THE MORAL DIMENSION OF DISGUISE AND ROLE-PLAYING IN BEN JONSON'S *VOLPONE*, *THE ALCHEMIST* AND *THE SILENT WOMAN*

A THESIS SUBMITTED TO
THE GRADUATE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
OF
MIDDLE EAST TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY

BY

ÇAĞLA TEKİN

IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR
THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS
IN
THE DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH LITERATURE

NOVEMBER 2015

Approval of the Graduate School of Social Sciences

_____

Prof. Dr. Meliha Altunışık
Director

I certify that this thesis satisfies all the requirements as a thesis for the degree of Master of Arts.

_____

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Nurten Birlik
Head of Department

This is to certify that we have read this thesis and that in our opinion it is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a thesis for the degree of Master of Arts.

_____

Assist. Prof. Dr. Margaret J. M. Sönmez
Supervisor

Examining Committee Members

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Nurten Birlik (METU, FLE) _____

Assist. Prof. Dr. Margaret J. M. Sönmez (METU, FLE) _____

Assist. Prof. Dr. Evrim Doğan Adanur (ATILIM, ELL) _____

I hereby declare that all information in this document has been obtained and presented in accordance with academic rules and ethical conduct. I also declare that, as required by these rules and conduct, I have fully cited and referenced all material and results that are not original to this work.

Name, Last name : Çağla Tekin

Signature :

ABSTRACT

THE MORAL DIMENSION OF DISGUISE AND ROLE-PLAYING IN BEN JONSON'S *VOLPONE*, *THE ALCHEMIST* AND *THE SILENT WOMAN*

Tekin, Çağla
M.A., English Literature
Supervisor: Assist. Prof. Margaret J. M. SÖNMEZ
November 2015, 117 pages

This thesis studies the plays *Volpone, The Alchemist and The Silent Woman* in order to show that through his characters who adopt multiple identities, Ben Jonson aimed to show his audience that disguise and role-playing are morally wrong. As a classicist, Jonson was influenced by Stoicism (mainly by Seneca). Stoicism was a philosophy that advocated being harmonious with nature and consistent in identity, which were seen as the ultimate paths to virtue. Therefore, Jonson, following Stoic's analogy of life as a stage, thought that the ideal man is the person who remaines loyal to his role, in other words his identity, from beginning to end. Jonson, as a satirist who finds every act that threatens self-integrity immoral, aims to awaken his audience to social and moral realities of his time by reflecting his time on stage; and by punishing his disguisers and role-players, who take advantage of other characters, he aims at transmitting his moral message.

Keywords: Disguise, role-playing, Stoicism, consistency.

ÖZ

BEN JONSON'UN *VOLPONE*, *THE ALCHEMIST* VE *THE SILENT WOMAN* ADLI OYUNLARINDA KILIK DEĞİŞTİRME VE ROL YAPMANIN AHLAKİ BOYUTU

Tekin, Çağla
Yüksek Lisans, İngiliz Edebiyatı
Tez Yöneticisi: Yard. Doç. Dr. Margaret J.M. Sönmez
Kasım 2015, 117 Sayfa

Bu tez Ben Jonson'un *Volpone*, *The Alchemist* ve *The Silent Woman* adlı oyunlarında, birden fazla kimliğe bürünerek oyun içinde oyun oynayan kahramanları ile, seyirciye kılık değiştirme ve rol yapmanın ahlaki açıdan yanlış olduğunu göstermeye çalışmasını konu etmektedir. Klasikçi bir oyun yazarı olarak Jonson, başta Seneca olmak üzere, Stoa felsefesinden etkilenmiştir. Stoacılar, kişinin doğasıyla uyumlu ve kendisiyle tutarlı olmasının, erdeme giden yollar olduğunu savunurlar. Ben Jonson da, hayatın bir sahne olduğu benzetmesinden yola çıkarak, ideal insanın oynadığı role, başından sonuna kadar sadık kalan kişi olduğunu düşünür. Kimliksel tutarlılığa aykırı olarak yapılan her hareketin ahlaki açıdan yanlış olduğunu düşünen Jonson, sanatçının toplumu eğitme görevi olduğunu düşünen bir hicivci olarak sahneye, içinde yaşadığı zamanın sosyal panoramasını yansıtarak, kılık değiştiren ve rol yapan kahramanlarını cezalandırma yoluyla, izleyicide ahlaki ve sosyal bir farkındalık yaratmaya çalışmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Kılık değiştirme, rol yapma, Stoacılık, tutarlılık.

To my mother and sister

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First of all, I would like to express my deepest gratitude to my supervisor Assist. Prof. Dr. Margaret J.M. Sönmez for her guidance, understanding, inspiration and more importantly supportive attitude. I would not be able to complete this thesis without her encouragement, kindness to and faith in me. I would also like to thank Assoc. Prof. Dr. Nurten Birlik and Assist. Prof. Dr. Evrim Doğan Adanur for their valuable comments on and contributions to my thesis.

I will always be grateful to Nurcan Kıyak for her support and guidance which helped me to get through the passing year. I will always feel lucky to know her and her family. I would like to thank Akile (Angie) Nazım for her encouragement and friendship and every other friend who had been there for me during this difficult period. It was a privilege to know each and every one of them.

I would also like to thank my family, especially my aunt Nuray Tekin and my grandparents who welcomed me with open arms to their house during my masters education and my cousin Derya Dağdelen for patiently answering every one of my questions.

Finally, I would like to thank my sister Nihan İnce for her support. I am particularly grateful to my mother who made every sacrifice to make sure that I live a good life. Her unconditional love and support helped me to become who I am.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Disguise and role-playing were important plot devices for dramatists of the early modern period. Changes in appearance through costumes as well as verbal role-playing to deceive others was effectively used, especially in the comedies of the period, in order to heighten "the effect of actors on audiences" (Dawson 13). Although there are multiple purposes for integrating disguise and role-playing devices into a work of drama, my main concern in this dissertation is going to be Ben Jonson and his use of these devices in his comedies, *Volpone, The Alchemist* and *The Silent Woman*. Jonson was a classist who placed great value on the works of antique writers. His interest in Greek and Roman works introduced him to Stoic philosophy which can be detected most of his works. Stoicism promoted that the ideal human being who follows the path of virtue in every action is the person who remains loyal to his or her identity at all times, regardless of the changing externals. Jonson who believed in the role of artist as a guide to society, aimed to show his audience that disguise and role-playing are morally wrong in his three satirical plays that will be examined in the coming chapters.

In the dictionary, meaning of the verb 'to disguise' is explained as "to furnish with a false appearance or an assumed identity" (*Merriam – Webster*). It can be defined as changes in appearance with the use of costumes, cosmetics and other accessories, but it

does not necessarily require external objects. It can be performed solely through the power of words, and it can simply take the form of role-playing in order to create a false image of oneself. No matter how they are defined, it would be fair to say that both disguise and role playing – as a different form of the same thing - are the basic features of drama; "After all, what an actor does is dress up and pretend to be someone else, one of the basic forms of human play" (Hyland *Early Modern Stage* 1), and insofar as they also reflect what the actors are doing, their part within a plot is metatheatrical. What this dissertation will examine is their use as dramatic and moral devices within Jonson's plays.

Devices of disguise and role-playing and their connection to the genre of drama were probably understood differently by the early modern audience from today's audience, because they witnessed a crossing of social and gender boundaries, every time they entered a playhouse. As Hawkes explains:

> The theatre's own inherited practice of gender cross-dressing, and indeed the broad nature of its art at large, which required commoners to dress as nobility, even royalty, was bound systematically to conflict with those ways of enforcing gender and class distinctions, bringing them into question and, ultimately, to the point of crisis. (15)

Hawkes considered boys playing female characters on stage as a source of confusion for contemporary audiences, as it was contradicting with reality. Even though it was perfectly understandable for theatre companies to infringe the limits of gender distinctions in employing male actors to play female characters (for reasons of social convention, currently understood

as some need to "contain [. . .] female sexuality" caused by a "fear of female sexuality" (Shapiro 2)), in real life, males wearing female apparel were unheard of and would have been entirely unacceptable, and cross dressing in the other direction, "women in male apparel", was "severely punished by London magistrates, probably because the movement afforded by cross-gender disguise allowed women to violate patriarchal norms of female behaviour" (Shapiro 7). Again, at a time when "governments propagated a neo-feudal view of the universe as a vast hierarchy containing many subsidiary hierarchies" (Hyland *Early Modern Stage* 27), actors were allowed to play the roles of people from higher (as well as lower) social positions. They were allowed to be seen in the costumes of nobility on stage, while the government passed sumptuary bills[1] to ensure that everyone was dressed according to his or her rank in society, to support the political belief that "everyone had a fixed place in society, and to shore up the sense of divinely appointed good order by ensuring that each subject remained in his or her place" (Hyland *Early Modern Stage* 27).

Shapiro takes a different approach than Hawkes and moves her argument towards a discussion of "dual consciousness" (9). Dual consciousness refers to a "state of mind in which the audience is aware simultaneously of the player and the player as character" (Hyland *Early Modern Stage* 23). According to this interpretation, all through the play, the audience was fully aware of the actor being on the stage, enacting a role and they were capable of appreciating the performance taking place:

[1] As Hyland wrote, sumptuary legislation was a method to limit people's expenses of private items and it aimed to make "distinctions between the ranks of aristocracy" (*Early Modern Stage* 28).

> To survive, and particularly to play a tragedy, the player had to share with his audience a common acknowledgement both of the ridiculousness of impersonation and some sort of belief in its significance. Every time a player re-entered, this acknowledged conspiracy was renewed, and any change in the character's appearance, such as a change in status, or a disguise, as displayed in costume or bearing, was liable to intensify it." (Mann 27)

If we are to follow Shapiro's idea of dual consciousness, it would be fair to say that what really complicates the work of drama for the audience is not the "disguise of the drama", but the metatheatrical "disguise within the drama" (Hyland *Early Modern Stage* 1). As Hyland writes, disguise and role-playing within a work of drama existed before the early modern period, and "disguise provided a wealth of intrigue; it also allowed a certain amount of verbal and dramatic irony; and, in the final unmasking, brought a logical, complete, and satisfying end to the play" (*Early Modern Stage* 3). Bradbrook studied the main influences on the use of disguise and role-playing devices in the early modern period and concluded that it goes back to the romance tradition, noting that, "in romances and ballads, disguise is a proof and almost a badge of the lover. From Hind Horn to Fair Annie[2], the heroes and heroines put on mean attire, the men to test their true love, and the women to follow theirs" (Bradbrook 86). According to Bradbrook and a few others, another influence that will make Jonson's use of these devices more understandable is the influence of the morality tradition of the medieval period. As Nicoll wrote:

[2] Both are characters from traditional folk ballads.

> To a certain extent the disguise device seems to have arisen chiefly out of the morality-play pattern. The hero, or at least the central figure in a play, is approached by some evil characters who wish to get him into their clutches; if they come to him in their own shapes he may be induced to dismiss them summarily, and so they pretend to be other than they are. This device is constantly being employed, and we may well believe that the familiarizing of sixteenth century spectators with the convention helps to explain the popularity of the disguise element in the later Elizabethan drama. Often this disguise device is associated with the person of the Vice. (54)

Apparently, no matter what the main influence on a particular example of early drama was, disguise and role-playing devices are considered to have been very appealing and commonly used.

Although it is admitted that "it is fundamentally a comic device" (Hyland *Early Modern Stage* 71), a distinction can be made between disguise and role-playing devices within a work of drama, depending on the objectives of the characters. As Hyland wrote:

> Those plays in which characters initially disguise for the purposes of concealment or self-protection can be seen as distinct from those in which a character freely chooses to put on disguise in order to observe, or to trick others. This division reflects the type of play involved – plays in which characters initially disguise under some sort of constraint tend to be romantic, whereas plays in which characters voluntarily put on disguise tend to be satiric. (Hyland *Disguise and Role-Playing* 7)

This is borne out by the plays analysed in this thesis. The next chapters will be dealing with the latter kind, while Shakespeare and his use of these devices can be used to exemplify the romantic use of disguise.

Looking at a few of the Shakespearean plays that include disguise and role-playing, it is not difficult to see how they differ from Jonson's use of these devices. In *As You Like It*, we see Rosalind disguising herself as a man to escape from her uncle, for instance. Viola in *Twelfth Night,* also dresses as a man to find a way to securely take part in patriarchal society. Again, while Portia from *The Merchant of Venice* uses disguise to bring justice, Jessica from the same play uses it to escape from her father and to be with her lover. All of these characters' intentions are not to deceive and manipulate people, but self-concealment for a certain period in order to achieve something good. Unlike Jonson's characters, at the end of their plays they are all (in a way) rewarded for their good efforts, being granted the happy endings they seek.

Whether satiric or romantic, critics who write on the subject believe that one of the most important reasons for the use of these devices in the early modern period is simply performance, as they "were written to display the virtuoso abilities of specific actors" (Hyland *Early Modern Stage* 17). Performing as a character who disguises himself or herself as someone else must be a challenging role for an actor, since he is to display a great change in character, that is he is to take on a character at a further remove from his self (a role within or beyond another role), although from outside it is a simple change of costumes or accessories. Therefore, theatrical value is placed on the presentation rather than the text, making "the spectator the evaluator of the performance" (Hyland *Early Modern Stage* 34). After all, it was performance that determined the success of the play:

> The central point, the focus of attention, and the clearly decisive element for the spectator's overall evaluation of a theatrical performance is the acting. A spectator's value judgement of the entire performance is most directly influenced by what the spectator attributes to the performers [...] How something is performed is obviously more important than what is performed. (Sauters 36)

Another reason that is agreed on by critics is the pleasure that the audience took in becoming a part of what he or she sees on the stage. "As a general though not absolute rule, disguise had to be entirely opaque to characters on the stage and entirely transparent to the audience" (Hyland *Early Modern Stage* 42). Therefore, this information held from other characters but accessible to the audience, granted a sort of superiority to the audience, probably increasing the pleasure derived from the play. As Gurr describes it,

> Through disguise in the play's plot, an almost momentary change of gown or cloak could make a face familiar in one role re-enter in another [...] The experienced audience knew who each player was, could watch the game of trickery through disguise without any risk of being conned in the way that the plots would in fooling their gullible stage character [...] Recognising the tricks being played with quick-change disguises made audience feel comfortably superior. They connived with the players in their trickery while admitting the whole process of deception through disguise as an integral part of the larger trickery, the metatheatrical entertainment they had paid to view. (51)

As an extension of the theory of superiority, Hyland notes that the element of surprise is considered to be an element in the success of the work of drama, since it was very appealing to the audience of the early modern drama:

> In plays in which the audience has all along been aware of the disguiser's true identity the moment of revelation is satisfying because the spectators have had a shared intimacy with the disguiser, aware of the ironic distance between what they know and what the disguiser's victims know, and so the moment of immediate revelation, [...] is like a punch line to a shared joke, a moment of release for which the spectators have been waiting. (Hyland *Early Modern Stage* 60)

A much simpler explanation comes from Ljungger, who is quoted by Sauters, claiming that "[t]he mimetic urge to imitate, the desire to disguise and to represent another person is common to all people on any level of education. A human being is born with such desires" (77). After all, disguise has a liberating aspect, giving the person the opportunity of becoming who she or he wants, satisfying a "human need to escape the constrictions of the self and be someone else" (Hyland *Early Modern Stage* 113). What drew Jonson to the use of these devices can be the performance, meta-theatricality or the element of surprise as the critics suggested, or all of these together. They were not his sole purpose, though: I believe that Jonson, by creating his "rogue in multi-disguise" (Hyland *Disguise and Role-playing* 12) characters, aims to meet the demands of his moral responsibility as a playwright, and this is what the coming chapters will try to show.

Ben Jonson, who was considered by his immediate successors to be the "the greatest man of the last age" and "the most learned and the judicious writer which theatre ever had" (Dryden 25), often used disguise and role-playing devices in his comedies. What distinguishes his use of these particular dramatic devices in his works is his attachment of moral lessons to them. He was not only a dramatist and poet, but also a critic of his society and a strict

moralist who believed in artists' role in society as teachers of virtues. As a moralist, Jonson used his plays to spread his moral message to his audience. Through his knaves and fools who constantly transform themselves into different identities in order to deceive others, he aims to encourage his audience to confront the realities of their society.

In order to understand this aspect of Jonson's purpose as a playwright, we should have a look at the definition and history of the satire. Merriam-Webster defines satire as "a literary work holding up human vices and follies to ridicule or scorn" explaining the term in the broadest sense. However, what has been a subject of argument among critics is its public function. Quintero calls the satirist a "prophet or an idealistic visionary" (2), since he[3] "oppose[s] a mirror to the realities of [his] time" (Dutton 59), indicating a belief in social betterment and evoking a desire to change for the better. Quintero notes that,

> any satirist deserving the name must be more than a partisan advocate or a clownish entertainer, for a true satirist must be a true believer, a practicing humanitarian, responsible even in his or her own subjective indulgence or personal indignation. […] The satirist, either explicitly or implicitly, tries to sway us toward an ideal alternative, toward a condition of what the satirist believes should be (Quintero 3).

Furthermore, the satirist must be a believer in shared values, because what he does necessitates a belief that satirist and the audience share a common understanding and that the audience is willing to participate in the game of ridicule. "The satirist, in

[3] I will refer to satirists as "he", since printed satires in Jonson's time were mostly written by men.

seeking a re-formation of thought, expects readers to engage the satire by applying their reasoning, moral values, and taste to the subject" (Quintero 5). With this re-formation and distortion of judgements, the audience goes through a change in point of view.

Satire is a word "derived from the classical Greek 'satyr', the half-man, half-beast companions of Bacchus, creatures whose language was supposed to be abusive or obscene" (Dutton 60). In early satire,

> a first-person poet-persona typically attack[ed] forms of vanity or hypocrisy. […] How a subject [was] presented (arrangement, design, patterning) and with what expression (style, tone, diction, figures) for the purpose of positioning an audience and promoting an opportunity for persuasion (kairos) – what we may more simply call 'the rhetorical form' – [was] constitutive of satiric content in classical satura. (Quintero 7)

Then, with its stock characters representing certain types like "the imposter, the self-deceiving braggart, the buffoon, the rustic, and, of course, the ironist", Old Comedy "use[d] narrative to lambaste, parody, or make ironic fun of its satiric objective, usually through dialogue between fools, knaves, or ironists. An obtuse fool or naïf may also narrate" (Quintero 7).

Jonson wrote his plays in the 17th century which has been considered part of the most productive period of satire, as Quintero, among others, states that "satire in the English language flowers most completely during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and more satires were written during these centuries than any others" (Quintero 9). Jonson aimed to present a satirical

view of society, putting on stage "not individuals, but types-- the testy old father, the curmudgeonly miser, the bombastically boasting soldier, the jealous husband" (Nicoll 101). He also added a special quality to his types. Taking its root from a medical concept, he created his characters in the light of certain humours that Nicoll explains in the following passage:

> There were four basic humours or 'moistures' (the word 'humour' being akin to our modern 'humid'). In the well-balanced individual these humours existed in due proportions, so that an even harmony ensued; but in many men one humour, or two humours in conjunction, attained such force as to destroy the operation of the others, the result leading towards disease. (100)

This method of characterization brought many critical approaches alongside, and Jonson was blamed for creating one dimensional characters, because they did not seem to possess any depth, other than the humours they represented. But Jonson sought a more idealistic objective in the writing of his plays.

Although he maintained the types of Old Comedy, he criticized it "for making the creation of laughter an end in itself, thereby losing touch with the moral and artistic ends of comedy" (Dutton 66). Therefore, taking a less escapist approach, he used satire to guide his audience towards seeing the immoral realities of their age, by putting morally misbehaving characters on stage. Furthermore, although he was thought to be a great satirist, he was criticized for not proposing any firm solutions for the construction of a better world. That is why he was accused of participating in the hypocrisy and folly that he was criticizing; the way he reflects society seemed to claim a sort of moral superiority and his style was found to be

too boastful and arrogant. However, as Dutton puts it, Jonson was writing for "understanders" who would see that "the royal sanction of his work [was] to lift it above the sordid entanglements of satire" (70).

In this thesis, I will argue that Jonson considered all kinds of disguise and role-playing as the indication of an unreliable identity which leads to moral corruption. Across the plays, he presents a group of fools and knaves who are enslaved by humane desires and weaknesses, and who constantly disguise themselves with false identities, presenting it as a manifestation of their moral corruption. Through examining how Jonson treated his characters in his satirical plays *The Alchemist*, *Volpone* and *The Silent Woman*, I will try to show that although he does not provide any example or concrete definition of the ideal man or ideal society in his plays, he consistently considers disguise and role-playing as a matter of morals, and that he presents lack of self integrity and instability of character as the main indications of immorality.

