstancy. (V.iii.88-103)

This bandying of words back and forth between Cutbeard and Otter holds Morose's interest for some time but gains such intensity that Morose can no longer tolerate it. Disguise, as the centre of comedy in the scene, gives way to Morose's humour, his violent aversion to noise. By this time the jargon has become notable for its high nuisance value, and it is this, more than the meaning of the words, which forces Morose to consent to their advice. It is as much to rid himself of lawyer and parson as of Epicoene that he announces, publicly, his impotence. But the ruse results only in humiliation; it does not free him of Epicoene..."No, ladies,... I'll take him with all his faults."

His release comes as he signs over a stipend of five hundred pounds a year to his nephew, Dauphine, and makes out his will in Dauphine's favour. He is quite willing to make over

his whole estate to his nephew he is, by this time, in such a frenzy.

The stage directions of the unmasking of Epicoene, Cutbeard and Otter are interesting to consider. Epicoene is the first to reveal her true identity. The stage direction states that Dauphine "takes of Epicoenes perruke." The perruke was, of course, a wig, and we can suppose that it was elaborately styled to identify the boy actor as a woman. What other aids to disguise were worn by Epicoene we can only guess at. It may be that the doublet was worn beneath the gown and the one was removed to reveal the other. There may also have been certain accessories, a fan, some jewels. One regrets the spareness of the direction which does not give more specific information of the nature of the disguise.

The direction given to unmask Cutbeard and Otter presents a slight contradiction; Dauphine "pulls of their beardes and disguise." A previous reference to their disguises alludes to dyed beards; this final direction states that the beards are false. In Act V Scene iii, Truewit says to Dauphine: "I have fitted my Divine & my Canonist, died their beards and all." Such a discrepancy can be resolved if we accept it as a printer's error. A more likely explanation is that it was Jonson's intention that the beards be dyed, and the stage director, working with your hairless boys (the play was produced by the Children of Her Majesty's Revels) thought it more in keeping with his actors if the beards were donned for the disguise and then removed as the characters unmasked. In other

words, the final stage direction may have been made by the director of the comedy and not by Jonson.

In Epicoene, disguise has farcical overtones, and yet its purposes are more than comic. It serves to expose the posturings of La Foole and Daw, of the Collegiate ladies and Morose, leaving all stripped bare of their pretensions. The central disguise of the play, a boy disguised as a woman, adds a further dimension, that of retrospect. If the spectator is not given the opportunity of participating in this jest during the course of the play, he is given the pleasure of reviewing certain scenes which change complexion completely when Epicoene's identity is revealed to him. The last scene before the unmasking is a good example. Morose confesses his frigidity and Epicoene declares she will have him with all his faults. Discovering that Epicoene is in fact a boy adds another comic dimension to the declaration as the scene in question tumbles back to the mind.

The advantages of this kind of disguise for the resolution of the dramatic action are fairly obvious. Dauphine is able to fulfil his promise to Morose by the simple act of unmasking the boy bride. What seemed to be an impossibly complex situation to untangle is resolved by the removal of a wig and gown.

THE ALCHEMIST

The Alchemist brilliantly demonstrates Jonson's skill with the motif of disguise. In this comedy, the audience is witness to a colossal hoax devised by three low-life characters who have pooled their various talents to produce a confidence game on a grand scale. Each is endowed with a nimble wit and has obviously taken pains to research the role he assumes with a thoroughness which is characteristic of Jonson's master rogues. The stage is in continual eruption with what appears to be a quick spontaneity, the product and earmark of Jonson's careful craftsmanship. One can only gasp with admiration as the stage reverberates with the life and vitality of the comic world that Jonson creates.

Face, who is in reality Jeremy, the butler to Lovewit, has grown a beard and disguises himself either as an army captain, Face, or as Lungs, the laboratory assistant to Subtle, another rogue who poses as an alchemist with a number of side-lines including necromancy and astrology. These two, along with a prostitute called Dol Common, have taken over the house vacated by Lovewit when the plague visits London. Jeremy left in sole charge of the house decides to turn it to his best advantage.

Even the setting assumes a disguise in this comedy as actual physical properties are used to transform Lovewit's town house into a laboratory for alchemic experiments and

other fraudulent ventures. This setting is the perfect backdrop to support the motif of disguise. It is not what it appears to be, but a grand improvisation on the part of the trio to establish a congenial climate in which to practise their cozening game. Outfitted with furnace and stills and all the appurtenances of a research and applied arts centre in alchemy, this initial investment provides a setting designed as the prime bait to lure victims and ensnare them by the power of the illusion created. To claim the skill to be able to change base metals into gold, no matter how cleverly supported by the jargon of the trade, can only hope to attract the most willing dupe; but to reinforce one's claims with the visual objects used to effect this transformation promises success with all but the most hardened sceptic. It is hard not to believe what we think we see with our own eyes, particularly when what we see is what we most want to believe. Greed is a first-rate emotion to distort vision, and Subtle, Face and Dol are psychologists enough to realize this and exploit it with an ingeniousness it would be difficult to surpass.

Jeremy as Face has no trouble finding customers. In Jonson's comic worlds, avarice normally appears as number one vice and those smitten by it cannot resist the dream of lead turned to gold. One might say that even the dream in this comedy involves transformation; certainly the characters undergo rapid transformations. The quick-change artist of popular comedy, first discussed in relation to Brainworm in

Every Man in His Humour is equally prominent in The Alchemist and even more cleverly devised. The motives for the quick-change disguises are clearly defined and quite necessary to the play. Face's constant shuffling of roles as he disappears and reappears in different identities is essential to the play because he must have different identities for different situations. Face is the captain about town who spreads the word about Subtle's genius and hustles up the victims; Lungs is the lab assistant who plays out a duet in alchemic jargon with Subtle in order to make the deception more convincing. He almost has to be in two places at once and there is no question that his agility in practically doing so not only gives the actor greater opportunity to display his versatility, not only allows him to delight his audience, but actually helps to heighten the realism, always one of Jonson's aims, by lending to the play a sense of ordered chaos which reflects Jonson's view of reality. The mirror, slightly distorted, presents a travesty of life as it is, but that life is clearly recognizable.

If there had been four rogues then the quick-change disguises would not have been necessary; however, I suppose one could argue that if there were four, then the loot would have had to be shared four ways, so that the economy in the division of labour was well in keeping with the kind of enterprise the trio set up. I think it fairer to say that Jonson did indeed see the comic possibilities of the quick-change artist and took special pains to be able to include him in The Alchemist.

