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BEN JONSON'S THEORY AND USE OF SATIRE IN COMEDY

by

Bradford Michael Morehouse Hill

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BEN JONSON'S THEORY AND USE OF SATIRE IN COMEDY

OUTLINE

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CHAPTER I

THE MEANING OF SATIRE

"Difficile est satiram non scribere"
Juvenal - Satirae.

Why should this great satirist of classical times have said, "It is difficult not to write satire"? Before this can be answered satisfactorily it is essential that we examine the mental attitude of the satirist and discover his outlook and purpose. Incidentally, this consideration will help us to arrive at a better understanding of the meaning of satire itself.

The satirist in a sense is an idealist who has become soured. In comparing the ideal that exists in his own mind with the everyday world he finds little that embodies this ideal. This reflects itself in the contemptuous attitude of the satirist toward the follies of mankind. Consequently, in showing human nature its own weaknesses, the satirist ranges all the way from playful sarcasm to the most bitter invective. Satire, accordingly, may be pleasantly tart with an agreeable pungency, or more acid with a smack of the caustic, or so bitter that it becomes virulent. But above all and through all we must remember that the satirist is essentially an idealist.

The satirist is also a critic. Now the first prerequisite for a critic is a natural capacity for keen observation, for if he does not fully comprehend and accurately conceive the object of his criticism, his censure would tend to be less effective or would miss the point altogether. The satirist as critic must be able to see beneath the surface of pretense and sham and must be able to detect insincerity and affectation. Let us suppose that the satirist has a neighbor who has bought an expensive car and has hired a chauffeur in spite of the fact that he is not able to give his family the necessities of life. The writer of tragedy would arouse our pity for the man's family. The satirist, on the other hand, criticizes his neighbor, not for owning an expensive car, but for the folly of starving his family at the expense of keeping the car, and for pretending to greater wealth than he actually has. Keen observation, then, is an essential and inherent characteristic of the critic, for the satirist "perceives underneath the specious disguise of social conventions and nominal morality the native brutality and ignorance of mankind."(1)

This critical spirit also implies a sense of superiority. The satirist looks about him and sees those who blindly imitate the follies and vices of mankind; he does not pity them but criticizes them and laughs at them for their sheer stupidity and lack of common sense. If the satirist publicly criticizes

(1) "Introduction to Dramatic Theory" by Allardyce Nicoll - p. 175.

our automobile buyer, it is done so that others may see the folly of false pretense in trying to keep up with the Joneses.

In addition to this sense of superiority the satirist also exhibits a sense of the ludicrous, for he criticizes the follies of human nature by exposing them to ridicule. Some situations are ridiculous in themselves and provoke laughter at once, such as the policeman who slips on a banana peel and descends from a position representing the dignity of the law to a position that is ridiculous and wholly wanting in dignity. More often, however, the blind and stupid world does not recognize the ridiculousness of its own follies, although "life everywhere furnishes an accurate observer with the ridiculous."(1) It takes the satirist to discover and expose the ludicrous by placing the object of his ridicule in such a light that there is no doubt left as to its ridiculousness.

We have seen that affectation is a fit subject for satire; we might go even further and say that affectation is the only source of the ridiculous. Let us take the same example of the man who has foolishly bought an expensive car. Suppose the satirist who has heard his neighbor boast that he knows how to drive after one lesson, sees that individual drive around his house barely missing trees and other objects. Then, in a burst of over-confidence, he dashes into his garage at top speed, only to emerge a moment later through the rear wall much to his own chagrin and to the dismay of his family. Naturally the driver and his family do not regard the situation

(1) Preface to "Joseph Andrews" by Henry Fielding - p. 19.

as ridiculous but feel that it is tragic. The satirist observes his neighbor's predicament and thinks it is quite ludicrous and gives way to unfeigned laughter. "The world is a comedy to those that think, a tragedy to those who feel."(1) The satirist laughs because his neighbor's unexpected departure from the normal appears ludicrous; however, if he uses this example later and discovers it to the public he will direct his satire against his neighbor's false pretenses in asserting himself capable of driving a car without adequate instruction. Without further examples we may conclude that affectation proceeds from either vanity or hypocrisy: vanity, because the man affects a knowledge of driving and is ostentatious in trying to execute something he is not capable of perfectly accomplishing; hypocrisy, because by purchasing the car in the first place he is trying to disguise his poverty by affecting wealth.

Paradoxically, what we might expect to give displeasure actually gives pleasure, for at the unexpected turn of events in the illustration above when the inexperienced driver crashes through the garage the observer bursts into laughter though his neighbor has injured his car, his garage, and possibly himself. This brings us to the question of the nature of laughter in relation to the ridiculous. In analyzing the above situation we discover that the comic is accidental, yet it is not the sudden change from the normal that raises a laugh but rather the involuntary element in this change.

(1) Horace Walpole in a letter to Sir Horace Mann. 1770. ("Familiar Quotations" by John Bartlett, p. 389)

In analyzing the attitude of the observer we discover that he is a disinterested spectator, and because of this detachment the situation appeals to his intelligence and not to his emotions. "The comic appeals to the intelligence pure and simple; laughter is incompatible with emotion." (1)

Perhaps a contrast between the tragic and the comic will help to clarify this point. Tragedy may be likened to the method of deduction that reasons from the general to the particular. Tragedy is concerned with the general laws of society in as far as they affect a particular individual or individuals, and deals with the internal motives of the character that will arouse our sympathy. Comedy, on the other hand, is like the inductive method of science that reasons from the particular to the general. Comedy is concerned with classes of people and is handled from a purely external point of view. With this in mind it seems only natural that laughter which aims at correcting should reach as great a number of persons as possible. "Comic observation instinctively proceeds to what is general." (2)

The satirist laughs at man for his pretentions and affectations, and when he makes us laugh at similar follies by making them appear ridiculous in comedy, this laughter becomes a warning to us to avoid such a course of action that is open to public censure. In laughter the satirist finds an unavowed intention to humiliate, and by the judicious use of laughter he tries to correct his neighbor, if not in his

(1) "Laughter" by Henri Bergson - p. 139.
(2) Ibid. - p. 170.

(1) "Laughter" by Henri Bergson - p. 123.
(2) Ibid. - p. 170.

will, at least in his deed. Further investigation would show us that the ridiculous or "the comic does not exist outside the pale of what is strictly human." (1)

Up to this point we have observed that the ridiculous arises from the exposure of an affectation and that this discovery always strikes the observer with surprise and pleasure. The surprise and enjoyment, moreover, are more marked and more cogent "when the affectation arises from hypocrisy than from vanity" (2): for it is more surprising to discover that one is the exact opposite of what he affects to be, and so more ridiculous, than to find him a little deficient in the quality he is reputed to have. Consequently, as the process of satirical exposure is unpleasant, it follows that satire is employed as a means of destructive criticism.

The reformer and the satirist often seek the same end - that of destroying a thing by attacking it - but they use entirely different means. The reformer attacks the vices and follies of man by condemning vicious and silly practices; he appeals to the emotions and the moral sense of mankind. The satirist, on the other hand, is not usually interested from a moral point of view, but attacks vice largely because of its sheer folly; his method is wholly different, for he destroys the object of his satire by making it appear ridiculous and by literally laughing it to death. Satire thus becomes a means and not an end. The satirist seeks to destroy our weaknesses that we may add the more noble

(1) "Laughter" by Henri Bergson - p. 170.
(2) Preface to "Joseph Andrews" by Henry Fielding - p. 22.

attributes of character; he destroys that we may rebuild.

Unlike the reformer, he does not appeal to our emotions but rather to our intellect and to our reason.

It is little to be wondered at, then, that as Juvenal looked about him and observed the follies of mankind he said, "It is difficult not to write satire," for it is the inherent nature of satire to ridicule the absurdities and affectations of human nature. Ben Jonson, the dramatist and critic, took this same attitude toward the London of the seventeenth century.

THE VARIETIES OF SATIRE

Satirical literature naturally falls into four fairly well defined groups: namely, personal, political, social, and literary satire.

Personal satire is by far the most primitive expression of the satirical spirit, and consequently is found in the literatures of all ages. Its method is to stigmatize the name and reputation of the man whose follies and excesses are detrimental to the happiness and prosperity of society. The result is rather a caution against future excess, than a remedy of present follies. "By the judicious application of personal reproof the contagion may be prevented, although the infection, perhaps, cannot be removed." (1)

Too often, however, personal satire degenerates

(1) On the Use and Abuse of Satire" by C. Abbot, Lord Tenterden, in "The Oxford English Prize Essays" Vol. I, p. 184.

into invective and is the product of uncontrolled hatred and malice. It is not strange, therefore, that personal satire seldom attains a high place in literature. Frequently personal satire is carried over into one or more of the other phases of the satirical spirit. In an instance of this kind the individual is merely used to show the application of the moral and helps to contribute strength to a tale of political, social, or literary satire. For example, personal satire has repeatedly been directed against conceited pretenders to learning and scholarship. If these counterfeits were not exposed to ridicule they would too often command deference and so contaminate the taste and corrupt the judgment of their age. Ben Jonson in the "Poetaster" directs much of his satire against his contemporaries for "murdering the king's English." Jonson also displays a good deal of animosity and contempt for his would-be rivals; he was not beyond doing physical violence to his enemies but in the 'Poetaster' he is content to maul his victims mentally.

While the satirist may expose his enemy to public ridicule he must maintain a sufficient sense of the ridiculous, "for where humor and the ridiculous are entirely lacking, there is no satire, but abuse." (1)

Political satire is a later development and a natural outgrowth of the personal phase of the satirical spirit. While personal satire rebukes the individual,

(1) "Verse Satire in England before the Renaissance" by Samuel Marion Tucker - p. 31.

political satire censures the administration of a nation. Obviously, satire directed against political corruption and oppression thrives during periods of change and revolution. This phase of satire is characteristically English. Political satire, however, is essentially ephemeral in nature and has little intrinsic value as its examples are derived from transient conditions. "Its localisms become in time obscure and lose their pristine flavor." (1)

By the judicious use and application of political satire the spirit of vigilance so pertinent to the maintenance of all constitutional governments can be awakened and stimulated. The fear of ridicule aids materially in diminishing the frequency of those occasional blunders to which the administration of every government is amenable. Repeated examples of this application of ridicule to the affairs of state may be observed in the history of an enfranchised nation. Many of these illustrations of political satire not only are useful to their own day and age, but might be instructive to posterity. Political satire serves a double purpose, for it secures the government from rebellion by repelling attacks of violence, and protects the people from tyranny by exposing the artifices of cabal. Like personal satire it is apt to degenerate into invective. "However ephemeral it is in its own day it is by far the most effective variety of its genre." (2) Political satire is the judge of governmental errors.

(1) "Verse Satire in England before the Renaissance" by Samuel Marion Tucker - p. 32.
(2) Ibid. - p. 32.

Social and moral satire, while the most characteristic of all the varieties, is perhaps the least effective. Only a highly organized and complex society produces this type of satire. In times of peace a highly sophisticated society has both the desire and the opportunity to study itself. Consequently, social satire is both the result and the mirror of existing conditions. Ben Jonson in his 'Cynthia's Revels' gives us a concrete picture of the affectations that had developed in Court life in London at the end of the sixteenth century.

Moral satire is so closely related to social satire that it is customary to consider them both under one head. Moral satire, however, does confine itself to the more ethical aspects of social conduct. For example, the falsehood of an opinion may not be evident on the surface, although the fallacy of such an opinion could easily be proved by argument. The major importance of moral satire is to render such opinions contemptible and to expose the deception. "There is a darkness that sometimes overspreads the human mind, which is more easily dissipated by the bright flashes of wit, than by the clear though steady light of reason." (1) Moral satire is the alert guardian of morality.

Yet satire has been directed more frequently against the common follies which render domestic life disagreeable and which distrub the happiness of society. It has ever been

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(1) "On the Use and Abuse of Satire" by G. Abbott, Lord Tenterden, in "The Oxford English Prize Essays" Vol. I, p. 1913.

a favorite object of comedy to chastise the absurd vanities and caprices of man and society. Follies of this kind are protected by their trivial nature from the more serious philosophical inquiry, and would remain unheeded to lead men into excesses if satire did not expose their futility and make them a common laughing-stock. Social satire is the protector of society and the censor of social conduct.

Literary satire was the last phase of the satirical spirit to develop, and is, perhaps, the most sophisticated of the genre. This species of satire appeals to the more subtle mind. It satirizes literary subjects and often expresses itself in burlesque. When a literary type becomes too artificial to be plausible and is carried to excess, the satirist is given a splendid opportunity to use his powers of ridicule and trenchant wit. For instance, in the novel Cervantes satirizes the medieval romance in his 'Don Quixote'; in the drama Fielding in his 'Tom Thumb' satirizes the heroic play by literally standing the literary type on its head.

This phase of the satirical spirit has often proved an effective weapon in literary quarrels. Byron in his 'English Bards and Scotch Reviewiers' attacks his critics with biting sarcasm, while Jonson in the 'Poetaster' assails his enemies and defends his position in the literary world. The same method of exposing the absurdity of error by ridicule applies to critical truth as well as to the fundamental truths of politics and morality, and helps to establish and maintain the basis

of literary standards. The satirist is an intellectual detective and employes his wit to detect and expose errors and discourage absurdities and affectation in literature, whether it be in form or in content.