Ben Jonson has been one of the prominent literary persons to be described as classicist and humanist. Living in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth century, he was highly influenced by the prevailing intellectual climate of late

> Renaissance humanism, the rebirth of learning in literature and the arts that began in Italy and spread its way across Europe, and which was characterized by a devotion to Greek and Roman literature, and, more specifically, to the restructuring of all literature on the model of the classical genres: epic, satire, lyric, drama, elegy, and so forth. (Mulryan 163)

Jonson consciously adopted the style and the teachings of the Roman and Greek writings, embracing the philosophy and principles of the writers. He saw himself as a part of this long line of a writing tradition and wanted to interiorise this ancient inheritance through imitating it, and also to contribute to it. He adopted the Aristotelian definition of poetry as the art of imitation, and placed it at the centre of his classicism, but he made a distinction between "slavish and true imitation of classics" (Mulryan 166). As he would write later, in his *Discoveries*,

> The third requisite in our poet or maker is imitation, to be able to convert the substance or riches of another poet to his own use. To make choice of one excellent man above the rest, and so to follow him till he grow very he [*sic*], or so like him as the copy may be mistaken for the principal. Not as a creature that swallows what it takes in crude, raw, or undigested, but that feeds with an appetite, and hath a stomach to concoct, divide, and turn all into nourishment. Not to imitate servilely, as Horace saith, and catch at vices for virtue, but to draw forth out of the best and choicest flowers, with the bee, and turn all into honey, work it into one relish and savour; make our imitation sweet; observe how the best writers have imitated, and follow them. How Virgil and Statius have imitated Homer; how Horace, Archilochus; how Alcæus, and the other lyrics; and so of the rest. (n.pag)

His interest in classics and in developing a classicism of his own is found not only in the form and style of his writings but also in his moral philosophy. His interest in classical writings introduced Jonson to Stoicism, especially that of Seneca. Stoicism is a philosophy that promoted moral and intellectual perfection. They believed that "virtue was possible but very hard to achieve indeed" (McEvoy 11).

Stoicism was a philosophy that was highly influenced by Socrates at first. The influence was so prominent that they actually wanted to be called 'Socratics' (Long *Epictetus: A Stoic* 67). They placed reason and self knowledge at the centre of their philosophy, as he did and believed that wisdom and virtue were the only good:

> The details cover numerous doctrines in ethics, moral psychology, and theology, including the priority of the soul's good over everything else, the unity of the virtues, the identity of virtue with knowledge, and divine providence. The Stoics' hardest and most distinctive thesis was that genuine and complete happiness requires nothing except moral virtue. And on this above all they looked to Socrates. […] The Stoics had also treated Socrates' life as a virtual paradigm of Stoic wisdom's practical realization, and they were especially impressed by accounts of Socrates' fortitude, self-control, and imperviousness to physical and emotional stress. (Long *Epictetus: A Stoic* 68)

Stoicism went through three periods; Early Stoicism which included the founder Zeno, Middle Stoicism and finally Late or Roman Stoicism which included Epictetus, Marcus Aurelius and more importantly Seneca who was most influential on Jonson. Since almost nothing was left of the writings of Zeno (Schofield 240), what is known about Stoicism is based mostly on the writings of the second and especially third generation: "which most decisively shaped the understanding of Stoicism in the early modern period" (Inwood "Introduction" 2).

Stoic philosophy has been mainly studied under three categories, being logic, physics and ethics, but its primary focus was on ethics; and what distinguished Late Stoics from the first two generations

was their interpretation of the already established ethical principles of Stoicism. First of all,

> in striking contrast to the common opinion that the Stoics were mostly lofty figures who were merely interested in some inner reality of their own with little consequence for society at large, the way in which the philosophical system developed and emerged in the hands of Roman Stoics was decidedly pragmatic and community–oriented. (Thorsteinsson 16)

The possible reason for this shift from individual to community might be the fact that prominent figures of the Late Stoics - such as Seneca and Marcus Aurelius - were involved in politics. Therefore, being influential on the community, they took Stoicism from a philosophical level to a more daily level, putting "emphasis on practical application of ethical demands" (Thorsteinsson 16).

Another important feature of Late Stoics was their perception of the humanitarian aspect of the Stoic philosophy. Stoicism taught that all human beings are capable of finding their connection to Reason which governs every aspect of the universe. This capability attained a divine value to each individual, and this value was accepted in all generations of Stoics. Late Stoics, however, carried it to a different level by being the first group who clearly "expressed the notion of equality and equal value of all human beings" (Thorsteinsson 16). They disregarded all kinds of differences among human beings and considered all humanity as a whole. According to them, all human beings are part of one body that functions perfectly as long as every human properly served its function. This metaphor was

> utilized in philosophical discourse on the relationship between the whole and its parts. Often it underlined that each and every member of a family, or of an organized community, or indeed of humanity, had some specific function in the whole. It demonstrated logically that the whole is made of and dependent upon different parts, and that all these parts are necessary, [...], in order for whole to function properly. (Thorsteinsson 33)

With this idea, they emphasized the responsibility of individuals in maintaining order in society and in the universe, and they aimed to "teach people how to recognize and preserve" this order (Thorsteinsson 33). Practical application of ethical rules and the individual's role and responsibility in the maintaining of order are two aspects of Stoic philosophy that Jonson also clearly advocated in his plays.

According to Stoicism, there are three groups of things.

> [T]he virtues *(aretai),* prudence, justice, courage, moderation, etc. are strictly 'good' *(agathon),* since they and they alone under all conditions always benefit and never harm us. Vice *(kakia),* foolishness, injustice, etc. were, conversely, considered the only truly 'bad' thing *(kakon)* since these things are the only things harmful to us under all conditions, and therefore are necessarily productive of unhappiness *(kakodaimonia)*. All things lying in the non-moral sphere, health, strength, and the like, the Stoics termed 'indifferents' *(adiaphora)* and labeled 'neutral' *(oudetera)* since they were neither good nor bad strictly speaking and it is possible to be happy *(eudaimon)* without them. (Stephens 1)

Since good things are the source of happiness and bad things are to be avoided for the sake of it, the primary objective of a person should be the possession of the good, which is virtue.

When the issues of virtue and morality are concerned Stoics use the term "prolepsis". In its basic sense, it means preconception. According to this idea,

> the mind contains certain moral conceptions (e.g. conceptions of bravery, the good and fine, the god person and the god). [...] Consider our knowledge of technical terms in geometry and musical theory. We do not naturally have conceptions of these things; so we clearly recognize that we must learn them from an expert. But when it comes to morality we are conceited and believe we need no instruction. (Dyson XVII)

These conceptions are common to all human beings. Yet, sometimes, people may disagree with each other on the application of these conceptions and they may lose their way to virtue.

Being virtuous can be achieved by following two interrelated concepts: Nature and consistency. For Stoics, reason is the ultimate road to virtue, and it can be found in nature. Therefore, if one wants to find the way to virtue, he or she should be consistent in action and also with nature:

> By contemplating Nature, the world, one learns the one set of true principles which man is to live by; life in accordance with this will also be life in consistency with oneself. It is by internalizing the correct set of mutually consistent propositions that man, the rational animal, perfects his reason. (Inwood *Ethics and Human* 109)

The goal of life is to reach the point of virtue, and as human beings we are provided with a natural inclination towards it. As Epictetus claims "to do good and benefit others" are in human nature and although human beings are not "sinless", it is possible to avoid it, since it is "the will and intention that count" (Thorsstein 61).

Therefore, all we need to do is to let nature guide us in our actions. As Schofield explains:

> The idea is that we all have as our natural endowment certain inclinations which are 'starting points for virtue' or the 'foundation of appropriate behaviour and matter for virtue'. In fact, Zeno etymologised the key notion of *kathekon*, appropriate behaviour, as what 'proceeds in accordance with' the nature of humans or animals or plants or whatever. […] But we are also naturally programmed to become rational creatures – and so to acquire a disposition such that 'reason supervenes as craftsman of impulse' , with the result that we perform whatever is appropriate with unfailing consistency – which is the disposition of virtue itself. (Schofield 242-44)

As Seneca wrote in *Of a Happy Life*: "This consummated state of felicity [the state of being virtuous] is only a submission to the dictate of right nature. The foundation of it is wisdom and virtue; the knowledge of what we ought to do, and the conformity of the will to that knowledge" (13).

Self consistency is as important as being harmonious with nature, and "the sage would have complete control over his disposition toward the world around him and act in a naturally correct way" (Bartsch 191). The sage in Stoicism is the wise man who, aware of his nature, cannot help acting other than in the morally correct way. He is never provoked by passions and does not react to externals. "The wise man is not pushed around by the slings and arrows of Fortune nor the torture devices of tyrants but soldiers on without wavering, guided by rational principle alone and sporting a steady gaze" (Bartsch 194).

This concept of self consistency is best explained by Seneca, through an analogy of life as a stage. To him, it is only the wise man who succeeds in sticking to one character, being consistent throughout his life:

> Believe me, it is a great role — to play the role of one man. But nobody can be one person except the wise man; the rest of us often shift our masks. At times you will think us thrifty and serious, at other times wasteful and idle. We continually change our characters and play a part contrary to that which we have discarded. You should therefore force yourself to maintain to the very end of life's drama the character which you assumed at the beginning. (*Ad Lucilium Letter CXX*)

Therefore, the wise man or sage "is the best of all actors – a quality Seneca bestows on him because his performance on the stage of life is marked by consistency" (Bartsch 194). Seneca believed in man's freedom to choose his own role in life. Nevertheless, once it has been chosen, one should strive to remain constant to it, since "true greatness" is shown "by its consistency" (*Ad Lucilium Letter CXX*).

Epictetus, following Seneca but not believing that man chooses his own initial identity, explained the importance of consistency in a very similar way.

> Remember that you are an actor in a drama, of such a kind as the author pleases to make it. If short, of a short one; if long, of a long one. If it is his pleasure you should act a poor man, a cripple, a governor, or a private person, see that you act it naturally. For this is your business, to act well the character assigned you; to choose it is another's. (*Enchiridion* 17)

Although these two philosophers have different perceptions about the way human roles are obtained, the core idea of consistency as a requirement of virtue remains the same. Therefore human beings, who either have the freedom of choosing their own roles in life as Seneca suggested or are assigned to play a certain role throughout their lives as Epictetus claimed, are morally responsible for staying loyal to their role from beginning to end. Since passions and externals have no significance for the wise, human beings are responsible for "not changing [their] expression no matter what happens" (Bartsch 194). Thus, disobeying your role in life, which includes participating in disguise and pretence, are products of the irrational, immoral and foolish mind. As Seneca wrote: "That is how a foolish mind is most clearly demonstrated: it shows first in this shape and then in that, and is never like itself — which is, in my opinion, the most shameful of qualities" (*Ad Lucilium Letter CXX*).

What Ben Jonson thought and wrote about the virtues of a good man can be considered as paraphrased versions of what has been said by the philosophers mentioned above. In his *Discoveries* he explains how important self knowledge is and how one should be true to one's own nature:

> I have considered our whole life is like a play: wherein every man forgetful of himself, is in travail with expression of another. Nay, we so insist in imitating others, as we cannot when it is necessary return to ourselves; like children, that imitate the vices of stammerers so long, till at last they become such; and make the habit to another nature, as it is never forgotten. (n.pag.)

According to Jonson, every man has a role which is naturally assigned to him, and the virtuous man, aware of his role, never forgets his true nature. Stoicism considers inwardness above all externals, which means that what matters is the inner quality of human beings. No matter what the circumstances are, human beings should always stays loyal to their nature, since nature "is always the same, like herself" (*Discoveries* n.pag.).

Although a Senecan influence on Jonson is undeniable, his understanding of Stoicism differed from Seneca's. Seneca, as a politician and a member of a wealthy family, was standing on a high level of social hierarchy. However, he was an advocator of equality of all human beings regardless of their social background. He believed that human beings were related to one another and nature operates with the principle of equality and mutual respect. As he wrote: "We all spring from the same source (principia), have the same origin (arigo); no man is more noble than another (nemo altero nobilior) except in so far as the nature of one man is more upright and more capable of good actions" (*On Benefits* 3.28.1). To Seneca, there are only two kinds of people: good people and bad people and this is only determined by personal effort, since "the path of virtue is closed to no one, it lies open to all; it admits and invites all, whether they be free-born men, slaves or freed-men, kings or exiles; it requires no qualifications of family or of property, it is satisfied with a mere man" (*On Benefits* 3.18.2).

As his plays indicate, Jonson takes a different position on the matter of social hierarchy. In Jonson's time, British society was going through drastic change in its structure. As Heinemann wrote:

> England was in process of change from a society based on rank and status to one based more directly on wealth and property; and this meant a shake-up of social and moral codes. There was an exceptional degree of social mobility, and contemporaries were very conscious of this shifting and changing - above all in London, the melting-pot for the whole kingdom. (3)

The population was increasing, and the city was becoming a centre of attraction for people of all social levels. With the breakdown of the villenage[4], traditional feudal bonds between people started to weaken. This caused an expansion of the city, and London became an important centre for both poor and rich, as it was "the main channel for the growing cloth trade with Europe and the new and highly profitable trade with the Indies" (Heinemann 4). Therefore, "in this commercial environment merchants […] grew very rich" (Heinemann 4). With this growing class of people, the idea of social mobility was getting stronger. People started to go after the status they could acquire by financial power, since they could not have it by birth. In this environment of social change, unlike Seneca, Jonson was standing as a conservative and did not like these changes in the class structure. To him, acting out of your social status was acting out of nature, and it led to evil and folly. As he wrote in his *Discoveries*:

> Would you not laugh to meet a great councillor of State in a flat cap, with his trunk hose, and a hobbyhorse cloak, his gloves under his girdle, and yond haberdasher in a velvet gown, furred with sables? There is a certain latitude in these things, by which we find the degrees. (N.pag.)

[4] Villenage: Tenure at the will of a feudal lord by villein services (Merriam- Webster).

As the coming chapters will show, in his plays, Jonson punishes his characters who try to change their social condition, for instance, by extracting money from others, and he exposes the folly of who try to appear differently with the confidence wealth brings with itself.

For Jonson, disguise and pretending to be someone other than who we really are, indicate an inconsistency of identity and lead to moral corruption in society. But the virtuous man is beyond all pretensions. He is aware of the play taking place and avoids being a part of it, as Jonson would explain and exemplify, later in the same work:

> Good men are the stars, the planets of the ages wherein they live and illustrate the times. God did never let them be wanting to the world: as Abel, for an example of innocency, Enoch of purity, Noah of trust in God's mercies, Abraham of faith, and so of the rest. These, sensual men thought mad because they would not be partakers or practisers of their madness. But they, placed high on the top of all virtue, looked down on the stage of the world and contemned the play of fortune. For though the most be players, some must be spectators. (n.pag.)

For Jonson, such spectators who avoid participating in the play-acting of society and who stand firm to demonstrate the corruption of society are the ones who carry the attributes of virtue.

Therefore, as a "good" poet, dramatist and critic, Jonson tried to reflect the errors of his society on stage and to show that these errors cannot lead to happiness. As he revealed in the *Epistle to Volpone*, he believed that he had a mission to set a good example and improve society morally:

> For, if men will impartially, and not asquint, look toward the offices and function of a poet, they will easily conclude to themselves the impossibility of any man's being the good poet, without first being a good man. He that is said to be able to inform young men to all good disciplines, inflame grown men to all great virtues, keep old men in their best and supreme state, or as they decline to childhood, recover them to their first strength; that comes forth the interpreter and arbiter of nature, a teacher of things divine no less than humane, a master in manners; and can alone (or with a few) effect the business of mankind-- this, I take him, is no subject for pride and ignorance to exercise their railing rhetoric upon.(3)

Taking his philosophy of consistency in identity as a virtue on one hand, and the social mission he assigned to poets on the other, it would be safe to say that disguise and role-playing together, as a theme, become one of the devices he used in his satires to accomplish his mission of "informing men in the best reason of living" (*Epistle* 5).

Since to him, pretending to be someone other than who one was a sign of a corrupted character, as he would explain in his *Discoveries,* lying and deceiving others were vile acts that must be punished:

> Truth is man's proper good, and the only immortal thing was *[sic]* given to our mortality to use. No good Christian or ethnic, if he be honest, can miss it; no statesman or patriot should. For without truth all the actions of mankind are craft, malice, or what you will, rather than wisdom. Homer says he hates him worse than hell-mouth that utters one thing with his tongue and keeps another in his breast. Which high expression was grounded on divine reason; for a lying mouth is a stinking pit, and murders with the contagion it venteth. (n.pag.)

Deception and deviation from truth are the sources of all vicious acts, and following Senecan tradition ("False things do not last" (*Ad Lucilium Letter*s CXX)), Jonson explains in his *Discoveries* that every lie is destined to be revealed: "Beside, nothing is lasting that is feigned; it will have another face than it had, ere long. As Euripides saith, "No lie ever grows old" (n.pag).

Jonson believed in stability in action and identity. Any deviation from truth is considered immoral in nature by him. For Jonson, "the virtuous man or woman possessed the 'centred self': an unchanging, self-knowing, self-authorising individuality in a constantly changing world where men feign their true intentions and feelings, a concept derived, [...], from Stoic philosophy" (McEvoy 64).

In the three plays that will be examined in the coming chapters, Jonson creates a world made up of all kinds of deceivers and pretenders. Most of them are intelligent enough to come up with intriguing plans to manipulate others to succeed in their goals, and some are too blind and foolish to see that they are also themselves the victims of manipulation. What is common in all three plays is the fact that they all depict a defective society that is threatened by deceit taking place at all levels, as demonstrated by Anderson's comments about the plays:

> While *Volpone* illustrates defects in the individual by the contrasts between the "virtuous" and the "morally defective" characters, *[The Silent Woman]*, with its emphasis on social defects, points the way toward *The Alchemist*'s treatment of the self-deception in the self-inflating dreams and desires of human nature. In *Volpone* the threat of social corruption is realized in the deceptions

> of Volpone and Mosca; in *[The Silent Woman]* the major social threat, the disinheritance of Dauphine, is antecedent to the intrigue; and in *The Alchemist*, the threat of corruption is only potential in the dreams of the dupes. (365)

In Jonson's world, not only knaves but also victims are role players. Most of the time, their greed and hypocrisy is exactly what turns them into victims, not to mention their unending pretensions in creating a feigned self image. They superficially judge everything by appearance and easily believe everything they are told. More importantly, Jonson's knaves and victims lack stoic consistency, thus posing a moral threat to society. Their greed, hypocrisy and manipulative nature are presented as the manifestation of their lack of consistency, and they are ultimately punished by Jonson for that.

A man in disguise is a man who lacks fixity of identity for Jonson, and he does not let role-playing go unpunished. He punishes disguisers and role players by exposing their folly and degrading them. Although he punishes and ridicules the play-acting society he does not provide any firm solutions to the problem of how to prevent moral corruption from happening. He does not encourage his audience to take any specific action but, by displaying moral decay and its possible consequences on stage, he simply invites them to ponder about the society they live in.

As a satirist what Jonson tried to do was to reflect the changing values and the principles of the society on the stage so that he could make his audience aware of the moral corruptions of the time. He tried to "validate the theatre by making it a proving

ground of virtue, a testing-place of judgement, worthy of the belief in the function of literature which he shared with other humanists after him, and as well as before" (Duncan 235). As the coming chapters will indicate, he emphasized the daily follies of ordinary life by creating transforming and manipulative characters who do not hesitate to victimize other characters, most of whom are also enslaved by human weaknesses.

CHAPTER II

PHYSICAL DISGUISERS

What Jonson's three plays have in common is their characters who are governed by their human weaknesses and desires: they are greedy, hypocritical and foolish. Jonson chooses to demonstrate these vices by emphasising his characters' lack of self consistency, which is seen as the source of immorality, from a Stoic perspective. Therefore, his disguising and role-playing characters become Jonson's way of condemning this unreliability of character. Most of these characters are punished by either physical penalties or social degradation, thus allowing Jonson to meet his social responsibility as a playwright, and to transmit his moral message to his audience.

Role-playing in Jonson's plays usually involves changes in the physical appearance of the character. As mentioned before, for Jonson, immorality is a result of a lack of fixity of identity. This is shown in the plays to create the problem of a radical lack of integrity, and eventually a sort of emptiness in the character. Therefore, not having core identity of their own, Jonson's rogues can transform themselves into any role that they find useful to their games of manipulation. By changing their physical appearance, they adopt multiple identities—and are eventually punished for the vices that are sourced in their lack of fixity of identity. In this chapter, I will examine three of Jonson's knaves, as (mostly) physical disguisers, and I will try to show how Jonson

criticizes their loss of centredness, by showing the audience the immorality that lies behind it.

Pretending to be a dying man in order to manipulate and deceive foolish legacy hunters, Volpone is one of Jonson's master disguisers. Volpone stands as a greedy self-interested character, who literally worships his gold and is apparently worshipped –at least verbally- by his servant who lives a parasitic life. As the role is that of a very practical and vicious character who does not hesitate to perform all kinds of immoral acts in order to obtain what he wants, he admits that he does not like hard work, and all of his wealth is made through cunning means:

> Yet I glory
> More in the cunning purchase of my wealth,
> Than in the glad possession; since I gain
> No common way. (1.1.30)

He pretends to be a dying man to get his hands on the wealth of the not-so-innocent legacy hunters around him, he disguises himself as Scoto of Mantua to get into contact with the beautiful Celia, and he even tries to rape her in Act 3 scene 7. Volpone stands as a "shape-shifter, a Protean man... without core and principle and substance'" (Greene 337). He can easily transform himself into multiple characters throughout the play, and at the end he is punished for this flux and instability that are accompanied by greed and voluptuousness.