The use of disguise in The Alchemist is instrumental in the exposure of folly, for Subtle, Face and Dol are careful to choose their disguises to suit their victim. It is not they so much who are exposed by the disguises they adopt; certainly we learn through the disguise what out and out rogues they are, but they themselves are not deceived by the roles they play. They know who they are (although they are occasionally carried away by their roles, intoxicated by their own creation.) They borrow various identities only as means to their ends. They choose their disguises to suit their victims, and the audience knowing them to be rogues and seeing the nature of the disguise, is made aware of the true nature of the victim. To Sir Epicure Mammon, Subtle is transformed into the brilliant alchemist who can work miracles with metals. Mammon is absolutely convinced of his skills, partly, to be sure, because of Subtle's exquisite performance, but also because of his own lustful desires for infinite riches and the luxuries they will afford him. If to the outside world he appears to be a rather dashing, if slightly pompous knight, in Subtle's den of alchemy his greed for the things that gold can provide him with overrides all other character traits and his avaricious, libidinous nature is truly exposed. Dol disguised as a lady of quality excites Mammon as no whore could ever do and all his lechery comes to the fore. Ananias who pretends to piety in the outside world is bared in the trio's alchemic world as the personification of hypocrisy, having no compunction, whatsoever, about cheat-

ing orphans of their goods if their parents had not professed the Puritan faith; he deems all means legal if they enrich the sect; he easily distinguishes the casting of money from the unlawful coining of money and even this assumption he cloaks in piety.

There other examples of disguise which should be commented on here, particularly Surly's disguise as a Spanish count. He dons this disguise with the express purpose of exposing the three, and if Jonson really wished to correct vice (as the Prologue leads us to believe) then Surly would have been allowed to succeed. There is no doubt that he displays a virtuosity nearly equal to the performances of Subtle and Face, for like them, his disguise does not merely take on exterior proportions. Bearded and garbed as a Spaniard, he manages to conceal his identity from them, but it is his mastery of the Spanish language, much like Subtle's mastery of the language of alchemy, which is the final touch which saves him from detection. We might also say that Face's and Subtle's desire to rope in one more victim carries them away and takes them off their guard. They are not expecting to be conned; that is their monopoly. So it is, in fact, their own avarice which betrays them. If it can be said that there is one reasonably moral character in The Alchemist, who is not good because he is too stupid to be otherwise, one would be forced to elect Surly as this character. He is a gambler, but one supposes he is an honest one. However, Jonson has no intention of making him the hero of the piece, but rather uses

him as an instrument to measure the extent of Face's wit. At the moment of exposure one can only think 'here is one situation you will not be able to handle'. Our delight is immeasurable when Face manages to save the day and all is not lost. Morality is struck a serious blow; it is the superior intellect which wins the decision.

The motif of disguise is introduced at the outset of the comedy. The pre-disguise period of both Subtle and Face is revealed in the fight which opens the play. Not only do they give themselves away by their grasp of low-life language and behaviour, but one recognizes and exposes the other as an impostor. Face is the product of his tailor; he is nothing more than the clothes he wears according to Subtle. Rough up his clothing and the true Face will emerge. Face, in denial of this charge, challenges Subtle with his identity: "Who/ Am I, my mungrill, who am I?" and Subtle responds, "I'll tell you,/ Since you know not your selfe."

Each strips the other of his counterfeit identity, and takes the credit for the elevation of station of the other; each is identified as he was before being skilfully transformed by the other.

> Sub. You were once (time's not long past) the good,
> Honest, plaine, livery-three-pound-thrum; that kept
> Your masters worships house, here, in the friers,
> For the vacations-- Fac. Will you be so lowd?
> Sub. Since, by my meanes, translated suburb-Captayne.
> Fac. By your meanes, Doctor dog? Sub. Within
> mans memorie,
> All this, I speake of. Fac. Why, I pray you, have I
> Beene countenanc'd by you? or you, by me?
> Doe but collect, sir, where I met you first.
> Sub. I doe not heare well. Fac. Not of t[illegible] I
> thinke it. (I.i.[illegible]-24)

Just as Subtle attributes Face's new and exalted status to his own genius, Face claims the credit of raising Subtle from a poverty-stricken nonentity, to a man of station and means.

> I ga' you count'nance, credit for your coales
> Your stills, your glasses, your materialls;
> Built you a fornace, drew you customers,
> Advanc'd all your black arts; lent you, beside,
> A house to practise in -- (I.i.43-47)

Face attributes the new Subtle to the external show that he supplied; without them, Subtle would still be "pinn'd up in several rags" that Face accuses him of having "rak'd and pick'd from dunghills, before day."

Subtle, on the other hand, claims it was he who provided Face with the language and manners of his new identity.

> Rais'd thee from broomes, and dust, and watring pots?
> Sublim'd thee, and exalted thee...
>
> . . . . . .
> Put thee in words, and fashion? made thee fit
> For more then ordinarie fellowships? (I.i.67-73)

The flyting match is a remarkably dramatic means of exposition. The audience learns the nature of the characters and their business and is introduced to the motif of disguise which dominates the play. The intimacy of the quarrel and what it reveals serves to draw the spectator into a participatory role. He has been let in on a cunning confidence game and is, in a sense, privileged. Once Jonson has created this bond between actors and audience, he is ready to termi-

nate the fight, begin his parade of victims, and Subtle, Face and Dol assume their counterfeit identities.

The first client to call is Dapper, "a gullible lawyer's clerk;" Subtle becomes the good doctor, dons his velvet cap and gown and launches himself into his role. Face becomes the captain, Dapper's "good sweet captain." The most active part in the deception is always taken by the gull himself, Face, at home in his role, directs the interview between Subtle and Dapper so adroitly that he has Dapper, himself, begging Subtle to take his money. The two con men set up the bait, playing on Dapper's greed, creating the illusion that the young lawyer's clerk most desires. Sensing Dapper's gullibility, their promises become more and more absurd, to the infinite delight of the audience. When Dapper leaves, minus several angels he has a number of nonsense rites to perform in preparation for his meeting with the Queen of fairy whom Subtle insists is his close kin. It is she who must give blessing to the 'familiar', the good luck charm that Dapper believes will guarantee his good fortune at cards, horses and other gambling pursuits.

In Act III Dapper almost does have his interview with his 'aunt' the Queen of fairy; Subtle becomes a priest of fairy, dressed in a special costume for his part, his voice disguised, his language rhymed incantation; Dapper is stripped of all his valuables which he is told is mandatory before he is permitted to meet this illustrious member of his family; Dol does enter, cittern in hand, and gives a musical accompaniment to the scene

which follows. Dapper submits to a blindfold and Subtle and Face caper about him, pinching him as they pretend they are the Queen of fairy's elfin retinue, making little elfin noises to convince him that he must relinquish all his worldly belongings. Both Face and Subtle play dual roles for the benefit of their victim, manipulating their voices so that they may simulate Captain and elf, Priest of fairy and elf, in order to wheedle from their little lawyer's clerk his very last article of any monetary value.