As far as popular instruction in concerned, satirical criticism will always precede philosophical inquiry. "The turgid, the gross, and the unnatural, must be despised, before the sublime, the witty, or the beautiful, can be truly relished." (1) While satire appears to be limited to the lower objects of criticism, yet it actually contributes to the advancement of the highest. Literary satire is the guide to taste in literature.

(1) "On the Use and Abuse of Satire" by C. Abbot, Lord Tenterden, in "The Oxford English Prize Essays" Vol. I, p. 200.

CHAPTER II

JONSON'S THEORY OF COMEDY

"Fools are my theme, let satire be my song"
Byron - 'English Bards and Scotch Reviewers'.

THE PURPOSE OF COMEDY

While we talk of Jonson as a dramatist and a poet, we must not forget that, above all, he was a classicist. He showed unusual interest in and knowledge of the classics as a youth, and even astounded his teachers with his erudition. Jonson's propensity for the classics did not wane as he matured; in fact, classicism had a great deal to do with his conception oc comedy and influenced his whole life as a dramatist. He prided himself on his learning and was contemptuous of his contemporaries who fell into error because of their lack of scholarship, and ignorance of the classics.

With this in mind it is not surprising to find that Jonson despised the romantic extravagances of his own day. This reaction was the natural result of the inherent difference between romanticism and classicism. Romanticism stressed freedom of form, the unlimited use of the imagination, and appealed mainly to the emotions; classicism emphasized form, the use of reason, and appealed mainly to the intellect. Shakespeare represented the romantic point of view, while Jonson stood for classical traditions. Jonson also upheld

Realism as opposed to Romanticism. In all fairness to Jonson

we cannot say that one point of view is better or worse than the other; they are simply different.

The conflict between Romanticism and Realism was already in the air; there was a noticeable leaning toward Realism that expressed itself in the works of Dekker and others. While Jonson was not the first to express this change, he was the first to define it. In the Prologue to 'Every Man in His Humour' he derides the stage practice of the day-

"To make a child now swaddled, to proceed
Man, and then shoot up, in one beard and weed,
Past threescore years; or, with three rusty swords,
And help of some few foot and half-foot words,
Fight over York and Lancaster's long jars,
And in the tyring-house bring wounds to scars." (1)

Here Jonson deplores the disregard for the unities of time and place, the ludicrous attempts to represent battles on the stage, and the bombast of the authors. Jonson was frequently shocked by the anachronisms that appeared in the plays of Shakespeare.

With his accustomed self-confidence he asserts that

"He rather prays you will be pleas'd to see
One such to-day, as other plays should be;
Where neither chorus wafts you o'er the seas,
Nor creaking throne comes down the boys to please;
Nor nimble squib is seen to make afeard
The gentlewoman; nor roll'd bullet heard
To say, it thunders; nor tempestuous drum
Rumbles, to tell you when the storm doth come." (2)

In comedy Jonson deplores the lack of reality and its deterioration into farce. Jonson claimed that the"audience and reader must not be invited to excuse the impossible

(1) "Every Man In His Humour" (Everyman edition of Jonson's plays. Vol. IO pp. 559-560.
(2) Ibid. p. 560.

or be asked to collaborate with the dramatist in making good what his own art should have offered." (1) While this point of view may limit the author in his materials, it is not an irrational one.

Aristotle in his 'Poetics' outlines his dramatic theory and maintains that the proper function of tragedy is the production of a certain kind of "katharsis" -

> "Tragedy, then, is an imitation of an action that is serious, complete, and of a certain magnitude;...through pity and fear effecting the proper purgation of these emotions." (2)

Thus Aristotle states that the purpose of tragedy is the purging of pity and fear. By analogy Jonson took the same attitude toward comedy, and asserted that the purpose of comedy was to purge mankind of foibles and weaknesses. Dramatic critics in the past had emphasized the differences between tragedy and comedy; Jonson stressed the similarity between the two major divisions of drama. He based this parallelism on the fact that the process in both tragedy and comedy is, according to his theory, cathartic and corrective.

Moreover, if the purpose of comedy is purgative, the general treatment must be realistic. Real weaknesses in the character of man must be portrayed on the stage if the dramatist expects to correct these faults. Jonson deplored the use of gross exaggeration, and maintained that the dramatist should not represent the improbable or the

(1) "Ben Jonson" by G. Gregory Smith - p. 72.
(2) "Aristotle's Theory of Poetry and Fine Art" by S. H. Butcher - p. 23.

impossible-

"But deeds, and language, such as men do use,
And persons, such as comedy would choose,
When she would shew an image of the times,
And sport with human follies, not with crimes." (1)

This is his plea for real life in comedy. In this declaration he serves notice to his audience that realism is to be his general method.

Jonson recognized that if he intended to purge man of his follies his particular method must be satire. "The audience must laugh to some end, and the play must deal with some folly and cure it by its ridiculous representation." (2) In his own words-

"I mean such errors as you'll all confess,
By laughing at them, they deserve no less:
Which when you heartily do, there's hope left then,
You, that have so grac'd monsters, may like men." (3)

Jonson realized that laughter was a means and not an end in comedy. If the audience could be made to laugh at their own follies there was some hope that public ridicule would make them avoid further acts of weakness and restore them to common sense.

Jonson had no English theories to guide him. But as he was a scholar and a critic as well as a playwright, he worked out his own literary theory, based on the teaching of Sidney, and reinforced by his own classical knowledge and training. Although Jonson obtained many of his ideas from classical sources, he was not an imitator, but a creator.

(1) "Every Man In His Humour" (Everyman edition of Jonson's plays. Vol. I) p. 560.
(2) "Ben Jonson" by F. Gregory Smith - p. 80.
(3) "Every Man In His Humour" (Everyman edition of Jonson's plays. Vol. I) p. 560.

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(1) "Every Man In His Humour" (Everyman edition of Jonson's plays. Vol. I) p. 560.
(2) "Ben Jonson" by T. Gregory Smith - p. 80.
(3) "Every Man In His Humour" (Everyman edition of Jonson's plays. Vol. I) p. 560.

He developed a theory and practice in comedy that had more influence on subsequent English drama than the works of any of his contemporaries, not even excepting Shakespeare.

"He had yielded himself to the tyranny of an idea and professed to be happy, chiefly because the bondage was of his own making." (1)

THE COMEDY OF HUMOURS

To prove his theory Jonson applied his principles of dramatic technique and theory to the stage of his day. His double purpose of realism and satire led him to develop the device of the Humours.

"Humour" was a stock expression of his age and had come to be used very carelessly. The conception came originally from medieval medicine. The physiology of the Middle Ages taught that there were four humours that make up a man's body: blood, phlegm, bile, and black bile. The Latin word umor, incidentally, means moisture. Complexion, as used by Chaucer, was a mixture of these fluids or humours in the body. Everyone's temperament, according to medieval physiology, was the result of the proper or improper distribution of these fluids. Thus, a man with a dominant humour of blood was said to be of a sanguine disposition; a predominance of phlegm would result in a phlegmatic nature; an over-supply of bile would give one a choleric constitution; and the man whose humour was predominantly black bile was said to have a melancholy

(1) "Ben Jonson" by G. Gregory Smith - p. 70.

temperament. Any disturbance of this balance of humours was considered dangerous and theoretically resulted in some disorder or disease.

During the Renaissance playwrights had become careless in their application of the term humour and frequently treated it as a whim or an eccentricity. Shakespeare in 'The Merry Wives of Windsor' satirizes the word humour by having Nym use it over and over again.

In the Induction to 'Every Man Out of His Humour' Jonson asserts his purpose is-

> "To give these ignorant well-spoken days
> Some taste of their abuse of this word humour." (1)

He feels that this is necessary because there are those who are compelled-

> "Daily to see how the poor innocent word
> Is rack'd and tortured." (2)

Jonson gives us an explanation of the term humour in so explicit a manner that we have no excuse for not comprehending what he meant.

> "Why, humour, as 'tis ens, we thus define it,
> To be a quality of air, or water,
> And in itself holds these two properties,
> Moisture and fluxure...
> That whatso'er hath fluxure and humidity,
> As wanting power to contain itself,
> Is humour. So in every human body,
> The choler, melancholy, phlegm, and blood,
> By reason that they flow continually
> In some one part, and are not continent,
> Receive the name of humours." (3)

This is a description of the four medieval humours of the body. But Jonson goes one step further and applies this to

(1) "Every Man Out of His Humour" (Everyman edition of Jonson's plays. Vol. I) p. 62.
(2) Ibid. I, p. 62.
(3) Ibid. I, p. 62.

affected humours.

"Now thus far
It may, by metaphor, apply itself
Unto the general disposition:
As when some one peculiar quality
Doth so possess a man, that it doth draw
All his affects, his spirits, and his powers,
In their confluctions, all to run one way,
This may be truly said to be a humour." (1)

After Jonson has defined his own position, he ridicules the popular misconception of the term-

"But that a rook, by wearing a pyed feather,
The cable hat-band, or the three-piled ruff,
A yard of shoe-tye, or the Switzer's knot
On his French garters, should affect a humour!
O, it is more than most ridiculous." (2)

It was Jonson's object to exhibit the foolish and weak elements in human character which had been allowed to exceed their limits and to portray these in a number of characters differently "humoured". It will be noted, moreover, that this excess of a humour that characterizes an individual is the component that qualifies the person for comedy. Without this excess it would be difficult to make the humour appear ridiculous, and the satire would be without point. Jonson, however, had pledged himself to <u>real life</u>, and it was his problem to strike a balance between a reasonable use of excess and his demand for reality.

In 'Every Man In His Humour' Jonson was experimenting with his theory. The attempt was hailed enthusiastically by the public, who had grown tired of the comedy that portrayed the conventional affected fop. The success that this play

(1) "Every Man Out of His Humour" (Everyman edition of Jonson's plays. Vol. I) p. 62.
(2) Ibid, I, p. 63.

enjoyed seems phenomenal to the modern student of drama who does not always recognize Elizabethan slang and who almost invariably misses the "local hits" unless they are contained in the footnotes. Jonson followed up this success by writing a dramatic counterpart 'Every Man Out of His Humour'. This was his first full-fledged "comical satire" and combined his theory of comedy with his development of the humours.

In many of his plays Jonson made use of the Theophrastian character sketch. In publishing 'Every Man Out of His Humour' he prefixed "the several Characters of the Persons" to the play to prevent any misunderstanding. These pithy paragraphs are humours in epitome. The character of Fastidious Brisk is summarized as-

> "A neat, spruce, affecting courtier, one that wears clothes well, and in fashion; practiseth by his glass how to salute; speaks good remnants, notwithstanding the base viol and tobacco; swears tersely, and with variety; cares not what lady's favour he belies, or great man's familiarity: a good property to perfume the boot of a coach. He will borrow another man's horse to praise, and backs him as his own. Or, for a need, on foot can post himself into credit with his merchant, only with the gingle of his spur, and the jerk of his wand." (1)

The Second Act of 'Cynthia's Revels' contains no less than six of these character sketches. Jonson often employed this method at the beginning of a play by having a couple of the minor characters discuss and describe the humours of the rest of the dramatis personae before they actually appear on the stage. The audience enjoyed being let

(1) "Every Man Out of His Humour" (Everyman edition of Jonson's plays. Vol. I) p. 60

into the secret, as it were, and were alert to discover the various humours as they appeared in the play.

Practically all the humours characters in Jonsonian comedy have tag names. These names identify the character immediately and disclose the humour to be exhibited. Such names as Brainworm, Wellbred, Fastidious Brisk, Morose, Sir Amorous La-Foole, Lovewit, Winwife, and Zeal-of-the-land Busy give us a taste of the kind of characters we will meet in Jonson's comedies.

Jonson gave drama a new literary type when he applied his formula of humour to comedy. The Comedy of Humours is his outstanding contribution to dramatic theory and practice.

CHAPTER III

JONSON'S USE OF SATIRE IN COMEDY

"Satire's the sauce, high season'd, sharp, and rough"
Farquhar - 'The Inconstant'

PERSONAL SATIRE

Nearly all of Jonson's personal satire arises from the so-called War of the Poets, or War of the Theatres. A brief review of this stage quarrel will aid us in understanding and appreciating more fully those plays of Jonson that deal with this phase of the satirical spirit.

This War of the Poets was waged between the years 1598 and 1603. As with any other war there were underlying causes and immediate causes. During this period in question London boasted of five public theatres and two private theatres. The two private theatres at this time were occupied by companies of children: the Children of Her Majesty's Chapel, acting at Blackfriars, and the Children of St. Paul's, acting at their own school. There was professional rivalry and jealousy between the theatres, between the adult and the children's companies, and between the poets who wrote for the stage. These we might term the underlying causes.

At the close of the sixteenth century the time was ripe for personal satire upon the stage. When a man like Jonson came into prominence, who "Maintained that he had liberty and licence to commend himself and abuse his comrades,"(1)

(1) "Ben Jonson" by John A. Symonds - p. 36.

an outburst of some sort was inevitable.

The spark that ignited the explosive Jonson was Marston's revision of 'Histriomastix' in 1599. This play is usually regarded as the immediate cause of the stage quarrel and of the dramatic war that Jonson waged against his literary contemporaries, chiefly Marston and Dekker. In this play of 'Histriomastix' Marston represented Jonson on the stage in the character of Chrysogonus, who makes a great show of his wisdom. Marston avowed it was his intention to pay Jonson a compliment. This compliment, however, was interpreted by Jonson as an insult. At this particular time Jonson was collaborating with both Marston and Dekker, and as the representation in 'Histriomastix' was obviously well-intended, the quarrel did not become violent until after the presentation of Jonson's 'Every Man Out of His Humour'.