Volpone's cunning nature is made clear by Jonson from the very beginning, through his name. Volpone means fox in Italian, and the fox is an animal which has long been considered a trickster, being

associated with vicious acts and shape shifting, since at least the time of medieval writings. In these tales, the fox uses role-playing to trick its victims. As narrated in one of the mostly widely known of beast fables, it can make the crow give up what is very valuable to it or snatch the cock through flattery, as in Chaucer's *Nun's Priest's Tale*. Furthermore, the idea that "foxes catch birds by rolling around in the earth and pretending to be dead, only to grab the birds that come to investigate" (Houwen 20) can be commonly observed in the works of Medieval and Renaissance writings. According to D. A. Scheve, the parallel that Jonson tries to create between the animal and his character is inspired by this representation of the animal:

> Jonson saw the device of the fox feigning death as an emblem or Allegory of the deception of legacy-hunters, and he worked it into the play in such wise as to draw out the parallels between it and the legacy-hunting theme. That Jonson expected his audience to recognize this fox device and therefore to see its parallels to legacy-hunting will, I think, be evident from a view of the frequent occurrences of it throughout the Middle Ages and the Renaissance. (242)

Jonson uses the fox's attributes of shape shifting, and pretending to be something it is not in order to give his audience a better understanding of his character Volpone:

> The play's animal imagery indicates an extensive root system in popular culture and folklore, drawing on classical and medieval beast fables, fox lore and bestiary tradition, especially on the mock-heroic beast epic Reynard feigns death, impersonates a doctor, commits a rape, is put on trial and escapes justice. [...] The Reynard tradition, like *Volpone*, is a tug-of-war between an anarchic identification with the fox and satiric condemnation of the evils he represents. (Thompson 20)

By paralleling fox's cunning nature with Volpone's loss of self-constancy, Jonson masterfully demonstrates the vicious nature of disguise and role-playing.

Like a fox, Volpone pretends to be a dying man in order to trap his prey, the three legacy hunters Voltore, Corbaccio and Corvino and, as a different sort of prey, Celia:

> Now, now, my clients
> Begin their visitation! Vulture, kite,
> Raven, and gor-crow, all my birds of prey,
> That think me turning carcase, now they come;
> I am not for 'em yet. (1.2.87)

This game he plays to fool the gulls is not something he instantly chooses. On the contrary, he plans and paves his way slowly towards it. He not only feigns to be a dying man but, like an actor preparing for a challenging role, he becomes the dying man:

> Now, my feigned cough, my phthisic, and my gout,
> My apoplexy, palsy, and catarrhs,
> Help with your forced functions this my posture,
> Wherein, this three year, I have milked their hopes.
> He comes; I hear him—uh!uh!uh!uh!Oh!—(1.2.127)

Volpone has no difficulties in continuing with this role-playing for a long time, since he lacks constancy of self, so the role becomes a surrogate self for him. Disguise and the pretence of being someone who he is actually not, are inherent parts of his life and exist in every possible aspect of it, whether it is related to his possession of valuable materials like his most precious gold or more immaterial aspect like his "object of desire" Celia (Johansen 282).

His scenes with Celia stand as the most important proof of Volpone's loss of self and his confusion of identity. Along with Bonario, Celia represents the ideal of constancy in character. She is one of the two innocent characters who are not acting in any way other than who they are. When Mosca explains to Volpone that she is the most beautiful woman in Venice, Volpone, whose admiration of precious things has been made obvious through the very first speech of the first act, feels obliged to see this beauty. Therefore, in the second scene of the second act, he enters, "disguised as a mountebank" (28). The word "mountebank" has two main definitions. 1**:** a person who sells quack medicines from a platform 2**:** a boastful unscrupulous pretender**:** charlatan (*Merriam-Webster*). Even the person Volpone chooses to disguise himself as, is not trustable. He becomes a charlatan who can pretend to be anything to deceive and manipulate people, indicating his loss of self and compulsion to changing disguises.

When he finally meets Celia, he is aroused by her beauty, and feels most acutely that he must acquire her:

> *VOLP:* O, I am wounded!
> *MOS*: Where, sir?
> *VOLP:* Not without;
> Those blows were nothing: I could bear them ever.
> But angry Cupid, bolting from her eyes,
> Hath shot himself into me like a flame;
> Where, now, he flings about his burning heat,
> As in a furnace an ambitious fire,
> Whose vent is stopped. The fight is all within me.
> I cannot live, except thou help me, Mosca;
> My liver melts, and I, without the hope
> Of some soft air, from her refreshing breath,
> Am but a heap of cinders. (2.4.1)

Going back to his dying man disguise, he and Mosca convince Corvino (who is one of the foolish legacy hunters and also Celia's extremely jealous husband) to bring Celia to Volpone.

The speech Volpone gives to Celia to convince her to sleep with him, is entirely consistent with the play's theme of disguise. After realizing her husband's and Volpone's intention, Celia strictly rejects having any kind of sexual relations with Volpone, who seems to be cured of all the diseases which he had been faking. However, Volpone is enough of a fox to want to have it all, so he elaborately outlines the pleasures he could provide for her, and the ways in which she would enjoy sexual pleasure from role-playing:

> Whilst we, in changed shapes, act Ovid's 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 wearied all the fables of the gods.
> Then will I have thee in more modern forms,
> Attired like some sprightly dame of France,
> Brave Tuscan lady, or proud Spanish beauty;
> Sometimes, unto the Persian sophy's wife;
> Or the grand signior's mistress; and, for change,
> To one of our most artful courtezans,
> Or some quick Negro, or cold Russian;
> And I will meet thee in as many shapes:
> Where we may so transfuse our wandering souls,
> Out at our lips, and score up sums of pleasures.
>
> (3.7.221)

He gives examples of famous characters from Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, among other tales, thus presenting his proffered ideal of the pleasures of sexual intercourse as an activity of shape shifting. He actually seems to be more interested in the act of shape shifting than in Celia. To Volpone, "her identity is lost"

(Johansen 282) and replaced by his desire of role-playing. As Greene wrote: "The speech is ostensibly intended to advance the seduction of Celia, but as Volpone is progressively carried away by his fantasy, his intoxication has less and less to do with the bewildered woman he seems to address" (338).

For Volpone, shape shifting becomes more than just a strategy to deceive the foolish; it is a perpetual need that is of the first priority. Even in his erotic fantasies, he fails to cling on to a stable character. In fact, further escape from centeredness or stability is presented here as giving him sexual pleasure. His rejection of consistency of self is so deep-seated that he compulsively re-creates himself through false identities.

When all of his games and plans are revealed at the end of the play, he is punished for his inability to possess "*the gathered self* – collected, consistent, contained, morally stalwart" (Donaldson qtd in Loxley 146). The falling action starts after Bonario's prevention of Volpone's attempted rape of Celia. Even when Volpone and his acolytes are being judged by the court of Venice, losing his connection to a fixed self Volpone starts to become who he pretends to be:

> *VOLP:* Well, I am here, and all this brunt is past.
> I ne'er was in dislike with my disguise
> Till this fled moment; here 'twas good, in private;
> But in your public,—cave whilst I breathe.
> Fore God, my left leg began to have the cramp,
> And I apprehended straight some power had struck me
> With a dead palsy: Well! I must be merry,
> And shake it off. A many of these fears
> Would put me into some villanous disease,
> Should they come thick upon me: I'll prevent 'em.

> Give me a bowl of lusty wine, to fright
> This humour from my heart. (5.1.1)

False implication of his false disease starts to become real as he panics. The multiple disguises he adopts and drops, starts to become difficult to manage, and Volpone begins to lose control of the situation. Volpone, aware of the danger of being revealed, tries to play one last trick in the final act, and enters as a commendatore with the hope of regaining the control. "*VOLP:* Am I then like him?/ *MOS:* O, sir, you are he;/No man can sever you" (5.5.1). However, this time he is fooled by his parasite Mosca, who claims that Volpone is dead, and he himself is his heir. Volpone, who cannot tell the truth for fear of punishment, tries to win Mosca back by offering him half of his wealth (5.12.67), but to no avail.

Being betrayed by his closest ally, Volpone finally reveals himself in order to avoid losing the material wealth for which he did all this: "*VOLP* : [ASIDE.] Soft, soft: Whipt!/ And lose all that I have! If I confess,/ It cannot be much more" (5.12.81). After letting go of his disguise, everything becomes clear to the other characters. The confidence tricks attempted by Volpone and his household are revealed and the innocence of Bonario and Celia is proved. At the end, "The knot is now undone, by miracle" (5.12.95) and Volpone is punished with what are, for him, the worst kinds of punishment. Everything he owned is taken away from him and, worse, he is forced to have a stable identity, to become what he had been feigning:

> *1st AVOCATO:* And, since the most was gotten by imposture,
> By feigning lame, gout, palsy, and such diseases,
> Thou art to lie in prison, cramp'd with irons,

> Till thou be'st sick, and lame indeed.—Remove him. (5.12.120)

His instability of character and constant shape shifting which manifested his greed and voluptuousness, are penalized severely by the playwright who reveals their disguise and deceptions, and takes away what is most precious to him:

> Under controlled circumstances he has made the jealous husband play pander to his wife, made the loving father disinherit his son. Volpone's experiment shows identity to be unstable, pliable, dependent on circumstance. He makes mockery of the comforting belief in a central core of psychological selfhood; he makes it fly out of the lawyer's mouth "In shape of a blew toad, with a battes wings!"(5.12.31). (Danson 188)

Volpone deceives, manipulates and attempts all kinds of crime in the course of the play. He acts the opposite of Jonson's norms of ideal man and his punishment proves to be very just. Volpone goes through one final transformation, and he is forcefully restricted to one identity. As a character:

> Volpone asks us to consider the infinite, exhilarating, and vicious freedom to alter the self at will once the ideal of moral constancy has been abandoned. [...] Volpone demonstrates the ultimate hectic development of Machiavelli's shifty pragmatism, and raises it from a political maxim to a moral, even a metaphysical state of being. (Greene 337)

However, the tempting invitation of Volpone's "exhilarating and vicious freedom" is blocked through Jonson's just and intimidating intervention at the end, establishing the playwright's moral standing and message.

Another Jonsonian character who is a physical disguiser is Subtle in *The Alchemist.* As Barton states, "The Alchemist is a play about transformation as it affects not metals, but human beings" (137). Alchemy is a practice "as old as human history" (Knapp 575), and it stood as an interesting combination of science and witchcraft:

> The aim of the whole alchemical project was the discovery of the philosopher's stone, the transforming agent that would transmute baser metals to gold and (in some systems) produce an elixir to cure all disease. The stone was seen as a scientific/technological artifact and a pious penetration of God's secrets, and these two faces of alchemical work coexisted through its long history with varying emphases on one or the other. An unlimited supply of gold would release the social world from poverty, and the elixir would eradicate illness. Alchemy therefore offered a utopian promise: that knowledge, some blend of technological expertise and spiritual insight, would enhance human happiness. (Knapp 576)

Alchemy was seen as a way of realizing people's individual and social desires. The alchemist was a person qualified with the knowledge of the terrestrial and the spiritual, and he possessed the power of altering the natural process with this knowledge (Eggert 203).

While the title of "alchemist" is already quite telling of the theme of the transformation in the play, we find out that even the laboratory which the play's rogues created (by transforming the house whose owner is away) is designed to contribute to the theme of transformation that Barton mentions. With *The Alchemist,* once more, we are introduced to fools who are seeking superficial aims, like always winning when gambling, turning metal into gold or being young and healthy for eternity. The knaves recognize these

weaknesses, and set out to exploit them through transforming themselves from one identity to another, improvising and revising their plots according to changes and misfortunes that occur during the course of the play.

The play opens with an argument between the main characters Subtle and Face, as both want to be declared as the superior one in their collaboration. In *Volpone,* the parasite and master relationship is obvious from the very start, thus making Mosca's betrayal slightly more unexpected, whereas in *The Alchemist* the unreliable and ungrateful nature of the characters is made clear by Jonson from the beginning, giving the audience glimpses of the course that the play will take.

Although Face will prove to be essential to all of the confidence tricks they have been playing, and completely absorbed by the disguise of an alchemist, Subtle transmutes himself into a Godlike figure pretending to hold the power to create and change the nature of things. Subtle openly claims that it was he who created Face and made him who he is and rhetorically asks him:

> *SUB*. Raised thee from brooms, and dust, and watering-pots,
> Sublimed thee, and exalted thee, and fixed thee
> I' the third region, called our state of grace?
> Wrought thee to spirit, to quintessence, with pains
> Would twice have won me the philosopher's work?
> Put thee in words and fashion, made thee fit
> For more than ordinary fellowships?
> Given thee thy oaths, thy quarrelling dimensions,
> Thy rules to cheat at horse-race, cock-pit, cards,
> Dice, or whatever gallant tincture else? (1.1.65)

He loves the identity he crafted for himself so much that he loses his sense of reality in his pretensions. He becomes the alchemist, and he applies the terms of alchemy such as ”sublime, exalt and fix” even when he is describing his relationship with Face. He grants himself the power of creating and claims to have created Face from “dust” and “raising him from watering pots”, as if he was God. As Barton notes,

> Subtle has a strange kind of belief in his own impersonation. He is deluding no one but himself when he complains that but for the time wasted on Face’s education he could have solved the great alchemical problem twice over or he expects gratitude [...] (Barton 142)

Therefore, in Subtle’s case, disguise and role-playing as a divine figure become a sign of not only an inconsistent identity but also a lack of self knowledge (which is essential for a virtuous man for Jonson), a kind of self rejection and self deception.

Subtle’s pretended divinity and his rejection of self becomes a recurring incident, as he deals with his clients who came to him with all sorts of materialistic expectations. Dapper, who is one of the gulls “seduced by the promise of wish-fulfilment, by the hope of prosperity in gambling and in trade” (Loxley 80), becomes the first victim of his role-playing. Playing on his greed, first Subtle and Face design a fake conversation that they deliberately make Dapper overhear in order to have mastery over him:

> *SUB:* Marry, to be so importunate for one
> That, when he has it, will undo you all:
> He'll win up all the money in the town.
> *FACE*: How?

SUB: Yes, and blow up gamester after gamester,
As they do crackers in a puppet-play. (1.2.75)

After feeding Dapper's hopes with the possibility of the idea of infallible luck, they convince him that the way to acquire it is to meet the Fairy Queen—who happens to be related to Subtle--setting the scene for Subtle's second disguise.

In Act 3, Subtle enters the scene disguised as a Priest of the Fairy Queen. He not only dresses like a priest but also acts like the priest. He is a good disguiser, so he has no difficulties in improvising this new character. He and Face make up a ridiculous ritual that requires Dapper to 'fast, hum and buzz' (3.5.1). Subtle knows exactly how to play with Dapper, and uses his pretended divine connections to strip him of his precious possessions including "half a crown/Of gold, about [his] wrist that [his] love gave him" (3.5.44). During the ritual scene, Subtle acts as if he is a mediator between the earthly and the otherworldly:

SUB: Her grace
Commends her kindly to you, master Dapper.
DAP: I long to see her grace.
SUB: She now is set
At dinner in her bed, and she has sent you
From her own private trencher, a dead mouse,
And a piece of gingerbread, to be merry withal,
And stay your stomach, lest you faint with fasting;
Yet if you could hold out till she saw you, (she says),
It would be better for you. (3.5.63)

However, with the arrival of another client (Sir Epicure Mammon), their ritual is cut short, of course only after Face has explained to Dapper the importance of confidentiality for the Fairy Queen. The plot is made as convincing as possible with through the touch of

minor details. In order to heighten the effect, Dapper is sent away with a piece of gingerbread in his mouth, since gingerbread that "tempts, pacifies and infantilizes" is closely associated with witchcraft and supernaturalism (Hopkins 209).

Both disguises of the Alchemist and the Priest of Faery Queen, bring the power of knowledge with them, the first being scientific, the latter being supernatural. Therefore, Subtle's choice of roles can be considered as the expression of his need to escape from his true self. Subtle's rejection of self, manifests itself through his obsessive desire for superiority. That is why, throughout the play he chooses himself "some variation on a wise father figure" (Enck qtd in Van Dyke 258) that will allow him to have mastery over others. In an effort to be someone other than who he is, Subtle chooses roles that will place him above all humanity. "Subtle as he deceives others, is half deceived into thinking of himself as the hieratic, omnipotent figure he plays" (Van Dyke 258). His God complex makes itself apparent once more when he is dealing with Sir Epicure Mammon.

Sir Epicure is not only a gull that knaves play with but also a parody of Epicureanism, the philosophy which has been contrasted with Stoicism by many. Unlike Stoicism, Epicureanism did not believe in the existence of reason in the universe or in the existence of a divine being as the governing power:

> The Epicureans saw our world, or kosmos, as just one among indefinitely many which are generated and destroyed in the infinite and everlasting universe simply as a result of the unceasing motion of atoms in a void. Our world is not the product of any form of rational

> design, nor are any of its constituents or inhabitants as they are because of some kind of natural teleology. (Warren 5)

Since human beings are not restricted by the rules of any superior power, their primary aim should be concentrated on themselves. As Long wrote, Epicureanism "was encapsulated in the fourfold remedy (*tetrapharmakos*): God presents no fears, death no worries. And while good is readily attainable, bad is readily endurable" (*From Epicurus* 178). Therefore, unlike Stoics, they did not find happiness in what is good and in being virtuous, but they put pleasure at the centre of their philosophy. "Pleasure is the goal of life for an Epicurean. But it is pleasure of a particular kind that represents this goal, namely lack of pain in body (aponia) and lack of distress in soul (ataraxia)" (Woolf 158). Of course, this did not mean that they advocated a life free from any kind of ethical rules. They argued that in order to reach a point of happiness, one does not require any more than basic human needs and a feeling of security. They rejected the idea of excessive luxury and other concepts, such as political power, social status and reputation, claiming that these were the main sources of "irrational fears and vain and unlimited desires" (Long *From Epicurus* 187). They claimed that these fears and desires must be avoided, because they eventually cause anxiety and pain in human beings. However, this emphasis on pleasure and avoidance of stress caused them to be criticized for being too sensual, even hedonistic. As Warren wrote:

> Epicureanism is founded on a dangerous combination of the twin follies of materialism and hedonism, encouraging humanity either to think of itself as too powerful – the ultimate masters of our own destiny and heedless of any

> divine commands – or else to think of humans merely as beasts like all the other creatures around us, pandering only to our basest physical natures and needs. (2).

Following a Stoic tradition, Jonson was critical of it too, and as the name indicated, he created Sir Epicure Mammon as a demonstration of his view of Epicureanism as a materialistic and pleasure loving philosophy.

Epicure Mammon stands as an embodiment of misconceptions about Epicureanism. He is a greedy character who is very fond of sensory pleasures. He is lusty, and completely obsessed with the idea of turning metal into gold with the Philosopher's Stone that Subtle claims to make for him. When Mammon comes to view the progress of this project, he is greeted by Subtle who is again posing as a divine figure, and who greets him in religious, even godlike jargon:

> *MAM*: Good morrow, father.
> *SUB*: Gentle son, good morrow,
> And to your friend there. What is he, is with you?
> *MAM*: An heretic, that I did bring along,
> In hope, sir, to convert him.
> *SUB*: Son, I doubt
> You are covetous, that thus you meet your time
> In the just point: prevent your day at morning.
> This argues something, worthy of a fear
> Of importune and carnal appetite.
> Take heed you do not cause the blessing leave you,
> With your ungoverned haste. (2.3.1)

The words 'father and son' create an atmosphere of a religious community, placing Subtle in the position of greater authority. He is also ascribed the power of a saviour, since Mammon brings a heretic Surly, who is sceptical of Subtle's practises, to be

converted. Around the Godlike figure that Subtle has created for himself, he creates a kind of imagined religious community and he, as part of his new identity, frames a manipulative religious language.

While Subtle pretends to be a man who does not exist, and to have the skills that he does not really have, his pretence proves itself to be the exact opposite of his real self. His real place is right at the bottom of social ladder, and at the end of the play, he is punished for his role-playing and self-rejection -that are accompanied by his greed- just as Volpone was. As his inconsistency in self and role-playing suggests Subtle is not a reliable character since he plans to take all their profits and leave Face behind. He reveals his intention in the final act:

> *SUB:* Soon at night, my Dolly,
> When we are shipp'd, and all our goods aboard,
> Eastward for Ratcliff, we will turn our course
> To Brainford, westward, if thou sayst the word,
> And take our leaves of this o'erweening rascal,
> This peremptory Face. (5.4.76)

Once he has earned the material gains he has sought throughout the play, he starts to look for ways to keep them all for himself, and convinces Doll, the prostitute who assists Face and Subtle in their plots, to abandon Face. Ironically, being a hypocritical and morally corrupt man, he constantly pretends to be a man of God and of divinity. He is a man of materials, but poses to as a man of spirituality. He, apparently, takes on the identities that are complete opposites of his real self, acting out of his nature. Jonson comes up with another well deserved punishment for this disguiser. When the real owner of the house, Lovewit, arrives with officers,

Subtle has to flee, leaving all of the earnings they had earned through their confidence tricks. He is forced to abandon not only his goods, but also all the identities that he masterfully crafted for himself. Although as audience we do not get to see how he was before, in act 1 scene 1, Face makes a distinctive depiction of Subtle's true self that he has been trying to escape from:

> But I shall put you in mind, sir;—at Pie-corner,
> Taking your meal of steam in, from cooks' stalls,
> Where, like the father of hunger, you did walk
> Piteously costive, with your pinch'd-horn-nose,
> And your complexion of the Roman wash,
> Stuck full of black and melancholic worms,
> Like powder corns shot at the artillery-yard. (25-30)

As the notes section of the Oxford Edition of the play indicates, Pie corner is a suburb mostly inhabited by criminals and people of very low social position (484). Jonson's punishment for Subtle, in a way, proves Greene's theory that the ideas of circle and centre are recurring motifs in Ben Jonson's work (325). Because after all the disguises and pretences that Subtle went through, and that we witnessed in the course of the play, he in a way makes a complete circle and is forced to return to his real self, being stripped of his disguise of superiority that he used to manipulate the gulls. As Arnold writes, Subtle's

> major fault lies in [his] succumbing to visions of exalted status. Each (knaves) sought transcend his proper station. Their just punishment is that like their dupes they remain exactly what they were, their hoped for transmutations unfulfilled. (162)

Through the revelation of all the games he has been playing Subtle is involuntarily stripped of the adopted identity of an alchemist,

who holds the power of creating, changing and transmuting, and is penalized by being trapped in his own self.