The interview is interrupted by Mammon's inopportune appearance and much quick-changing of disguises takes place as Dapper, still blindfolded, is gagged with a piece of gingerbread, given a dead mouse, and led away to the privy to await a more convenient time for his meeting with the Queen of fairy, alias Dol Common. Face changes rapidly into his lab assistant's outfit, Subtle into his alchemic gown, and Dol goes off, soon to return richly attired in the robes of a noblewoman to confront Sir Epicure Mammon. So much then occurs that poor Dapper is quite forgotten. It is not until Act V Scene iv of the play that the scene of encounter between Dapper and the Queen of fairy finally takes place, with Dol bedecked in a velvet gown to conduct the interview.

This rapid shifting into various roles, depending on the client on hand, continues throughout the comedy to the constant delight of the audience. The motif of disguise is always in the forefront and it is reinforced by Jonson's quick ear for the comic possibilities of language. Disguise of

language is a conscious accoutrement to the motif of disguise in Jonson's comedies, and The Alchemist is probably the best play from which to illustrate it. One marvels at the extent and diversity of the knowledge Jonson displays on a variety of subjects in this comedy, and marvels more at the skill with which he uses it. Jargon, slang, parody, all come into play, although they are not always employed for purposes of disguise. Jonson uses language in broadly two ways in the play, one the direct antithesis of the other. On the one hand, a man's speech serves to define his character, on the other, it is an excellent device to conceal his identity and add the finishing touches to his disguise. When Jonson uses language as a definition of character, the character, himself, is not conscious of the fact that his natural speech betrays him; but when it is used to enhance disguise, language then becomes a tool of conscious manipulation.

The low-life slang of Subtle, Face and Dol and the cant of the Puritan brethren Ananias and Tribulation Wholesome are two examples where language exposes the speaker and dramatic irony is effected; the audience perceives the quality of their speech and immediately identifies the one group as cozeners at large, the other as hypocrites. The language which issues most naturally from the lips of Subtle Face and Dol when they are not acting out one of their various roles to ensnare a victim is, in fact, a type of slang which evolved from the need to maintain secrecy among thieves. The slang expressions for a brothel, for example, were numerous, and

Jonson has a liberal sprinkling of them throughout this comedy. "Academy, Corinth, school of Venus, vaulting school, smuggling ken, pushing school," all were terms synonomous with a house of prostitution.[1] Partridge in his study of The Alchemist notes that the euphemisms and abusive terms which mark the language of the trio are not merely rhetoric but typical of thieves' slang in seventeenth century London. In this case, language serves to identify these three underworld characters, revealing them as a trio of thieves to the audience who views the play. In a similar way, the sanctimonious cant of Ananias and Tribulation Wholesome, prompted by the doctrines of the Puritan faith, but more a question of style than vocabulary, reveals the unspeakable hypocrisy of the two. We need little more to identify them than their style of speech, but when they piously justify their greed in the name of religion, they are truly exposed. In his Discoveries Jonson wrote: "Language most shewes a man: speake that I may see thee....No glasse renders a mans forme, or likenesse, so true as his speech."[2] Jonson uses thieves' slang and Puritans' cant to this end in The Alchemist.

However, the most prominent kind of language in the play is the jargon of alchemy. Subtle and Face are past masters at this kind of professional double talk. Their skill with the vocabulary of alchemy is largely responsible for their astounding success at luring their victims into their trap. Just as the vocabulary of sociology textbooks today impresses the layman because of its incomprehensibility, so the rehearsed patter of alchemist and assistant in the presence of their

'clients' overwhelms by its resonance of profound knowledge and research. To someone who wants to believe it, such erudition bespeaks of the ability and artistry to turn the crudest lead into gold; these artists of language and disguise transform technical terms into dazzling rhetoric making their confidence game quite irresistible. Thus, along with the appropriate costumes and the perfect setting, the jargon of alchemy elevates two tricksters into two experts in the science of alchemy. The disguise is complete. Only the cynical Surly recognizes these high-sounding terms for what they really are.

> Sub Looke well to the register,
> And let your heat, still, lessen by degrees,
> To the Aludels. Fac. Yes, sir. Sub. Did you looke
> O' the Bolts-head yet? Fac. Which, on D. sir? Sub. I
> What's the complexion? Fac. Whitish. Sub. Infuse
> vinegar,
> To draw his volatile substance, and his tincture:
> And let the water in Glasse E be feltred,
> And put into the Gripes egge. Lute him well;
> And leave him clos'd in balneo. Fac. I will, sir.
> Sur. What a brave language here is? next to canting?
> (II.iii.33-42)

Mammon is completely deceived by this jargon, to the point where he has picked up some of the expressions himself to impress others with his knowledge of alchemy. Even his friend Surly's clear-sightedness does not sway him from believing that these two are what they claim to be and are quite capable of miraculously effecting alchemic transmutations.

For Mammon's benefit, Subtle employs another kind of language, that of a man of God. It was believed that only a holy man had the powers to transform base metals into gold. Subtle, knowing no half measures, adds yet another dimension

to his disguise as an alchemist when religious cant is added to the jargon of alchemy, here used to enhance disguise and aid in the concealment of Subtle's fraud; Subtle becomes the priest, Mammon one of his flock, and alchemy, their religion.

> Mam. Good morrow, father. Sub. Gentle sonne,
> good morrow,
> And to your friend, there. What is he, is with you?
> Mam. An heretique, that I did bring along,
> In hope, sir, to convert him. Sub. Sonne, I doubt
> Yo'are covetous, that thus you meet your time
> I' the just point: prevent your day, at morning.
> This argues something, worthy of a feare
> Of importune, and carnall appetite.
> Take heed, you doe not cause the blessing leave you
> With your ungovern'd hast. (II.iii.1-10)

The scene continues with Subtle mouthing pious phrases, no doubt with sombre demeanor to make them comfortably at home.

In Act II Scene v, the actual vocabulary of alchemy is made holy. Partridge has noted that the scene is played out between Subtle and Face in the nature of a catechism. "Enough of these questions and answers are given to indicate this apparently is a parody of a catechism. Subtle is catechising Face in the doctrines of their religion to impress Ananias with their piety."[3] Partridge points out further that "this religion has its mystical Trinity, too, which Face explains at the end of the catechism."[4]

> Fac. 'Tis a stone, and not
> A stone; a spirit, a soule, and a body... (II.v.40-41)

It is impossible to do justice to Jonson's use of language in The Alchemist; space does not permit. But the whole play demonstrates his unfailing ear for vocabulary, phraseology and

turns of speech from the lowliest thief to the religious fanatic; and out of them, he weaves his skilful rhetoric. Two other examples of language used to enhance disguise come to mind and I will content myself with drawing these to the reader's attention. When the angry boy Kastril elicits Subtle's aid in teaching him the pugnacious arts of quarreling, Subtle naturally turns to the language of the schoolmen to teach him how to argue well. The result is confusing to Kastril, amusing to the audience and above all, impressive. Subtle disposes of Kastril's ineffectual anger and introduces him to scholastic logic and philosophy as the most efficient and sophisticated method of conducting a quarrel.