Authorities disagree over whether Jonson actually brings Marston and Dekker upon the stage in 'Every Man Out of His Humour', but it is certain that Jonson ridiculed many of Marston's favorite words and expressions in this play. This piqued Marston and he retaliated with 'Jack Drum' and ridiculed Jonson in the character of Brabant Senior. Jonson replied with 'Cynthia's Revels' and ridiculed both Marston and Dekker as Hedon and Anaides. Marston staged a quick come-back with 'What You Will' and attacked Jonson in the character of Lampatho Doria. The quarrel grew increasingly

bitter and now Jonson threw discretion to the winds. To forestall another play of the enemy, which he knew was in the making, he dashed off the 'Poetaster'. This play was the climax of the quarrel as far as Jonson was concerned. In the 'Poetaster' he lashed both Marston and Dekker as Crispinus and Demetrius. Dekker now entered the quarrel openly and retaliated with his play 'Satiromastix', but it proved to be an anticlimax. Jonson's parting shot was the Apologetical Dialogue to the 'Poetaster' in which he reiterated all his abuse, but declined to continue the quarrel. No one knows just when this stage quarrel ended, but by 1603 we find Marston highly complimenting Jonson in the Epilogue to the 'Malcontent'. The justice of the quarrel still remains a debatable point in literature. "Jonson was insolent and overbearing; Marston was quick-tempered and conceited; Dekker was an intimate friend of Marston. Given such conditions, a quarrel must occur, in which all parties are partly in the wrong." (1)

Josiah H. Penniman in his 'The War of the Theatres' has attempted to identify other characters in Jonson's plays with the poets Munday, Lodge, Daniel, and Shakespeare. Roscoe A. Small and other literary critics, however, do not feel justified in following Penniman's assumptions. All we can reasonably say is that probably other poets of the period were spattered by the "mud-slinging" contest in which Jonson, Marston, and Dekker were the chief participants.

(1) "The Stage-Quarrel between Ben Jonson and the So-called Poetasters" by Roscoe Addison Small - p. 129.

SATIRE ON MARSTON

We have already noted that 'Every Man Out of His Humour' contains many "fustian" passages which ridicule Marston's vocabulary. The following speech delivered by Clove is a good example-

> "Now, sir, whereas the ingenuity of the time and the soul's synderisis are but embrions in nature, added to the panch of Esquiline, and the inter-vallum of the zodiac, besides the ecliptic line being optic, and not mental, but by the contemplative and theoric part thereof, doth demonstrate to us the vegetable circumference, and the ventosity of the tropics, and whereas our intellectual, or mincing capreal (according to the meta-physicks) as you may read in Plato's Histriomastix--You conceive me, sir? (1)

While the whole passage is in imitation of Marston, the words and phrases underlined indicate expressions taken directly from Marston's 'Histriomastix' and the 'Scourge of Villanie'.

In the Induction to 'Cynthia's Revels' Jonson claims that the theatre-goers are tired of seeing immodest and obscene plays. He continues-

> "Besides, they could wish your poets would leave to be promoters of other men's jests, and to way-lay all the stale apothegms, or, old books they can hear of, in print, or otherwise, to farce their scenes withal. That they would not so penuriously glean wit from every laundress or hackney-man, or derive their best grace, with servile imitation, from common stages, or observation of the company they converse with; as if their invention lived wholly upon another man's trencher." (2)

(1) "Every Man Out of His Humour" (Everyman edition of Jonson's plays. Vol. I) p. 99

(2) "Cynthia's Revels" (Everyman edition of Jonson's plays. Vol. I) p. 153.

As Jonson later openly accused both Marston and Dekker of plagiarism, this is undoubtedly an indirect rap at the two poets in question. But the following quotation was probably intended mainly for Marston-

> "She is like one of your ignorant poetasters of the time, who, when they have got acquainted with a strange word, never rest till they have wrung it in, though it loosen the whole fabric of their sense." (1)

In speaking of Hedon, who has been identified as Marston, Cupid asks, "And not a poet?" Mercury answers-

> "Fie, no: himself is a rhymer, and that's thought better than a poet." (2)

It is not likely, however, that Jonson held Marston and Dekker responsible for the affectations of the Court as represented in the two courtiers Hedon and Anaides. That Marston did not fail to see himself satirized in 'Cynthia's Revels' is evinced in the fact that he retaliated almost immediately with 'What You Will'.

In the 'Poetaster' Jonson goes after his enemies "with hammer and tongs." Marston was well-born. Perhaps Jonson was envious of the fact that Marston was a gentleman; at any rate he joshes Marston in the following dialogue-

> Chloe. "Are you a gentleman born?
> Cris. That I am, lady; you shall see mine arms, if it please you.
> Chloe. No, your legs do sufficiently shew you are a gentleman born, sir; for a man borne upon little legs, is always a gentleman born." (3)

Jonson also satirizes Marston's personal appearance

(1) "Cynthia's Revels" (Everyman edition of Jonson's plays. Vol. I) p. 172.
(2) Ibid. I, p. 166.
(3) "The Poetaster" (Everyman edition of Jonson's plays. Vol. I) p.245.

by criticizing his unattractive face, beard and hair (as Jonson gave Crispinus the first name of Rufus it is generally understood that Marston had red hair).

Chloe. "And shall your looks change, and your hair change, and all, like these?
Cris. Why, a man may be a poet, and yet not change his hair, lady.
Chloe. Well, we shall see your cunning: yet if you can change your hair, I pray do." (1)

Later when Crispinus meets Horace he introduces himself in the following dialogue-

Cris. "...But I could wish thou didst know us, Horace; we are a scholar, I assure thee.
Horace. A scholar, sir! I shall be covetous of your fair knowledge.
Cris. Grammercy, good Horace! Nay, we are new turn'd poet too, which is more; and a satirist too, which is more than that: I write just in thy vein, I. I am for your odes, or your sermons, or any thing indeed; we are a gentleman besides; our name is Rufus Laberius Crispinus; we are a pretty Stoic too.
Horace To the proportion of your beard, I think it, sir." (2)

Here Jonson mocks Marston's pretence to scholarship.

That Marston like the majority of the poets of the time, was frequently in debt is evident from the numerous references in the 'Poetaster' to the fact. But to our day and age it seems a little crude that Jonson should have referred to Marston's clothing as fashionable but shabby-

"Your satin sleeve begins to fret at the rug that is underneath it, I do observe: and your ample velvet bases are not without evident stains of hot disposition naturally." (3)

(1) "The Poetaster" (Everyman edition of Jonson's plays. Vol. I) p. 249.
(2) Ibid. I, p. 252.
(3) Ibid. I, p. 253.

Jonson ridicules the loud and tragic style in which Marston writes his plays-

> "He is a gentleman, parcel poet...he pens high, lofty, in a new stalking strain, bigger than half the rhymers in the town again; he was born to fill thy mouth, Minotaurus, he was, he will teach thee to tear and rand." (1)

Marston is accused of plagiarizing from Horace (Jonson) -

> "Why, the ditty's all borrowed; 'tis Horace's: hang him, plagiary!" (2)

Later in the play Jonson makes the same charge-

> "...One by the name of Rufus Laberius Crispinus, alias Cri-spinas, poetaster and plagiary." (3)

Jonson is contemptuous of Marston because he does not know the classics; he suggests that Marston-

> "Taste a piece of Terence, suck his phrase Instead of liquorice; and, at any hand, Shun Plautus and old Ennius: they are meats Too harsh for a weak stomach. Use to read (But not without a tutor) the best Greeks." (4)

At the end of the play Horace (Jonson) administers a pill to Crispinus (Marston) to purge him of his bombastic vocabulary; Crispinus vomits up a whole series of Marstonian words-

> Cris. "O! I shall cast up my---spurious--- snotteries---
> Hor. Good. Again.
> Cris. Chilblain'd---O---O---clumsie---
> Hor. That clumsie stuck terribly.
> Mec. What's all that, Horace?
> Hor. Spurious, snotteries, chilblain'd, clumsie.

(1) "The Poetaster" (Everyman edition of Jonson's plays. Vol. I) p. 261.
(2) Ibid. I, p. 269.
(3) Ibid. I, p. 291.
(4) Ibid. I, p. 297.

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> Hor. That <u>glumate</u> stuck terribly.
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(1) "The Poetaster" (Everyman edition of Jonson's plays. Vol. I) p. 261.
(2) Ibid. I, p. 269.
(3) Ibid. I, p. 291.
(4) Ibid. I, p. 297.

Tib. "O Jupiter!
Gal. Who would have thought there should have been such a deal of filth in a poet?
Cris. O---balmy froth---
Caes. What's that?
Cris. ---Puffie---inflate---turgidous---ventosity.
Hor. Barmy, froth, puffie, inflate, turgidous, and ventosity are come up.
Tib. O terrible windy words.
Gal. A sign of a windy brain." (1)

Here Jonson combines personal and literary satire in the same breath.

SATIRE ON DEKKER

We have already noted the passage in the Induction to 'Cynthia's Revels' that is undoubtedly a rap at both Marston and Dekker.

In the 'Poetaster' Jonson comes out with a direct attack on Dekker in the character of Demetrius Fannius. Jonson also ridicules his poverty and poor clothing and claims that he is not an original dramatist but a mere "dresser of plays", who makes over the works of others-

"O, sir, his doublet's a little decayed; he is otherwise a very simple honest fellow, sir, one Demetrius, a dresser of plays about the town here; we have hired him to abuse Horace, and bring him in, in a play." (2)

This last part of this quotation is usually interpreted by Critics to refer to 'Satiromastix'. Tucca seems to think it will be difficult to put Horace (Jonson) into a play, but Histrio has more confidence in the powers of Demetrius (Dekker) -

(1) "The Poetaster" (Everyman edition of Jonson's plays. Vol. I) p. 296.
(2) Ibid. I, p. 264.

Tib. "O Jupiter!
Gal. Who would have thought there should have
been such a deal of filth in a poet?
Orla. O---bajter [sic] Troth---
Dese. That's that!
Orla. ---Futile---trifle---turgidous---ventosity.
Hor. Brave, Troth, pretty, trifle, turgidous,
and ventosity are some up.
Tib. O terrible windy words.
Gal. A dish of a windy brain." (1)

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(1) "The Poetaster" (Everyman edition of Jonson's plays. Vol. I) p. 296.
(2) Ibid. I, p. 294.

Tuc. "But you know nothing by him, do you, to make a play of?
Hist. Faith, not much, captain; but our author will devise that that shall serve in some sort.
True. ...Can thy author do it impudently enough?
Hist. O, I warrant you, captain, and spitefully enough too; he has one of the most overflowing rank wits in Rome; he will slander any man that breathes, if he disgust him." (1)

At the end of the play Jonson repeats his accusation of plagiarism. After Crispinus has been arraigned in court Tibullus turns to Demetrius-

"The other by the name of Demetrius Fannius, play-dresser and plagiary. That you...have most ignorantly, foolishly, and...maliciously, gone about to deprave, and calumniate the person and writings of Quintus Horatius Flaccus...taxing him falsely, of self-love, arrogancy, impudence, railing, filching by translation, etc." (2)

This last indictment was applied equally to Marston and Dekker.

This stage quarrel gave us the greater part of the 'Poetaster' and 'Satiromastix' and considerable portions of at least six other plays. "It deeply affected Jonson and Marston, and fairly shocked the latter into greatness by making him discard the crudities and extravagances of his early style." (3)

(1) "The Poetaster" (Everyman edition of Jonson's plays. Vol. I) p. 264.
(2) Ibid. I, p. 291.
(3) "The Stage-Quarrel" by Roscoe Addison Small - p. 200.

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True. ...Can this author do it tragedantly enough?
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POLITICAL SATIRE

Political feeling in England during the first half of the seventeenth century ran high; politics was too dangerous a subject to satirize openly. Moreover, as the dramatists of this period depended on royal favor, it did not behoove them to criticize the government as represented by Queen Elizabeth or her successors. The Puritans, however, were steadily growing in importance and gaining in political power; many of the minor offices of the city magistrates were held by Puritans. These Puritan "city fathers" did everything in their power to limit the activities of the stage and eventually succeeded in closing the theatres in 1642. The dramatists retaliated by satirizing and attacking the Puritans in their plays. Jonson was no exception to this rule.

Jonson took particular delight in slurring the "city fathers". In the final scene of 'Everyman In His Humour' he defends the poets of the age saying-

> "They are not born every year, as an alderman. There goes more to the making of a good poet, than a sheriff...though I live in the city here, amongst you, I will do more reverence to him, when I meet him, than I will to the mayor out of his year." (1)

SATIRE ON THE PURITANS

At times Jonson almost seems to go out of his way to attack the Puritans. In 'Cynthia's Revels' we

(1) "Every Man In His Humour" (Everyman edition of Jonson's plays. Vol. I) p. 623.

find this contemptuous reference to the Puritans-

Pha. "What a set face the gentlewoman has,
as she were going to a sacrifice!
Phi. O, she is the extraction of a dozen
of Puritans, for a look." (1)

Jonson takes several jibes at the Puritans in 'Epicoene'-

"...do you ever think to find a chaste wife in these times? now? When there are so many masques, plays, Puritan preachings, mad folks, and other strange sights to be seen daily, private and public?" (2)

It seems hardly fair to class the Puritan service with secular gatherings of the above sort, but it shows Jonson's intolerance of this sect.