Last but definitely not the least of the physical disguisers in these three satirical plays is Epicene from *The Silent Woman,* which is "the most deceptive of Jonson's plays" (Mirabelli 310), as Jonson leaves his audience nonplussed with the final revelation. In *The Silent Woman* Jonson once more introduces to us a group of knaves and gulls who function as a criticism of social hypocrisy and role-playing in society. The play introduces to us Morose, a man who has absolutely no toleration for any kind of noise, for "All discourses but [his] own afflict [him]; they seem harsh, impertinent, and irksome" (2.2.3). Being childless, he seeks a silent woman to get married to so that he can produce heirs, thus preventing his nephew Dauphine from inheriting his wealth after his death. Through the intervention of other characters, Epicene is introduced to Morose who immediately has the idea of marrying her, since she looks "learned, judicious, sharp and conceited" and can "bury [herself] in silence" (2.5.50). What Morose seeks in a woman is in complete harmony with the definition of ideal woman at the time. As Digangi wrote: "A prescriptive ideal of femininity for the women of the period centred on the modest virtues of chastity, silence and obedience, codes that guide conduct of Jonson's more conventional female characters" (340) such as Celia in *Volpone*. At the time, women were expected "to be chaste and to speak modestly and behave submissively towards social superiors" (340). However, as the play will reveal, Epicene stands far from this ideal, and not being aware of the fact that he has been tricked into

marrying her, Morose becomes the biggest victim of Epicene's role-playing.

Epicene's disguise and role-playing shows itself along two dimensions. The first dimension reveals itself right after she marries Morose, when she turns out not to be a silent woman at all. Prior to marriage, Epicene acts in a submissive manner. Knowing Morose's aversion to sound she gives very short answers to his long speeches; she speaks in a very low voice and most of her answers consist of exclamations that Morose knows everything better:

> *MOR*: Can you speak, lady?
> *EPI*: [softly.] Judge you, forsooth.
> *MOR*: What say you, lady? speak out, I beseech you.
> *EPI:* Judge you, forsooth.
> *MOR*: On my judgment, a divine softness! (2.5.29)

However, Epicene's softness, that Morose considers divine, lasts only until their marriage. Right after the marriage, the first layer of her deception is revealed, as she brings her disguise of silence to an end. Morose's "admirable creature" (2.5.75) proves herself to be an example of the "manifest woman" (3.4.40) whom he had feared in the first place:

> *MOR*: You can speak then!
> *EPI*: Yes, sir.
> *MOR*: Speak out, I mean.
> *EPI*: Ay, sir. Why, did you think you had married a statue, or a motion, only? one of the French puppets, with the eyes turn'd with a wire? or some innocent out of the hospital, that would stand with her hands thus, and a plaise mouth, and look upon you? (3.4.31)

Having dropped one aspect of her fake identity, she becomes an outspoken woman who dominates and takes control of the whole household. What Morose had been made to believe was an angel, a perfect mate, reveals herself to be a creature of "Amazonian impudence" (3.5.35).

However, her change from a silent woman to a source of remorse for Morose constitutes only the first part of Epicene's disguises. Her second revelation surprises the audience as much as it surprises Morose, and other characters. As audience, we are provided with the knowledge that Morose's marriage to Epicene is actually a plot devised by Dauphine, who spent four months working on it (2.4.), in order to ensure that he will inherit the wealth which he believes rightfully his. Nonetheless, the greater twist of the plot that we and the rest of the characters are unaware of is revealed at the very end of the play. In Act 5, when Morose understands that Epicene is not the woman he expected her to be, he seeks a final solution through asking Dauphine to help him, making the arrangements that are necessary to end this marriage. Dauphine agrees to help him only after he makes a very profitable contract which ensures his share of Morose's wealth, and he brings everything into open, as follows:

> *DAUP*: Then here is your release, sir. *(he takes off Epicene's peruke)* You have married a boy, a gentleman's son, that I have brought up this half year at my great charges, and for this composition, which I have now made with you. (5.4.182)

Dauphine takes down Epicene's disguise, and declares that she is actually a boy disguised as a woman, making it the most striking

moment of the play. This is the point where the audience come to the sudden realization that they have been as much the victims of the disguise of Epicene as Morose has been. As Shapiro wrote, it becomes Jonson's way of achieving a coup de théâtre (35), making him the ultimate trickster:

> In this way [Epicene] makes the same kind of fundamental moral challenge to established ways of thinking which Volpone did. It is characteristic of Jonson that the impact is produced by turning the whole play into what is effectively a hilarious practical joke played at the audience's expense, and at the same time violently jarring meta-theatre. (McEvoy 85)

Epicene's true nature, which was hidden under two layers of fake identity that were forced upon him or her by Dauphine, becomes the most surprising element of the play. However, having a deeper look at the word Epicene, one can easily understand that the ambiguity in her character had been hinted from the beginning. As explained in the endnotes to the Oxford Edition of the play, Epicene is,

> in Greek and Latin grammar, a noun which can denote either sex without changing its grammatical gender; Jonson's transferred sense (of one who partakes of the characteristics of both sexes) would have been felt as a joke deriving from the grammatical term. (463)

Even though he was raised as a bricklayer's son, Jonson was a well educated man. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, a good education meant the study of classical literature, which required knowledge of Latin and Greek. Therefore with his use of the word "Epicene", Jonson signals what is to come to a group of people whom he referred as understanders, --spectators who are skilful and educated enough to appreciate his art (Chernaik 54) -- but

does not spoil the surprise for majority of the audience who did not realize how they were fooled until the end, as it was common for boy actors to play the parts of the women characters at the time.

Epicene is involved in the act of deceiving Morose through disguise yet, different from Volpone and Subtle, he functions as a tool in Dauphine's plot, rather than as its inventor or an active participant. It is obvious that if the disguise were to be continued, he would profit from living in the luxury that Morose's wealth provides to her, as his wife; but what becomes of him is left as a mystery after the revelation of his true gender. This has given rise to some speculation concerning the play's moral message:

> [The play] can be read in several ways: [Jonson] is ironically trying to awaken the audience to the vices it treats as respectable; he is on a badly needed moral holiday; or his moralism has given way to bleak pessimism. (Haynes 108)

As the characters that have been examined so far and the characters in the coming chapters indicate, Jonson was not happy with the social changes caused by changing economic environment. Commerce was growing, and trade was making merchants richer. While overseas trade gained importance, the idea of a free market was growing. Feudalism was going through a breakdown, and society was becoming more capitalistic and individualistic. Wealth was seen as the provider of privileges, taking place of titles. Jonson was critical of this new "acquisitive society" (Burlinson 282). As he wrote in *Discoveries:*

> Money never made any man rich, but his mind. He that can order himself to the law of Nature is not only without the sense but the fear of poverty. O! but to strike blind

> the people with our wealth and pomp is the thing! What a wretchedness is this, to thrust all our riches outward, and be beggars within; to contemplate nothing but the little, vile, and sordid things of the world; not the great, noble, and precious! We serve our avarice, and, not content with the good of the earth that is offered us, we search and dig for the evil that is hidden. (n.pag.)

Therefore, by demonstrating "the deformities of personality that drive [his] characters to seek power and self-aggrandizement" (Wayne 26), he condemned avarice and greed in society by exposing the disguises of his characters.

Rather than punishing Epicene, Jonson focuses his satire on demonstrating the economic perversity that rules over society, and consequently, over his plays. He believes the function of the artist is to be a social and moral guide. Consequently, he aims to open a moral path for his audience to follow:

> In [*The Silent Woman*]'s second prologue, Jonson notes that a work of art is composed not of "truths, but things (like truths) well fain'd." Although the play has the appearance of a farce, he stresses in this prologue that the purpose of true art's "well fain'd" illusion is not only "to delight" the audience but also "to profit" us morally. (Mirabelli 310)

Jonson's physical disguisers are, of course, smart enough to adopt the attitudes and verbal styles that should accompany their disguises. Since they have no fixed identity of their own, their pretence goes beyond the role-playing. Being empty of self, they easily transmute themselves, and convince themselves to be the person they pretend to be. Although their verbal abilities are sufficient for manipulating gulls, they are aided by other characters

that may be termed verbal disguisers and that function as hunters and dramatically speaking, plot movers which the next chapter will deal with.

CHAPTER III

CHAMELEONS

In all three plays, the plots and tricks that are designed by the role players are put into practise as a result of a group effort. While Volpone, Subtle and Epicene are busy with playing their parts, their accomplices conduct their roles in a more controlled manner, displaying more developed verbal talents. These are what Greene calls "chameleon characters" (336); they have a very good understanding of their victims, and they are quick to adjust themselves to changing circumstances. They are the main manipulators of the play, because they continuously feed the hopes and expectations of their victims in order to exploit them. They are as greedy and self-interested as the physical disguisers, and, of course, their constant changes of disguise and roles, even though undertaken as a requirement of the role of the mediator, is punished by Jonson, who gives them their come-uppance at the end of the plays.

The most famous of Jonson's chameleons is Mosca from *Volpone*. Although Mosca is occasionally called a "parasite", his function during the course of the play is much more than parasitical. Volpone seems to be in the leading role, but in reality, it is Mosca who controls the actions in Volpone's household. While Volpone spends most of his time in bed, pretending to be sick, it is Mosca who greets and manipulates their gulls into offering Volpone valuable gifts. Mosca is the one who successfully convinces Corbaccio that his son is plotting to kill him (3.9), he makes Lady

Politic Would-be testimony against Celia (4.3), and even convinces the jealous husband Corvino to let his wife sleep with Volpone (2.6). Furthermore, it is Mosca who comes up with the most intriguing plots to save Volpone when things start to unfold. He, therefore, stands as the real genius behind their operations and as a skilled disguiser, he maintains control throughout the play.

Mosca is a disguiser, like Volpone, but the nature and the technique of his role-playing differs from Volpone's most of the time. Volpone mostly makes changes to his physical appearance, while he is going from one persona to another. He gets into his gown and in his bed to become an ill man (1.3), when he becomes Scoto of Mantua he dresses like a Mountebank to deceive Celia (2.2), and in the court scene he comes to stage "*in the habit of a commandatore*" (5.5). He is one of Jonson's master disguisers, repeatedly using physical accessories to satisfy his compulsion to change identities. This method of disguise makes the transformation process take longer time than Mosca's, which is verbal rather than physical. Since Mosca's primary function in the play is to negotiate between Volpone and legacy hunters, it is in speech that he enacts his manipulations. He talks the victims into giving Volpone gifts, and makes them believe that these gifts will make them Volpone's heirs. Another difference between his disguises and those of Volpone is that he does not transform himself into different identities but seems, rather, to possess multiple faces belonging to one certain self, and he masterfully goes from one face to another as the situation requires. Unlike Volpone, he is quick to come up with ideas and switches between different versions of his self:

> With Mosca role-playing is a means to an end, with Volpone it is itself the end. [...] He has much firmer control over his performances than does Volpone. [...] He never pretends to be someone else as does Volpone but he represents different versions of himself to everyone. [...] He is whatever his clients wish him to be. (Hyland *Disguise and Role-Playing* 94)

As Hyland comments, what makes Mosca able to control his negotiations so successfully is his ability to understand what the other person he is dealing with wants to hear. His first interaction in the opening scene is with Volpone, and here Mosca presents the façade of a parasite. Volpone is obsessed with and glorifies his gold, and Mosca approves of everything he says and participates in the glorification. Flattery is a powerful instrument, which Mosca knows how to use, and he shares Volpone's pride in the wealth, which he made by illicit means, feeding Volpone's vanity. However, this flattery lasts only until he receives a reward for his efforts (his share of the gold), and he leaves the stage as soon as he gets it.

When Voltore the lawyer comes in (in the third scene), carrying a piece of plate to present to Volpone, Mosca resorts to flattery again, but his target is Voltore this time. Mosca is well aware that Voltore is there with the hope of becoming Volpone's heir, so he makes him believe that his wish may come true:

> *MOS*: Men of your large profession, that could speak
> To every cause, and things mere contraries,
> Till they were hoarse again, yet all be law;
> That, with most quick agility, could turn,
> And re-turn; [could] make knots, and undo them;
> Give forked counsel; take provoking gold
> On either hand, and put it up: these men,
> He knew, would thrive with their humility. (1.3.53)

What Mosca praises is exactly what he exercises in life, indicating his perception of society and understanding of life. He identifies the abilities to manipulate people through the power of words and to profit from people's folly, as the most admirable qualities. Mosca, in the pose of a humble servant, tells Voltore exactly what he wants to hear. He convinces him that he has been chosen by Volpone as an heir, for he is the one bearing those characteristics that make one successful in society. He flatters Voltore, and tries to establish a master servant relationship with him, convincing him that once Volpone dies he will need someone to work for:

> I do beseech you, sir, you will vouchsafe
> To write me in your family. All my hopes
> Depend upon your worship: I am lost,
> Except the rising sun do shine on me (1.3.34)

Although he knows that this is a game he is playing, he takes on the role and character of a servant who fears losing his job and hopes that the heir will employ him, making sure that "[the legacy] shall both shine and warm [him]" (1.3.38) as well as Voltore. It is through character-acting that Mosca makes their plot as convincing as possible.

When it comes to Corbaccio and Corvino, Mosca again uses the power of flattery, and tries to establish a seemingly sincere bond with them. Corbaccio is a character as wealthy as Volpone, and he does not know that he is being hunted for his money. As he, also, tries to become the sole heir of the dying Volpone, Mosca comes up with an idea and pretends to give him friendly advice. He advises him to make Volpone his heir and to disinherit his son, so that Volpone will do the same out of gratitude:

MOS: And last, produce your will; where,
without thought,
Or least regard, unto your proper issue,
A son so brave, and highly meriting,
The stream of your diverted love hath thrown you
Upon my master, and made him your heir:
He cannot be so stupid, or stone-dead,
But out of conscience, and mere gratitude—
COR: He must pronounce me his?
MOS: 'Tis true. (1.4.101)

Although he is the one who is controlling the whole plot and conversation, Mosca makes it seem as if it is "[Corbaccio's] own project" (1.4.112) and "[his] invention" (1.4.118), allowing him to take all the credit for it. Of course, he also does not fail to convince Corbaccio that it is he, Mosca, who has worked hard towards this desirable end, and who, therefore, deserves gratitude from Corbaccio. As he puts it, Corbaccio will, no doubt, "be a father to [him]" (1.4.127) once he gets the inheritance.

When it comes to Corvino, the strategy remains mostly the same. Corvino is a merchant who comes to Volpone, with no different intention than Voltore's and Corbaccio's, and he brings a pearl as his gift to Volpone. Mosca immediately moves into his role of the concerned servant to a dying man, and elaborately depicts how serious Volpone's mental state is, since:

He knows no man,
No face of friend, nor name of any servant,
Who 'twas that fed him last, or gave him drink:
Not those he hath begotten, or brought up,
Can he remember. (1.5.40)

Although Volpone is apparently in a state of unconsciousness, Mosca tells Corvino that his is the only name he pronounces as his

heir. Once more presenting himself as the indispensable promoter of the suitor's interests, he even proposes suffocating Volpone with a pillow (1.5.67), in this way, further convincing Corvino that he is on his side. Mosca is so successful at this role that Corvino declares "thou art friend, my fellow, my companion, / My partner and shalt share in all my fortunes" (1.5.80).

Great though it is, Corvino's fortune is enough for neither Volpone nor Mosca, since the fox must have what is most precious to him, his wife Celia who is:

> A beauty ripe as harvest!
> Whose skin is whiter than a swan all over,
> Than silver, snow, or lilies! a soft lip,
> Would tempt you to eternity of kissing!
> And flesh that melteth in the touch to blood!
> (1.5.110)

Mosca aims to convince Corvino to bring his wife to Volpone willingly. As a verbally talented disguiser, he makes it look as if it is Corvino's idea (2.6). Once he is assured by Mosca that he will banish all other legacy hunters through this sacrifice, Corvino puts his jealousy aside and willingly offers his own wife.

As seen, Mosca's greatest power lies in his ability to rule over words. He is quick to identify how to influence people verbally, and also very quick to come up with new scenarios. As he explains in Act 1 Scene 4, he is able to "give' em words;/Pour oil into their ears and send them hence" (140). His ability to manipulate people into saying anything he wishes them to say is made evident in the court scene, where Voltore accuses Bonario and Celia of having an illegitimate relationship, in order to save Volpone from the charge

of attempted rape. He prompts Corvino to deny that he pandered his wife to Volpone and to put all the blame on Celia (4.6), and he tricks Lady Would-be into believing that her husband had an affair with Celia (4.4). He reinvents the whole incident, and makes sure that everyone plays his part correctly in his new invention:

> *MOS*: Is the lie
> Safely convey'd amongst us? Is that sure?
> Knows every man his burden? (4.4.3)

With Mosca's intervention, truth and lies become indistinguishable. As Hyland puts it, Mosca's use of words and wit is very powerful because he is "skilled in making lies appear the truth, [and] he can also make the truth appear a lie" (*Disguise and Role-Playing* 95).

Although he presents himself to his clients as a person who is dependent on others, in reality he is well aware of his power. Contrary to his promoted image as a parasite, he is aware that he is the one in control of all the tricks, from the very beginning. He glories in his power and cleverness. After he has convinced Corvino to offer his wife to Volpone, he displays his self appraisal, showing how he places himself above all others:

> O! Your parasite
> Is a most precious thing, dropt from above,
> Not bred 'mongst clods, and clodpoles, here on earth.
> (3.1.5-8)

He praises his abilities as superior, declaring that the world consists of parasites and sub parasites and places himself at the top of that ladder because he:

> can rise,
> And stoop, almost together, like an arrow;

> Shoot through the air as nimbly as a star;
> Turn 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 than a thought! (3.1.23)

He takes pride in his abilities to move from one role to another quickly and to present multiple fake displays of himself simultaneously. However, what he considers so splendid about himself is exactly what Jonson finds immoral. As Legatt wrote; "Mosca and Volpone [may] think they are extending their powers by acting; but it should also be stressed that Jonson shows they are wrong" (23). His use of versatility and verbal talent to manipulate others are against the stoic self integrity that Jonson holds high. According to Jonson, "[a] man without a core will be without principle" (McEvoy 65), and he must be punished for it. Volpone and Mosca live in a world that is made of deception, lies and pretension, so at the end, when this world shatters through the revelation of their plot, Mosca is punished just as much as Volpone. "Being the chiefest minister", he is to "be whipped;/Then live perpetual prisoner in our galleys" (5.12.108). Mosca and Volpone represent a corrupted society, "for which gold has become 'the worlds soule' (1.1.3)" (Dessen 384), and they become Jonson's way of criticizing the acquisitive and hypocritical society that is based on self interest:

> What control Jonson has over Volpone and Mosca comes as we have seen through the imagery of perversion (...). For at the end Jonson tells us through the First Advocate that the play has demonstrated a process whereby evil eventually always destroys itself : "Mischiefs feed/ Like beasts, till they be fat, and then they bleed" (V.xii. 150-151). (Manlove 249)

By presenting their punishment as deserved and turning Mosca and Volpone into the victims of their own role-playing, Jonson once more condemns the evil that is sourced by the loss of self integrity. With this ending, the play puts emphasis on changing moral principles of society, and presents them as self-destructive.

Another chameleon, the master manipulator of *The Alchemist* is Face whose name implies that the character may be nothing more than a façade, and be "empty" inside. In this play, the role of negotiator is played by Face. While Subtle, who pretends to be the alchemist, is playing an unreachable God-like figure, it is Face who arranges and manages relationships with their victims. In the course of the play, Face goes through multiple transformations. We see him as the Captain when dealing with Dapper, as Lungs when he is with Sir Epicure Mammon, and as Jeremy the Butler with Lovewit, who is the owner of the house they have disguised as a laboratory. The identities he creates are practical and serve their purposes well, but they are essentially superficial, being nothing but roles. Therefore, Face, too, lacking stoic integrity and stability becomes Jonson's way of delivering his moral message.

Face's function in the play is quite similar to that of Mosca. Like Mosca, he is the one with the gift of greater wit, for it is his role to promote Subtle's character as a holder of the power of granting what his victims wish. Therefore, he quickly moves from one role to another, since their clients have different desires, and different clients who have different weaknesses, require different tactics. From this perspective, one can easily say that Jonson's choice of name for his character is telling. Face, presenting multiple faces

throughout the play, cannot exist as more than just a Face. What Partridge wrote on this subject is quite helpful in seeing the true nature of Face's existence as a character: "In one sense Face alone remains what he was – that is, nothing in himself, but living only in disguises or "faces" which he assumes" (Partridge qtd in Hyland *Disguise and Role-Playing* 140). Face, as a character (having more than one face) represents, "one of the ambitious Faces of the time, who, the more they paint, are the less themselves" (*The Alchemist* 212) in Jonson's own description.