> Sub. O, this's no true Grammar,
> And as ill Logick! You must render causes, child,
> Your first, and second Intentions, know your canons,
> And your divisions, moodes, degrees, and differences.
> Your praedicaments, substance, and accident,
> Series externe and interne, with their causes
> Efficient, materiall, formall, finall,
> And ha' your elements perfect-- Kas. What is this
> The angrie tongue he talkes in? (IV.ii.21-29)

Jonson's intention is satirical as he ridicules the machinations of scholastic argument as well as the practice of London gallants to learn by book (and books were actually written on the subject) the finer points and etiquette of quarreling. Subtle's rhetoric, however, has another function; it adds another dimension to his disguise as he offers to his client what appears to be a complete grasp of what Kastril most desires to learn. This parody of scholastic reasoning,

like the jargon of alchemy, is very impressive and Dame Pliant, Kastril's widowed sister is overawed by it.

> Pli. Brother,
> Hee's a rare man, beleeve me! (IV.ii.49-50)

Subtle's skill in the use of these several language styles secures his disguise, giving him the appearance of being exactly what his customers most wish him to be; and of course, the nonsense he speaks exposes the victim, reducing him to the stature of a fool.

Another amusing instance of Jonson's rhetoric occurs when Dol throws her fit. Disguised as a lady of quality in order to play her designated part with Sir Epicure Mammon, she feigns madness. Face has already alerted Mammon to the fact that Dol is there to be treated for a malady which induces madness whenever mention is made of the Hebrew scriptures. When she enters raving, Mammon is beside himself; he fears her fit will be heard by Subtle, who, finding him with a mad Dol will suspect his carnal intentions. More devastating than this is the effect his less than holy actions will have on the alchemic experiments meant to transform his plate into gold. The scene results in Mammon's conviction that it is his own lecherous nature that has undone him.

Dol's ravings in this scene are a somewhat garble version of Hugh Broughton's Concent of Scripture[5] which sets forth his particular interpretation of the bible.

> For, after ALEXANDERS death-- Mam. Good lady--
> Dol. That PERDICCAS, and ANTIGONUS were slaine,
> The two that stood, SELEUC', and PTOLOMEE--
> Mam. Madame. Dol. Made up the two legs, and the fourth Beast.
> That was Gog-north, and Egypt-south: which after
> Was call'd Gog Iron-leg, and South Iron-leg-- Mam. Lady--
> Dol. And then Gog-horned. So was Egypt, too.
> Then Egypt clay-leg, and Gog clay-leg-- Mam. Sweet madame. (IV.v.1-8)

Dol's speech, like that of Subtle and Face, complements the disguise of the moment; they have many faces, each enhanced by the language which befits it best. The result is comic, but the purpose is more intrinsic than comic possibility; they are actors within the framework of the play and disguise is essential to their art. Like Volpone and Mosca they seem to derive as much pleasure from the versatility of their performances as they do from the promise of gain which prompts their unique performances. When Lovewit returns to his town house he speaks for Jonson and for his characters when he declares; "I love a teeming wit, as I love my nourishment."

BARTHOLOMEW FAIR

Jonson has assembled here a rare assortment of characters taken from the London streets and London's Bartholomew fair. Each character has the mark of personal observation and contact, blown up to stage size by Jonson's usual talent for exaggeration and hyperbole. No one is coarser or fatter than Ursula, the pig woman; no judge is more determined to rid his borough of vice than Justice Overdo; all the hypocrisy of the Puritans is concentrated in one ultra-zealous hypocrite, Zeal-of-the-Land Busy. The stage overflows with cutpurses, horse coursers, bawds and ballad singers who inject into this comedy all the noise, bustle and colour of the London that Jonson knew and loved so well. The play has its share of intriguers, victims, knaves and fools, but in Bartholomew Fair Jonson's usually stinging wit makes way for appreciation and delight of the many low-life characters transposed from the streets of London. The only character singled out as a butt for Jonson's biting attack is Zeal-of-the-Land Busy; the others are bathed in his critical but good-natured observations of their wit or their folly.

The central action of the play (if it may be said to have one) is initiated by the mask of the spy in disguise. Like Harun Al-Rashid, the Oriental ruler from Arabian Nights who travelled throughout his Moslem kingdom in disguise to learn about the people he ruled, like Duke Vincentio in Measure

for Measure who pursued justice disguised as a simple friar, so Justice Overdo disguises himself in order to weed out vice at Bartholomew fair. Jonson's spy in disguise, however, is a comic reversal of his sage predecessors. In Bartholomew Fair the spy disguise does not reveal the enormities of others which such disguise normally uncovers; although it is Justice Overdo's purpose to have it do so, Jonson reverses its results to have it reveal, rather, the foolishness of its wearer.

Overdo's disguise in Bartholomew Fair is a radical departure from the disguises in Jonson's earlier plays and its dramatic effect is uniquely different. Brainworm had no clear motive for his disguise and I have concluded that its principal function in Every Man in His Humour is the sheer love of mischief and imitation. In Epicoene, the main purpose of the central disguise is to feed Morose's noise-hating humour and to serve a retroactive function. Volpone and Face combine Brainworm's delight in successfully deceiving others by the virtuosity of their performances, but hand in glove with this motive is the desire for material gain. In each of these plays the disguised person is a clever rogue who preys upon the gullibility of his victims and succeeds in stripping them of their pretensions. This is not the case in Bartholomew Fair. Like Harun Al-Rashid and Duke Vincentio, Justice Overdo, too, has a well-defined motive for donning his disguise; his intentions are in the interests of his calling. He plans to disguise himself as a fool to seek out 'enormities' at the fair, and in this way, purge the world of the play of vice. But his

success is minimal and in fact, justice is overturned and shown to be in the hands of fools. The disguise, rather than concealing the identity of Overdo serves to identify him correctly and the mask unmasks the wearer, exposing the true character of justice.