In the Coventicle Act of Elizabeth, 1593, the Puritans had been prohibited from worshiping as an independent body. Later, in 1604, the nonconformists were again silenced. In 'Epicoene' Jonson refers contemptuously to these silenced ministers-

"If precise, you must feast all the silenced brethren, once in three days...and hear long-winded exercises, singings and catechisings ...to please the zealous matron your wife, who for the holy cause, will cozen you over and above." (3)

Zealous brother was a favorite expression of the Puritans, and Jonson never failed to turn this term against them whenever occasion offered-

Cut. "...And I am now going for a silent minister to marry them, and away.

(1) "Cynthia's Revels" (Everyman edition of Jonson's plays. Vol. I) p. 198.
(2) "Epicoene" (Everyman edition of Jonson's plays. Vol I p. 500.
(3) Ibid. I, p. 501.

True. "'Slight! get one of the silenced
ministers; a zealous brother would
torment him purely." (1)

The cant terms of the Puritans often show the influence of Scriptural phraseology; thus, many words of otherwise good repute came to be looked upon with ridicule. Saints as it is used in the following passage is a good example-

"Please you, a servant of the exiled brethren,
That deal with widows' and with orphans' goods;
And make a just account unto the saints." (2)

"As guardians of the property of the fatherless and the widows they [i.e., the Puritans] were represented as notoriously faithless of their trusts." (3)

Jonson ridiculed the Puritans for their sour looks, their cant terms, etc., but the most serious charge he made against them was that of hypocrisy. Twice in "The Alchemist" Subtle launches into a tirade against the hypocritical practices of the Puritans-

"Nor shall you need to libel 'gainst the prelates,
And shorten so your ears against the hearing
Of the next wire-drawn grace. Nor of necessity

---

(1) "Epicoene" (Everyman edition of Jonson's plays. Vol. I) p. 511.
(2) "The Alchemist" (Everyman edition of Jonson's plays. Vol. II) p. 34.
(3) "The Controversy between the Puritans and the Stage" by Elbert N. S. Thompson - p. 235.

Trans. "'Alight! get one of the saints
miniatures; a zealous brother would
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"Nor shall you need to libel 'gainst the prelates,
And spend so your zeal against the herring
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(1) "Epicoene" (Everyman edition of Jonson's plays. Vol. I) p. 311.
(2) "The Alchemist" (Everyman edition of Jonson's plays. Vol. II) p. 34.
(3) "The Controversy between the Puritans and the Stage" by Elbert N. S. Thompson - p. 275.

"Rail against plays, to please the alderman
Whose daily custard you devour: nor lie
With zealous rage till you are hoarse. Not one
Of these so singular arts. Nor call your selves
By names of Tribulation, Persecution,
Restraint, Long-patience, and such-like, affected
By the whole family or wood of you,
Only for glory, and to catch the ear
Of the disciple." (1)

Jonson lists the common charges against the Puritans in the following speech of Subtle-

"No, nor your holy vizard, to win widows
To give you legacies; or make zealous wives
To rob their husbands for the common cause:
Nor take the start of bonds but one day,
And say, they were forfeited by providence.
Nor shall you need o'er night to eat huge meals,
To celebrate your next day's fast the better;
The whilst the brethren and the sisters humbled,
Abate the stiffness of the flesh. Nor cast
Before your hungry hearers scrupulous bones;
As whether a Christian may hawk or hunt,
Or whether matrons of the holy assembly
May lay their hair out, or wear doublets,
Or have that idol starch about their linen." (2)

We have seen that zeal and zealous were favorite and mighty words in the Puritan vocabulary. Jonson makes frequent reference to these words, and in 'Bartholomew Fair' he gives us a personification of zeal in the person of Zeal-of-the-land Busy. Practically all of Jonson's Puritan characters can be recognized by their tag names: Tribulation Wholesome, Dame Purecraft, Win-the-Fight Littlewit, etc. These popularized travesties were a common source of amusement to a large class of people.

Incidental allusions to the Puritans abound in

(1) "The Alchemist" (Everyman edition of Jonson's plays. Vol. II) p. 41.
(2) Ibid. II, p. 41.

nearly all of Jonson's plays, but in 'The Alchemist' and 'Bartholomew Fair' the treatment of Puritanism constitutes his chief interest. Representatives of this class are included in the dramatis personae and are given a leading part in the action.

In 'The Alchemist' Ananias (the deacon) and Tribulation Wholesome (the pastor) bring ridicule upon the "brethren". In their desire for wealth their conscience and principles become most elastic, and they easily fall prey to an alchemical fraud. "The Puritans, it was said, were more influenced by their desire for gold and worldly power than they would have men believe." (1) At the beginning of this play Tribulation and Ananias had gone to Subtle, the Alchemist, seeking aid for their church. Subtle readily sizes them up and decides to victimize the two. He suggests counterfeiting as the easiest and quickest method of raising the needed money. Tribulation and Ananias hesitate at first, but soon draw a fine distinction between counterfeiting and the "casting" of money. Thus Jonson makes hypocrisy the dominating ingredient of their nature; the culmination of Subtle's artifice involves them in ridicule and disgrace.

Zeal-of-the-land Busy in 'Bartholomew Fair' is Jonson's portrayal of the hypocritical Puritan "par excellence". Busy claims that Bartholomew Fair is a most idolatrous affair and that the very thoughts of it fill him

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with horror. However, when some of his flock decide to visit the Fair, his objections are easily overruled and he is persuaded to accompany them. At the Fair Busy soon gets himself into trouble; his arrogant zeal even leads him on to acts of violence. In an iconoclastic temper he ruthlessly destroys Joan's gingerbread figures, calling them a "nest of images" and a "basket of popery". These ignorant and indiscriminate attacks prove ineffectual and result in nothing but laughter and ridicule.

Busy's unquenchable zeal leads him into gross absurdities. An excellent example of comic satire is Busy's senseless attack on the stage and his humorous controversy with the puppet in a side-show.

Winw. "What a desperate, profane wretch is this! is there any ignorance or impudence like his, to call his zeal to fill him against a puppet?
Quar. I know no fitter match than a puppet to commit with an hypocrite! (1)

Here Jonson effectively ridicules the unreasonable attitude of the Puritans against the stage. He takes the attitude that the Puritans cannot justly criticize the stage because they did not frequent the theatres.

When Quarlous hears the name of Zeal-of-the-land Busy he bursts into a tirade against the Puritan-

"A notable hypocritical vermin it is...One that stands upon his face, more than his faith, at all times: ever in seditious motion, and reproving for vainglory; of a most lunatic conscience and spleen, and

(1) "Bartholomew Fair" (Everyman edition of Jonson's plays. Vol. II) p. 259.

> "affects the violence of singularity in all he does...By his profession he will ever be in the state of innocence though, and childhood; derides all antiquity, defies any other learning than inspiration; and what discretion soever years should afford him, it is all prevented in his original ignorance." (1)

Undoubtedly the Puritan hostility to the theatre and the drama was the chief cause of the dramatists' objection to the Puritans. "But it was not the issue on which the dramatists asked a decision. Instead they represented the new sect as abnormal persons, threatening the whole nation with a mode of life at once impractical and absurd. And by posing as opponents of innovation, the dramatists succeeded in securing for themselves the position of defending an established ideal." (2)

SATIRE ON THE SCOTCH

After the death of Queen Elizabeth in 1603, King James VI of Scotland came to the English throne as King James I. Many of his Scottish friends and admirers followed him to London. It seems only natural that he should have created some of his loyal Scottish subjects new Knights. This action, however, caused considerable comment and adverse criticism among the English nobility and the Court group.

The dramatists were not long in making the most

(1) "Bartholomew Fair" (Everyman edition of Jonson's plays. Vol. II) p. 188.
(2) "A Study of Patriotism in the Elizabethan Drama" by Richard Vliet Lindabury - p. 144.

of the situation. Chapman, Jonson, and Marston collaborated in writing 'Eastward Hoe'. "In the course of the play satirical girds were made at the Scottish adventurers who...flocked to London in search of political advancement, and also at the new knights freely created by a sovereign ready, it was believed, to sell the honor in order to line the royal purse." (1)

As Joseph Quincy Adams points out in 'Eastward Hoe and Its Satire against the Scots', two of the most objectionable passages against the Scotch were deleted before the play was finally accepted by the publisher and printed in its present form. Several gibes at the Scotch, however, still remain in the printed play. In Act I we have the following stage direction-

> "Enter Girtred, Mildred, Bettrice, and Poldauy a Taylor, Poldauy with a faire gowne, Scotch Varthingall, and French fall in his arms..." (2)

And later in the same scene Girtred asks-

> "Tailer, Poldavis, prethee fit it
> fit it: is this a right Scot?
> Does it clip close? and beare up round?" (3)

The farthingale was an article of feminine wearing apparel which added rigidity to the ugliest of fashions. "Right

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(1) "Eastward Hoe and Its Satire against the Scots" by Joseph Quincy Adams (In "Royster Memorial Studies" - p. 157).
(2) "Eastward Hoe" by Chapman, Jonson, and Marston (Edited by Julia Hamlet Harris) p. 10.
(3) Ibid., p. 11.

Scot" in the second quotation refers to the farthingale.

In the Second Act Quicksilver tries to discourage Sir Petronel Flash from marrying Girtrid-

> "...she could have bin made a Lady by a Scotche Knight, & never ha' married him: ...how she set you up, and how she will pull you downe." (1)

This gibe at the Scotch undoubtedly refers to the laxness of the Scotch marriage laws.

In the Third Act when Seagull is describing the English colonization of Virginia, he remarks-

> "...And then you shal live freely there, without Sergeants, or Courtiers, or Lawyers, or Intelligencers, only a few industrious Scots perhaps, who indeed are disperst over the face of the whole earth. And for my part, I would a hundred thousand of 'hem there, for wee are all one Countreymen now, yee know; and wee should finde ten times more comfort of them there, then wee doe heere." (2)

This passage reflects the strong feeling on the part of the English against the naturalization of the Scotch.

The last reference to the Scotch comes in the Fourth Act when Sir Petronel Flash refers to himself as a poor knight of England. The First Gentleman says-

> "I ken the man weel, hee's one of my thirty pound Knights." (3)

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(1) "Eastward Hoe" by Chapman, Jonson, and Marston (Edited by Julia Hamlet Harris) p. 29.
(2) Ibid., p. 46.
(3) Ibid., p. 61.

Joseph Quincy Adams suggests that "since the sum of thirty pounds was the regular herald's fee for issuing a patent of knighthood...it is hard to understand how this brief clause could occasion serious offense. And hence it has been suggested that the actor, in uttering the words, may have mimicked the Scotch brogue of King James." (1)

The satire against the Scotch in 'Eastward Hoe' (including the two objectionable passages deleted from the original play) aroused the wrath of the Court. The management of Blackfriars was suppressed and the authors were punished. Marston was conveniently "out of London" at the time, but Chapman and Jonson were arrested and thrown into prison.

SATIRE ON POLITICAL SPIES

In the year 1605 there was much talk of plots against the government in England. Spies, trials, and executions were the chief topics of conversation. It is not surprising then to find Jonson satirizing the situation in the person of Sir Politick Would-Be. Spain was accused of being mixed up in these plots; Jonson is apparently ridiculing the idea in the following dialogue between Peregrine and Sir Politick Would-Be-

> Per. "The very day
> (Let me be sure) that I put forth from
> London, there was a whale discover'd in

(1) "Eastward Hoe and Its Satire against the Scotch" by Joseph Quincy Adams (In "Royster Memorial Studies") p. 164.

"the river, as high as Woolwich, that had
waited there, few know how many months,
for the subversion of the Stode fleet.
Sir P. Is't possible? believe it,
'Twas either sent from Spain, or the
archdukes: Spinola's whale, upon my life,
my credit!. Will they not leave these
projects?" (1)

When Peregrine tells Sir Politick that Mass Stone is dead, Sir Politick suspects that Stone must have been a notorious spy. Again Jonson ridicules the idea and makes us believe that these suspicions were hallucinations of an over active imagination. Sir Politick speaks of Stone as follows:

"He has received weekly intelligence,
Upon my knowledge, out of the Low Countries,
For all parts of the world, in cabbages;
And those dispensed again to ambassadors,
In oranges, musk-melons, apricocks,
Lemons, pome-citrons, and such-like;
.....
Nay, I've observed him, at your public ordinary,
Take his advertisement from a traveller,
A conceal'd statesman, in a trencher of meat;
And instantly, before the meal was done,
Convey an answer in a tooth-pick." (2)

SOCIAL SATIRE

A brief review of social conditions in the reign of Queen Elizabeth will help us to understand more thoroughly the social satire of Jonson's comedies.

The defeat of the first Spanish Armada in 1588 and the destruction of the second Armada in 1597 gave

(1) "Volpone" (Everyman edition of Jonson's plays. Vol. I) p. 421.
(2) Ibid., Vol. I, p. 422.

England unquestionably the supremacy of the sea. This aided materially the natural growth of wealth and industry in England. With the introduction of manufacturing on a large scale England no longer sent her fleeces to be woven in Flanders. Woolen mills sprang up in the north of England, and Manchester became the chief manufacturing city.