The dubious nature of this character's identity is pointed by Jonson, by the opening scene of the play (Donaldson "Introduction" xvii), indicating Face's lack of stability in identity as a character. Face's existence which "seemingly consists entirely of externals, of 'face'" (Donaldson "Introduction" xvii) is pointed out in the first scene where his whole existence is degraded to physicality by Subtle. As mentioned earlier, we meet Subtle and Face in the middle of a fierce dispute about who is the more essential figure in their collaboration. They both claim superiority, although Jonson's even distribution of their speeches suggests a kind of equality between the two. Throughout the whole argument, Subtle's definition of Face depends on clothing imagery. He was "livery-three-pound-thrum" before they met with no essence, and he is still nothing more than "all that tailor has made" (1.1.10). He is empty and does not go beyond his appearances. He shifts from one identity to another, but actually possesses none of them. Even Face himself is aware of his lack of self: "Face: Am I, my mongrel? Who am I? Subtle: I'll tell you, / Since you know not yourself—"(1.1.11). Face is a tailor's creation, and he cannot exist outside of what he is

wearing. For this reason, as his clothes change, his identity changes too—but according to Jonson "a man who has more than one identity has no identity" (Hyland *Disguise and Role-Playing* 140), and of course he is eventually punished for that.

Just like Subtle, Face is not contented with his real identity since prior to his encounter with Subtle, he was just a servant in cheap clothes and accompanied by spiders (1.1), and again just like Subtle, role-playing is a manifestation of Face's self rejection. Nevertheless, no matter what the reason might be, role-playing is an immoral act according to Jonsonian criteria, and Face's continuous role-playing cannot be without consequences. At the end of the play, when Lovewit returns and the whole scheme of the knaves comes to an end, Lowewit becomes victorious, taking over all of the knaves' possessions and marrying the wealthy Spanish widow that both Subtle and Face had been pursuing. Subtle and Dol run away with no gain, and although Face remains in the household as a servant, like Subtle and Volpone he too is punished by being forced to stay in one role only, that of Jeremy the Butler. All the other identities he took on are taken away from him, and he is constrained to adopt a constant identity, the one he has been trying to escape from:

> They simply revert to the status they all occupied before the play began. Subtle, the fake alchemist, and his Doll escape penniless back to the streets they came from, with no profit from their elaborate con. They are restored to precisely the state of social outcasts they were in before the play started. So is Face, who returns to his former role as the house-owner's butler. (Cave 13)

Face's punishment proves Greene's theory right for one more time. By punishing Face with his real self, Jonson in a way traps him inside of the circle that symbolizes "gathered self, centred and coherent" (Loxley 145) as Greene suggested.

Although the problem of disguise and role-playing is resolved, Jonson gives Face one final speech in order to disrupt the illusion created on the stage. Jonson believes in the poet's (or playwright's) ability to promote social improvement and his plays aim to "better" men. Therefore, he needs to make clear that what he put on the stage is a demonstration of a society, afflicted by the loss of integrity which results in the disruption of moral values. To make sure that his message is received by the audience, he makes Face his spokesman:

> My part a little fell in this last scene,
> Yet 'twas decorum. And though I am clean
> Got off from Subtle, SURLY, MAMMON, Dol,
> Hot ANANIAS, Dapper, Drugger, all
> With whom I traded; yet I put my self
> On you, that are my country: and this pelf
> Which I have got, if you do quit me, rests
> To feast you often, and invite new guests. (5.5.159)

Jonson reflects the society on stage and tries to make sure that audience is aware of it:

> His mode of representing time ensures that the audience's moral judgements are exercised in an experience which cannot be dismissed as wholly fictional. This is not a separate imaginary world on another temporal plane into which the audience can look; the time on stage claims to be the same minute of the same day in which the audience are alive. (McEvoy 102)

The play is a case submitted to trial, and the audience should come to their own conclusions. That is why, Face presents himself to them, expecting them to come up with a final verdict about their own role in corrupted reality. As an artist, Jonson poses as a teacher of society and encourages audiences think about what has been shown to them. As he explains in the prologue of *The Alchemist:*

> Though this pen
> Did never aim to grieve, but better men;
> Howe'er the age he lives in doth endure
> The vices that she breeds, above their cure. (12)

He aims to make audience the critics of their own society in order to achieve improvement, hence concluding the play with "fair correctives" for the impostures (Prologue 18).

In *The Silent Woman,* the chameleon role, that is the negotiating and verbal manipulation part, which was played by the characters Mosca and Face in *Volpone* and *The Alchemist,* is performed by Truewit. Truewit is introduced to us in the first scene of the first act. Although he is as surprised as the audience by the revelation of Epicene's disguise at the end of the play, he is the one who masterfully manipulates the gulls throughout the play. While most of the time it is Dauphine who makes the plans, Truewit directly participates in all of the plots. First, he tries to dissuade Morose from marrying, by providing a highly detailed description of how cunning and annoying all women can be (2.2). Although his long speech surprisingly causes a contrary effect on Morose, he demonstrates what a verbally talented character he is in this, signalling of his manipulative nature. His plan does not result in the

way he wants, but Dauphine, who has been quite frightened at first, accomplishes his goal, by the fortunate diversion of Truewit's plot. Truewit, then, quickly changes his attitude and adopts a different strategy, taking pride in what he claims to have accomplished, refusing to acknowledge his mistake:

> *TRUE*: Fortune! mere providence. Fortune had not a finger in't. I saw it must necessarily in nature fall out so: my genius is never false to me in these things. Shew me how it could be otherwise. (2.4.66)

Exactly like Mosca and Face, he can quickly change plans and come up with new ideas. He is a master player, and stands as "the spokesman for the successful handling of oneself and others in society" (Anderson 354).

What distinguishes Truewit from Face is the fact that he is surprisingly honest in presenting deception, superficiality and artificiality, as the keys to success in social life. Pretence and deceit are his most important tools, and he does not hesitate to defend them openly. In the first scene of the first act, he appreciates the artificiality of the cosmetics in women and explains how he prefers deceit over nature:

> *TRUE*: And I am clearly o' the other side: I love a good dressing before any beauty o' the world. O, a woman is then like a delicate garden; nor is there one kind of it; she may vary every hour; take often counsel of her glass, and choose the best. If she have good ears, show 'em; good hair, lay it out; good legs, wear short clothes; a good hand, discover it often; practise any art to mend breath, cleanse teeth, repair eye-brows; paint, and profess it. (94)

He understands and appreciates the existence of deception in society, and prefers appearance over reality. His embracement of the social pretensions gives him the ability of manipulating others. He "illustrates it verbally when he tells his companions of the defects of others and how they may be controlled" (Anderson 357).

Later in act 3, we understand that Dauphine is following Truewit's lead, in manipulating the gulls of the play La Fool and Daw:

> *DAUP*: Tut, flatter them both, as Truewit says, and you may take their understandings in a purse-net. They'll believe themselves to be just such men as we make them, neither more nor less. (3.84)

Truewit's open admiration of the power of deceit is again displayed in a long speech, on how to win the favour of women, which mostly concentrates on flattery and deception. He advises Dauphine to

> Give cherries at time of year, or apricots; and say they were sent you out of the country, though you bought them in Cheapside. Admire her tires: like her in all fashions; compare her in every habit to some deity; invent excellent dreams to flatter her, and riddles. (4.1.102)

Of course, his participation in the theme of deception in the play goes beyond theoretical knowledge. Since he understands that "all their (women's) actions are governed by crude opinion" (4.6.57), he manipulates the ladies of the play into falling in love with Dauphine as he promised, and in the meantime, he actively takes part in the manipulation and exposure of the fools of the play with the trick he plays on La Fool and Daw. He plots against La Fool and Daw to make them fight each other and uses this opportunity to prove the bravery of Dauphine in front of the ladies (IV.v); even

Morose is encouraged to marry Epicene by his mistaken reliance on Truewit's advice (2.1).

As cunning as he is—and, as his name indicates, Truewit is indeed a character of wit— however, he is as fooled as everyone else by the end of the play. His disintegrated self is presented to the audience through his verbal abilities, and exactly like Mosca and Face, he is good at identifying what to say best in order to manipulate the character he is dealing with. As Mirabelli points out "True-Wit's power derives from his perspicacity. All of his many displays of cunning in the nature of man, are based on an accurate understanding of his victims (...)" (321). But, of course, exactly like Mosca and Face, he is also punished. Truewit's most important function in the play is his contribution into the exposure of folly that is presented to us through characters of Morose, La Foole and Daw. He continuously makes remarks on how empty and artificial the gulls of the play are, "dramatizing [power of] his [own] wit" (Anderson 357). What he does not realize until the end of the play is his own folly in being "too uninhibited, too carried away with what he perceives as his own verbal skills, and therefore lack[ing] the ability to see past appearances, lack[ing] the ability to understand like truth" (Sanchez 22). By concealing the most important part of his plot, Dauphine in a way exposes the folly of Truewit*:* "Well, Dauphine, you have lurch'd your friends of the better half of the garland, by concealing this part of the plot: but much good do it thee, thou deserv'st it, lad" (5.4.200-202).

The genius that he praises fails him (2.4.66), leaving him in the lurch. Ironically enough, he is punished by being made one of the

fools that he had been playing with, and he is ultimately proved to be as hollow as those he had been criticizing.

Truewit is Jonson's attack on the credulity and artificiality of the society he lives in and on the pretence and deception that come with them.

> Truewit, motivated by his desire to redeem his tarnished reputation, displays his wit by organizing the deceptions and exposures in the second part of the play and serves as the spokesman for the means to a successful existence in a society where reality lies beneath the surface and deception is an accepted norm. (Anderson 355)

With his intentional role-playing, his praise of artificiality and his pragmatic ideas about life, Truewit becomes a demonstration of the "social duplicity" that Jonson is criticizing (Hyland *Disguise and Role-Playing* 123). He is empty, a role player who can take on any role as situation demands. Throughout the play, he becomes the puppeteer of a society that is afflicted with hypocrisy. He deliberately uses the power of his wit to expose the folly of the others, while openly promoting role-playing and artificiality. At the end, he is punished by the realization of the fact that he had been manipulated all along. In a way, by punishing Truewit, Jonson condemns the social pretension that Truewit supported throughout the play, turning him into a victim of what he is promoting.

CHAPTER IV

FOOLS

Jonson is a satirist, and he puts a reflection of society on the stage, his aim being "both to evoke laughter and to make a point (…)" (Hawkins 339). Therefore, it is not surprising that all of his knaves are punished in one way or another. Another important aspect of Jonson's three plays is the fact that he does not hesitate to punish some of his victims, in the same way he punishes his trickster figures. His victims are as corrupted as his deceivers. They are as greedy and as conceited as the deceivers. They are also foolish enough to be tricked easily by the knaves. According to Jonson, folly and deception come from the same negative source, which is "lack of self-knowledge, from rejection or loss of identity; usually manifested through play acting or actual disguise" (Hyland *Disguise and Role-Playing* 153). Most of the time, these plays display fools, endeavouring to create a self image that they do not have, and mimicking people. "But knavery and credulity, mimicry and metamorphosis, alike reflect aspects of one basic folly: the folly of becoming, or trying to become, what one is not, the cardinal sin of losing one's nature" (Barish 90).

In his *Discoveries,* Jonson openly criticizes those who are incapable of seeing what is not apparent to their senses, people who are overly concerned with their appearances and titles:

> […] Not from those that will jest at their own outward imperfections, but hide their ulcers within, their pride, lust, envy, ill-nature, with all the art and authority they can. These persons are in danger, for whilst they think to

> justify their ignorance by impudence, and their persons by clothes and outward ornaments, they use but a commission to deceive themselves: where, if we will look with our understanding, and not our senses, we may behold virtue and beauty (though covered with rags) in their brightness; and vice and deformity so much the fouler, in having all the splendour of riches to gild them, or the false light of honour and power to help them. Yet this is that wherewith the world is taken, and runs mad to gaze on—clothes and titles, the birdlime of fools. (n.pag.)

Since virtue cannot be achieved by superficial means, it is foolish to pretend to be someone else other than one is. Folly of those who fail to see beyond appearances can create a moral disruption, because in the hands of a sufficiently talented trickster, they can be manipulated into anything. However, Jonson makes sure his audience realizes the fact that most of the time, these fools are the cause of their own suffering, since they do not have any control over what is happening around them.

As mentioned before, Jonson's interest in classical works is a fact that all critics agree upon. When it comes to his perception of folly, another point that is widely accepted about Jonson is the Erasmusian influence on his characters. Desiderus Erasmus was a Renaissance writer whose widely known work *Praise of Folly* contributes to Jonson's creation of his fools. *Praise of Folly* stands as "a virtuoso piece of demonstrative rhetoric in which the allegorical figure of Folly praises herself as the greatest boon to humankind and indirectly condemns various beliefs and practices by claiming them as her own inventions" (Duval 71).

Accompanied by Self Love, Imbecility, Forgetfulness and Flattery, Folly depicts all the discrepancies of humanity, as a work of its own

existence. What makes Erasmus' influence on Jonson easy to detect is his idea of life as a stage. In the *Praise of Folly* he writes:

> If anyone seeing a player acting his part on a stage should go about to strip him of his disguise and show him to the people in his true native form, would he not, think you, not only spoil the whole design of the play, but deserve himself to be pelted off with stones as a phantastical fool and one out of his wits? But nothing is more common with them than such changes; the same person one while impersonating a woman, and another while a man; now a youngster and by and by a grim seignior; now a king, and presently a peasant; now a god, and in a trice again an ordinary fellow. But to discover this were to spoil all, it being the only thing that entertains the eyes of spectators. And what is all this life but a kind of comedy, wherein men walk up and down in one another's disguises and act their respective parts till the property man brings them back to the attiring house. And yet he often orders a different dress, and makes him that came but just now off in the robes of a king put on the rags of a beggar. Thus are all things represented by counterfeit, and yet without this there was no living. (n.pag.)

If life is a stage, and the actors are free to change their costumes as they like, then they should choose the one that suits them the best, and remain loyal to it so as to play their part in the best way they can. In his *Praise of Folly*, Erasmus allows his reader to discover,

> a wide variety of ''wise fools'' who had fully appreciated and lived their theatrical roles in the comedy of humanity, but also for the debunking of self-fashioned Stoics who had not. For Erasmus, the fashionable Stoicism of many Renaissance thinkers amounts to a denial of the roles of passion and pleasure in human affairs; in *The Praise of Folly* such kill-joys appear as pretentious wise men looking all the more foolish for their self-vaunting (and

> self-loving) poses of superiority and this-worldly transcendence. (Blanchard 124)

He makes sure to indicate the folly of those who are in denial of their reality, and take refuge in self interest and pretended wisdom, by giving up or betraying their identities. Erasmus also writes that ” the mind of man is so framed that it is rather taken with the false colours than truth” (n.pag.), criticizing the delusional world that man creates for himself, and “acknowledging that the human love of role-playing could at times provoke a response of pathos rather than laughter” (Blanchard 125).

While Jonson chooses to punish his knaves by restricting them to one certain identity, when it comes to fools, he punishes them by exposing their emptiness of character and their folly. Jonson’s knaves too present a form of folly, as their punishments result from their voluntary participation of role-playing and deception. We see deceivers to be equally victimized by their own pretensions, thus making their mortification too self inflicted. As Goldberg writes, the problem with Jonson’s knaves is not only moral but also criminal (240), (except the one in *The Silent Woman*), creating a distinction between “the innocuous fools and the vicious fools” (Hawkins 347). Because the kind of folly they present is different, Jonson designs different kinds of punishment. While the vicious fools face judicial justice, innocuous fool experience poetic justice. As Barish explained, in Jonson’s plays “vice, which is criminal and attacks others, must suffer public correction, whereas folly, a disease essentially self-destructive, may be dealt with in private and without the assistance of constituted authority” (91).

Of course, no matter which way Jonson chooses to punish his characters who are out of Jonsonian norms of self stability as an indication of moral integrity and self-knowledge, his primary aim remains the same. As Hawkins puts it, "the figures appearing on Jonson's "stage of fools", both instruct and delight an audience that recognizes and, simultaneously, relishes their follies" (335).

Apart from three victims in the plot of *Volpone*, the two fools that fall prey to plots of Volpone and Mosca are Sir Politic Would-be and Lady Would-be. The theme of loss of self can be seen in the sub plot as well as the main plot of this play. Sir Would-be and his wife are as inconsistent in identity as other characters. They are the aspirants of the play. They admire the ways of Venetian society and desperately try to imitate this life. As Barish explains, " For Sir Politic and Lady Would-be function to a large extent precisely as mimics. They imitate their environment, and without knowing it they travesty the actions of the main characters" (83).

Sir Politic Would-be "purports to be a man of the world" (Hyland *Disguise and Role-Playing* 99). He brags about his travels and takes pride in his ability to understand what people are thinking:

> *SIR P*: Sir, to a wise man, all the world's his soil:
> It is not Italy, nor France, nor Europe,
> That must bound me, if my fates call me forth.
> Yet, I protest, it is no salt desire
> Of seeing countries, shifting a religion,
> Nor any disaffection to the state
> Where I was bred, and unto which I owe
> My dearest plots, hath brought me out; much less,
> That idle, antique, stale, gray-headed project
> Of knowing men's minds, and manners, with Ulysses! (2.1.1)

However, his opinion of himself is based on empty confidence. Although he poses as a know it all character, he is easily tricked by a mountebank –who is the disguised Volpone – in the next scene (2.2). He is quick to fall for this mountebank's claim to be able to cure diseases. Despite Peregrine's cautious approach, he considers mountebanks to be

> […]the only knowing men of Europe!
> Great general scholars, excellent physicians,
> Most admired statesmen, profest favourites,
> And cabinet counsellors to the greatest princes;
> The only languaged men of all the world! (2.2.10)

His scene clearly reveals Sir Would-be's folly, yet the full exposure of his foolishness and emptiness takes place in Act 5. In the final act, Sir Would-be's "absurd pretensions to worldly wisdom" brought to humiliating end (Goldberg 234), when the disguised Peregrine tricks him into believing that he is on the verge of being arrested.

Sir Would-be poses as a man of knowledge and ideas, but he easily becomes prey to the aptly named Peregrine and his plot. Act 4 starts with Sir Would-be's speech on how discreet a man should be, about what is on his mind in the State of Venice, since no man can be fully trusted:

> *SIR P*: First, for your garb, it must be grave and serious,
> Very reserv'd, and lock'd; not tell a secret
> On any terms, not to your father; scarce
> A fable, but with caution; make sure choice
> Both of your company, and discourse; beware
> You never speak a truth— (4.1.11-16)

Although he advises Peregrine on the importance of being secretive and withholding the truth, he foolishly explains all of his ideas, ranging from the size of the tinderboxes to his project on how to identify people who are affected by plague through the use of onions (4.1). Peregrine sees the folly behind his projects, and in Act 5, he uses one of them to play with him. Peregrine enters the scene disguised and with three merchants, who will pretend to be men from Senate, who are there to arrest him. He convinces Sir Would-be that the man to whom he had been speaking earlier was a spy, and Would-be's idea of selling Venice to the Turks is revealed. Panicking and having nothing else to do, Sir Would-be finds himself a tortoise shell in which to hide:

> *SIR P*: I shall ne'er endure the torture.
> Marry, it is, sir, of a tortoise-shell,
> Fitted for these extremities: pray you, sir, help me.
> [*climbing into shell*]
> Here I've a place, sir, to put back my legs,
> Please you to lay it on, sir, with this cap,
> And my black gloves. I'll lie, sir, like a tortoise,
> 'Till they are gone. (5.4.54-60)

Donaldson and Hyland consider Jonson's choice of a tortoise shell very important. As Donaldson writes; "the tortoise was also commonly taken to be an emblem of silence. The tortoise was sometimes said to be tongueless" ("Tortoise" 164). Sir Would-be pretends to be a man of wisdom and experience. Throughout the play, he endeavours to prove it to both the other characters and the audience. However, his folly of role-playing is exposed and ridiculed. He is transformed from being a man of ideas and words to being silent and helpless. As Hyland writes, Sir Politic Would-be goes through a

> visual transformation into a tortoise – the cold, slow moving, lowly creature that Sir Pol really is. Sir Politic then becomes an emblem for all the transformations of the play, for all transformation is, in Jonson's world, degradation. (*Disguise and Role-Playing* 101)

According to Jonson, "too much talking is ever the index of a fool" (*Discoveries* n.pag.). Witnessing his never ending explanations of his theories and plans about life, it is not difficult to say that Sir Politic easily meets the criteria. Therefore Sir Politic, who is called a "chattering poll parrot" by Barish (83), is punished by Jonson for his folly which brings pretension and mimicry alongside. He is transformed and degraded to a silent tortoise.