Fools like Matthew and Stephen in Every Man in His Humour are manipulated for the sport of that play's more sophisticated and knavish characters; in Bartholomew Fair, on the other hand, Jonson does the manipulating himself and the foolish Overdo undoes himself. One can hear Jonson's voice behind the words of Quarlous when he says

> ...of all Beasts, I love the serious Asse. He that takes paines to be one, and playes the foole, with the greatest diligence that can be.
> (III.v.265-267)

Quarlous refers here to Humphrey Waspe, tutor to Bartholomew Cokes, who holds the black box containing the license which Quarlous commissions Edgworth to steal for him. Humphrey is a very serious ass, the play's angry man who is completely controlled by his humour. But the remark is much more inclusive and extends to the most serious of all fools, Justice Overdo, himself. Mistress Grace, his ward, is quick to include him in the definition.

> Gra. Then you would not chose, Sir, but love my Guardian, Justice Overdoo, who is answerable to that description, in every haire of him.
> (III.v.268-270)

When Justice Overdo visits the fair to seek out vice at

first hand, he completely bungles his purpose. Instead of uncovering vice, he mistakes vice for virtue, seeing in a cutpurse a young gentleman mixed up in bad company. Not trusting his paid spies with the task of ferreting out crime, he decides to go to the fair and do so himself. What he accuses his underlings of doing, he is guilty of himself, for as their misinformation makes him mistake 'a proper yong Batcheler of Musicke for a Bawd,' he mistakes Ezechiel Edgworth, a cutpurse, for a gentleman.

> What pitty 'tis, so civill a young man should haunt this debaucht Company? here's the bane of the youth of our time apparant. A proper penman, I see't in his countenance, he has a good Clerks looke with him, and I warrant him a quicke hand. (II.iv.30-34)

The response he gets from this assessment of Edgworth is "a very quicke hand, sir," from Moon-calfe. Here we have something of the same effect we get from disguise. The audience, aware that Edgworth's sleight of hand has nothing to do with legible writing, can enjoy the fact that such a bulwark of authority can make such a gross error. Part of the comedy stems from the fact that the audience knows Edgworth's real occupation but Overdo does not. Mistaken identity results in laughter. The irony, of course, lies in the fact that Overdo is in disguise and Edgworth is not.

This brand of irony multiplies as the play progresses. The Justice is determined to rescue Edgworth from evil company. Meanwhile, the audience witnesses the sleight of hand

of this clever pickpocket whom Justice Overdo is convinced is a gentleman. When Bartholomew Cokes, the most superbly drawn of all Jonson's gulls, has his purse lifted by this gentleman cutpurse, the most disturbing thing about the affair for Cokes is that no one present resembles a thief, except perhaps, his tutor Humphrey Waspe. In this way Jonson links the country gull with the near-sighted Justice. He goes one step further and includes the waspish Humphrey in this parade of fools by having him name Justice Overdo as the thief. Rather than reveal his identity, Overdo submits to the beating he gets, feeling great pride in his fortitude, believing that the wise man should permit nothing to deter him from his purpose when the public good is at stake.

Not only does the real thief escape detection, but Overdo is bound he will guard his innocence. He follows his young cutpurse throughout the fair, bent on saving him from his ballad singing accomplice, Nightingale, "the young man of a terrible taint, Poetry! with which idle disease, if he be infected, there's no hope of him..." Thus the vice goes unnoticed as the Justice concentrates on the 'idle disease' poetry, and Justice Overdo becomes more and more the butt of Jonson's wit, well-suited to the garb he wears.

Jonson is not content to draw a simple gallery of fools; the Jonsonian fool makes every effort to assure his position. Elisabeth Woodbridge[1] in her study of Jonson, claims that the victims are passive characters whereas the knaves represent the active participants of his comedies. I cannot altogether

agree with this judgment. Characters like Overdo, and Bartholomew Cokes in Bartholomew Fair, the birds of prey, the Dappers and Druggers, all exert a great deal of activity to have themselves gulled. We never sympathize with Jonson's victims because they so zealously earn their victimization; like Bartholomew Cokes, they almost beg to be gulled. Cokes displaying his more valuable and yet unstolen purse for all to see, continually draws attention to it, waving it to and fro and challenging any cutpurse worth his salt to steal it from him. He could have done no more if he had stood up and begged to be relieved of it, and of course, very shortly he is. Overdo's shortsightedness and the misdirection of his attentions are duly paid in full; still concerned with the balladeer and his song, he misses seeing the theft committed. But he does not miss being seen and once again he is accused, this time by the very gentleman cutpurse, who, seeing a way to distract attention from himself and Coke's purse which is now in his possession, directs it to the innocent but foolish Justice who is seized and taken away to the stocks. A savoury bit of irony issues from the lips of Mistress Overdo who, not recognizing her husband in his disguise, pronounces that he is "a lewd, and pernicious Enormity: (as Master Overdoo calls him.)" The enormity, Jonson is saying, is not clever thievery but dull folly. Justice Overdo in his blindness is by far the greatest enormity at Bartholomew fair. If legal justice is not served, Jonson's brand of poetic justice is; Overdo earns his place in the stocks. The man who joins him there is no thief or con-

fidence man, but Rabbi Zeal-of-the-Land Busy. Jonson has the hypocrite take his place next to the fool; they both wear masks which only differ in kind.

Rabbi Busy wears no physical disguise except the austere clothing which identifies his religious affiliations. It is the mask he assumes of a pious man which demands comment in an essay whose subject is disguise. His character has achieved a certain fame (perhaps infamy would describe it better) as one of the finest comic character drawings of a hypocrite in English literature. His predecessors in Jonsonian comedy are the Puritan brethren, Ananias and Tribulation Wholesome in The Alchemist. But if these two were presented to elicit our amused scorn because of their studied hypocrisy, Zeal-of-the-Land Busy earns our comtempt (and a great deal of delight and laughter) because of his.

The hypocritical mask betrays itself by the massive gap which exists between the word and the act; it is exposed as well by the process of rationalization the hypocrite undergoes in order to close the gap. In the main Jonson's audiences were non-Puritan (except, perhaps, for the odd hypocrite like Busy who could not resist the pleasures the theatre afforded!) and it is not difficult to conceive the delight such a character provoked in theatregoers constantly threatened by the Puritan hostility to theatres, fairs or any form of public entertainment. The Puritans were hostile to the fairs for much the same reason they attacked the theatres; they believed them to be immoral gathering places which encouraged all manner of vice.

Just as a character like Malvolio in Twelfth Night would like to drain life of all physical pleasure, and a character like Sir Toby Belch would have no life without it, so the Puritans were against the very joys that gave Ben Jonson's life meaning. Of all the characters in Bartholomew Fair, Zeal-of-the-Land Busy is the only one whom Jonson heartily disliked. Of all imposture, hypocrisy was the one he could tolerate least.

> Many men beleeve not themselves, what they would perswade others; and lesse doe the things, which they would impose on others;....Only they set the signe of the Crosse over their outer doores, and sacrifice to their gut, and their groyne in their inner closets. (625.2031-2035)

Jonson wrote this in Discoveries, but it is as blissfully accurate a description of Rabbi Busy as one could possibly find and was no doubt the thought which inspired the creation of the character.