"What Elizabeth contributed to this upgrowth of national prosperity was the peace and social order from which it sprang." (1) The foundation of the Royal Exchange and the formation of the great Merchant Companies marked the commercial progress of the time.

The exploits of Francis Drake brought new luxuries to England. The colonization of Virginia introduced tobacco to the English people. Smoking soon became a fad of the day and dramatists took every opportunity to satirize the use of tobacco.

This rapid growth of prosperity showed itself eva in the improvement among the country folk. Their rough farmhouses were replaced by brick and stone dwellings. Pewter took the place of the earlier wooden trenchers. In the cities the filthy flooring of rushes gave way to carpets. The introduction of glass on a large scale became a marked improvement in the domestic architecture of the age. All these innovations added substantially to the physical comforts of the home.

(1) "A Short History of the English People" by John Richard Green. Revised by Alice Stopford Green - p. 396.

"The lavishness of a new wealth united with a lavishness of life, a love of beauty, of color, of display, to revolutionize English dress." (1) Court life became known for its luxury and its elaborate and expensive costumes. The rapid growth of commerce and industry gave rise to a well-to-do middle class. All these factors added to the sophistication of the English people; they had more leisure and wanted to be amused. Under these conditions the theatre steadily grew in importance and became the center of amusement.

The social satire in Jonson's comedies can be divided into three fairly well defined groups: satire on certain types as such; satire on certain characteristics of individuals, such as affectation of dress, manner, and speech; and satire on certain social activities, such as smoking, Petrarchan love-making, and foreign travel.

SATIRE ON TYPES

THE GULL - In 'Every Man In His Humour' we have Master Stephen, the country gull, who tries to imitate Bobadill and thinks himself a great soldier. He is easily taken in and Brainworm palms off a worthless sword on him at a high price. The following dialogue satirizes the fact that Stephen comes from the country and that gentlemen pay altogether too much attention to their legs by affecting silk hose-

(1) "A Short History of the English People" by John Richard Green, Revised by Alice Stopford Green - p. 397.

Step. "How dost thou like my leg, Brainworm?
Brai. A very good leg, master Stephen; but the woolen stocking does not commend it so well.
Step. Foh! the stockings be good enough, now summer is coming on, for the dust: I'll have a pair of silk against winter, that I go to dwell in the town. I think my leg would shew in a silk hose--" (1)

Master Mathew is the town gull who writes verses to his mistress. Later his friends discover that he has copied them out of a book he has purchased. Ed Knowell gulls him by literally taking away his love from under his own nose.

In 'Cynthia's Revels' Asotus is the young fool from the country, who does his best to imitate Amorphus. Mercury tells us he-

"Sweats to imitate him in every thing to a hair, except a beard, which is not yet extant. He doth learn to make strange sauces, to eat anchovies, maccaroni, bovoli, fagioli, and caviare, because he loves them;" (2)

Sir John Daw and Sir Amorous La-Foole are the two gulls in 'Epicoene'. Truewit manages a little horseplay in the Fourth Act, by making Daw and La-Foole believe that they have grievously offended each other. First he tells Daw that La-Foole is out to revenge an insult-

True. "He has got some body's old two-hand sword, to mow you off at the knees; and that sword hath spawn'd such a dagger! - But then he is so hung with pikes, halberds, petronels, calivers and muskets, that he looks like a justice of peace's hall...You would think he meant to murder all St. Pulchre parish...

(1) "Every Man In His Humour" (Everyman edition of Jonson's plays. Vol. I) p. 565.
(2) "Cynthia's Revels" (Everyman edition of Jonson's plays. Vol. I) p. 170.

Daw. "Good lord! what means he, sir? I pray you, master Truewit, be you a mediator.
True. Well, I'll try if he will be appeased with a leg or an arm; if not you must die once." (1)

With a final note of warning he locks Daw in a closet. As La-Foole enters, Truewit warns him of Daw and ends with-

"Cast you the worst. He has sent for powder already, and what he will do with it, no man knows: perhaps blow up the corner of the house where he suspects you are." (2)

With this admonition he thrusts La-Foole into a study and shuts the door. Truewit now sends for the ladies to witness the humiliation of these two gulls. Daw is led forth blindfolded and Dauphine in disguise enters and administers six severe kicks to Daw's tender anatomy. As Daw is led from the scene, La-Foole is brought forth blindfolded and Dauphine tweaks him by the nose until he screams with pain. Haughty remarks to the other ladies-

"...how our judgments were imposed on by these adulterate knights!" (3)

Later in the play Clerimont and Dauphine get the gulls to admit their conquests among the ladies. Both Daw and La-Foole boast of their conquests and claim that Epicoene has been their mistress. Great is their consternation and humiliation when Epicoene throws off her disguise and proves to be a youth masquerading as "the silent woman".

THE BRAGGART SOLDIER - Jonson shows the influence of the classics in many ways, but particularly in his use

(1) "Epicoene" (Everyman edition of Jonson's plays. Vol. I) p. 537.
(2) Ibid., I, p. 539.
(3) Ibid., I, p. 542.

of type characters. "Jonson's grasp, understanding and easy use of the ideas, the technical practices, the style and subject matter of ancient authors may be called an assimilated classicism...Still, persons, plots and situations in Jonson's comedies are often directly inspired by the classics. For example in 'Every Man in His Humour', Captain Bobadil is as palpably the braggart Pyrgopolinices of the Miles Gloriosus of Plautus as Brainworm is the ubiquitous clever servant of Roman comedy." (1) Bobadill is the boasting soldier whose language is full of "bastinados" and "Passadoes" and other Italian terms of fencing and encounter. He glories in telling of the battles in which he has distinguished himself. We suspect that Captain Bobadill has an over active imagination, for after one of his discourses on the number of the enemy he has killed Edward Knowell slyly asks-

> "But did you all this, captain, without hurting your blade?" (2)

After Bobadill has given an account of how twenty soldiers could easily annihilate an army of forty thousand strong by computation (that is, by challenging twenty at a time, killing them and then challenging twenty more, etc.) Edward Knowell mischievously inquires-

> "Why, are you so sure of your hand, captain, at all times? (3)

(1) "Foreign Influences in Elizabethan Plays" by Felix E. Schelling - p. 20.
(2) "Every Man in His Humour" (Everyman edition of Jonson's plays. Vol. I) p. 585.
(3) Ibid. I, p. 608.

Bobadill arrogantly replies-

> "Tut! never miss thrust, upon my reputation with you." (1)

Bobadill is addicted to swearing, probably to show what a great soldier he is. His favorite oath is "By Pharaoh's foot". Indeed, if his right arm was as strong and as powerful as his voice he would be a very fierce man to contend with. However, when Downright challenges him to an open encounter his bravado suddenly takes wing, and he craves to be excused saying-

> "Tall man, I never thought on it till now-- Body of me, I had a warrant of the peace served on me, even now as I came along..." (2)

But Downright will accept no excuses and he beats Bobadill most shamefully. Even Ed. Knowell is overcome with disgust-

> "'Slid! an these be your tricks, your passadoes, and your montantos, I'll none of them. O, manners! that this age should bring forth such creatures! that nature should be at leisure to make them! " (3)

Captain Otter in 'Epicoene' is another braggart (that is, when his wife is not around). He gets very bold after he has downed several cups of strong drink and, not suspecting the proximity of his spouse, begins

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(1) "Every Man in His Humour" (Everyman edition of Jonson's plays. Vol. I) p. 608.
(2) Ibid. I, pp. 608-609.
(3) Ibid. I, p. 609.

to rail about his wife-

> "She takes herself asunder still when she goes to bed, into some twenty boxes; and about next day noon is put together again, like a great German clock: and so comes forth, and rings a tedious larum to the whole house, and then is quiet again for an hour, but for her quarters--" (1)

At this point Mistress Otter has stood about enough and without warning she comes forward, falls upon him and beats him soundly.

THE PARASITE - In 'Every Man In His Humour' Brainworm, the father's man, accepts money from both his master and Edward, and then proceeds to double-cross them both. He is the typical parasite of Latin comedy. He dons various disguises during the play. After Bobadill has been humiliated by Downright in a street encounter, Brainworm exhorts a jewel from Matthew and a pair of silk stockings from Bobadill for the arrest of Downright. Brainworm then double-crosses them and goes to Downright; but if he had had the brain of a worm he should have known that all this double-crossing could not go on forever undetected.

In 'Volpone' we have the parasite "par excellence" in the character of Mosca (the fly). At the beginning of the Third Act Mosca gives a soliloquy on parasites-

> "...O! your parasite
> Is a most precious thing, dropt from above,
> Not bred 'mongst clods and clodpoles, here on earth.
> I muse, the mystery was not made a science,
> It is so liberally profest! almost

(1) "Epicoene" (Everyman edition of Jonson's plays. Vol. I) p. 529.

"All the wise world is little else, in nature
But parasites or sub-parasites.--And yet,
I mean not those that have your bare town-art,
To know who's fit to feed them; have no house,
No family, no care, and therefore mould
Tales for men's ears, to bait that sense;
.....
But your fine elegant rascal, that can rise
And stoop, almost together, like an arrow;
Shoot through the air as numbly 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!
This is the creature had the art born with him;
Toils not to learn it, but doth practise it
Out of most excellent nature: and such sparks
Are the true parasites, others but their zanis." (1)

But Mosca is not satisfied with a portion of his master's wealth; he must have all. He makes the same mistake that Brainworm made, and by double-crossing his master, Volpone, is eventually exposed and loses everything.

AFFECTATION OF DRESS

The lavishness of Court life showed itself particularly in the extravagance of dress. In 'Every Man Out of His Humour' the courtier Fastidious Brisk affects the latest in fashion. Fastidious tells of a quarrel he had with Luculento, but from his description of the encounter we gather that he was more concerned about his ruined finery than even his own life-

"He again lights me here, - I had on a gold
cable hatband, then new come up...- cuts my
hatband, and yet it was massy goldsmith's
work, cuts my brims...takes me away six
purls of an Italian cut-work band I wore,

(1) "Volpone" (Everyman edition of Jonson's plays. Vol. I) p. 435.

"All the wide world is little place,
But pantaloon or sub-parasites.--And yet,
I mean not those that have your bare town-art,
To know who's fit to feed them; have no house,
No family, no care, and therefore would
Take for man's gern, to suit that name;
.....
But your fine elegant rascal, that can ride
And strong, almost together, like an arrow;
Shoot through the air as nimbly as a star;
Turn about 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 vizor, swifter than a thought!
This is the creature had the art born with him;
Toils not to learn it, but doth practise it
Out of most excellent nature: and such sparks
Are the true parasites, others but their apes." (1)

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"He again lights me here, - I had on a gold cable hatband, then now come up...- cuts my hatband, and yet it was heavy goldsmith's work, cuts my brims...takes me away silk purle of an Italian cut-work band I wore.

(1) "Volpone" (Everyman edition of Jonson's plays. Vol. I) P. 435.

"cost me three pound in the Exchange but three days before"..."He, making a reverse blow, - falls upon my emboss'd girdle... strikes off a skirt of a thick-laced satin doublet I had, lined with four taffetas, cuts off two panes embroidered with pearl..." (1)

Fungoso "follows the fashion afar off, like a spy. He makes it the whole bent of his endeavours to wring sufficient means from his wretched father, to put him in the courtiers' cut; at which he earnestly aims, but so unluckily, that he still lights short a suit." (2) He admires the Frenchified courtier, Fastidious, exceedingly and has a suit made according to the fashion. Fallace commends him-

Fal. "You have a fair suit, brother, 'Give you joy on't"..."O, you are a gallant in print, brother.
Fung. Faith, how like you the fashion? it is the latest edition, I assure you." (3)

But Fungoso soon finds that Fastidious has a still later edition in fashion, and he is very melancholy. Undaunted he has his tailor follow Fastidious around until he notes every line and ribbon, but when the suit is finished he finds Fastidious still one lap ahead of him.

In 'Cynthia's Revels' Hedon is the arrogant man of fashion. Mercury gives us the following description of his affectation of dress-

"He never makes general invitement, but against the publishing of a new suit; marry, then you shall have more drawn to his lodging, than come to the launching of some three ships... He is thought a very necessary perfume for

(1) "Every Man Out of His Humour" (Everyman edition of Jonson's plays. Vol. I) pp. 122-123.
(2) Ibid. I, p. 60.
(3) Ibid. I, p. 91.

"the presence, and for that only cause
welcome thither; six milliners' shops afford
you not the like scent." (1)

Jonson in the character of Crites criticizes the affectation of fashion and dress at Court-

"...I have seen, most honour'd Arete,
The strangest pageant, fashion'd like a court,
(At least I dreamt I saw it) so diffused,
So painted, pied, and full of rainbow strains,
As never yet, either by time, or place,
Was made the food to my distasted sense;
Nor can my weak imperfect memory
Now render half the forms unto my tongue,
That were convolved within this thrifty room.
Here stalks me by a proud and spangled sir,
That looks three handfuls higher than his foretop;..."
.....
"There stands a neophite glazing of his face,
Pruning his clothes, perfuming of his hair,
Against his idol enters..." (2)

AFFECTATION OF MANNER

Extravagance and affectation in dress introduced, naturally enough, affectation in manner. Carlo Buffone in 'Every Man Out of His Humour' instructs the inquisitive Sogliardo in the accomplishments of a gentleman as he sees it-

"You must endeavour to feed cleanly at your
ordinary, sit melancholy, and pick your teeth
when you cannot speak: and when you come to
plays, be humorous, look with a good starch'd
face, and ruffle your brow like a new boot,
laugh at nothing but your own jests, or else

(1) "Cynthia's Revels" (Everyman edition of Jonson's plays. Vol. I) p. 166.
(2) Ibid. I, pp. 178-179.