Lady Would-be is as foolish as her husband. We learn that she came to Venice "for intelligence/of tyres, and fashions, and behaviour, / Among the courtesans" (2.1.27-29). She is extremely concerned with her appearance, and her fondness for cosmetics is an indication of her superficiality. Like her husband, she provides a "caricature [of] the actors of the main plot" (Barish 83) by imitating other characters and pretending:

> Lady Would-be, for her part, joins the dizzy game of legacy-hunting. Her antics caricature the more sinister gestures of Corvino, Voltore, and Corbaccio. She is jealous, like Corvino, as meaninglessly and perversely erudite as Voltore, and like Corbaccio, she makes compromising proposals to Mosca […]. (Barish 92)

Her scene with Volpone in the third act, presents a brief summary of her character. On her first entrance, we immediately see her obsession with appearances:

LADY WOULD-BE: This band
Shews not my neck enough.—I trouble you, sir;
Let me request you, bid one of my women
Come hither to me.—In good faith, I, am dressed
Most favourably, today! It is no matter:
'Tis well enough.— (3.4.1-6)

As scene progresses, we see that she is not only concerned about her looks, but she also gets sanctimoniously critical of the appearance of the female servants. Since she is empty inside and has no integrity, what she sees in herself and others cannot go beyond surfaces. Although her superficiality is rather obvious, she shows an immense effort to keep intact her pose of a learned and intellectual gentlewoman, in the same scene at which point Jonson's statement that "A fool could never hold his peace" (*Discoveries n.pag.*) is personified in her character, just as much as in that of her husband. She engages herself in a speech in which she mentions all philosophers and poets she read. She confuses all of them with each other, and does not realize she has been mostly out of context (3.4.66-80). She is so thoroughly foolish and vain that, she fails to understand Volpone's implication, when he quotes a philosopher's saying that "highest female grace is silence" (3.4.76). Just like her husband, she becomes "the talking machine" (Barish 88) that forces Volpone to declare himself cured, but she is so involved in creating a respectable public image that she does not even realize it.

Her folly also becomes a great instrument for Mosca's manipulation. First, he tricks Lady Would-be into believing that her husband is having an affair with "the most cunning courtesan of Venice" (3.5.20). When she goes to see her husband, she finds the

young traveller Peregrine with him. She attempts to uncover Peregrine's disguise, believing that he is the Venetian courtesan (4.2) and making a complete fool out of herself. She once more becomes prey to Mosca's plans in the next scene, when Mosca tells her that Celia is the woman he saw with Sir Politic earlier, and she is facing the Senate as they speak. She readily goes to testify against Celia, even though she has no clue of who she is:

> *LADY WOULD-BE*: Ay, this same is she.
> [POINTING TO CELIA.]
> Out, thou chameleon harlot! Now thine eyes
> Vie tears with the hyaena. Dar'st thou look
> Upon my wronged face?— (4.6.2-5)

Her folly, as an indication of the inconsistency of her personality, makes her another object in the hands of the play's master puppeteer, Mosca.

Throughout the play, Celia's character is exactly what makes Lady Would-be's self disintegration more apparent, because while Celia stands as "the object of all desires", Lady Would-be stands as "the source of all repulsion" (Hawkins 338). As Hyland and Barish would argue, the two characters exist as complete contrasts. "Lady Would-be's lecherousness", her "addiction to cosmetics" and "her barely disguised sexual overtures" are pointed out more strongly by Jonson, through the use of Celia's "unearthly purity" (Barish 88). Celia stands as a foil to Lady Would-be, with her "greater strength" that is sourced by "her own inner centrality" (Greene 342). As quoted before, according to Jonson beauty and virtue is achieved through characteristic stability, by being true to oneself. Therefore, Lady Would-be "who thinks she can create beauty on the outside and has no identity" (Hyland *Disguise and Role-Playing*

101), does not realize that she became "the most egregious of the dupes because she is the blindest" (Barish 84).

Surly, Tribulation and Ananias are the characters from *The Alchemist* who are degraded by the exposure of their folly. Pertinax Surly is a gamester and a friend of Sir Epicure Mammon. When he first appears on stage in Act 2, he appears to be a man of intelligence, since he takes a sceptical approach to the practice of alchemy. As Mammon praises the talents and knowledge of Subtle, with his sarcastic answers, Surly shows his distrust of the knaves of the play. He even openly challenges them:

> *SUR*: [Aside] [. . .]
> Now, I am sure it is a bawdy-house;
> I'll swear it, were the marshal here to thank me:
> The naming this commander doth confirm it.
> Don Face! why, he's the most authentic dealer
> In these commodities, the superintendant
> To all the quainter traffickers in town!
> He is the visitor, and does appoint,
> Who lies with whom, and at what hour; what price;
> Which gown, and in what smock; what fall; what tire.
> Him will I prove, by a third person, to find
> The subtleties of this dark labyrinth. (2.3.304-311)

Surly stands out among the other characters, since he is quick to identify the knaves as they are. Right after Face (disguised as Lungs) convinces Surly to meet Captain Face in Temple Church, Surly starts to make his plan to unravel knaves' plot, as he immediately detects something abnormal about the house and knaves' behaviour, and decides to enlighten "the dark labyrinth" that Subtle and Face try to draw their victims into. As Barton wrote:

> Surly is a man impatient with pretence, someone who declines to be taken in. A rationalist from the start, he believes neither in Mammon's grandiose visions nor in the promises of Subtle. He identifies Dol Common quite accurately as a whore, at first sight, although Mammon tries to persuade him that he actually knows her ladyship's noble brother, and has the whole, dignified family history lodged somewhere in the back of his mind. As Subtle and Mammon fill the air with brightly coloured alchemical terms, Surly's observations are caustic. He cannot resist trying to expose the charlatans for what they are. (146)

Unfortunately, his determination in exposing the rogues becomes his way of participating in their crime, as in his quest to expose the confidence games of the knaves, Surly too tries to become what he is not, and "gives up his identity" (Hyland *Disguise and Role-Playing* 146). As a gamester he knows very well about the tricks used to deceive a man:

> *SUR*: Sir, I'll believe,
> That Alchemy is a pretty kind of game,
> Somewhat like tricks o' the cards, to cheat a man
> With charming. (2.3.180-183)

Because, as a gamester, he is familiar with ways of the deceivers, and he disguises himself as a Spaniard to unravel what lies behind the surface in Act 4, scene 3. However, once he gets into disguise, he turns into a victim of the knaves, since they easily take the control of the situation from his hands. First, he is openly scorned by Subtle and Face (4.3). They make fun of him and insult him yet he cannot say anything in return, since he needs to pose as a Spaniard with no knowledge of English. Later, he becomes the victim of attacks from the angry brother of wealthy Dame Pliant Kestrel and from Ananias, who are manipulated by Face into doing

so (4.7) His refusal to change and his determination to remain loyal to his self, create what may seem to be an ideal Jonsonian character at first, since he claims that "I would not willingly be gull'd. /Your Stone /Cannot transmute me" (2.1.78-79). As the play progresses, however, he too proves himself to be a fool, and he receives the degradation that comes with it. As Greene writes:

> Surly, who announces explicitly his uniqueness: "Your stone cannot transmute me." No one of the other major characters possesses the judgment to say that, and it is of ironic significance that Surly himself will return two acts later transmuted by disguise. (344)

Therefore, he is punished by becoming what he despised. Although he primarily aims to uncover the evidence of the knaves' role-playing, he turns into one of them by voluntarily getting into disguise. Hyland wrote: "The man who, thinking himself wise, wishes to unmask the folly of others is himself a fool" (*Disguise and Role-Playing* 239). Again, as Erasmus wrote, "nothing is more foolish than preposterous wisdom, so nothing is more unadvised than a forward unseasonable prudence" (n.pag.).

While Surly commits the crime of pretension only with good intentions, in Tribulation and Ananias it takes the form of hypocrisy. Tribulation and Ananias are religious figures, the first being a pastor, and the second a deacon. However, their religious background does not prevent them from coming to Subtle for selfish and greedy reasons. Like the other characters, they are seeking the philosopher's stone, which they plan to use for conquering the world in order to spread their religious teaching. Although Ananias questions the religious legitimacy of the whole practise, Tribulation being the more logical one, always finds a

religious excuse to do it (2.1). Ananias seems to be the more impulsive one of the two. He is quick tempered and considers everything that he finds inharmonious with religious teachings as "heathen". He even gets into a fierce dispute with Subtle, since he considers any language other than Hebrew as heathen, and the language of alchemy is mostly Greek (2.5). This religious jargon, both characters adopted becomes Jonson's way of emphasizing hypocrisy that two characters represent: "They too seek material benefits, but they are hypocrites, and can only come to terms with what they are doing by fabricating an appearance of righteousness" (Hyland *Disguise and Role-Playing* 142).

They pretend to be respectable and devoted men of religion with higher purposes, but they also do not hesitate to turn orphans' metal into gold for material gain. Although Ananias continuously feels the need to consult the brethren about what is right or wrong, it is only a way of legitimizing what they already have in mind. However, at the end, they are too exposed and degraded, like the other fools of the play, by being beaten by Lovewit. As Fallon writes, these two characters stand as Jonson's criticism of the puritans of the time (16). British historian Trevelyan defined Puritanism as "the religion of all those who wished either to purify the usage of the established Church from the taint of Popery, or to worship separately by forms so purified" (56). They constituted a religious group who continuously gained power in all aspects of life and who were in "perpetual war" with theatre "from the opening of the public theatres in 1576 to their closing in 1642" (Heinemann 20). They saw the stage as a promoting place for the vices, and playwrights as threats to morality. This extremist approach to

theatre made Puritans target of Jonson's satire, making him "their greatest enemy" (Heinemann 285), as he turned Puritan characters into the real life examples of themes of hypocrisy and self-deception (Heinemann 74). Therefore, it is not surprising that Jonson, by attracting his audience's attention on the covetous motives of the Puritans under the disguise of belief and exposing their folly, aims to awaken his audience to the reality of their society and time.

Three fools that are exposed and punished by degradation in *Epicene* are Morose, La Foole and Daw. Morose stands as one of the biggest dupes of the three plays. He is a man who cannot endure a voice, unless it is him who is talking. So, rejecting the outside world, he surrounds himself with silent characters, like the mute servant and speechless barber Cutbeard. Morose's folly lies in his belief that he is in control of his life. As explained in Chapter II, because he does not like the chaotic atmosphere of the external world, being a wealthy man, he searches for a woman who will be as silent and meek as possible, so that he can produce his own heirs and consequently disinherit his nephew, Dauphine. However, he is so blinded by his desire to become the sole control holder of the situation that, he does not realize he, in fact, will become the biggest victim of Dauphine's intriguing plot, leaving him defeated and degraded at the end.

As Morose explains in Act 5, his aversion to noise and his inwardness are necessities of a philosophical tradition that he inherited from his family:

> My father, in my education, was wont to advise me, that I should always collect and contain my mind, not suffering it to flow loosely; that I should look to what things were necessary to the carriage of my life, and what not; embracing the one and eschewing the other: in short, that I should endear myself to rest, and avoid turmoil: which now is grown to be another nature to me. So that I come not to your public pleadings, or your places of noise; not that I neglect those things that make for the dignity of the commonwealth: but for the mere avoiding of clamours and impertinencies of orators, that know not how to be silent. (5.3.41-51)

In describing the principles of his education, he actually defines what Jonson defends as the requirements of an ideal man. "Collecting and containing the mind", not letting his mind flow loosely, and being loyal to one's self by eschewing the others are the main principles of a constant self. As Hyland wrote: "Morose sees himself as Stoic observer, the man sufficiently strong in himself to be able to reveal deficiencies of others" (*Disguise and Role-Playing* 117). Unfortunately, he does not possess the intelligence that Jonson considers essential, and that is why, his self constancy cannot be more than a disguise. Epicene's first revelation, as a woman far from what Morose wanted and expected in Act 3, degrades Morose enough to beg Dauphine to get him out of his marriage, and forces him to share his wealth with Dauphine, by circumstances of his own making. Meanwhile, his wife's second revelation in Act 5 —as a man— shows the audience that Morose is a hopeless dupe who is incapable even of telling a woman apart from a man:

> Here, as elsewhere in the play, the action is designed to expose comically the folly in characters' misjudgments of themselves and others. And the settling of Morose's estate on Dauphine is only the by-product and also the

> price of Morose's folly, similar to his declaration of his impotence, which he must pay for his freedom. [Epicene]'s unmasking is properly the culminating exposure of the folly and misjudgments of all the fools-the coup de grace to their public characters-and the terminating stroke of wit that ties all themes and actions together. (Anderson 351)

Morose, who is the master of the small world of silence he created, is defeated immediately as he walks out of it, since he lacks the intelligence that will allow him to pursue his plans, thus making him another foolish victim.

When we have a look at La Foole and Daw, it is not difficult to see their similarity to the Would-Bes, since they are as concerned as the Would-bes about their appearance in society. However, both La Foole and Daw are nothing but posers, because their futile effort to be respectable only exposes their folly. As one of Dauphine's gentlemen friends, Clerimont explains, La Foole is a man with no knowledge of proper social behaviour and no intelligence:

> He is one of the Braveries, though he be none of the wits. He will salute a judge upon the bench, and a bishop in the pulpit, a lawyer when he is pleading at the bar, and a lady when she is dancing in masque, and put her out. (1.3.30-33)

We understand that La Foole loves attracting attention with extravagant money spending and is very fond of women. Following Clerimont's depiction of him, it is concluded that La Foole places himself in a social position of his own making, thus making himself a "precious manikin" with no essence; he becomes an empty, superficial figure of self creation. Daw is another follower of the same fashion. As Truewit describes him, he is "a fellow that

pretends only to learning, buy titles, and nothing else of books in him" (1.2.71-72). He is "a fellow so utterly nothing, as he knows not what he would be" (2.4.136). Both La Foole and Daw relentlessly try to acquire a social position that will earn them respect. However, their essential emptiness, superficial concerns and desire for respectability only make them more vulnerable to the attacks of the victimizers of the play:

> Both Daw and La Foole are manipulated easily because they have no inner character for making discerning judgments; lacking all identity and believing and taking all advice offered them, they can be swayed by anyone who wishes it. (Anderson 359)

Both La Foole and Daw are tricked to make false claims about having sexual relations with Morose's bride, Epicene (2.4 – 3.3). Later, although they are intimate enough to be described as "inseparable" by Truewit (2.4.86), they are presented to one another as life threatening dangers, and they are cruelly ridiculed in Act 4 scene 5 where they drawn into a fight, -while they are blindfolded- that is staged by Dauphine, Truewit and Clerimont. However, the main degradation takes place at the end of the play, when Epicene's true gender is revealed. This revelation not only exposes their lies about their affairs with Epicene, but also exposes their folly, since their fight was based on these false claims. Being exposed, their disguise falls apart and they are punished with the revelation of the fact that they are nothing more than "such men as [others] make them, neither more nor less" (3.3.84), and by being expelled from society:

> Those hollow men, Daw and La Foole, are likewise expelled, for their characters are as empty, and their claims to the company of fashionable society are as false,

> as their claims concerning [Epicene]. All three fools are ostracized for their threat to those composing the reorganized society: Morose is exiled for his autocratic misjudgments that threatened Dauphine, and the two dupes are sent away for their self-aggrandizing slanders of women. (Anderson 363)

Being essentially empty, not one of the three fools possesses control over his life, and they are very easy to manipulate. However, at the end, they are given ”the strong medicine of ridicule” (Barish 91). In the context of a satirical play, their humiliation becomes an instrument that Jonson uses to instruct society. Jonson’s “basis for judging life was intellectual; ignorance and stupidity becomes the cardinal sins” (Baum qtd in Hyland *Disguise and Role-Playing* 245). By punishing those who participate these sins, he invites his audience to see the “moral truth of his satires” (Syme 145).

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

Use of disguise and role-playing in dramatic works was certainly not Jonson's own invention, since "disguise is fundamentally a comic device associated with the world-turned-upside-down tropes of carnival misrule and with broader areas of comic misunderstanding" (Hyland *Early Modern Stage* 13). However, being "the most powerful advocate in his time of the value to society of the artist as critic" (Wells 129), he adopted them and used them to reflect what he saw in contemporary society. As a satirist, he strove to achieve moral improvement, by displaying what he believed to lie behind social corruption, self rejection and pretension.

Jonson was a classist who believed that, "contemporary literature is corrupt, [...], and the popular theatre is artistically bankrupt" (Thompson 9). Therefore, by going back to classical literary works, he aimed to "raise the despised head of poetry again, and stripping her out of those rotten and base rags wherewith the times adulterated her form, restore her to primitive habit, feature, and majesty" (*Volpone* "Epistle" 114-116). His criticism of contemporary writings and his interest in classical works, introduced him to the idea that shaped the moral philosophy lying behind the plays analysed in this thesis: Stoicism. His neo-stoic vision associated the ideal with one's being loyal to one's self, regardless of changing externals. This idea accords with Seneca's statement that:

> The wise man can lose nothing. He has everything invested in himself, he trusts nothing to fortune, his own goods are secure, since he is content with virtue, which needs no gift from chance, and which, therefore, can neither be increased nor diminished. For that which has come to the full has no room for further growth, and Fortune can snatch away only what she herself has given. But virtue she does not give; therefore, she cannot take it away. Virtue is free, inviolable, unmoved, unshaken, so steeled against the blows of chance that she cannot be bent, much less broken. (Seneca *Moral Essays* 61)

Being consistent in virtue and stable in identity, the ideal man embraces his nature, not being "moved or stirred at anything" (Marcus 30). He rejects the idea that the self is "the product of the moment and the circumstance" (Donson 180). Therefore, instability of virtues and inconsistency in identity, which show themselves in the forms of pretension and deception, are considered to be the qualities of a corrupted nature, which leads to the creation of evil in society. In these plays, Jonson not only condemns such inconsistency of identity, but also finds the lack of it equally reprehensible.

In all three plays that I have examined, as a part of his moral lesson Jonson punishes the characters that fail to stay true to their own nature by committing the moral crime of role-playing, whether with the intent of deceiving others or through the folly of deceiving themselves. They are punished either by judicial sentencing or by being ridiculed and degraded.

I believe that theme of disguise and role-playing for Jonson is not only a device that he used to make his plays more sophisticated or more attractive to audience. He uses it as a way of supporting "the

idea that a concern with self knowledge and consistency of identity is at the centre of his ethical vision" (Hyland *Disguise and Role-Playing* 249). Most of the characters in the three plays that the foregoing chapters dealt with, either through physical and verbal disguising or simply by pretension, participate in play acting atmosphere of the plays, but eventually they become a part of Jonson's moral statement. For Jonson, ignorance is a disease for the soul (*Discoveries n.pag.*), and many of his characters are afflicted with it; being ignorant of their true selves they relentlessly transform and pretend; "[b]ut a truly wise man will also be a man of virtue. A man who knows himself has no need to deceive the world" (Hyland *Disguise and Role-Playing* 246).

Throughout the three plays, Jonson depicts a society full of imposture that is mostly fed by greed, vanity or an obsession with appearances. But for him:

> [i]mposture is a specious thing, yet never worse than when it feigns to be best, and to none discovered sooner than the simplest. For truth and goodness are plain and open; but imposture is ever ashamed of the light. (*Discoveries* n.pag.)

Therefore, as a satirist, he aims "to teach and delight" by eventually depicting imposture as something to be ridiculed in itself. Nevertheless, he refrains from making direct suggestions concerning how to defeat deception, since he strictly refuses the idea of "mak[ing] an author a dictator" (Discoveries n.pag.), but aims to encourage his audience realizing and thinking about the defects of society. As Loxley writes, Jonson believes that, "if his

plays could show men how preposterous their manners and natures had come to be, they would go and sin no more" (162).

In his three satirical plays that have been examined, Jonson created worlds occupied by characters who held self interest above all moral values. They are either greedy and manipulative or too foolish and flamboyant. For some of his characters disguise becomes a compulsive act since even they do not know who they really are, for some it is a way of escaping their real selves as they are not contended with it, and for another group, it is a way of claiming respect from society by creating the image of gentry. No matter what their reasons may be, Jonson's characters stand as the embodiments of evil and folly, since they lose their connection to and the control of their selves as they adopt and drop their disguises. Jonson ties all these negative qualities to what he sees as the source of evil in human beings: lack of self consistency. From a Stoic perspective, we all possess a piece of the reason that governs in the universe. Therefore, understanding and being in peace with our true form, eventually will lead understanding and appreciation of nature. Stoicism also claims that happiness must be the ultimate purpose of human beings and one must follow the path of virtue in order to reach it. Even though, state of being virtuous is not easily reached, by being consistent in identity and harmonious with nature it can be achieved. Jonson's foolish and vicious characters who try to deceive the world through disguise and role-playing end up being punished for it, as they fail to follow the path of nature.

Jonson believed the satirists' role in society as a guide. He thought that the unmasking imposture on stage, allowed his audience to benefit from what they saw on stage, as they were entertained. Therefore, combining his Stoic ideas on morality and on the self with the moral responsibility he felt towards society, as a satirist he established a moral example for his audience by punishing his role-playing characters in his plays.

REFERENCES

PRIMARY SOURCES

Jonson, Ben. "The Alchemist". *The Alchemist and Other Plays.* Ed. Gordon Campell. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1995. Print.

---. "Volpone. *The Alchemist and Other Plays.* Ed. Gordon Campell. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1995. Print.

---. "The Silent Woman". *The Alchemist and Other Plays.* Ed. Gordon Campell. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1995. Print.

---. *Discoveries Made Upon Men and Matter and Some Poems.* Ed. Henry Morley. Cassell & Company, 1892. *Project Gutenberg*. Web. 14 August 2014.

SECONDARY SOURCES

Anderson, Mark A. "The Successful Unity of Epicoene: A Defense of Ben Jonson." *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900* 10.2: 349-66. *JSTOR*. Web. 20 Feb. 2015. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/449921>.

Barish, Jonas A. "The Double Plot in "Volpone"" *Modern Philology* 51.2 (1953): 8392. *JSTOR*. Web. 20 Feb. 2015. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/435080>.

Barton, Anne. *Ben Jonson, Dramatist*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1984. Print.

Bartsch, Shadi. "Senecan Selves". *The Cambridge Companion to Seneca.* Ed. Shadi Bartsch. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2015. 187-199. Print.