Zeal-of-the-Land Busy is the crowning achievement in Jonson's gallery of hypocrites, but he is far from being the only one. In every one of Jonson's comedies there is at least one: Bobadill who professes outstanding bravery but who runs away in a cold sweat when it is put to the trial; Morose who declares his extreme loathing for the noise of the human voice and yet talks ceaselessly himself; the birds of prey who swear their concern for the dying Magnifico but would gladly smother him with a pillow; and of course, the Puritan brothers, Ananias and Tribulation Wholesome, who would cheat helpless orphans not of the Puritan faith. I include the hypo-

critical mask in this study of disguise because hypocrisy is an attempt to disguise, if not one's identity or condition, certainly one's odious nature, one's ignorance or one's vice.

In Bartholomew Fair, the pregnant Mistress Littlewit yearns for roast pig at the fair in much the same way as her modern day counterpart longs for pickles and ice cream at two o'clock in the morning when all the shops are closed. With a Puritan mother, her longings seem just as inaccessible. Zeal-of-the-Land Busy, as one of the faithful, regards this obsession as the work of the devil. According to a Puritan interpretation of the bible, only animals with cloven hooves were considered clean and fit for human consumption; the pig, therefore, was an unclean beast and barred as food for the faithful. That Mistress Littlewit should desire it Rabbi Busy interprets as a sign of greed and gluttony; but that she must enjoy it at the fair, an iniquitous place which breeds nothing but vanity, is for Busy, the crowning blasphemy. "...this Faire, this wicked, and foul Faire...fitter may it be called a foule, then a Faire...." His religious zeal attains such proportions at times he pops the buttons of his vest and "cracks seames at every saying he sobs out."

The scene where Busy, seized by the same craving as Mistress Littlewit, rationalizes away all objections to the eating of pig at the fair so that he may satisfy his own longings is undoubtedly one of the funniest in the play. It begins with his castigation of Mistress Littlewit's 'diseased' desire for pig, but this censure soon gives way to the observation

that to long for pork is one of those carnal diseases natural to women; he then concedes that the pig is a nourishing meat and therefore it is only natural to desire it. Finally, he makes the pronouncement that as it is natural to desire pig, it is therefore natural and acceptable that it be eaten. So he reasons, and his hypocrite's logic paves the way for his journey to the fair where he, himself, may indulge his longings for roast pork. Having worked his way around all obstacles, he consents, with a grand show of reluctance, to join the pig-eating party at Bartholomew fair, claiming in pious tones that when the succulent pig is set before them it must be eaten "with a reformed mouth, with sobriety, and humblenesse; not gorg'd in with gluttony, or greedinesse;" but even this restriction he manages to circumlocute by giving his gluttony a religious purpose.

> I will eate exceedingly, and prophesie; there may be good use made of it, too, now I thinke on't: by the publike eating of Swines flesh, to professe our hate, and loathing of Judaisme, whereof the brethren stand taxed. I will therefor eate, yea, I will eate exceedingly. (I.vi.93-97)

After downing two and a half servings of Ursula's roast pig, and a pailful of ale "a drinke of Sathan's, a diet-drinke of Sathan's, devised to puff us up, and make us swell in this latter age of vanity," Busy's Puritan loathing for the fair suddenly returns and he begins to revile it. "Thou are the seate of the Beast, O Smithfield, and I will leave thee. Idolatry peepeth out on every side of thee." Leatherhead is amazed to learn that his hobbyhorse is a "feirce and rancke

idoll" and Joan Trash, the gingerbread woman is told that her wares are a "basket of popery" and an "Idolatrous Grove of Images." In his Puritan zeal, Busy proceeds to destroy them all. His zeal leads him to the stocks where he takes his rightful place beside the equally zealous Justice Overdo.

An amusing instance of incidental disguise in the comedy, more for purposes of comic delight than exposure, is the tangle that Mistress Littlewit and Mistress Overdo get themselves in when they find themselves without male escort at the fair. Mistress Overdo well deserves her fate having displayed a rather obnoxious tendency to vanity, prompted by her position as a Justice's wife. Carried away by her elevated status, and seeing certain 'enormities' at the fair, she becomes a parody of her absent husband, busily ordering people about in the name of justice. Natural inclinations, however, (she finds herself in need of a privy) lead her into the questionable company of bawds who, finding themselves short of whores, ply her with drink and manage to transform both her and Mistress Littlewit into green-gowned, crimson petticoated whores. Knockem sends Ursula within to find the garments to clothe them in which will identify their new occupations. The ladies, let it be said, are quite unaware of the roles they have been designated. In fact, Mistress Overdo passes out, dead drunk. When the ladies reappear wearing masks and ushered in by Captain Whit, the Justice, now disguised as a porter, is offered one or other of them for a shilling. Overdo is ecstatic with delight to have found what he is convinced is by far the

'chiefest enormitie' at the fair. With his usual lack of perception the not very astute judge who has already interpreted cunning for innocence, that is, a cutpurse for a gentleman, now judges innocence for cunning. It is ignorance which is the whore and Jonson perhaps creates this particular complication of plot in order to say so. It is only at the play's end when the identities of both cutpurse and wife are revealed that Justice Overdo learns his errors. The 'chiefest enormitie' proves to be his own blind and foolish zealousness.

The disguise of Quarlous in Bartholomew Fair is more in keeping with Jonson's traditional use of the disguise convention. Quarlous and Winwife are the two characters in the comedy who are clever enough to perceive reality and knave enough to capitalize on it. Quarlous is the arch knave of the piece. He seeks out Trouble-All, a madman who has been an officer in the court of Pie Pouldres, Justice Overdo's precinct; dismissed by the justice and since gone mad, Trouble-All is obsessed by the need of a warrant in Justice Overdo's name for every act he performs, be it to take a drink or indeed to just be.

> Tro. I thinke, I am, if Justice Overdoo signe to it, I am, and so wee are all, hee'll quit us all, multiply us all. (IV.ii.108-109)

It has been suggested that Trouble-All's function in the play is to question the actions and behaviour of the many characters by asking what 'warrant' they have for what they do. The char-

acters themselves hardly consider the question; it is the audience who is left to answer it.[2]

Trouble-All has marked a name in Mistress Grace's book which is to determine which of the two friends, Quarlous or Winwife, will wed her. Unable to penetrate Trouble-All's madness, Quarlous resolves to use him for another purpose. He disguises himself as the madman, donning his cap, gown and a beard. Dame Purecraft, convinced of the prophecy of the fortune tellers in Cow Lane that her happiness lies in marriage to a madman, declares her love for the disguised Quarlous whom she believes to be the demented Trouble-All. With the benefit of his disguise Quarlous learns that it is Winwife who has won the hand of Mistress Grace. He also learns however, that Dame Purecraft is a rich widow who would make him a fine catch. Not only does he win the widow, but a signed blank document from Justice Overdo, meant to serve as a warrant for any action Trouble-All might wish to perform but used by Quarlous as a contract transferring Grace to his own guardianship. He gladly offers her to Winwife but Grace must pay him for her release.

Quarlous is not unlike his predecessors, Volpone and Face; he is the cunning rogue whose motives are clearly defined. His disguise is donned for base purposes, with monetary gain as his primary aim. Unlike his predecessors he is wholly triumphant; unlike Volpone, he endures no punishment; unlike Face, the money and the rich widow are his. His prize

is won by cunning acquisitiveness. The good intentions of Justice Overdo fail, the selfish interests of Quarlous succeed, a curious moral if it be one. Perhaps if one must seek a moral from the comic worlds created by Ben Jonson, it would be that it is infinitely better to be a rogue than a fool.

CONCLUSION

T.S. Eliot in his essay on Ben Jonson has written that it is not construction of plot that is responsible for Jonson's skill as a dramatist, but "a unity of inspiration that radiates into plots and personages alike."[1] I believe that this is so; there is in Jonson's plays a kind of centrifugal force that animates the whole, thrusting out from the core of each and making each of its parts interdependent. It is foolish to attempt to define it; the creative impulse defies definition. I prefer to pinpoint something more tangible that may have given impetus to Jonson's comic creations, and my choice is the only one possible after a study like the one I have undertaken here. I am convinced that the 'unity of inspiration' which Eliot refers to owes a great deal to Jonson's view that all men are impostors. Motives may change from play to play, but common to all of them is the imputation that we are all in disguise parading as wise or honest men. This assumption controls not only the creation of his characters, but the costumes they wear, the language they use, the world they live in, their actions and the plot itself.

Jonson's two great comic masterpieces Volpone and The Alchemist are the most notable examples of the all-pervading influence of disguise although every one of his comedies expresses the view that no man is what he pretends to be.

In these two comedies, however, even the setting is in disguise, the one a travesty, the other made to appear other than it really is; the action of both is the result of a hoax, language is disguised to perpetrate the hoax, and theme weaves them together, demonstrating the power of disguise.

What I have tried to show in this study is how Jonson uses the disguise convention in his comedies, and why he uses it. Through my study I have become convinced of its importance, although I suspected I would find it so when I first chose the topic for my thesis.

Disguise is absolutely basic to Jonson's conception of comic theatre just because he could not interpret the world in any other light but the one which illuminated the roles men play, roles motivated by man's greed, his hypocrisy, his pretensions and his cunning. It was the roles devised through cunning like those conceived by Volpone and Face, which injected into his comedies an immense spirit of theatricality, heightening the comic moment by imitation within an imitation, making his knavish characters as much actors in the world of the play in which they live as Jonson perhaps was in the real world he inhabited. His rogues are as irrepressible as he, as dynamic in personality, as high-spirited, as clever, as much in love with a practical joke as Jonson was himself, but they are far less honest. Because of their dishonesty they know the value of disguise, because of their temperament, they could not possibly resist it.

Jonson rather liked these rogues of his own creation, but

he also saw them with a critical eye. If Brainworm was devised as a spirit of mischief, sharing Jonson's own small-boy delight in disguisings and practical jokes, his more mature knaves are hardly such lovable creatures; their disguisings are no mere child's game. Their shrewd manipulations have all the attributes of a predatory animal stalking its prey; these knaves may not be out for blood, but they are out for gold, and although they find immeasurable delight in the means by which they gain it, their motives are less than laudatory. However, it is his characters whose disguises are inept, who attempt to conceal vice and ignorance under a cloak of virtue and wit who are the real targets of Jonson's biting satire, his amused scorn, or outright condemnation.

His characters fall mainly into one of three categories. Parading as honest or wise men they are either dishonest, unwise, or dishonest and unwise. The fact that we feel much more affinity for the rascals in Jonson's comedies, suggests that in Jonson's considered opinion, it was far better to be dishonest than unwise, and far worse to be both one and the other. The clever rascal, then, was the most attractive of the three, although it would seem that, according to Jonson, there really was very little choice in the matter because a certain natural endowment is necessary to achieve the status of knave, and most men fall into the second and third groups, being fools by nature. Jonson, in his plays, seems to be offering one alternative; he would like to eliminate the third

category altogether; cleverness and deceit have a certain allure for him, but folly and deceit he found insupportable.

As in the humour comedies, he tries to see that his fools are taught caution by exposing their folly to them and to others. We do not know how successful he is, or the outcome of this exposure, for stripping his foolish characters of their pretensions normally terminates the play, but I cannot help but have the feeling that although they will ever remain fools, Morose will never again react with such violence to the sound of the human voice; Corbaccio, in spite of his less than lavish endowment of brains, will be a more faithful father to his son in the future; Mammon will listen more attentively to his friend Surly, and possibly heed his warnings; Old Knowell will trust his son's behaviour and the company he keeps, and spend his energies more constructively; Bartholomew Cokes might just possibly keep his purse in his pocket; and Justice Overdo will leave the differentiation between the innocent and the guilty to those more qualified to distinguish the one from the other. Only Jonson's hypocrites have no hope and are condemned forever to Jonson's third category.

Jonson had no love for fools but he hated the hypocrite; the knave, however, received preferential treatment in his hands. Occasionally he meted out severe punishment for their misdeeds, as he did in Volpone, but on the whole he treated them with indulgence. Both Brainworm and Face are commended for their wit, and even Subtle and Dol escape any serious censure, hopping over the back fence and away, no doubt to set

up some other kind of confidence game which will expose other fools and rob them of their money. Dauphine in Epicoene wins a financial settlement from his uncle for his chicanery and is reinstated in Morose's will, and Quarlous, as we have seen (to my mind the least appealing of the rogues) wins both wealth and a wife.

Shakespeare and Jonson were the two giants of drama in the renaissance. Both relied on the disguise convention in their comedies and yet their purposes for using disguise, and their handling of the device were very different. Romantic comedy and satiric comedy are worlds apart, but even so, the disguise convention was essential to the comic art of both, and basic to the dramatic structure of their plays. I have already discussed aggressive and protective disguise,[2] the one a Jonsonian device usually employed for purposes of reduction, the other used by Shakespeare to further the love themes of his comedies. But the use of these two forms of disguise were hardly unique to Shakespeare and Jonson. It would be difficult to name one dramatist of that period who did not employ the convention in one or other of his plays; Freeburg discusses over two hundred plays of the renaissance in his study of disguise plots, and admits that he was forced to limit his study to plays in which disguise is central to the main action, omitting incidental disguise as well as the various relatives to disguise found in Elizabethan drama. However, there is something unique in Jonson's handling of the disguise convention and it is the way in which he weaves

it into the very fibre of his comedies so that character, language, setting, action, theme, are all affected. Shakespeare makes brilliant use of disguise to create complications of plot in his love comedies, but because Jonson saw all men as impostors disguise has an added significance in his comedies. In fact, Jonson fashions the disguise convention into one of the essences of that "unity of inspiration that radiates into plots and personages alike," and the results perhaps prompted the epitaph which was inscribed on his tombstone: "O RARE BEN JONSON."

NOTES

INTRODUCTION

1. Ben Jonson, "Discoveries," in The Poems, The Prose Works, Vol.VIII of Ben Jonson ed. C.H. Herford, Percy and Evelyn Simpson (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1947). All quotations from the writings of Ben Jonson will be cited from this edition of his collected works.

2. Alvin Kernan, The Cankered Muse (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1959). See chapter on "The Satirist" pp. 14-30. There is always a danger of confusing the satirist with the author of a work. An author's persona is a separate literary identity, one of the stylistic conventions of satire. The blunt, straightforward attack on human folly in tones of moral indignation is one of the general characteristics of the persona (or mask) adopted by the writer of satire.

THE MASK

1. Glenn Hughes, The Story of the Theatre (New York: Samuel French, 1950), pp.4-6.

2. Ibid., pp.72-73.

3. See Allardyce Nicoll, Masks, Mimes and Miracles (New York: Cooper Square Publishers, 1963), pp.50-64.

4. Matthew Hodgart, Satire (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1969), p.30.

5. Nicoll, pp.65-79.

6. Kathleen Marguerite Lea, Italian Popular Comedy (New York: Russell and Russell, 1962), p.227.

7. Victor Oscar Freeburg, Disguise Plots in Elizabethan Drama (New York: B.Blom, 1965), p.36.

8. Ibid.

9. Ibid., p.39

THE THEATRICAL ADVANTAGES OF DISGUISE

1. Herford and Simpson, "Conversations with Drummond"

I.141.306-311.
All subsequent references to "Conversations" will be from this edition.

2. See chapter on The Alchemist, p.74.

3. Freeburg, pp.5-7.

THE SATIRICAL ADVANTAGES OF DISGUISE

1. "Discoveries," VIII.644.2676-2677.

2. Hodgart, p.20.

3. It would be wrong to think of alchemy as a fraudulent practice in Jonson's England. On the contrary, there were men who had arrived at some kind of distinction in this field of study. Jonson makes mention of a few in The Alchemist. Dr. Dee (II.vi.24), Raymond Lully and George Ripley (II.v.8) were all famous alchemists of the English renaissance. Astrology, necromancy, medicine, as well as alchemy, were studies which occupied Dr. Simon Forman, a personage of much influence in the year 1610. See L.C. Knights, Drama and Society in the Age of Jonson (London: Chatto and Windus, 1937), pp.206-207.

4. Hodgart, p.118.

KINDS OF DISGUISE

1. Elias Canetti, Crowds and Power trans. Carol Stewart (London: Gollancz, 1962). Both folk tales quoted in this chapter are taken from Canetti's chapter on "Transformation" pp. 337-384, although I use them for purposes other than his.

2. Muriel Bradbrook, The Growth and Structure of Elizabethan Comedy (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books in association with Chatto and Windus, 1963), pp.97-98.

3. Canetti, pp.337-384.

4. Lea, p.190.

EVERY MAN IN HIS HUMOUR

1. Freeburg, p.124.

2. Lea, p.65.

3. Freeburg, p.121.

4. Northrop Frye, Anatomy of Criticism: Four Essays (New York: Atheneum, 1969), originally published by Princeton University Press, 1957, pp.172-175. The comic character who manipulates the action of a comedy by trickery is one type of eiron discussed by Frye in his third essay: "Archetypal Criticism: Theory of Myths." The alazon or 'impostor' is another classic comic type, prominent in Jonson's comedies, and discussed by Frye.

5. Every Man in His Humour III.v.26; Miles Gloriosus lines 901, 902, 915ff; 1139, in Plautus: Three Comedies trans. Erich Segal, (New York: Harper & Row, 1969).

6. Freeburg, p.124.

7. Plautus's braggart soldier, Pyrgopolynices, was the likely model for Bobadill in Every Man in His Humour as he no doubt was for Shakespeare's Falstaff.

8. "Conversations," I.144.420-424.

9. Freeburg, p.28. Comic doubles probably employed identical masks in Roman performances of Plautus's Amphitruo. Although masks may not have been generally used in Roman theatre before 115 B.C., this particular comic situation derives from Greek theatre where masks were an integral part of performance.

10. May Day II.i.479-489, The Plays of George Chapman Vol.I, ed. Thomas Marc Parrott, (New York: Russell & Russell, 1961).

11. Hamlet III.ii.16-17, The New Variorum Edition of Shakespeare Vol.I, ed. Horace Howard Furness, (New York: American Scholar Publications, 1965); all quotations from Shakespeare will be cited from this edition.

12. Andrew Gurr, The Shakespearean Stage 1574-1642 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970), pp.80-81.

VOLPONE

1. Herford and Simpson, II.52-53.

2. Nicoll, p.223.

3. Ibid., p.346.

4. Kernan, p.165.

EPICOENE

1. Freeburg, p.114.

2. In a Tale of a Tub Swift created an allegory based on a suit of clothes. A father leaves each of his three sons a new coat in his will. The three coats, initially identical, undergo radical change one from the other as each son interprets the will in his own way; the coats become a reflection of the doctrines and beliefs of each of them. Swift's purpose, of course, is satirical.

THE ALCHEMIST

1. Francis Grose, A Classical Dictionary of the Vulgar Tongue (London: 1785), as cited in Edward B. Partridge, The Broken Compass (London: Chatto and Windus, 1958), p.119.

2. "Discoveries," 625.2031-2035.

3. Partridge, p.128.

4. Ibid., p.130.

5. Herford and Simpson, X.105.

BARTHOLOMEW FAIR

1. Elisabeth Woodbridge, Studies in Jonson's Comedy (New York: Gordian Press, 1966), originally published in 1898.

2. Ray L. Heffner, Jr., "Unifying Symbols in the Comedy of Ben Jonson," Ben Jonson ed. Jonas A. Barish, (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1963), p.143.

CONCLUSION

1. T.S. Eliot, "Ben Jonson," Barish, p.20.

2. See section on aggressive and protective disguise, p.27.

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