> "as the noblemen laugh. That's a special grace you must observe." (1)

Toothpicks had recently been introduced into London and Jonson takes this occasion to satirize their affected use.

In the same play, Carlo represents the hypocritical attitude of the affected gentleman of the day, who slanders a man behind his back, but flatters him to his face: when he meets Macilente he exclaims to Sogliardo-

> "Oh, 'tis Macilente! Signor, you are well encountered; how is it? O, we must not regard what he says, man, a trout, a shallow fool, he has no more brain than a butterfly, a mere stuft suit; he looks like a musty bottle new wicker'd, his head's the cork, light, light! (Aside to Macilente) - I am glad to see you so well return'd, signior." (2)

Jonson hated any form of insincerity, and hypocrisy was his particular aversion.

When Macilente gets out of patience with the fools he sees around him, Fastidious and Puntarvolo in particular, Carlo gives him the same advice he meted out to Sogliardo earlier in the play-

> "Nay, look you, sir, now you are a gentleman, you must carry a more exalted presence...be exceeding proud, stand by your gentility, and scorn every man; speak nothing humbly, never discourse under a nobleman...Love no man: trust no man: speak ill of no man to his face; nor well of any man behind his back. Salute fairly on the front, and wish them hanged upon the turn. Spread yourself upon his bosom publicly, whose heart you would eat in private." (3)

(1) "Every Man Out of His Humour" (Everyman edition of Jonson's plays. Vol. I) pp. 68-69.
(2) Ibid. I, p. 71.
(3) Ibid. I, p. 100.

In 'Cynthia's Revels' Anaides, the arrogant courtier, is described in the following sketch-

> "He has two essential parts of the courtier, pride and ignorance; marry, the rest come somewhat after the ordinary gallant. 'Tis Impudence itself, Anaides...He will censure or discourse of any thing, but as absurdly as you would wish. His fashion is not to take knowledge of him that is beneath him in clothes. He never drinks below the salt. He does naturally admire his wit that wears gold lace, or tissue: stabs any man that speaks more contemptibly of the scholar than he." (1)

Another courtier with affected manners is Amorphus. Mercury gives us this picture of him-

> "Amorphus, a traveller, one so made out of the mixture of shreds of forms, that himself is truly deform'd. He walks most commonly with a clove or pick-tooth in his mouth, he is the very mint of compliment, all his behaviours are printed, his face is another volume of essays, and his beard is an Aristarchus. He speaks all cream skimm'd, and more affected than a dozen waiting women." (2)

Amorphus gives Asotus an elaborate discourse on faces, including the merchant, the scholar, the soldier, the lawyer, and the courtier. Let us take a look at the courtier's face through the eyes of Amorphus-

> "But now, to come to your face of faces, or courtier's face; 'tis of three sorts...Your courtier theoric, is he that hath arrived to his farthest, and doth now know the court rather by speculation than practice...a fastidious and oblique face; that looks as it went with a vice, and were screw'd thus. Your courtier practic, is he that is yet in his path...and hath not touch'd the punctilio

(1) "Cynthia's Revels" (Everyman edition of Jonson's plays. Vol. I) pp. 167-168.
(2) Ibid. I, p. 170.

"or point of his hopes...a most promising, open, smooth, and overflowing face, that seems as it would run and pour itself into you: somewhat a northerly face. Your courtier elementary, is one but newly enter'd, or as it were in the alphabet, or ut-re-mi-fa-sol-la of courtship. Note well this face, for it is this you must practise." (1)

Jonson in the character of Crites runs through the various types of courtiers and concludes-

"...Then fall they in discourse
Of tires and fashions, how they must take place,
Where they must kiss, and whom, when to sit down,
And with what grace to rise; if they salute,
What court'sy they must use: such cobweb stuff
As would enforce the common'st sense abhor
Th' Arachnean workers." (2)

Puntarvolo, in 'Every Man Out of His Humour', is characterized by Jonson as "a vain-glorious knight, over-englishing his travels, and wholly consecrated to singularity; the very Jacob's staff of compliment; a sir that hath lived to see the revolution of time in most of his apparel...He deals upon returns, and strange performances, resolving, in despite of public derision, to stick to his own fashion..." (3)

Puntarvolo shows a ridiculous amount of attention to his dog and his cat; he is more concerned over their welfare than a mother would be over her children. When he decides to travel he takes every precaution to insure their comfort.

"Next, our several appellations, and character of my dog and cat, must be known. Shew him

(1) "Cynthia's Revels" (Everyman edition of Jonson's plays. Vol. I) p. 169.
(2) Ibid. I, p. 180.
(3) "Every Man Out of His Humour" (Everyman edition of Jonson's plays.Vol. I) p. 59.

"the cat, sirrah.

.....

Now, for particulars: that I may make my travels by sea or land, to my best liking; and that hiring a coach for myself, it shall be lawful for my dog or cat, or both, to ride with me in the said coach.

.....

That, after the receipt of his money, he shall neither, in his own person, nor any other, either by direct or indirect means... attempt, practice, or complot any thing to the prejudice of me, my dog, or my cat." (1)

When Puntarvolo meets Saviolina and Fastidious in the Palace the following dialogue ensues-

Sav. "...But how might we do to have a sight of your dog and cat?
Fast. His dog is in the court, lady.
Sav. And not your cat? how dare you trust her behind you, sir.
Punt. Troth, madam, she hath sore eyes, and she doth keep her chamber; marry, I have left her under sufficient guard, there are two of my followers to attend her." (2)

AFFECTATION OF SPEECH

If affectation of dress and manner were bad, affectation of speech was worse according to Jonson. We get an insight into Puntarvolo's affectation of speech when he describes Fungoso to Saviolina-

"He's a gentleman, lady, of that rare and and admirable faculty, as, I protest, I know not his like in Europe...speaks the languages with that purity of phrase, and facility of accents, that it breeds astonishment; his wit, the most exuberant, and above wonder, pleasant, of all that ever entered the concave of this ear." (3)

(1) "Every Man Out of His Humour" (Everyman edition of Jonson's plays. Vol. I) p. 115.
(2) Ibid. I, p. 131.
(3) Ibid. I, p. 131.

"the cat, airrah.

. . . . . .

Now, for particulars: that I may make my travels by sea or land, to my best liking; and that during a season for myself, it shall be lawful for my dog or cat, or both, to ride with me in the said coach.

. . . . . .

That, after the receipt of his money, he shall neither, in his own person, nor any other, either by direct or indirect means... attempt, practice, or contrive any thing to the prejudice of me, my dog, or my cat." (1)

When Puntarvolo meets Savolina and Fastidious in the Palace the following dialogue ensues-

Sav. "...But how might we do to have a sight of your dog and cat?

Fast. His dog is in the court, lady.

Sav. And not your cat? how dare you trust her behind you, sir.

Punt. Truth, madam, she hath sore eyes, and she doth keep her chamber; marry, I have left her under sufficient guard. There are two of my followers to attend her." (2)

ALTERATION OF SPEECH

If affectation of dress and manner were bad, affectation of speech was worse according to Jonson.

We get an insight into Puntarvolo's affectation of speech when he describes Purpose to Savolina-

"He's a gentleman, lady, of that rare and admirable faculty, as, I protest, I know not his like in Europe...speaks the languages with that purity of phrase, and facility of accents, that it breeds astonishment; his wit, the most exuberant, and above wonder, pleasant, of all that overwatered the concave of this ear." (3)

(1) "Every Man Out of His Humour" (Everyman edition of Jonson's plays. Vol. I) p. 115.
(2) Ibid. I, p. 131.
(3) Ibid. I, p. 131.

Whenever anyone mentions Court life Fastidious utters a stream of what Dreiser would term "intellectual palaver"-

> "O, the most celestial, and full of wonder and delight, that can be imagined, signior, beyond thought and apprehension of pleasure! A man lives there in that divine rapture, that he will think himself i' the ninth heaven for the time, and lose all sense of mortality whatsoever, when he shall behold such glorious, and almost immortal beauties; hear such angelical and harmonious voices, spirits, whose wits are as sudden as lightning, and humorous as nectar; oh, it makes a man all quintessence and flame, and lifts him up, in a moment, to the very crystal crown of the sky..." (1)

In 'Cynthia's Revels' when Asotus introduces Crites to Amorphus, the latter is at loss for the means of conversation-

> "Since I trod on this side the Alps, I was not so frozen in my invention. Let me see: to accost him with some choice remnant of Spanish, or Italian! that would indifferently express my languages now." (2)

Jonson was very pro-English and hated the affectation of foreign speech. He always took pains to place this particular type of individual in a ridiculous light.

After Amorphus has inducted Asotus into the mysteries of courting, he insists on affectation of speech as a final prerequisite-

> "Your pedant should provide you some parcels of French, or some pretty commodity of Italian, to commerce with, if you would be exotic and exquisite." (3)

(1) "Every Man Out of His Humour" (Everyman edition of Jonson's plays. Vol. I) p. 126.
(2) "Cynthia's Revels" (Everyman edition of Jonson's plays. Vol. I) p. 161.
(3) Ibid. I, p. 182.

AFFECTATION OF LEARNING

In 'Volpone" "blue-stocking" Lady Politick Would-Be affects book-learning to a prodigious degree. Volpone wearies of her unceasing chatter on letters and arts and suggests-

> Volp. "The poet as old in time as Plato,
> and knowing, says, that your
> highest female grace is silence.
> Lady P. Which of your poets? Petrarch, or
> Tasso, or Dante? Guarini? Ariosto?
> Aretine? Cieco di Hadria? I have
> read them all." (1)

Lady Politick shows her ignorance by suggesting that they are all contemporaries of Plato. In speaking of 'Pastor Fido', a pastoral drama by Guarini, she says-

> "All our English writers,
> I mean such as are happy in the Italian,
> Will deign to steal out of this author, mainly:
> Almost as much as from Montagnié:
> He has so modern and facile a vein,
> Fitting the time, and catching the court-ear!
> Your Petrarch is more passionate, yet he
> In days of sonnetting, trusted them with much:
> Dante is hard, and few can understand him.
> But, for a desperate wit, there's Aretine;
> Only, his pictures are a little obscene--" (2)

Jonson satirizes the Collegiate Ladies in 'Epicoene'. Truewit imparts the following information to Clerimont-

> "A new foundation, sir, here in the town,
> of ladies, that call themselves the
> collegiates, an order between courtiers
> and country-madams, that live from their
> husbands; and give entertainment to all
> the wits, and braveries of the time, as
> they call them: cry down, or up, what they

(1) "Volpone" (Everyman edition of Jonson's plays. Vol. I) p. 440.
(2) Ibid. I, p. 440.

> "like or dislike in a brain or a fashion,
> with most masculine, or rather
> hermaphroditical authority; and every day
> gain to their college some new probationer." (1)

Jonson considered the attempt of the ladies of his day to appear intellectual as extremely ridiculous. In true masculine style he laughed at even the possibility of feminine learning or scholarship.

When Truewit is trying to dissuade Morose from marrying he includes the following warning-

> "...If learned, there was never such a
> parrot; all your patrimony will be too
> little for the guests that must be
> invited to hear her speak Latin and
> Greek; and you must lie with her in
> those languages too, if you please her." (2)

After mentioning a long list of calamities that will surely befall Morose if he marries, Truewit comes back to the feminine affectation of learning-

> "...she may censure poets, and authors,
> and styles, and compare them; Daniel
> with Spenser, Jonson with the t'other
> youth, and so forth: or be thought
> cunning in controversies, or the very
> knots of divinity; and have often in her
> mouth the state of the question; and then
> skip to mathematics, and demonstration." (3)

After Morose has locked himself up in the top of his house to avoid the noise and confusion, Truewit returns to the company of his friends and speaks rather disparagingly of the Collgiate Ladies-

> Cler. "But where are your collegiates?
> Daup. Withdrawn with the bride in private.

(1) "Epicoene" (Everyman edition of Jonson's plays. Vol. I) p. 492.
(2) Ibid. I, p. 501.
(3) Ibid. I, p. 502.

True. "O, they are instructing her in the college-grammar. If she have grace with them, she knows all their secrets instantly." (1)

When Epicoene thinks her husband is going mad she appeals to the Collegiate Ladies-

"...Ladies; - servant, you have read Pliny and Paracelsus; ne'er a word now to comfort a poor gentlewoman?" (2)

Lady Haughty suggests that Epicoene talk divinity or moral philosophy to her husband to quiet his nerves.

Sir John Daw is also guilty of affected learning. When his friends mention Plutarch and Seneca he remarks-

Daw. "The dor on Plutarch and Seneca! I hate it: they are mine own imaginations, by that light. I wonder those fellows have such credit with gentlemen.
Cler. They are very grave authors.
Daw. Grave asses! mere essayists: a few loose sentences, and that's all. A man would talk so, his whole age: I do utter as good things every hour, if they were collected and observed, as either of them." (3)

Daw is very contemptuous of the classics. He continues in the same vein-

Daw. "There's Aristotle, a mere common-place fellow; Plato, a discourser; Thucydides and Livy, tedious and dry; Tacitus, an entire knot; sometimes worth the untying, very seldom.
Cler. What do you think of the poets, Sir John?
Daw. Not worthy to be named for authors. Homer, an old tedious, prolix ass, talks of curriers, and chines of beef; Virgil of dunging the land, and bees; Horace, of I know not what.
Cler. I think so.