Bevington, David. "The Major Comedies." *The Cambridge Companion to Ben Jonson*. Ed. Richard Harp and Stanley Stewart. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2000. 72-89. Print.

Bradbrook, M. C. *The Growth and Structure of Elizabethan Comedy*. California: U of California, 1956. Print.

Blanchard, W. Scott. "Renaissance Prose Satire: Italy and England." *A Companion to Satire*. Ed. Ruben Quintero. Malden, MA: Blackwell Pub., 2007. 118- 136. Print.

Burlinson, Christoper. "Money and Consumerism". *Ben Jonson in Context*. Ed. Julie Sanders. Cambridge: Cambridge UP,2010. 281-289. Print.

Cave, Richard Allen, Elizabeth Schafer, and Brian Woolland. *Ben Jonson and Theatre Performance, Practice, and Theory*. London: Routledge, 1999. Print.

Chernaik, Warren. "The Dryer's Hand: Shakespeare and Jonson". *The Cambridge Companion to Shakespeare and his Contemporaries.* Ed. Ton Hoenselaars. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2012. 54-69. Print.

Cousins, A. D. "Feigning the Commonwealth: Jonson's Epigrams." *Ben Jonson and The Politics of Genre*. Ed. A. D. Cousins and Alison V. Scott. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2009. 14-42. Print.

Craig, D. H., ed. *Ben Jonson the Critical Heritage*. London: Routledge, 1995. Print.

Dawson, Anthony B. "Performance and Participation." *The Culture of Playgoing in Shakespeare's England*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2001. 11-38. Print.

Dessen, Alan C. "Volpone And The Late Morality Tradition." *Modern Language Quarterly* 25.4 (1964): 383. *Academic Search Complete*. Web. 30 March 2015.

Digangi, Mario. "Gender and Sexuality". *Ben Jonson in Context*. Ed. Julie Sanders. Cambridge: Cambridge UP,2010. 339-348. Print.

"Disguise". *Merriam-Webster.com.* Merriam-Webster, 2015. Web. 15 September 2015.

Donaldson, Ian. "Jonson's Tortoise." *The Review of English Studies, New Series* 19.74 (1968): 162-66. *JSTOR*. Web. 20 Feb. 2015. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/512696 .>.

---. "Introduction". *The Oxford Authors: Ben Jonson*. Oxford UP: Oxford,1985. Print.

Donson, Lawrence. "Jonsonian Comedy and the Discovery of the Social Self." *PMLA* 99.2: 179-93. *JSTOR*. Web. 19 Feb. 2015. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/462160 .>.

Dryden, John. An *Essay of Dramatic Poesy*. Ed. Thomas Arnold. Oxford: Oxford UP, 1918. Print.

Duncan, Douglas. *Ben Jonson and the Lucianic Tradition*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1979. Print.

Dutton, Richard. "Jonson's Satiric Styles." *The Cambridge Companion to Ben Jonson*. Ed. Richard Harp and Stanley Stewart. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2000. 58-71. Print.

Duval, Edwin M. "Rabelais and French Renaissance Satire." *A Companion to Satire*. Ed. Ruben Quintero. Malden, MA: Blackwell Pub., 2007. 70-85. Print.

Dyson, Henry. "Introduction: The Seeds of Virtue and Knowledge". *Prolepsis and Ennoia in the Early Stoicism.* Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2009. Print.

Eggert, Katherine. "The Alchemist and Science". *Early Modern English Drama: A Critical Companion.* Ed. Garret A. Sullivan Jr. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2006. 200-212. Print.

Epictetus. *Enchiridion.* Trans. Elizabeth Carter. 2000. The Internet Classics Archive. Web. 15 Sep 2015.

Erasmus, Desiderius. *The Praise of Folly*. Trans. John Wilson. Adelaide: U of Adelaide, 2014. https://ebooks.adelaide.edu.au. Web. 15 April 2015

Fallon, J.L. "Jonson's ANANIAS." *Explicator* 44.2 (1986): 15. *Academic Search Complete*. Web. 10 March 2015.

Goldberg, S.L. "Folly Into Crime The Catastrophe Of Volpone." *Modern Language Quarterly* 20.3 (1959): 233. *Academic Search Complete*. Web. 30 April 2015.

Greene, Thomas M. "Ben Jonson and the Centered Self." *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900* 10.2: 325-48. *JSTOR*. Web. 20 Feb. 2015. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/449921>.

Gurr, Andrew. *Shakespeare's Opposites*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2009. Print.

Haynes, Jonathan. *The Social Relations of Jonson's Theatre*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1992. Print.

Hawkes, Terrence. "Using History." *William Shakespeare: King Lear*. Plymouth: Northcote House, 1995. 9-17. Print.

Hawkins, Harriet. "Folly, Incurable Disease, and Volpone." *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900* 8.2: 355-48. *JSTOR*. Web. 20 Feb. 2015. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/449663 .>.

Heinemann, Margot. *Puritanism and Theatre*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1980. Print.

Hyland, Peter. *Disguise and Role-Playing in Ben Jonson's Drama*. Salzburg: Inst. F. Engl. Sprache U. Literatur, U Salzburg, 1977. Print.

---. *Disguise on the Early Modern English Stage*. Farnham, Surrey, England: Ashgate Pub., 2011. Print.

Inwood, Brad. "Introduction: Stoicism, An Intellectual Odyssey." *The Cambridge Companion to the Stoics*. Ed. Brad Inwood. Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge UP, 2003. 1-7. Print.

---. *Ethics and Human Action in Early Stoicism.* Oxford:Clerondon Press,1985. Print.

Johansen, J. *Literary Discourse a Semiotic Pragmatic Approach to Literature*. Toronto, Ont.: U of Toronto, 2002. Print.

Knapp, Peggy Ann. "The Work of Alchemy". Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies 30.3 (2000): 575-599. Project MUSE. Web. 28 May 2014.

<http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/jmems/summary/v030/30.3knapp.html>.

Leggatt, Alexander. "The Suicide of Volpone." University *of Toronto Quarterly* 39.1 (1969): 19-32. *Project MUSE*. Web. 2 March 2015. <https://0-muse.jhu.edu.library.metu.edu.tr/>.

Long, A. A. "The Socratic Paradigm." *Epictetus: A Stoic and Socratic Guide to Life*. Berkeley: U of California, 2002. Print.

---. *From Epicurus to Epictetus: Studies in Hellenistic and Roman Philosophy*. Oxford: Clerandon Press, 2006. Print.

Loxley, James. *The Complete Critical Guide to Ben Jonson*. London: Routledge, 2002. Print.

Manlove, C.N. "The Double View In Volpone." *Studies In English Literature (Rice)* 19.2 (1979): 239. *Academic Search Complete*. Web. 30 March 2015.

Mann, David. *The Elizabethan Player: Contemporary Stage Representation.* London: Routledge, 1991. Print.

Marcus, Leah S. "Jonson and the Court." *The Cambridge Companion to Ben Jonson*. Ed. Richard Harp and Stanley Stewart. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2000. 30-42. Print.

McEvoy, Sean. *Ben Jonson, Renaissance Dramatist*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh UP, 2008. Print.

Mirabelli, Philip. "Silence, Wit, and Wisdom in The Silent Woman." *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900* 29.2: 309-36. *JSTOR*. Web. 20 Feb. 2015. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/450477 .>.

Moriarty, Michael. *Disguised Vices: Theories of Virtue in Early Modern French Thought*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2011. Print.

"Mountebank". *Merriam-Webster.com.* Merriam-Webster, 2015. Web. 15 April 2015.

Mulryan, John. "Jonson's Classicism." *The Cambridge Companion to Ben Jonson*. Ed. Richard Harp and Stanley Stewart. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2000. 163-174. Print.

Nicoll, Allardyce. "The Development of Professional Drama: Moralities and Interludes." *British Drama*. 5th ed. New York: Barnes & Noble, 1963. 37-55. Print.

Ostovich, Helen. "'Gingerbread Progeny' in Bartholomew Fair." *Magical Transformations on the Early Modern English Stage*. Ed. Lisa Hopkins. Surrey: Ashgate, 2014. 203-214. Print.

Quintero, Ruben. "Introduction: Understanding Satire." *A Companion to Satire*. Ed. Ruben Quintero. Malden, MA: Blackwell Pub., 2007. 1-13. Print.

Sanchez, Reuben. "'Things like Truths, Well Feigned': Mimesis and Secrecy in Jonson's Epicoene." *Comperative Drama* 40.3: 313-36. *Project Muse*. Web. 28 May 2014. <http://muse.jhu.edu/journals/cdr/summary/v040/40.3.sanchez.html>.

"Satire". *Merriam-Webster.com.* Merriam-Webster, 2015. Web. 15 Sep 2015.

Sauter, Willmar. "Theatre or Performance or Untitled Event?" *The Theatrical Event Dynamics of Performance and Perception*. Iowa City: U of Iowa, 2000. 36-50. Print

Scheve, D.A. "Jonson's Volpone and Traditional Fox Lore." *The Review of English Studies* 1.3 (1950): 242-44. *JSTOR*. Web. 7 Mar. 2015. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/510362>.

Schofield, Malcolm. "Stoic Ethics." *The Cambridge Companion to the Stoics*. Ed. Brad Inwood. Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge UP, 2003. 233-257. Print.

Seneca, Lucius Anneaus. *Ad Lucilium Epistuale Morales.* Trans. Richard M. Gummere. Vol.3. London: William Heinamann. www.archive.org. Web. 30 March 2015.

---. *On Benefits.* Ed. Aubrey Stewart. Project Gutenberg. Web. 12 Sep 2015.

---. "Of a Happy Life". *The Wisdom of the Stoics.* Ed. Henry Hazzlit. Lanham: University Press of America,1984. Print.

---, *Moral Essays*. Trans. John W. Basore. Vol. I. London: William Heinemann. www.stoics.com. Web. 15 Sep 2015.

Shapiro, Michael. *Gender in Play on the Shakespearean Stage: Boy Heroines and Female Pages*. Ann Arbor: U of Michigan, 1994. Print.

Stephens, William O. "Introduction". *Stoic Ethics: Epictetus and Happiness as Freedom.* New York: Continuum Press, 2007. 1-7. Print.

Syme, Holger Schott. *Theatre and Testimony in Shakespeare's England: A Culture of Mediation*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge UP, 2012. Print.

Thompson, Sam. "The Critical Backstory." *Volpone A Critical Guide*. Ed. Matthew Steggle. London: T & T Clark International, a Continuum Imprint, 2011. 8-30. Print.

Thorsteinsson, Runar M. *Roman Christianity and Roman Stoicism.* Oxford: Oxford UP, 2010. Print.

Trevelyan, G.M. *England Under Stuarts.* London: Routledge, 2002. Print.

Van Dyke, Joyce. "The Game Of Wits In The Alchemist." *Studies In English Literature (Rice)* 19.2 (1979): 253. *Academic Search Complete*. Web. 30 April 2015.

"Villenage". *Merriam-Webster.com.* Merriam-Webster, 2015. Web. 15 September 2015.

Warren, James. "Introduction". *The Cambridge Companion to Epicureanism.* Ed. James Warren. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2009. 1-9. Print.

Wayne, Don E. "Drama and Society in the Age of Jonson: An Alternative View". *Ben Jonson*. Ed. Richard Dutton. New York: Routledge, 2000. 26-50. Print.

Wells, Stanley. "Ben Jonson." *Shakespeare and Co.* London: Penguin, 2006. 129-166. Print.

Woolf, Raphael. "Pleasure and Desire". *The Cambridge Companion to Epicureanism.* Ed. James Warren. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2009. 158-179. Print.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: TURKISH SUMMARY

Bu çalışma Ben Jonson'un *Volpone*, *The Alchemist* ve *The Silent Woman* adlı oyunlarında, kılık değiştiren ve oyun içinde oyun oynayan kahramanları aracılığıyla, seyircisine kılık değiştirme ve rol yapmanın ahlaki olarak yanlış olduğunu göstermeye çalışmasını konu almaktadır. Antik eserlere olan ilgisi Jonson'u Stoacılıkla tanıştırmıştır ve bu felsefenin etkisi eserlerinde görülmektedir. Stoacılık, kişinin erdemli bir hayat sürebilmesi için, dış etkenler ne kadar değişirde değişsin, her zaman özüne sadık kalmasının gerekliliğine inanır. Toplumda sanatçının bir rehberlik görevi üstlendiğine inanan Jonson, gelecek bölümlerde incelenecek olan üç oyununda, kılık değiştirerek ve rol yaparak kişinin özünün dışına çıkmasının ahlaki açıdan yanlış olduğunu seyirciye göstermeyi amaçlamıştır.

Kılık değiştirme kahramanları sahne üzerinde köstüm ve aksesuarların yardımıyla, olmadıkları bir kimliğe bürünmeleri olarak adlandırılabilir. Ancak kılık değiştirme, sadece sözcüklerin gücüyle kişinin olmadığı biri gibi davranması, rol yapması olarak da tanımlanabilir. Tanımları ne olursa olsun, kılık değiştirme ve rol yapma, tiyatro sanatının temelinde yatmaktadır ve oyun içinde karakterlerin kılık değiştirme ve rol yapma metotlarını kullanmaları oyunlara metateatral bir etki katmaktadır.

Kılık değiştirme ve rol yapma araçlarının oyun içinde kullanılmasıyla ilgili pek çok farklı teori ortaya atılmıştır. Ortak olan bir görüş ise

Jonson'un döneminde, kılık değiştirmenin ve rol yapmanın, içinde yaşadığımız zamanın seyircisinden farklı algılandığıdır. Tiyatronun modern çağının başlangıcı olarak görülen dönemde, kadın rolleri erkekler tarafından oynandığı için ve de sınıf ayrılıklarının önemsendiği dönemde oyuncuların sınıflarından daha yüksek ya da daha aşağıda olan roller oynayabilmeleri, zamanın seyircilerinin bugünkülerden farklı algılara sahip olmalarının sebepleri olarak gösterilebilir.

Rol yapma ve kılık değiştirme araçlarının oyun yazarları tarafından tercih edilmesi sebeplerinden biri geleneğin çok eskiye dayanmasıdır. Kimi eleştirmenler, kılık değiştirme ve rol yapma araçlarının geçmişinin orta çağa dayandığı öne sürmektedir. Onlara göre, bu araçlar dönemin ahlaki oyunlarında ve romans geleneğinde sıklıkla kullanılmıştır.

Oyun yazarlarının bu araçları yaygın olarak kullanmalarının sebeplerinden biri, oyun içinde oyun oynayan kahramanları oynayan aktörlerin oyunculuk kabiliyetlerinin ön plana çıkarılmaya çalışılmasıdır. Diğer bir sebebin bu araçları oyunlara kattığı sürpriz elementi olduğu düşünülürken, kim eleştirmenler oyun içindeki kahramanlar kandırılırken, seyircinin tüm olan bitenin farkında olmasıyla sahip olduğu üstünlük duygusunun seyirciye sağladığı tatminin önemli bir etken olduğunu düşünmektedirler. Tüm bu açıklamalardan çok daha basit olan bir diğer düşünce ise kılık değiştirme ve rol yapmanın insana sağladığı başka biri olabilme özgürlüğü sebebiyle temel bir ihtiyaç olarak görüldüğü düşüncesidir. Bir hicivci olarak Jonson ise bu araçları felsefi

görüşlerini seyirciye geçirmek ve kendi deyimiyle onları eğlendirirken eğitmektir.

Klasikçi bir oyun yazarı olan Ben Jonson, antik Yunan ve Roman eserlerinden etkilenmiştir. Antik yazarların sadece tekniğinden ve üslubundan değil, aynı zamanda felsefe ve prensiplerinden etkilenmiş, kendisi de bu yazım geleneğinin bir parçası olabilmek ve onların üslup ve felsefelerini kendi eserlerine taşıyabilmek için çabalamıştır. Antik eserlere olan ilgisi, Jonson'ı Stoa felsefesiyle tanıştırmıştır.

Stoacılar, erdemli insan kavramının varlığına inanmakla birlikte, bunu başarmanın çok zor olduğunu düşünürler. Stoacılar için erdemin ilk şartı, kişinin kendi kimliğine sadık kalmasıdır. Erdemli kişi, kimliğinde ve hareketlerinde tutarlıdır ve değişen dış etkenlere göre değişmez. Jonson üzerinde en büyük etkiye sahip antik yazar olan Seneca ve diğer Stoacılar, hayatın bir sahne olduğunu benzetmesinden yola çıkarak, kişinin sahip olduğu role yani özbenliğine başından sonuna kadar sadık kalmasının gerekliliğine inanırlar. Stoa felsefesinin etkisinde kalan Jonson da bu geleneği devam ettirerek, asıl önemli olanın insanın özbütünlüğü olduğunu düşünür ve bu bütünlüğü tehdit edebilecek her türlü hareketi ahlak dışı olduğunu savunur.

Stoacılardan en Jonson'u en fazla etkileyen filozof Seneca'dır. Ancak Jonson'un Seneca'nın öğretilerinden ayrıldığı bir nokta mevcuttur. Seneca her insanın eşit olduğu görüşünü savunmaktadır. Ona göre insanları birbirinden ayıran şey sınıf farklılıkları değil, iyi ya da kötü olmalarıdır ve bu da ancak kişinin

kendisi tarafından yapılan bir seçimdir. Jonson ise bu konuda Seneca'dan daha muhafazakâr bir görüşe sahiptir. Jonson içinde yaşadığı toplumun sahip olduğu sınıf farklılıklarına fazlasıyla saygılıdır ve insanların kendi sınıflarının gerektirdiği yaşam tarzının ve davranışların dışına çıkılmasını kabul edilemez görür. İçinde yaşadığı dönemdeki ekonomik değişikliklerin beraberinde getirdiği sınıfsal hareketlilikten hoşlanmayan Jonson, oyunlarında kendi sınıflarının normları dışında davranan kahramanları cezalandırırak bu görüşünü seyirciye yansıtmaktadır.

Jonson'un Seneca'ya ve diğer Stoacılara katıldığı görüş ise hayatın amacının mutluluk olduğu görüşüdür. Stoa felsefesine göre bu mutluluğa giden yol erdemli olmaktan geçer ve erdemli olabilmenin iki temel şartı, kişinin kendisiyle tutarlı ve doğa ile uyumlu olabilmeyi başarmasıdır. Doğa mantık tarafından yönetilir ve mantığa uygun hareket etmek erdemli olabilmenin yoludur. Dolayısıyla kişi hiç bir zaman doğasının dışında hareket etmemelidir ve kendi özüyle tutarlı olabilmelidir ve böylelikle erdeme giden yolu bulabilir. İnsanlar doğuştan mantığı ve erdemi içinde barındırdıkları için, kişinin tek yapması gereken doğanın kendisine rehberlik etmesine izin vermektir.

Stoa felsefesinden etkilenmiş bir hicivci olarak Jonson, sanatçının topluma rehberlik etme görevi olduğuna inandığından, içinde yaşadığı zamanı ve toplumu sahneye yansıtarak seyirciye felsefi be ahlaki mesajını vermeye çalışmaktadır. Bu çalışmada incelenen üç oyununda Jonson, özbütünlük ilkesine aykırı olarak kılık değiştiren ve rol yapan kahramanlarını başkalarını kandırmak ve yönlendirmek amacıyla olmadıkları biri davranmalarını

cezalandırarak, seyirciye topumun ahlaki ve sosyal gerçeklilerini sunar. Her ne kadar seyirciye ideal toplum kavramına dair kesin bir tanım ya da açıklama sağlamasa da, kahramanları aracılığıyla onları kendilerine bakmaya ve toplumsal uygulamaları sorgulatmayı amaçlamaktadır.

Jonson'un üç oyununun ortak özelliği, hepsinin seyirciye insani zayıflıklarının kurbanı olan kahramanlar sunmalarıdır. Açgözlü, ikiyüzlü ve aptal olan bu kahramanlar aracılığıyla Jonson, Stoacı bir bakış açısından bakıldığında, ahlaksızlığın temel nedeni olarak öz tutarlılık eksikliğini gösterir. Kılık değiştiren ve rol yapan kahramanları Jonson'un karakterdeki tutarsızlığı kınama yoludur. Bu kahramanların pek çoğu, fiziksel ya da sosyal aşağılanmayla cezalandırılırken bir yandan da Jonson'a ahlaki mesajını sunma fırsatı tanırlar.

Oyuna ismini veren Volpone adlı kahraman, Jonson tarafından aç gözlü ve düzenbaz bir kahraman olarak seyirciye sunulur. Altınlarına tapan Volpone, kendisi gibi aç gözlü kahramanları oyuna getirebilmek için oyun boyunca pek çok kez kılık değiştirerek, Jonson'un tutarlılık ilkesinin dışına çıkar ve oyun sonunda Jonson tarafından bunun için cezalandırılır.

Volpone, İtalyancada tilki demektir ve Jonson kahramanı ve tilki arasında kurnazlık ve düzenbazlık özelliklerinden yola çıkarak bir paralellik yaratır. Her zaman daha fazlasını isteyen Volpone ilk olarak ölüm döşeğinde olan bir adam kılığına girer. Amacı servetine varis olmak isteyen, en az kendisi kadar aç gözlü kahramanlar üzerinden maddi kazanç sağlamaktır. İkinci olarak, Scoto of

Montua adlı bir şarlatan kılığında görülür. Amacı servet avcılarından biri olan Corvino'nun güzel karısı Celia'yı görebilmektedir. Celia ile olan sahnesi Volpone kahramanını anlamak için oldukça önemlidir. Celia'ya tecavüz teşebbüsü sırasında, ona sağlayabileceği zevkleri anlattığı konuşmasında, cinsel fantezilerinde bile tek bir öze sadık kalamayan Volpone'nin, kılık değiştirme saplantısı ve bundan kaynaklanan kimlik kaybı Jonson tarafından gözler önüne serilir.
Oyunun sonunda, Volpone tek bir öze sadık kalamadığı için Jonson tarafından cezalandırılır. Kendi özünü kaybeden ve kılık değiştirmeye saplantı haline getiren Volpone, ironik bir biçimde, taptığı altınlarından alıkonularak ve kendi yaratımı olan hasta adam kimliğine hapsedilerek cezalandırılır.