(1) "Epicoene" (Everyman edition of Jonson's plays. Vol. I) p. 525.
(2) Ibid. I, p. 532.
(3) Ibid. I, pp. 503-504

Daw. "And so, Pindarus, Lycophron, Anacreon,
Catullus, Seneca the tragedian, Lucan,
Propertius, Tibullus, Martial, Juvenal,
Ausonius, Statius, Politian, Valerius
Flaccus, and the rest-
Cler. What a sack full of their names he has got." (1)

Clerimont's last remark is quite correct; Daw apparently knows little about the authors he mentions except their names. This method of mentioning great authors' names was a particular trick of those who affected learning.

John Daw also employs a smattering of Latin in his conversation for effect. In discussing Morose's madness he suggests-

"But he may be but phreneticus yet, mistress;
and phrenetis is only delirium, or so." (2)

Captain Otter is especially addicted to quoting scraps of Latin. We find him addressing his wife thus-

"Nay, good princess, hear me pauca verba." (3)

Cutbeard also sprinkles his talk with Latin phrases.

SATIRE ON TOBACCO

Bobadill in 'Everyman In His Humour' speaks in extravagant praise of tobacco-

"...I have been in the Indies, where this herb grows, where neither myself, nor a dozen gentlemen more of my knowledge, have received the taste of any other nutriment in the world, for the space of one and twenty weeks, but the fume of this simple only: therefore, it cannot be, but 'tis most divine. Further, take it in the nature, in the true kind; so, it makes an antidote, that, had you taken the most

(1) "Epicoene" (Everyman edition of Jonson's plays. Vol. I) p. 504.
(2) Ibid. I, p. 533.
(3) Ibid. I, p. 512.

"deadly poisonous plant in all Italy, it should expel it, and clarify you, with as much ease as I speak...I could say what I know of the virtue of it, for the expulsion of rheums, raw humours, crudities, obstructions, with a thousand of this kind; but I profess myself no quack-salver..." (1)

This is just as ridiculous as Cob's tirade against the weed-

"'Od's me, I marle what pleasure or felicity they have in taking this roguish tobacco. It's good for nothing but to choke a man, and fill him full of smoke and embers: there were four died out of one house last week with taking of it...one of them, they say, will never scape it; he voided a bushel of soot yesterday, upward and downward." (2)

There are frequent references to the fad of smoking tobacco. Perhaps the most humorous example is that of Fastidious Brisk affecting to smoke as a means of courting his mistress and Macilente's sarcastic observation-

Fast. (Talks and takes tobacco between the breaks "Troth, sweet lady, I shall (puffs)---be prepared to give you thanks for those thanks, and---study more officious, and obsequious regards ---to your fair beauties---Mend the pipe, boy.
Maci. I never knew tobacco taken as a parenthesis before." (3)

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(1)"Every Man In His Humour" (Everyman edition of Jonson's plays. Vol. I) p. 594.
(2)Ibid. I, p. 594.
(3)"Every Man Out of His Humour" (Everyman edition of Jonson's plays. Vol. I) p. 110.

PETRARCHAN LOVE-MAKING

The courtier's method of courting his beloved had reached a stage where it was truly ridiculous. When Fastidious sees his mistress in the distance and exclaims-

> "A kind of affectionate reverence strikes me with a cold shivering, methinks." (1)

Macilente remarks with cutting sarcasm-

> "I like such tempers well, as stand before their mistresses with fear and trembling; and before their Maker, like impudent mountains." (2)

Macilente maliciously instructs Sogliardo in the art of courting-

> "You shall begin with, How does my sweet lady, or, Why are you so melancholy, madam? though she be very merry, it's all one. Be sure to kiss your hand often enough; pray for her health, and tell her, how more than most fair she is. Screw your face at one side thus, and protest: let her fleer, and look askance, and hide her teeth with her fan, when she laughs a fit...you must talk forward, (though it be without sense, so it be without blushing,) 'tis most court-like and well." (3)

In 'Cynthia's Revels' the courtier Amorphus initiates Asotus into the mysteries of courting a lady-

> "Marry, you shall say; Dear Beauty, or sweet Honour (or by what other title you please to remember her), methinks you are melancholy. This is, if she be alone now, and discompanies...And then, offering to kiss her hand, if she shall coily recoil, and signify your repulse, you are to re-enforce yourself with, More than most fair lady, Let not the

(1)"Every Man Out of His Humour"(Everyman edition of Jonson's plays. Vol. I) p. 109.
(2) Ibid. I, p. 109.
(3) Ibid. I, p. 130.

> "rigour of your disdain Thus coarsely censure of your servant's zeal. And withal, protest her to be the only and absolute unparallel'd creature you do adore, and admire, and respect, and reverence, in this court, corner of the world, or kingdom." (1)

After Asotus has gone through this form Amorphus continues-

> "This is, if she abide you. But now, put the case she should be passant when you enter, as thus: you are to frame your gait thereafter, and call upon her, lady, nymph, sweet refuge, star of our court. Then, if she be guardant, here; you are to come on, and laterally disposing yourself, swear by her blushing and well-coloured cheek, the bright dye of her hair, her ivory teeth, (though they be ebony), or some such white and innocent oath, to induce you. If regardant, then maintain your station, brisk and irpe, show the supple motion of your pliant body, but chief of your knee, and hand, which cannot but arride her proud humour exceedingly." (2)

SATIRE ON FOREIGN TRAVEL

Foreign travel was a fad of the age. In instructing Asotus in the accomplishments of a gentleman Amorphus insists that travel gives one that "je ne sais quoi"

> "O, you should digress from yourself else: for, believe it, your travel is your only thing that rectifies, or, as the Italian says, vi rendi pronto all' attioni, makes you fit for action." (3)

In the following conversation with Crites, Amorphus tries to impress Asotus with his knowledge gained from

(1) "Cynthia's Revels" (Everyman edition of Jonson's plays. Vol. I) p. 181.
(2) Ibid. I, p. 182.
(3) Ibid. I, p. 162.

travelling-

Aso. "Metheglin; what's that, sir? may I be so audacious to demand?
Amo. A kind of Greek wine I have met with, sir, in my travels; it is the same that Demosthenes usually drunk, in the composure of all his exquisite and mellifluous orations.
Cri. That's to be argued, Amorphus, if we may credit Lucian, who in his Encomio Demosthenis, affirms, he never drunk but water in any of his compositions.
Amo. Lucian is absurd, he knew nothing: I will believe mine own travels before all the Lucians of Europe..." (1)

Amorphus reminds us of some American tourists who remember their travels chiefly for the variety of wines they have sampled in foreign countries.

Amorphus at the Fountain of Self-Love bursts forth in a long soliloquy while he partakes of the waters. The following extract shows the importance he placed on travel and the subsequent influence it had on his manners and speech-

"...knowing myself an essence so sublimated and refined by travel; of so studied and well exercised a gesture; so alone in fashion; able to render the face of any statesman living; and to speak the mere extraction of language, one that hath now made the sixth return upon venture..." (2)

In 'Volpone' Sir Politick Would-Be claims that he is not particularly interested in foreign travel, but he tells Peregrine the reason he is now in Venice-

"Sir, to a wise man, all the world's his soil:
It is not Italy, nor France, nor Europe,
That must bound me, of my fates call me forth.
Yet, I protest, it is no salt desire
Of seeing countries...

(1) "Cynthia's Revels" (Everyman edition of Jonson's plays. Vol. I) p. 160.
(2) Ibid. I, p. 159.

"..... .....
But a peculiar humour of my wife's
Laid for this height of Venice, to observe
To quote, to learn the language, and so forth-
I hope you travel, Sir, with license?" (1)

Later Peregrine apologizes for his untutored behavior in a foreign land and hopes that Sir Politic will give him proper instruction-

Sir P. "Why, came you forth empty of rules for travel?
Per. Faith, I had some common ones, from out that vulgar grammar, Which he that cried Italian to me, taught me.
Sir P. Why this it is that spoils all our brave bloods, trusting our hopeful gentry unto pedants, fellows of outside, and mere bark." (2)

SATIRE ON LAW

With Captain Otter disguised as a divine and Cutbread as a canon lawyer under Truewit's instruction, Jonson gives us some amusing satire on law and legal procedure. The divine and the lawyer have been brought in to see Morose and to discuss the possibility of a divorce. Captain Otter's and Cutbeard's smattering of Latin aid materially in the ruse-

Cut. "Your question is, For how many causes a man may have <u>divortium legitimum</u>, a lawful divorce? First you must understand the nature of the word, divorce, <u>à divertendo</u>-
Mor. No excursions upon words, good doctor; to the question briefly.

(1)"Volpone" (Everyman edition of Jonson's plays. Vol. I) p. 420.
(2) Ibid. I, p. 423.

Cut. "I answer then, the canon law affords divorce but in few cases; and the principal is in the common case, the adulterous case: But there are duodecim impedimenta, twelve impediments, as we call them, all which do not dirimere contractum, but irritum reddere matrimonium, as we say in the canon law, not take away the bond, but cause a nullity therein.

Mor. I understood you before: good sir, avoid your impertinency of translation.

.....

Cut. The first is impedimentum erroris.

Ott. Of which there are several species.

Cut. Ay, as error personae.

Ott. If you contract yourself to one person, thinking her another.

Cut. Then, error fortunae.

Ott. If she be a beggar, and you thought her rich.

Cut. Then error qualitatis.

Ott. If she prove stubborn or head-strong, that you thought obedient.

Mor. How! is that, sir, a lawful impediment? One at once, I pray you, gentlemen.

Ott. Ay, ante copulam, but not post copulam, sir.

Cut. Master parson says right. Nec post nuptiarum benedictionem. It doth indeed but irrita reddere sponsalia, annul the contract; after marriage it is no obstancy." (1)

This whole scene is meant to expose the ridiculously loose state of the English law of divorce in the time of King James. "The ecclesiastical courts had jurisdiction over matters matrimonial until they were abolished in 1857, when they disappeared in anything but a blaze of glory." (2)

Cutbeard and Otter continue in true legal style-

Cut. "The next is conditio: if you thought her free born, and she prove a bondwoman, there is impediment of estate and condition.

(1) "Epicoene" (Everyman edition of Jonson's plays. Vol. I) pp. 550-551.

(2) "Epicoene" by Ben Jonson, edited by Aurelia Henry, p. 263.

Ott. "Ay, but, master doctor, those servitudes are now sublatae now, among us Christians.
Cut. By your favor, master parson-
Ott. You shall give me leave, master doctor.
Mor. Nay, gentlemen, quarrel not in that question; it concerns not my case: pass to the third.
Cut. Well then, the third is votum: if either party have made a vow of chastity. But that practice, as master parson said of the other, is taken away among us, thanks be to discipline. The fourth is cognatio; if the persons be of kin within the degrees.
Ott. Ay: do you know what the degrees are, sir?
Mor. No, nor I care not, sir; they offer me no comfort in the question, I am sure." (1)

Cutbeard and Otter continue to harass Morose with their legal juggling of terms. They continue their legal fencing with very grave faces-

Cut. "Who cannot uti uxore pro uxore, may habere eam pro sorore.
Ott. Absurd, absurd, absurd, and merely apostatical!
Cut. You shall pardon me, master parson, I can prove it.
Ott. You can prove a will, master doctor; you can prove nothing else. Does not the verse of your own canon say, Haec socianda vetant connubia, facta retractant?
Cut. I grant you; but how do they retractare, master parson?
Mor. O, this was it I feared.
Ott. In aeternum, sir.
Cut. That's false in divinity, by your favour.
Ott. 'Tis false in humanity to say so.
.....
True. Nay, good sir, attend the learned men; they'll think you neglect them else.
Cut. Or, if he do simulare himself frigidum, odio uxoris, or so?
Ott. I say, he is adulter manifestus then.
Daup. They dispute it very learnedly, i'faith." (2)

(1) "Epicoene" (Everyman edition of Jonson's plays. Vol. I) p. 551.
(2) Ibid. pp. 552-553.

Eventually Epicoene rushes in, followed by the Collegiate Ladies, and puts an end to the judicial wrangling of Cutbeard and Otter.

LITERARY SATIRE

In discussing Jonson's theory of comedy we noted the conflict between Romanticism and Classicism. It is not surprising that Jonson, who stood for classical tradition, should satirize those poets who held the opposite point of view. He had very definite ideas of how a play should be written; he ridiculed the drama and poetry of his day both in form and content. We have already quoted parts of the Prologue to 'Every Man In His Humour' in which Jonson derides the stage practice of the day. Throughout his plays he attacks plagiarism, literary fads, sonneteering on slight provocation, romantic formlessness, and the would-be poets.

PLAGIARISM

If there was one thing that Jonson despised above all else in his contemporaries it was plagiarism. Jonson often combined several phases of the satirical spirit in one situation. In discussing personal satire we have already noted that he accused both Marston and Dekker of plagiarizing.

In the Induction to 'Cynthia's Revels' he condemns

the purloined plays of the age and states that he never stoops to such dishonest and ignoble methods-

"Besides, they could wish your poets would
leave to be promoters of other men's jests,
and to way-lay all the stale apothegms, or
old books they can hear of, in print, or
otherwise, to farce their scenes withal...
Again, that feeding their friends with
nothing of their own, but what they have
twice or thrice cooked, they should not
wantonly give out, how soon they had drest it.
.....
O (I had almost forgot it too), they say, the
umbrae or ghosts of some three or four plays
departed a dozen years since, have been seen
walking on your stage here..." (1)

The Prologue to 'Volpone' is in the same vein-

"Nor hales he in a gull old ends reciting,
To stop gaps in his loose writing;
With such a deal of monstrous and forced action,
As might make Bethlem a faction:
Nor made he his play for jests stolen from each table,
But makes jests to fit his fable..." (2)

Jonson was very proud of his own originality and did not hesitate to say so.

Jonson often takes a jibe at those who filched from the writings of others. In 'Every Man Out of His Humour' he mentions stealing from Sidney and Greene-

Fast. "...she does observe as pure a phrase,
and use as choice figures in her
ordinary conferences, as any be in
the Arcadia.
Car. Or rather in Green's works, whence she
may steal with more security." (3)

Through the character of Cob in 'Every Man In His Humour' Jonson refers to the Brazen-head in Greene's 'Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay' and suggests it would be an easy

(1) "Cynthia's Revels" (Everyman edition of Jonson's plays. Vol. I) p. 153.
(2) "Volpone" (Everyman edition of Jonson's plays. Vol.I) p.403.
(3) "Every Man Out of His Humour" (Everyman edition of Jonson's plays. Vol. I) p. 85.

matter to borrow some such device to augment his play. Jonson infers that others may succumb to this temptation but not he-

"Oh, an my house were the Brazen-head now!
faith it would e'en speak Moe fools yet." (1)

It was easy enough to fool the general public as it was the time before public libraries or extensive reading. The average Elizabethan audience was illiterate and many dramatists took advantage of this fact and felt fairly secure in borrowing from earlier writers. But these plagiarists did not escape the eagle eye of Jonson.

Master Mathew in 'Every Man In His Humour' is frequently caught circulating the verses of others as his own-

Mat. "Rare creature, let me speak without offence,
Would God my rude words had the influence
To rule thy thoughts, as thy fair looks do mine,
Then shouldst thou be his prisoner, who is thine.
E. Know. This is Hero and Leander.
Vel. O, ay: peace, we shall have more of this.
.....
E. Know. Well, I'll have him free of the wit-brokers, for he utters nothing but stolen remnants.
Wel. O, forgive it him.
E. Know. A filching rogue, hang him! - and from the dead! it's worse than sacrilege." (2)

In 'Timber, or Discoveries Made upon Men and Matter' we find Jonson attacking plagiarism again: "Some that turn over all books, and are equally searching in all

(1) "Every Man In His Humour" (Everyman edition of Jonson's plays. Vol. I) p. 568.
(2) Ibid., I, p. 600.

papers; that write out of what they presently find or meet, without choice. By which means it happens that what they have discredited and impugned in one work, they have before or after extolled the same in another...These, in all they write, confess still what books they have read last, and therein their own folly so much, that they bring it to the stake raw and undigested; not that the place did need it neither, but that they thought themselves furnished and would vent it." (1)

SATIRE ON LITERARY FADS

Every age has its fads in dress, manner and speech; even literature is not exempt. Jonson ridiculed the literary fads of his age regardless of popular opinion (for which he had great contempt) and irrespective of the individual authors his satire assailed. We have already noted his attack on those who used "foot and half-foot words" in discussing his theory of comedy. (See: Prologue to 'Every Man In His Humour').

Under the head of personal satire we noted how Jonson ridiculed Marston for his bombastic style and his fustian vocabulary. In 'Every Man Out of His Humour' shortly before the passage that contains fustian words taken from Marston's plays (quoted on page 25) Clove says-

> "Monsieur Orange, yon gallants observe us; prithee let's talk fustian a little, and gull them; make them believe we are great scholars." (2)

(1) "Timber, or Discoveries Made Upon Men and Matter" by Ben Jonson, edited by Felix E. Schelling - p. 25.
(2) "Every Man Out of His Humour" (Everyman edition of Jonson's plays. Vol. I) p. 99.

In 'Timber' Jonson remarks: "Indeed, the multitude commend writers as they do fencers or wrastlers, who, if they come in robustiously and put for it with a deal of violence, are received for the braver fellows: when many times their own rudeness is a cause of their disgrace, and a slight touch of their adversary gives all that boisterous force the foil." (1)

The puppet show in 'Bartholomew Fair' is a burlesque of Marlowe's 'Hero and Leander'. Marlowe was noted for his grandiloquent style. He had died just at the beginning of his fame as a playwright and became more or less of an idol to the lesser dramatists who imitated him. The amount of bombast that resulted seemed both ridiculous and appalling to Jonson. This turgid form of expression soon became a fad with many poets. Jonson makes a satirical reference to Marlowe in his 'Timber' - "The true artificer will not run away from Nature as he were afraid of her, or depart from life and the likeness of truth, but speak to the capacity of his hearers. And though his language differ from the vulgar somewhat, it shall not fly from all humanity, with the Tamerlanes and Tamer-chams of the late age, which had nothing in them but the scenical strutting and furious vociferation to warrant them to the ignorant gapers." (2) Jonson believed in using the everyday language of the people; "Pure and

(1) "Timber, or Discoveries Made upon Men and Matter" by Ben Jonson, edited by Felix E. Schelling - pp. 22-23.
(2) Ibid. pp. 26-27.

neat language I love, yet plain and customary." (1)

Magniloquent oathing was another fad that Jonson ridiculed in his plays. We have already seen that Captain Bobadill in 'Every Man In His Humour' was fond of great oaths. Cob in telling Master Mathew of Bobadill imitates the Captain-

> "...I'd forswear them all, by the foot of Pharaoh! There's an oath! How many water-bearers-shall you hear swear such an oath? O, I have a guest - he teaches me - he does swear the legiblest of any man christened: By St. George! the foot of Pharaoh! the body of me! as I am a gentleman and a soldier! such dainty oaths!..." (2)

This is a take-off on Rabelais' Gargantua and Panurge, who were also fond of magniloquent oaths. In Rabelais we find Panurge exclaiming- "By the Foot of Pharao, cry'd Panurge, the De'll a Sous you'll get me." (3) And again - "What! do you think I am afraid? cry'd Panurge: Not I, I protest; by the Testicles of Hercules..." (4) Later we find such oaths as "By my Oriental Barnicles, quoth Panurge, honest Fryar, thou'rt in the right." (5)

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(1) "Timber, or Discoveries Made upon Men and Matter" by Ben Jonson, edited by Felix E. Schelling - p. 59.
(2) "Every Man In His Humour" (Everyman edition of Jonson's plays. Vol. I) p. 569.
(3) "The Lives, Heroic deeds & sayings of Gargantua and his Son Pantagruel" by Rabelais, translated by Sir Thomas Urquhart and Peter Le Motteux - p. 883.
(4) Ibid., p. 855.
(5) Ibid., p. 889.

SATIRE ON SONNETEERING

Master Mathew in 'Every Man In His Humour' is satirized as the romantic youth who composes sonnets on the slightest provocation. He does not often get the opportunity to recite his rhymes to his mistress, and contents himself for the most part by rehearsing his verses to his friends. Master Mathew even repeats selections from his sonnets to the unappreciative Bobadill-

"To thee, the purest object to my sense,
The most refined essence heaven covers,
Send I these lines, wherein I do commence
The happy state of turtle-billing lovers.
If they prove rough, unpolish'd, harsh, and rude,
Haste made the waste: thus mildly I conclude." (1)

Percy Simpson in his edition of 'Every Man In His Humour' suggests that these lines are in imitation of the style of Daniel who was known in his own day for his sonnets.

Later in the play Mathew's pockets are searched and Clement reads an extract from Mathew's papers-

"Unto the boundless ocean of thy face,
Runs this poor river, charg'd with streams
of eyes." (2)

These lines parody the first stanza of Daniel's 'Sonnet to Delia'.

In 'Cynthia's Revels' Hedon is caricatured as a writer of rhymes and sonnets. In speaking of Hedon to her court ladies, Philautia says-

(1) "Every Man In His Humour" (Everyman edition of Jonson's plays. Vol. I) p. 570.
(2) Ibid. I, p. 623.

"Tut, let him be what he will, 'tis an
animal I dream not of. This tire, me-
thinks, makes me look very ingeniously,
quick, and spirited; I should be some
Laura, or some Delia, methinks." (1)

Petrarch celebrated Laura in a series of nearly three hundred sonnets. The sonnets of Daniel appeared in 1592. Jonson apparently did not esteem either poet very highly.

ROMANTIC FORMLESSNESS

Jonson as a classicist deplored the romantic formlessness and violation of rule that abounded in the plays of his contemporaries. Over and again he satirizes the utter disregard for the unities of time and place-

"To make a child now swaddled, to proceed
Man, and then shoot up, in one beard and weed,
Past threescore years; or, with three rusty swords,
...Fight over York and Lancaster's long jars,
And in the tyring-house bring wounds to scars.
He rather prays you will be pleas'd to see
One such to-day, as other plays should be." (2)

In the Prologue to 'Volpone' Jonson states-

"Yet thus much I give you as a token
Of his play's worth, no eggs are broken,
Nor quaking custards with fierce teeth affrighted,
Wherewith your rout are so delighted." (3)

Jonson condemned comedy that deteriorated into farce. He continues-

"And so presents quick comedy refined,
As best critics have designed;

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(1) "Cynthia's Revels" (Everyman edition of Jonson's plays. Vol. I) p. 184.
(2) "Every Man In His Humour" (Everyman edition of Jonson's plays. Vol. I) pp. 559-560.
(3) "Volpone" (Everyman edition of Jonson's plays.Vol.I) p.403.

"The laws of time, place, persons he observeth,
From no needful rule he swerveth." (1)

In discussing drama in his 'Timber' he insists that "two things are to be considered: first, that it exceed not the compass of one day; next, that there be place left for digression and art." (2)

SATIRE ON POETASTERS

Many gentlemen of leisure tried their hand at writing verses. Jonson thoroughly despised these would-be poets. In the 'Poetaster' he tries to belittle the works of both Marston and Dekker by satirizing them as poetasters.

The Induction to 'Every Man Out of His Humour' contains literary satire against the would-be poets of the age-

"O, how I hate the monstrousness of time,
Where every servile imitating spirit,
Plagued with an itching leprosy of wit,
In a mere halting fury, strives to fling,
His ulcerous body in the Thespian spring,
And straight leaps forth a poet." (3)

In speaking of Hedon in 'Cynthia's Revels' Jonson has Mercury say-

"Fie, no: himself is a rhymer, and that's
thought better than a poet." (4)

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(1) "Volpone" (Everyman edition of Jonson's plays. Vol. I) p. 404.
(2) "Timber, or Discoveries Made upon Man and Matter" by Ben Jonson, edited by Felix E. Schelling - p. 85.
(3) "Every Man Out of His Humour" (Everyman edition of Jonson's plays. Vol. I) p. 62.
(4) "Cynthia's Revels" (Everyman edition of Jonson's plays. Vol. I) p. 166.

Tucca in describing Crispinus to Histrio says-

"...he is a gentleman, parcel poet, you slave; his father was a man of worship, I tell thee. Go, he pens high, lofty, in a new stalking strain, bigger than half the rhymers in the town again..." (1)

In 'Timber' Jonson attacks the would-be poet again- "Others there are that have no composition at all; but a kind of tuning and riming fall in what they write. It runs and slides, and only makes a sound. Women's poets they are called, as you have women's tailors.

"They write a verse as smooth, as soft as cream, In which there is no torrent, nor scarce stream.

You may sound these wits and find the depth of them with your middle finger. They are cream-bowl-, or but puddle-deep." (2)

Jonson found English comedy in ill repute; after his efforts to establish comedy as a literary form he left it on an equal footing with its dramatic counterpart, tragedy.

(1) "Poetaster" (Everyman edition of Jonson's plays. Vol. I) p. 261.

(2) "Timber, or Discoveries Made upon Men and Matter" by Ben Jonson, edited by Felix E. Schelling - p. 25.

SUMMARY

An examination of the mental attitude of the satirist is essential to the understanding of satire itself. The satirist is an idealist and a critic. He must possess a sense of superiority and a sense of the ludicrous.

Affectation through vanity or hypocrisy is the only source of the ridiculous. The comic is accidental, but it is the involuntary element that makes a situation laughable.

The four varieties of satire are; personal, political, social, and literary satire. Personal satire is the avenger of an individual's misconduct; political satire is the judge of governmental errors; social satire is the protector of society and the censor of social conduct; literary satire is the guide to taste in literature.

Jonson's purpose of comedy is the correction of man's foibles and follies. The general method is realistic and the particular treatment is satirical. Jonson applied his theory of comedy to the stage and in doing so developed the device of the Comedy of Humours.

Personal satire in Jonsonian comedy is directed chiefly against his contemporaries, Marston and Dekker. His political satire is directed against the Puritans and the Scotch. Jonson's social satire divides itself into three groups: satire on certain types as such; satire on certain

characteristics of individuals, such as affectation of dress, manner, and speech; and satire on certain social activities, such as smoking, Petrarchan love-making, and foreign travel. Jonson's literary satire is directed against plagiarism, literary fads, sonneteering on slight provocation, romantic formlessness, and the poetasters.

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