Jonson'un özünden farklı davranarak Stoacı ahlak anlayışına aykırı düşen bir diğer kahramanı The Alchemist'den Subtle'dır. Sosyal merdivenin alt basamaklarından olduğu daha ilk sahnede Jonson tarafından belli edilen Subtle, tüm oyun boyunca bu gerçeklikten, kendisine yeni kimlikler yaratarak kaçmaya çalışır.

Bir dolandırıcı grubunun parçası olarak Subtle, şans, altın ve sonsuz gençlik gibi yüzeysel istekleri olan kurbanlarını dolandırmak için, ilk olarak simyacı kılığına bürünür. Simya, büyü ve bilimin tuhaf bir karışımı olarak, insanları en büyük dileklerini gerçekleştirme vaadini taşır ve yaratma ve değiştirme gücünü elinde tutan simyacı da onları bu dileklere yakınlaştırabilecek yegâne insandır. Kendini oynadığı role fazlasıyla kaptıran Subtle, kendini yaratma ve yok etme gücünü içinde barındıran Tanrıvari bir pozisyona taşımaya çalışır. Oyunun ilerleyen sahnelerinde, Periler Kraliçe'sinin rahiplerinden biri ve dini bir grubun ruhani lideri tavrına bürünen

Subtle, özbütünlüğüne ihanet ederek, her seferinde kendine hiyerarşinin en tepesine yerleştirecek bir kimlik yaratır. Bu onun kendi gerçekliğinden kaçma şeklidir. Oyunun başında Face ile girdiği tartışmada, toplumun en alt sınıfından geldiği anlaşılan Subtle, bu durumdan kaçabilmek için kendini oldukça yükseğe taşımaya çalışır. Ancak oyun sonunda, Jonson tarafından kaçmaya çalıştığı özüne hapsedilerek cezalandırılır ve tam bir daire çizerek, başladığı sosyal pozisyona geri döndürülür.

Son olarak, *The Silent Woman*' dan, Epicene iki aşamalı kılık değiştirmesiyle, diğer kahramanlardan farklı bir kahraman olarak karşımıza çıkar. Yine diğer kahramanlardan farklı olarak, Epicene, oynanan oyunların yaratıcılarından biri değil, yalnızca Dauphine'nin amcasının servetinin varisi olmak amacına ulaşmak için bir araç olarak ortaya çıkar.

Epicene ilk olarak, kendi sesi dışında hiçbir sese tahammülü olmayan Morose kahramanının, evlendiği sessiz kadın kılığında karşımıza çıkar. Ancak evliliğinin hemen ardından, sessiz ve itaatkâr kadın rolünden çıkarak, geveze ve baskıcı bir kadın haline döner. Asıl şaşırtıcı olan Epicene'nin ikinci kılık değiştirmesinin ortaya çıkmasıdır. Çünkü Dauphine hariç tüm diğer kahramanlar ve seyirci Jonson tarafından kandırılmıştır. Herkesin kadın sandığı Epicene'nin, oyun sonunda kadın kılığına girmiş bir erkek olduğu ortaya çıkar. Bu kez Jonson, Epicene'nin vurgu odaklanmak yerine, toplumda süregelen ekonomik sapkınlığı seyirciye sunmaya odaklanır ve eğlendirirken farkındalık yaratmayı amaçlar. Kapitalizmin yükselişiyle, Jonson'un içinde yaşadığı toplumun daha bireysel ve benmerkezci bir hale bürünmesini eleştirmektedir. Ona

göre kişisel çıkarlar insanları öyle sapkın bir duruma getirmiştir ve Epicene'nin iki katmanlı kılık değiştirmesi bunun bir göstergesi olarak seyirciye sunulur.

Fiziksel kılık değiştiren bu kahramanlar, hem dış görünüşlerini hem de konuşmalarını girdikleri kılıklara ve oynadıkları role uygun hale getirmelerine yardımcı olacak zekâya sahip olsalar da, oyunlarında gelecek bölümde incelenecek ve bukalemun karakterler olarak adlandırılan ve sözel yetenekleri oldukça gelişmiş kahramanlardan yardım alırlar.

Greene'nin makalesinde "bukalemunlar" olarak adlandırdığı kahramanlar Jonson'un üç oyunundaki pek çok diğer kahraman gibi çıkar elde etme dürtüsüyle hareket eden kahramanlar olarak karşımıza çıkarlar. Kurbanlarını istek ve düşüncelerini çok iyi anlayabilen bu kahramanlar, sözel kılık değiştiriciler olarak adlandırılabilirler. Herkesin umut ve beklentilerini besleyerek, onları yönlendirmekte başarılı bu kahramanlar, genellikle dolandırıcılar ve kurbanları arasında aracı görevindedirler ve kaçınılmaz olarak Jonson tarafından bunun için cezalandırılırlar.

Jonson'un bukalemun kahramanlarından ilki, *Volpone* adlı oyundan Mosca'dır. İlk olarak Volpone'nin paraziti olarak görülen Mosca, aslında tüm oyun boyunca kontrolü elinde tutan kahramandır. Corbaccio'yu oğlunun onu öldürmek istediğini fikrine ikna eden, Lady Would-be'yi Celia'ya karşı kışkırtan ve Corvino'yu karısını Volpone'ye bir anlamda kurban etmeye ikna eden Mosca'dır.

Tüm bu oyunların içinde Mosca'nın en büyük silahı pohpohlamadır. Karşısındakinin zaaflarını ustaca fark eden Mosca, çoğunlukla dalkavukluk yaparak amacına ulaşmaya çalışır. Volpone'den farklı olarak rol yapmak onun için bir saplantı ya da amaç değil sadece amaca ulaşmasını kolaylaştıran bir araçtır. Herkese farklı bir yüzünü sunarak, özbütünlüğe ihanet eder.

Yetenek ve becerilerinin fazlasıyla farkında olan Mosca bunlarla övünmekten de kaçınmaz. Yalan ve dolandırıcılığı, içinde yaşadığı toplumun ayrılmaz bir parçası olarak gören Mosca, kendini bu toplumun en üst pozisyonlarında görür. Her ne kadar Mosca rol yapma becerisiyle övünse de Jonson bunun yanlış olduğunu seyircisine göstermekte gecikmez. Yozlaşmış bir toplumun temsilcisi olan Mosca, bu toplumun eleştirisi ve ahlaki bir tehdit olarak toplumdan uzaklaştırılır.

Birden fazla yüzünü gördüğümüz bir diğer kahraman, *The Alchemist* oyunundan Face'dir. Adından da anlaşıldığı gibi Face, içi boş, sadece suret olarak var olan bir kahramandır. Dapper'layken Captain, Sir Epicure Mammon'la Lungs ve ev sahibi Lovewit'leyken uşak Jeremy'e dönüşür. Face tüm oyun boyunca hızlıca bir rolden diğerine geçerek, Stoacıların erdemli insan kavramından oldukça uzaklaşır.

Epicure Mammon da aslında Jonson 'un Stoa felsefesiyle olan yakınlığını gösteren bir kahramandır. Sir Epicure adını, çoğunlukla Stoacılıkla karşı karşıya getirilen Epikürcülerden alır. Epikürcülük, Stoacılığın aksine evreni yöneten bir mantık gibi bir gücün varlığına ya da ilahi bir varlığın müdahalesine inanmazlar. Dolayısıyla insanın

tek sorumluluğu kendisine karşıdır. Stoacılar mutluluğu insanın nihai amacı olarak görürken, Epikürcüler için nihai amaç zevktir. Zevk, Epikürcülükte acının yoksunluğu olarak tanımlanır. Bu durum, Epikürcülerin her türlü ahlaki sorumluluktan yoksun bir hayatı savunduğu anlamına gelmez. Onlara göre insanların yemek, sağlık ve güvenlik gibi temel ihtiyaçlarından ötesine ihtiyaçları yoktur. Bu yüzden politik güç, şöhret ve sosyal sınıf gibi kavramların kaçınılması gerektiğini savunurlar. Çünkü onlara göre bunlar temelsiz korkular, boş arzular ve stres kaynaklarıdır, bu yüzden de kişi eninde sonunda acı yaratan bu kavramlardan uzak durmalıdır. Ancak Epikürcülerin zevke yaptığı bu vurgu, yanlış anlaşılmalarına ve çoğu zaman hedonist olmakla suçlanmalarına neden olmuştur. Stoa felsefesine olan yakınlığı nedeniyle, Epicure adlı kahramanı oldukça açgözlü ve şehvetli bir karakter olarak yaratarak Jonson, Epikürcülüğe karşı eleştirisini gözler önüne serer.

Face'in özsel boşluğu ise Jonson tarafında daha ilk sahneden, Subtle'la arasında geçen tartışma aracılığıyla vurgulanır. Subtle, Face'i sadece giysilere indirgeyerek, girdiği kılıklardan bağımsız olarak var olmadığını vurgular. Face sadece kıyafetlerinden ibarettir. Zaten Stoacılara göre de birden fazla kimliği olan bir insan kimliği olmayan, içi boş insandır. Tıpkı Subtle gibi Face'de gerçek kimliğinden kaçmaya çalışmaktadır ancak tam da bu yüzden oyunun sonunda Jonson tarafından o kimliğe hapsedilerek cezalandırılır.

Sanatçının toplumu iyileştirme işlevine inanan Jonson, *The Alchemist*'in sonunda Face'yi seyirciye mesajının ulaştığından emin olmak için kullanır. Sahnede yaratılan yanılsamayı dağıtarak Face,

seyirciyle konuşur ve az önce sahnede olan bitenlerden, kendi sonuçlarını çıkarabilmeleri için oyunu onlara sunar. İçinde yaşadığı toplumu sahneye yansıtan Jonson seyircinin de bu gerçeği farkında olduğundan emin olmak istemektedir.

Son bukalemun kahraman *The Silent Woman* adlı oyundan Truewit'tir. Tıpkı Mosca gibi Truewit de yalan ve düzenbazlığın sosyal hayatın ayrılmaz bir parçası olduğunu düşünür ve bu özellikleri açıkça övmekten de geri kalmaz. Yine Face ve Mosca gibi, Truewit de oyunda kontrolü elinde tutan kahramanlardandır ve zekası ve insanları yönlendirebilme becerisiyle övünür.

Rol yapmanın hayatta başarılı olmanın gerekliliği olduğuna inanan Truewit'in cezası, olmaya çalıştığı kişinin tam zıttı olduğunun ispatlanmasıdır. Oyunun sonunda, fazlasıyla övündüğü zekâsı onu yarı yolda bırakır ve onun da diğer kahramanlar gibi Epicene tarafından kandırılmış olduğu anlaşılır. Truewit de diğer karakterler gibi kılık değiştirme ve rol yapmanın kurbanı haline dönüştürülerek cezalandırılır. Truewit, Jonson'un içinde yaşadığı toplumun güvenilmezliğinin ve yapaylığının eleştirisi haline dönüşür. İçinde yaşadığı sosyal ikiyüzlülüğü vurgulamak isteyen Jonson, Truewit'i övdüğü yapaylığın kurbanı haline getirerek, seyirciye mesajını ulaştırmaya çalışmaktadır.

Bir hicivci olarak Jonson, sahnede toplumun bir yansımasını sunar ve güldürürken, bir mesaj vermeyi amaçlar. Bu yüzden oyunlarının sonunda dolandırıcılar, bir şekilde cezalandırılırlar. Ancak bu oyunların önemli bir diğer özelliği bazı kurbanlarında dolandırıcılar gibi cezalandırılmalarıdır. Çünkü onlar da dolandırıcılar kadar açgözlü ve kibirlidirler. Jonson'un oyunları, sahip olmadıkları bir

kimliğe bürünerek, olmadıkları gibi davranan bu kahramanların aptallığını gözler önüne serer.

Jonson'un her üç oyununda da görülebilen son kahraman tipi de soytarılar/ aptallardır. Jonson'a göre aptallık ve kandırmaca aynı kaynaktan ortaya çıkmaktadır; kimlik kaybı. Jonson'un bu kahramanları yaratırken etkilendiği isim Erasmus'tur. Erasmus ünlü eseri *Deliliğe Övgü'* de kendi gerçekliklerine sırt dönen ve çıkar ve sahte bilgelik rollerinin arkasına saklanan insanların hatalarını aptallığın işi olarak sunar. Seneca gibi o da hayatın bir sahne olduğunu düşünür. Eserde Delilik, bir sahne olan hayatı olduğu gibi yaşamanın gerekliliğinden ve kimsenin gerçekte ne olduğu bilmeye çalışmadan, sadece gördüklerimizle yetinmemizin gerekliliğini savunarak, bizlere Jonson'un kahramanlarında da görülebilen bir aptallık tanımı sunar. Ancak kişi rolünü bir kez seçtikten sonra ona sadık kalmakla yükümlüdür. Erasmus' un aptallık tanımının ışığında Jonson da bu kahramanların aptallığını ifşa ederek onları cezalandırır.

Jonson' un *Volpone* adlı oyunundaki soytarı kahramanları Would-be çiftidir. Would-beler tüm oyun boyunca olduklarından daha zeki ve asil kahraman imajı çizmeye çalışırlar. Zaten Venedik'e asillerin hayatını öğrenmeye gelmiş olan Would-beler çaresizce bu hayatı taklit etmeye çalışırlar. Sir Politic, fazlasıyla geveze ve kolayca kandırılabilen bir kahraman iken, oyun boyunca bunun tam tersi olduğunu ispat etmeye çalışır. Ancak oyun ilerledikçe, Peregrine adlı kahramanın oyununa gelen Sir Politic, kendini çaresizce bir kaplumbağa kabuğunun içine saklanmış olarak bulacaktır. Kocasından pek farklı olmayan Lady Would-be de oldukça

gevezedir. Oldukça boş bir kahraman olmasına rağmen oyun boyunca entelektüel olduğunu ispat etmeye çalışır. Ancak bunu yaparken okuduğu tüm şair ve filozofları birbirine karıştırarak kendini küçük düşürür. Lady Would-be o kadar itici bir kahraman olarak tasvir edilir ki Volpone sadece ondan kurtulmak için neredeyse iyileştiğini söylemek zorunda kalır. Lady Would-be 'nin iticiliği, Celia'nın çekiciliğiyle zıtlaştırılarak vurgulanır. Her iki kahramanın da gevezelikleriyle de vurgulanan aptallıkları ve olmadıkları biri gibi davranmaya çalışmaları, oyun sonunda küçük düşürülmeleriyle cezalandırılır.

The Alchemist'te Would-belerin konumu Surly, Tribulation ve Ananias kahramanları tarafından doldurulur. Başından beri Face ve Subtle'dan şüphelenen Surly, onların oyununu açığa çıkarabilmek için kendi kimliğinden vazgeçer ve kılık değiştirerek özbütünlüğe aykırı davranır. Her ne kadar oyunun başında Jonson'un erdem örneği olmaya oldukça yaklaşan bir kahraman olan Surly, kılık değiştirme ve rol yapmaya gönüllü olarak giriştiği için Jonson'un cezasından kurtulamaz.

Tribulation ve Ananias ise dini ikiyüzlülüğün temsilcisi görevini üstlenirler. Her ikisi de din adamı olan kahramanlar, din gösterilerinin arkasına sığınarak maddi kazanç peşindedirler ve oyunun sonunda küçük düşürülerek cezalandırırlar. Eleştirmenler, iki kahramanın dönemin Püritanlarının bir eleştirisi olduğunu düşünmektedir. Jonson'un döneminde, Püritanlık Hıristiyanlığın oldukça uç bir mezhebi olarak, dinin saflaştırılmasını savunmuştur. Sahne sanatlarının izleyiciyi günah işlemeye ittiğini düşünen Püritanlar, tiyatro sahnelerinin kapatılması gerektiğini savunmuşlar

ve bunun kaçınılmaz bir sonucu olarak, pek çok oyun yazarının tepkisini çekmişlerdir. Oyunu sonunda Tribulation ve Ananias'ın maskesini ve aptallıklarını gözler önüne seren Jonson, izleyiciyi içinde yaşadığı dönemin gerçekliklerini fark etmeye davet eder.

The Silent Woman da ise Morose, La Foole ve Daw oyunun soytarıları olarak karşımıza çıkarlar. Morose benmerkezci ve kontrolde olma arzu yüksek bir kahraman olarak karşımıza çıkar. Ancak kahramanın sahip olduğunu iddia ettiği felsefi eğitimi ve kendini dış etkenlerden bağımsız tutmaya çalışması bir Stoacılık parodisi olmaktan öteye geçemez. Morose'nin kontrol sahibi imajı, Epicene'nin kılık değiştirmesinin kurbanı olarak, bir erkeği kadından ayırt edemediğinin ortaya çıkmasıyla, parçalanır. La Foole ve Daw ise Would-beler gibi sahte asalet rolü yapmaktadırlar. Paranın getirdiği özgüven ve güçle, sahip olmadıkları bir imaj yaratmaya çalışan bu kahramanlar, Truewit ve diğerlerinin oyunlarının baş kurbanlarına dönüştürülerek, küçük düşürülür ve cezalandırılırlar. Stoacıların erdem anlayışına aykırı davranan kahramanları cezalandırarak Jonson seyircisini eğitmeyi amaçlamaktadır.

Jonson için kılık değiştirme ve rol yapma temaları, sadece oyunlarını seyirciye daha çekici kılmak için değil, aslında insanın kimliğinde tutarlı olması, öz bilinç ve öz bütünlük fikirlerini desteklemek için kullanmaktadır. Jonson için cehalet bir ruh hastalığıdır ve kendilerini bilmeyen kahramanlar sürekli şekil değiştirip, rol yaparlar. Oysaki kendini gerçekten tanıyan insanın kimseyi kandırmaya ihtiyacı yoktur.

Her üç oyunda da aç gözlülük, kibir ve dış görünüş saplantısı kurbanı olan kahramanlara yer vererek, Jonson bir hicivci olarak hem eğlendirme hem eğitme görevini yerine getirmeye çalışmaktadır. Jonson 'un amacı toplumdan sahneye yansıtılanları gören seyircinin, aynı ahlak dışı eylemlere kapılmasını engellemektir.

Her üç oyunda da Jonson, çıkarlarını her türlü ahlaki değerin üzerinde tutan karakterler yaratmıştır. Her biri ya açgözlü ya da fazlasıyla aptal ve gösteriş meraklısı kahramanlar olarak karşımıza çıkarlar. Jonson tüm bu olumsuz özellikleri, her türlü kötülüğün kaynağı olarak gördüğü kahramanlarındaki öz tutarlılık eksikliğine bağlar. Jonson'un kahramanları Stoa felsefesinin ahlak dışılık tanımının vücut bulmuş şekli haline gelirler. Çünkü bu kahramanlar bir kılıktan diğerine geçerken doğayla olan ilişkilerini ve özlerinin kontrolünü yitirirler. Stoa felsefesine göre erdemli bir hayat mutlu bir hayattır. Erdemli olmak kolay ulaşılabilir bir amaç olmasa da kişi doğasıyla uyum içinde ve sahip olduğu role sadık kalarak bunu başarabilir. Jonson'un içinde yaşadıkları dünyayı kandırmaya çalışan aptal ve kötü karakterleri oyun sonunda tam da bu yüzden cezalandırılırlar. Jonson hicivcinin içinde yaşadığı toplumda önemli bir roü olduğuna inanır. Bu yüzden sahnede karakterlerinin maskesini düşürerek, seyircisini eğlendirirken, aynı zamanda eğitmeyi amaçlar. Stoa felsefesine olan bağlılığını, hicivcinin topluma rehberlik etme görevine olan inancıyla birleştiren Jonson, ahlaki ve toplumsal mesajını seyirciye kılık değiştiren ve rol yapan kahramanlarını cezalandırarak vermeye çalışır.

APPENDIX B: TEZ FOTOKOPİSİ İZİN FORMU

ENSTİTÜ

Fen Bilimleri Enstitüsü ☐

Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü ☐

Uygulamalı Matematik Enstitüsü ☐

Enformatik Enstitüsü ☐

Deniz Bilimleri Enstitüsü ☐

YAZARIN

Soyadı: Tekin

Adı: Çağla

Bölümü: İngiliz Edebiyatı

TEZİN ADI: The Moral Dimension Disguise and Role-playing in Ben Jonson's *Volpone, The Alchemist* and *The Silent Woman*

TEZİN TÜRÜ: Yüksek Lisans ☐ Doktora ☐

1. Tezimin tamamından kaynak gösterilmek şartıyla fotokopi alınabilir. ☐
2. Tezimin içindekiler sayfası, özet, index sayfalarından ve/veya bir bölümünden kaynak gösterilmek şartıyla fotokopi alınabilir. ☐
3. Tezimden bir (1) yıl süreyle fotokopi alınamaz. ☐

TEZİN KÜTÜPHANEYE TESLİM TARİHİ: