VOLPONE AND BAROKA:
TWO FOXES OF THE SAME COIN

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ABSTRACT

This study is an attempt to trace the Fox theme in two plays: one by the Renaissance English dramatist Ben Jonson, *Volpone* (1605), and the other by the modern Nigerian dramatist Wole Soyinka, *The Lion and the Jewel* (1963). It is believed that there are affinities in themes and techniques between the two plays despite the elapse of time between them. Throughout the analyses of both plays such affinities have been examined. The study focuses on how the fox theme has been treated by both playwrights who belong to two different ages. Besides, the study undertakes to examine whether or not Wole Soyinka has been influenced by Ben Jonson thematically and technically.

The beast fables, epics and analogies have been so pervasive in human communities that their influence has functioned to a large extent a distinct appeal to the human popular mind. The fox figure, more specifically, has continued for generations to acquire regular reputation for, in these epics and analogies, the fox has always emerged as a humorous clever actor and a resourceful creature who outwits the birds of prey and finally entraps them by feigning death.[1] As a result, the fox's character has always represented through different literary ages a subject of temptation to many literary authors to elaborate such character in their literary productions so as to create one general theme, a theme that shows to what extent a human being can be the pure incarnation of the most loathsome variety of the fox's cunning, cruelty and intellect, and what the effect of such a character is on his society after all.[2] Ben Jonson's *Volpone* and Wole Soyinka's *Lion and the Jewel* stand as two representative examples of the development of such tendency in English literature generally, and in English drama specifically.

Both plays function essentially as an expression of the native identity of both, the European and the African, through the reflection of the characters, motives and the environments implied in the general framework of the two plays. Starting with the sort of the protagonists presented in the two plays, Volpone in *Volpone* and Baroka in *The Lion and the Jewel*, each one of those two figures presents the character of the crafty fox or the Trickster, the one who is motivated by his own instinctual and amoral cunning. This cunning fox always seeks to satisfy his fundamental appetites rather than to serve, consciously, any moral or humanitarian ends. This cunning is thus turned to be to the fox:

> A life-style pervading his entire being and not merely adopted disguise. To the extent that he can be said to be aware of his own acts, the art of pulling a clever jest on the less wary is his supreme joy. His world is a narrow one in which knavery is carried out half as play half in accordance with the logistics of survival.[3]

Jonson's fox, Volpone, is shown based on such cunning stratagem. He is a rich, childless magnifico whose major enjoyment in life is his "cunning purchase" (I, i, 31), throughout which he exerts his own wealth:

> …., I glory
> More in the cunning purchase of my wealth,
> Than in the glad possession; since I gain
> No common way: I use no trade, no venture;
> I wound no earth with ploughshares; fat no beasts

To feed the shambles; have no mills for iron,
Oil, corn, or men, to grind 'em into poulder;
I blow no subtle glass; expose no ships
To threat'nings of the furrow-faced sea;
I turn no moneys, in the public bank;
Nor usure private –

(I, I, 30-40)

Voplone's speech shows his obsessive nature. His life is going perfectly easy as his genius continues to fleece great riches without the slightest effort, without the need to practice any means of commercial exchange such as trading, farming nor even usurary. Moreover; Voplone's cunning purchase provides him with the pleasure of outwitting the less minded victims, the matter which Volpone is obsessed with more than his obsession with possession itself: "Volpone's real pervasion is that he regards life as a play where he can write the script for his own amusement: his sin is not to treat money as a god but to treat people as puppets".[4]

Soyinka's Baroka, "the Fox of Undergrowth"(Morning, p.11), on the other hand, is equally as a trickster as Volpone is. He is the chief of his village who lives " lazily in his harem and exercises his powers with a daily bout of wrestling"[5] and thus he wants his life to go easily this way. Baroka's reaction to any probable change in his village is always faced with different tricks that he practices to keep out such danger for according to him:

…, [men] must leave
Virgin plots of lives, rich decay
And the tang of vapour rising from
Forgotten heaps of compost, lying
Undisturbed…

(Night, p.52)

Baroka's cunning policy is to keep this content world of virgin forms of lives, a world in which he is the controlling master and "[t]he living god among men" (Morning, p.11). Any change that occurs to this world may lead to Baroka's loss of his status as the village head, the matter that Baroka is well aware and afraid of at the same time. Both foxes, Volpone and Baroka, are thus having a style of life that they do not want to change and each has a cunning strategy throughout which he guarantees the continuation of his own world. At the same time, the continuous success of those two foxes in their cunning strategy leads them to go after more as long as they can get what they want. For Voplone's part, his obsession with his strategy, to outwit the lesser minded fellows without the slightest chance of being discovered, leads him to demand what is more valuable than fortunes. Volpone is now tempted to

Celia, "the blazing star of Italy" (I, v, 107) as being affected by Mosca's description of her as:

> …….! a wench
> O' the first year, a beauty, ripe, as harvest!
> Whose skin is whiter than a swan, all over!
> Than silver, snow, or lilies! A soft lip,
> Would tempt you to eternity of kissing!
> And flesh that melteth, in the touch, to blood!
> Bright as your gold! And lovely as your gold!
>
> (I, v, 108-114)

Now Volpone wants to get the possession of Celia as he has kept continuously for three years getting possession of her husband's wealth but firstly Volpone is facing a challenge, the capability to see Celia who is surrounded by "a guard of ten spies thick" (I, v, 123). The fox thus decides to get out of his liar "in some disguise" (I, v, 128) to see Celia at her window. Volpone's choice for his new character would be the Scoto of Mantua, a mountebank, a kind of theatrical doctor who sells medicine publicly.[6]

The essential significance of the mountebank scene lies in its importance as a key scene in the play thematically and structurally. In this scene, Volpone frees himself from his "death bed" to seize the actions of the play as he transforms from playing the role of an old dying man to take the disguise of the mountebank, performing at the same time, the role of the lover as he woos Celia just below her window.[7] As a mountebank or Scoto, Volpone plays this role to the bone as he announces the unlimited qualities of the "precious liquor" he is selling:

> To fortify the most indigest, and crude stomach, ay, were it of one that, through extreme weakness, vomited blood, applying only to warm napkin to the place, after the unction, and fricace; for the *vertigine*, in the head, putting but a drop into your nostrils, likewise, behind the ears; a most sovereign and approved remedy: the *mal caduco*, cramps, convulsions, paralyses, epilepsies, *tremor-cordia*, retired nerves, ill vapours of the spleen, stoppings of the liver, the stone, the stranguary, *hernia ventosa*, *iliaca passio*; stops a *disenteria* immediately; easeth the tortion of the small guts; and cures *melancholia hypocondriaca*, being taken and applied, according to my printed receipt.
>
> (II, ii, 98-109)

Quite sure that Celia is listening intently at her window to his speech, Volpone offers to give this elixir along with "a little remembrance"(II, ii, 218) to the person who can give him a momento, a handkerchief. Suddenly, Celia throws her own handkerchief. Now that Volpone is able to see Celia, he speaks to her directly with great desire in his voice. Ironically, Volpone promises Celia to offer her a powder that values "worth nine thousand volumes were but as one page, that page as a line, that a line as a word…to the expressing of it" (II, ii, 230-32). This little remembrance that Volpone is offering to Celia proves to be a cosmetic powder with miraculous values:[8]

> It is the poulder that made Venus a goddess, given her by Apollo, that kept her perpetually young, cleared her wrinkles, firmed her gums, filled her skin, coloured her hair; from her derived to Helen, and at the sack of Troy, unfortunately, lost: till now, in this our age, it was as happily recovered, by a studious antiquary…
>
> (II, ii, 236-41)

The fox cannot let out his tricky nature of entrapping others. What is notable in this matter is that this entrapment is always done by the assistance of certain means that the fox uses as a bait to entrap his victim. Volpone uses his fortune as a dying man to entrap the three gulls and the cosmetic powder to entrap Celia. Quite similarly, Soyinka's fox, Baroka, entraps his victim Sidi by using the same device. The means of entrapment this time is the strange machine that Baroka uses, ironically, to convince Sidi that it will print her beauty and carries it to the outside world:

Sidi: I have never seen the like.

Baroka: The work dear child, of the palace
blacksmiths
Built in full secrecy. All is not well with it-
But I will find the cause and then Ilujinle
Will boast its own tax on paper, made with
Stamps like this. For long I dreamt it
And here it stands, child of my thoughts.

Sidi: You mean…this will work some day?

Baroka: For the warmth of life and love
In youthful cheeks like yours,

My daughter…
Ten of thousands of these dainty prints
And each one with this legend of Sidi.
The village goddess, reaching out
Toward the sun, her lover,
Can you see it, my daughter!

(Night, pp.50-51)

Sidi is completely overawed by the idea of having her images on thousands of stamps printed by this machine.[9] Quite evidently, Baroka is well aware of Sidi's weakness now that she is infatuated by her new status as the village beauty. Both foxes, Volpone and Baroka, thus seem to outwit their victims Celia and Sidi by attempting to create a sense of infatuation to raise their victims' admiration even if it is an imagined admiration in Celia's case. Of course neither Volpone's miraculous powder is having the attributed effect nor is Baroka's stamp machine going to work one day. Both means are exploited by the two cunning foxes to serve their own ends, to enable Volpone see Celia and then make his careful planning to get her, and to enable Baroka, on the other hand, to get Sidi's admiration. In their attempts to achieve this purpose, Volpone and Baroka are ready to take any risk even if their purpose is to be achieved against their own manhood, and this is exactly what they have done. The two foxes use their cunning intellect to declare their impotence, the matter that creates an essential turn in the events of the two plays, exploiting the fact that "people would rather misperceive reality than surrender their self aggrandizing fantasies".[10]

For Volpone's part and by the assistance of his parasite, Mosca, the fox approaches his aim as his careful planning leads him to succeed in making Corvino offer his wife "to sleep by [Volpone]"(II, v, 35). Ironically, Corvino (in the Mountebank scene) objects to being cast as the Pantalone of traditional *Commedia Dell' Arte* scenario as the mountebank (Volpone in disguise) is making a scene at his own door. Corvino thus accuses Celia of being Franciscina of traditional *Commedia* who is cuckolding her husband (the Pantalone) with signior Flaminio, calling her "lady vanity" and "whore", threatening her to revenge his honour:

What couldst thou propose
Less to thyself, than, in this heat of wrath,
And stung with my dishonour, I should strike
This steel into thee, with as many stabs,
As thou wert gazed upon with goatish eyes?

(II, v, 30-34)

As Mosca tricks Corvino that Volpone has recovered his health by the Scoto's elixir and thus, to restore Volpone's previous condition as a dying man, "some woman, must be straight sought out/ Lusty and full of joice, to sleep by him" (II, vi, 34-35). Suddenly, the prostitution of his wife "becomes in Corvino's eyes merely a piece of stage business"[11] through which Corvino guarantees Volpone's fortune:

> Corvino: … Mosca, I have determined.
> Mosca: How sir?
> Corvino: We'll make all sure. The party, you wot of,
> Shall be mine own wife, Mosca.
>
> (II, vii, 79-81)

Moreover; Jonson creates of Corvino a tool of abnormal spirited greed that may ever possess a man as Corvino orders Celia to obey him in this affair if she respects their marriage vows, threatening her this time:

> Corvino: Heart of my father!
> Wilt thou persist thus? Come, I prey thee, come.
> Thou seest 'tis nothing: Celia! By this hand
> I shall grow violent. Come, do't, I say
>
> Celia: Sir, kill me, rather: I will take down poison,
> Eat burning coals, do anything-
>
> Corvino: Be damned
> Heart, I will drag thee hence, home, by this hair;
> Cry thee a strumpet, through the streets; rip up
> Thy mouth, unto thine ears; and slit thy nose,
> Like a raw rotchet – Do not tempt me, come
> Yield, I am loath – death, I will buy some slave,
> Whom `I will kill, and bind thee to him, alive;
> And at my window, hang you forth: devising
> Some monstrous crime, which I, in capital letters,
> Will eat into thy flesh, with aquafortis,
> And burning corsives, on this stubborn breast.
> Now, by the blood, thou hast incensed, I'll do't.
>
> (III, vii, 90-106)

Celia begs to be allowed to take a poison or to eat burning coals but not to submit to sexual dishonour.[12] She valiantly declares that her husband's act is a mere sin, but Corvino describes such an act as a "pious work, mere chastity, for physic / And honest policy to assure mine own" (III, vii, 65-6).

Celia's appeals are thus returned with leaving her all alone with the fox in his liar:

> O God, and his good angels! Whither, whither
> Is shame fled human breasts? That with such ease,
> Men dare put off your honours, and their own?
> Is that, which ever was a cause of life,
> Now placed beneath the basest circumstance?
> And modesty an exile made, for money?
>
> (III, vii, 133-38)

Suddenly, the fox leaps out from his feigned sickness bed to play the role of the lover who tries to persuade his beloved to be lovingly devoured, to let him show her "the true heaven of love" (III, vii, 140), singing:

> Come, my Celia, let us prove,
> While we can, the sports of love;
> Time will not be ours, for ever,
> He, at length, our good will server;
> Spend not then his gifts, in vain.
> Suns that sets, may rise again:
> But if, once, we lose this light,
> 'Tis with us perpetual night.
> Why should we defer our joys?
> Fame, and rumour are but toys.
> Cannot we delude the eyes
> Of a few poor household spies?
> Or his easier ears beguile,
> Thus removed, by our wile?
> 'Tis no sin, love's fruits to steal;
> But the sweet thefts to reveal:
> To be taken, to be seen,
> These have crimes accounted been.
>
> (III, vii, 165-183)

Volpone's rhetoric shows his multilayered character. Now he appears as the romantic virile lover who can sing pleasantly in a highly elaborated poetic style that appeals directly to the senses:

> [In] wooing Celia, [Volpone] extols the unlimited wealth and inexhaustible sexual performance which he will lavish on her…. His aspiring mind makes him a descendant of

> Tamburliane with something of the power of his working words and something of the same sense of unlimited possibilities.[13]

Moreover, as he adopts the traditional *carpe diem*[14] theme, Volpone shows himself free from all human cares. He alludes to thoughts of mortality without the slightest fear. It has been years since he is valid to act the role of "young Antinous" (III, vii, 162), yet; at his old age, Volpone does not regret his aging "because it makes his claim to sustained virility seem the more impressive".[15] He invites Celia to join him in his "sports of love", to share and to be delighted by his exuberant vanity, for life is short and time will not be theirs for ever. Still, materialistic nature cannot abandon the character of Volpone, the lover, as he treats Celia as his own possession:

> Why droops my Celia?
> Thou hast in place of a base husband, found
> A worthy lover: use thy fortune well,
> With secrecy, and pleasure. See, behold,
> What thou art queen of; not in expectation,
> As I feed others; but possessed, and crowned.
> See, here, a rope of pearl; and each, more orient
> Than that the brave Egyptian queen caroused:
> Dissolve, and drink 'em. See, a carbuncle,
> May put out both the eyes of our St. Mark;
> A diamante, would have bought Lollia Paulina,
> When she came in, like star-light, hid with jewels,
> That were the spoils of provinces; take these,
> And wear, and lose 'em: yet remains an ear-ring
> To purchase them again, and this whole state.
> A gem, but worth a private patrimony,
> Is nothing: we will eat such at a meal.
> The heads of parrots, tongues of nightingales,
> The brains of peacocks, and of ostriches
> Shall be our food: and, could we get the phoenix,
> Though nature lost her kind, she were our dish.
>
> (III, vii, 185-205)

The poetic force of Volpone's speech holds the power of temptation: "there is indeed an exuberate description of Luxury – temptations are heaped upon temptations with a rapidity which almost outstrips the imagination".[16] Celia, however, seems to be unimpressed by such temptations of "the rarest food and wines, the costliest jewels, the most numerous and most various

encounters".[17] Unlike the legacy hunters, Celia's chastity is all that is valuable for her, all that she wants to possess:

Celia: Good sir, these things might move a mind affected
With such delights; but I, whose innocence
Is all I can think wealthy, or worth th' enjoying,
And which once lost, I have nought to lose beyond it,
Cannot be taken with these sensual baits:
If you have conscience-

Volpone: 'Tis the beggar's virtue,
If thou hast wisdom, hear me Celia
Thy baths shall be the juice of July-flowers,
Spirits of roses, and of violets,
The milk of unicorns, and panthers' breath
Gathered in bags, and mixed with Cretan wines.
Our drink shall be prepared gold, and amber;
…….

Celia: If you have ears that will be pierced; or eyes,
That can be opened; a heart, may be touched;
Or any part, that yet sounds man, about you:
If you have touch of holy saints, or heaven,
Do me the grace, to let me scape. If not,
Be bountiful, and kill me. You do know,
I am a creature, hither ill betrayed,
By one, whose shame I would forget it were.

(III, vii, 206-217/240-47)

The old fox's ears and eyes cannot apprehend what Celia is uttering and her refusal of all delights he presents to her:

Think me cold,
Frozen, and impotent, and so report me?
That I had Nestor's hernia, thou wouldst think,
I do degenerate, and abuse my nation,
To play with opportunity, thus long:
I should have done the act, and then have parleyed.
Yield, or I'll force thee.

(III, vii, 260-165)

Volpone has altered his motive that now he wants only to prove his manhood.[18] His mood is changed from the romantic lover to a mere rapist: in vain are all Celia's entreats to let her go. Suddenly and in the form of traditional romances, the lady's rescuer responds to her appeals to be saved as Bonario steps in from his hiding place in the nick of time to save Celia from the fox's clews and carries her to safety:

> Forbear; fool ravisher, libidinous swine,
> Free the forced lady, or thou diest, impostor.
> …….
> Lady, let's quit the place, it is the den
> Of villainy; fear nought, you have a guard:
> And he, ere long, shall meet his just reward.
> (III, vii, 267-69/ 273-75)

For the first time in the play actions seem to be out of Volpone's control; the fox turns to be the hunted instead of the hunter.[19] Volpone is now exposed; he is out of his disguise: "I am unmasked, unspirited, undone/ Betrayed to begging, to infamy" (III, vii, 278-9). The sight of Celia has been fatal for Volpone as it has resulted such exposure. Volpone's desire to win her has darkened his judgment and intellect as he takes her to be just like the three legacy hunters or even like the English Lady Would Be, that Celia is to be affected by the materialistic world he is presenting to her. Thus all Volpone's temptations to Celia are faced with a total failure to seduce her, unlike Soyinka's fox, Baroka, who succeeds in getting his jewel by using Volpone's cunning style. The only difference between the two is that in *The Lion and the Jewel,* there is no Bonario to make his lucky entrance to save Sidi from Baroka's hands. As with *Volpone*, the actions of *The Lion and the Jewel* take a turn as Baroka, secretly, declares his impotence to his eldest wife Sadiku:

> Baroka: The time has come when I can fool myself
> No more. I am no man, Sadiku. My
> manhood
> Ended near a week ago.
>
> Sadiku: The gods forbid.
>
> Baroka: I wanted Sidi because I still hoped-
> A foolish thought I know, but still –I hoped
> That, with a virgin young and hot within,
> My failing strength would rise and
> save my pride

A waste of hope. I knew it even then.
But it's a human failing never to accept
The worst; and so I pandered to my vanity.
When manhood must, it ends.
The well of living, tapped beyond its depth,
Dries up, and mocks the wastrel in the end.

(Noon, p.29)

Of course, Sadiku, like Corvino in *Volpone*, dose not know that this is a mere trick played by Baroka to entrap Sidi since his proposal to her is met with rejection from Sidi's part. Baroka is so well aware of Sadiku's nature that she is not going to keep this matter to herself, on the contrary, she will leak it all to her young rival Sidi,[20] and this is exactly what Sadiku does:

Sidi: Sadiku, are you well?
Sadiku: Ask no questions my girl. Just join
my victory dance. Oh Sango my lord,
who of us possessed your lightning and
ran like fire through that lion's tail…
…….

Sadiku: Oh you are troublesome. Do you
promise to tell no one?

Sidi: I swear it. Now tell me quickly.
(*As Sadiku whispers, her eyes widen*)
But Sadiku, if he knew the truth, why
Did he ask me to …
Ha ha! Some hope indeed. Oh Sadiku
I suddenly am glad to be a woman
We won! We won! Hurray for
womankind!

(Night, p.33)

As a result, Sidi's belief in Baroka's impotence tempts her to go to his palace to make fun of him:

Sidi: Stop. Sadiku stop. Oh such an idea

Is running in my head. Let me to the
palace for
This supper he promised me, Sadiku,
what a way

To mock the devil. I shall ask forgiveness
For my hasty words…No need to change
My answer and consent to be his bride –
he might
Suspect you've told me. But I shall ask
a month
To think on it

……

Sadiku: You will have to match the Fox's
cunning. Use your bashful looks and
be truly repentant.

(Night, pp.34-35)

Sadiku is perfectly right to fear the "fox's cunning", the matter which Sidi is not to take seriously. As she arrives at Baroka's house, Sidi finds him engaged in a wrestling exercise with his wrestler:

The scene changes to Baroka's bedroom. On the left in a one-knee-on-floor posture, two men are engaged in a kind of wrestling, their hands clasped round each other's waist, testing the right moment to leave. One is Baroka, the other a short squat figure of apparent muscular power. The contest still in the balanced stage. In some distant part of the house, Sidi's voice is heard lifted in the familiar general greeting, addressed to no one in particular

(Night, p.38)

The significance of this scene lies in its importance to show Baroka's powers. As a man who suffers the waning of manhood, Baroka's chances of winning might seem insufficient to Sidi, the one who speaks her thoughts when she tells Baroka that his wrestler is the one who is going to win the contest. On the other hand, Baroka knows perfectly what lies beneath Sidi's words:

Sidi: I think he will win?
Baroka: Is that a wish my daughter?
Sidi: No, but [*Hesitates but boldness wins*]
If the tortoise cannot tumble
It does not mean he can stand
[Baroka *looks at her, seemingly puzzled*…]

(Night, p. 42)

In opposition to what Sidi expects, Baroka defeats his opponent "*with a sudden burst of angry energy… and throws him over his shoulder*" (Night, p.44). Sidi is now "too excited to listen"(Night, p.44) to Baroka's speech, breaking into a kind of shoulder dance and songs, celebrating the returned manhood of Baroka:[21]

> You won. You won!
> [*She breaks into a kind of shoulder dance and sings]*
> yokolu yokolu. Ko ha tan bi
> iyawo gb'oko san'le
> oko yo'ke…
>
> (Night, p.44)

The whole situation serves, symbolically, as a foreshadowing to the coming seduction scene. As Baroka uses this combat to show Sidi, on purpose, his physical power that he is still the powerful lion, Baroka is also going to overwhelm Sidi by his mental power through which he will overcome all her resistance to him. Baroka's cunning intellect puts him in a position in which he perfectly knows Sidi's nature and her own view of herself as the village beauty. Thus his entrapment of Sidi is going exactly to be centered on this particular point, tempting her to carry the responsibility of her new status and to accept the honouring task Baroka is offering her:

> I hope you will not think it too great
> A burden, to carry the country's mail
> All on your comeliness
>
> (Night, p.51)

The fox gradually drags the prey to his trap. As Baroka knows of the love affair, from Lakunle's side towards Sidi and thus Sidi might be affected by Lakunle's ideas of progress, Baroka exploits Sidi's naivety to infatuate her with his ideas of change. Baroka is carefully planning to compel Sidi's admiration, to make himself appear not as the backwardist Lakunle claims him to be, but as the leader who has a magnificent strategy to bring progress to his community:

> We shall begin
> By cutting stamps for our own village alone,
> As the schoolmaster himself would say-
> Charity begins at home.
> For a long time now,
> The town-dwellers have made up tales

Of the backwardness of Ilujinle
Until it hurts Baroka, who holds
The welfare of his people deep at heart.
Now, if we do this thing, it will prove more
Than any single town has done!
I do not hate progress, only its nature
Which makes all roofs and faces look the same
And the wish of one old man is
That here and there,
Among the bridges and the murderous roads,
Below the humming birds which
Smoke the face of Sango, dispenser of
The snake-tongue lightning; between this moment
And the reckless broom that will be wielded
In these years to come, we must leave
Virgin plots of lives, rich decay
And the tang of vapour rising from
Forgotten heaps of compost, lying
Undisturbed…

(Night, p52)

Baroka's skillful selection of rhetorics and his careful manipulation of accepted truths create a strong effect on Sidi who becomes so overwhelmed by Baroka's words as well as ideas that she does not find the like with Lakunle, the one who always keeps on torturing her with his plans of progress.[22] With Lakunle, Sidi could not find the self value that Baroka keeps on nourishing in her now. To Lakunle, Sidi always represents the ignorant, uncivilized girl that he wants to save from the world of ignorance around with her will or without. With Baroka now she is living in a world where she is the superior. Baroka, on the other hand, feels Sidi’s transformation and now he is too close to achieve his end by exploiting Sidi's amazement:

I find my soul sensitive like yours,
Indeed, although there is one - no more think I -
One generation between yours and mine,
Our thoughts fly crisply through the air
And meet, purified, as one
And our first union
Is the making of this stamp.
The one redeeming grace on any paper-tax
Shall be your face and mine,
The soul behind it all, worshipful
Of Nature for her gift of youth

And beauty to our earth

(Night, p.53)

Baroka's seductive words show a lyrical force that is filled with charm, sensitivity and cunning through which the fox lulls his prey. The effect of Baroka's foxy speech on Sidi is beyond her resistance, the matter which leads her easily to fall in the fox's trap:

Baroka: The old must flow in the new, Sidi
Not blind itself or stand foolishly
Apart, A girl like you must inherit
Miracles which age alone reveals.
Is this not so?
Sidi: Everything you say, Bale,
Seems wise to me.

(Night, p.54)

Baroka proves himself to be a past master of wooing as he is the commanding chief of his village.[23] His ability to take many shapes and disguises – as a fearful Bale, briber, impotent old man, wrestler and seducer – all suggest a direct parallelism with the character of Volpone due to the different shapes and disguises that Volpone attributes to himself. What is also noteworthy in those two characters, Volpone and Baroka, is that they seem to be unified in the sort of the satirical domain presented in the two plays and its relation to the society they find themselves in, because the fox, in order to practice his strategy, needs a society to sport with after all. As far as Volpone is concerned, the society of the play is Venice of the Renaissance, an exotic city that symbolizes to the English mind the place of Italianate beauty, wealth, money-making and corruption:

> To the Englishman, Venice was the most fabulous of wealthy Italian cities; it was a place where houses worthily deserved to be called Palaces, some hundreds of them being fit to receive princes; Venice was a city famed for its jealous husbands and closely kept wives on the one hand, and for its courtesans and brothels on the other.[24]

Such setting, associated with materialism, corruption and failing of human values, serves as a perfect environment for greed to flourish as "a desire that has broken loose from real objects and real needs".[25] As an Elizabethan who is aware of the deficiencies of such environment and aware

of the problems of his age and country as well, Ben Jonson provides *Volpone* with his own satirical views of these problems. Jonson's satire tends to explore the deformity and immoral overemphasis of money at his time. Such deformity is satirized so early as the first two lines of *Volpone* where Volpone opens the play celebrating his gold: "Good morning to the day; and, next, my gold! / Open the shrine, that I may see my saint"(I, i, 1-2). Volpone's hymn to his gold reveals a dangerous effect of materialism and possession on human values.[26] Obviously, this effect is not restricted to Volpone only, but it also turns to be a sort of social disease outspreading through different slices of society as represented by the three legacy hunters Voltore, Corbaccio and Corvino. The greedy nature of those three dose not only show their slavery to Volpone's fortune, but they are also ready to commit crimes as well. Voltore, the man of law, presents a deformed view of the court, the institution of justice in Venice. He is supposed to be the defender of truth and justice but the weakness of his own will puts him in a position in which he uses his legal knowledge to advocate injustice. Corbaccio, the other carrion eater, is supposed to be an old gentleman and thus to respect the qualities of his age. Ironically, Corbaccio is wrapped up in his physical condition to the extent that his greed blinds him spiritually to disinherit his son for he really expects to outlive Volpone and inherit his fortune.[27]

Moreover; Venice has been known also as the city where the virtue of young women can be compromised by men seeking to increase their wealth, exactly the same that occurs with Corvino who, on the one hand, keeps Celia in affirm guard, but, on the other hand, he offers her to men around him. Thinking only of his financial gain, the greedy Corvino is persuaded to demand Volpone to cuckold him,[28] neglecting the injustice he brings to his wife, the matter that is frankly criticized by Volpone himself:

> Ay, in Corvino, and such earth-fed minds,
> That never tasted the true heaven of love.
> Assure thee, Celia, he that would sell thee,
> Only for hope of gain, and that uncertain,
>
> He would have sold his part of paradise
> For ready money,
>
> (III, vii, 139-144)

Hereupon, in satirizing such a wicked picture of Venice and its people, Jonson in *Volpone* is showing a warning to the city and people of London; wishing Venice's sophistication may lead to Venice's degradation.[29] Such warning is carried to the English people throughout the satirical view that Jonson presents to show the English folly in imitating Italian vice represented by the two English characters in the play, Lady and Sir politic Would Be.

Lady Would Be is said to have come to Venice to learn about "fashions, and behaviour / Among the Courtesans" (II, i, 28-29), a model that is not appropriate to an English aristocratic lady to follow. On the other hand, Lady Would Be's speech with Volpone shows an "obsessive chain of literary allusions"[30], the matter which intensifies her folly:

Lady Would Be: I have, a little, studied physics; but, now,
I'm all for music: save, i'the forenoons,
An hour, or two, for painting. I would have
A lady, indeed, to have all, letters, and arts,
Be able to discourse, to write, to paint,
But principal, as Plato holds, your music,
And so does wise Pythagoras, I take it,
Is your true rapture, when there is a concent
In face, in voice, and clothes: and is indeed,
Our sex's chiefest ornament.

Volpone: The poet
As old in time, as Plato, and as knowing,
Says that your highest female grace is silence.

Lady Would Be: Which o' your poets? Petrarch? or Tasso? or Dante?
Guarini? Ariosto? Aretine?
Cieco di Hadria? I have read them all.

Volpone: Is everything a cause, to my destruction?

(III, iv, 67-82)

Ironically, Lady Would Be's "great recognition" in arts does not serve her so as to realize how little Peregrine resembles "a cunning courtesan" that she mistakes him of being so. Moreover; joining the game of legacy hunting, Lady Would Be's character shows the comic distortion of Voltore, Corbaccio and Corvino, for:

> She is jealous, like Corvino, as meaninglessly and perversely erudite as Voltore, and like Corbaccio; she makes compromising proposals to Mosca which leaves her at the mercy of his

> blackmail… and when she plays onto Mosca's hands… she becomes the most egregious of the dupes because she is the blindest.[31]

At the same time, Lady Would Be's attempted seduction of Volpone puts her in direct opposition with Celia, the symbol of unearthly beauty:

Lady Would Be: Come, in faith, I must
Visit you more a days; and make you well:
Laugh, and be lusty.

Volpone: My good angle save me!

Lady Would Be: …, I'll discourse
And't be but only, sir, to bring you asleep,
How we did spend our time, and loves, together,
For some six years.

(III, iv, 112-115 /121-124)

Thus Lady Would Be's manners and behaviours carry a direct ridicule to her status as an English lady. Such ridicule is also directed to her husband Sir Politic Would Be, the knight who lives on his political fantasies, recording his daily life events. Sir Politic's foolery puts him in a state in which he starts to believe his own lies that he is a real politician who can even sell whole states:

Sir Pol: I would I had my note.

Peregrine: Faith, so would I:
But, you ha' done well, for once, sir

Sir Pol: Were I false,
Or would be made so, I could show you reasons,
How I could sell this state, now, to the Turk;
Spite of their gallies, …

(IV, i, 128-131)

Ironically, such political schemes of Sir Politic have proved to be false ones that are drawn "out of the play-book"(V, v, 41). Moreover, Sir Politic proves great foolery when he plays the parrot to Volpone, disguised as the Scoto of Mantua, as Sir Politic shows a great admiration in the Scoto up to the extent that he plays the role of the charlatan to Volpone's false character:[32]

> Sir Pol: … [the mountebanks] are the only knowing
> men of Europe!
> Great generals scholars, excellent
> physicians,
> Most admired statesmen, professed
> favourites,
> And cabinet counsellors, to the greatest
> princes
> The only languaged men, of all the world!
> (II, ii, 9-13)

Such claims of Sir Politic prove his naivety as well as absurdity. He is the man who boasts to know everything and all tricks but he is easily tricked by a false mountebank, the matter that puts Sir Politic in direct opposition with Volpone: "Sir politic, like Volpone, is infatuated with his own ingenuity and like Volpone he nurses his get-rich-quick schemes, but none of them ever progresses beyond the talking stage".[33] Thus Sir Politic's character tends to be more appropriate of a fool or a jester to Volpone than a real politician. Whereas Volpone increases the sense of expectation of the audience of his next foxy plan, Sir Politic increases only their laughter for his bombastic schemes. As a result, both the Would Bes present a deformed image of the English people abroad, those who attempt to copy blindly forms of life found in these foreign societies, attributing to themselves characters that are not appropriate for them. Ironically, all they can get are the condemnation and despise even from people like Volpone:

> Volpone: 'Fore heaven, I wonder at the desperate
> valour
> Of the bold English, that they dare let
> loose
> Their wives to all encounters!
>
> Mosca: Sir, this knight
> Had not his name for nothing, he is politic,
> And knows, how e'er his wife affect strange
> airs,

She hath not yet the face, to be dishonest.
(I, v, 100-105)

Apart from Jonson's foreign corrupted society of Venice that reflects, indirectly, the corrupted society of London, Wole Soyinka chooses a local content African society to his play *The Lion and the Jewel*, that is the village of Ilujinle.

Ilujinle represents a traditional Yoruba community that has a strong and conservative restriction to traditional and social values but at the same time "it is facing the challenge of a rapid change".[34] The discrepancy between those two tendencies is illustrated from the very beginning of the play as it opens, in Morning Scene, at the village centre. This center is dominated by "an immense 'odan' tree"(Morning, p.1), the symbol of tradition, and a "bush school" that "flanks the stage on the right" (Morning, p.1), as the symbol of progress. Both symbols serve as pure reflections of the two protagonists in the play, Baroka and Lakunle, and the conflict coming forth between the two. Through his dramatization of this conflict, Soyinka is adopting certain satirical views due to the defects and problems found in the African society in the postcolonial period. This period has witnessed a clash between two extremes, between "those who wished to return to that tradition of precolonial times and those who sought to Modernize Africa".[35] In *The Lion and the Jewel* Soyinka is exposing this issue, but standing with neither. He is, on the one hand, against neglecting tradition and its values, but at the same time, Soyinka stands against the backwardness of Ilujinle and its lack of communication with the modern world. With Lakunle as his mouth speaking, Soyinka satirizes the backwarded state of Ilujinle which cannot accommodate itself with the modern world as a society that belongs to a Modern age:

Within a year or two, I swear,
This town shall see a transformation
Bride-price will be a thing forgotten
And wives shall take their place by men
A motor road will pass this spot.
And bring the city ways to us
We'll buy saucepans for all women
Clay pots are crude and unhygienic
No man shall take more wives than one
That's why they're impotent too soon
The ruler shall ride cars, not horses
Or a bicycle at the very least.
We'll burn the forest, cut the trees
Then plant a modern park for lovers
We'll print newspapers every day

> With pictures of seductive girls.
> The world will judge our progress by
> The girls that win beauty contests
> While Lagos builds new factories daily
> We only play 'ayo' and gossip.
> Where is our school of ballroom dancing?
> Who here can throw a cocktail party?
> We must be modern with the rest.
>
> (Night, p.37)

Lakunle's ideas seem to be very promising to promote change and bring modernity to Ilujinle, but eventually, Lakunle mixes great issues with trivial ones. He looks forward to canceling the costume of bride price because, according to him, "[t]o pay the price would be / [t]o buy a heifer off the market stall"(Morning, p.8). Lakunle seeks to achieve equality between man and woman, but at the same time modernity means to him the printing of pictures of seductive girls on Ilujinle newspaper. Instead of focusing on building roads, Lakunle plans to cocktail parties and Ballroom dancing. Thus such twisted views and ideas show the twisted nature of their creator. Lakunle proves that he is no more than a "court jester"(Morning, p.17) whose schemes, as Sir Politic, do not pass the talking stage the matter that gives a satirical view to the kind of leadership that Lakunle may conduct in the future:

> While Soyinka is undoubtedly interested in the construction aspect of Lakunle's programme, he nevertheless explores with characteristic humour the naïve, histrionic side of him in order to expose the quality of leadership in view for the community in the immediate future, that is, the little "intellectual dictator" of the future.[36]

On the opposite side of Lakunle stands Baroka, the lion of Ilujinle and the fox of undergrowths, the one who keeps on suppressing progressive attempts of Lakunle and all other attempts of transformation in Ilujinle, the matter that Soyinka condemns in Baroka. It is true that Soyinka seems to be at Baroka's side as he makes the winner of Sidi,[37] but Soyinka at the same time shows Baroka's strict policy as not what Ilujinle needs. Baroka's conservative reaction to progress is shown in a negative way. He refuses Ilujinle openness to the outside world. Such issue is evident in Baroka's negative reaction to Sidi's published photos in the magazine. Apparently, Baroka feels jealous but he is actually worried that Sidi might skip his iron grip and step out side his closely kept world:

First Girl: The Bale is jealous, but he pretends to be proud of you. And when this man tells him how famous you are in the capital, he pretends to be pleased, saying how much fame you have brought to the village.

Sidi: Is not Baroka's image in the book at all?

Second Girl: Oh yes, it is. But it would have been much better for the Bale if the stranger had omitted him altogether. His image is in a little corner somewhere in the book, and even that corner he shares with one of the village latrines.

(Morning, 11)

Moreover, Baroka's ideas of progress seem to be perfect if they are really applied in Ilujinle, but what if such plans are false as the stamp machine! What if Baroka's speech to Sidi represents only a continuation of his cunning series throughout which he keeps on controlling Ilujinle and its people!. Still, in spite of these negative issues concerning tradition and its symbol Baroka. Soyinka seems to prefer tradition to a sudden, unreasonable change: if Modernization is achieved in Ilujinle according to Lakunle's way, it is better not to be achieved at all. Lakunle's process of change is based on the transformation of the real identity of African people and all social values that controls their society.[38] With tradition there is a hope to promote the needed change, that is the gradual not the sudden, a change that will not detach people from their past; rather it will mingle with tradition that has a strong effect on African people to establish a better life for the coming generations. This explains why Soyinka makes Sidi the symbol of young African people who may be affected by foreign forms of modernity (represented by Lakunle) and "believe in the impotence of the past but will nevertheless experience its power".[39] Ironically, all what Lakunle gets at the end is Sidi's photos, the symbol of modern Sidi, whereas the traditional Sidi chooses Baroka as her own partner in life in spite of all his defects:

[…*Sidi goes up to Lakunle and hands him the book*]
Sidi: A present from Sidi.
I tried to tear it up
But my fingers were too frail.
You may come too if you wish

You are invited.

Lakunle: Well I should hope so indeed
Since I am to marry you.

Sidi: [*turns round in surprise*]
Marry who…? You thought…
Did you really think that you, and I…
Why, did you think that after him,
I could endure the touch of another man?
I who have felt the strength,
The perpetual youthful zest
Of the panther of the trees?
And would I choose a watered-down?
A beardless version of unripened man?

(Night, p.63)

Hereupon, the satirical views of the two plays, *Volpone* and *The Lion and the Jewel*, present an illustration of social problems and issues of each society. Of course such treatment cannot appear in vacuum. Both Jonson and Soyinka share almost the same belief in the moral commitment of the dramatist towards his society. For Jonson's part, such belief is illustrated in the *Epistle* of *Volpone* as Jonson shows his view that the playwright has a moral responsibility towards his society, "to inform men in the best reason of living" (*The Epistle*, 107). Such dramatic logic leads Jonson to create in *Volpone*:

> A world, of limited range but universal affinities, in which attention is focused almost entirely upon greed and the credulity it nourishes. We are shown avarice as a power that can infect and quite pervert human nature, destroying its humanity, nullifying its intelligence and banishing all dignity and wealth. Within this world there is a hierarchy of scoundrels each confident of his power to deceive and exploit others, and remarkable for his capacity to deceive himself.[40]

Such world might not seem the perfect one to be introduced in a comedy, especially if this comedy belongs to an age famous for its romantic comedies as the Elizabethan age is. What is noteworthy in Jonson's literary career is that he has refused to accommodate himself with the current Elizabethan pattern

of comedies and has made a pattern of his own. On the stage, Jonson is concerned with the presentation of life as it is in its worst side as an opportunity to face the community with its defects. Being classically oriented, Jonson has realized in the world of comedies the best medium through which he is able to "imitate justice, and instruct to life, as well as…stir up gentle affections" (*The Epistle*, 120-21). In *Volpone*, the imitation of justice is related to the punishment of the community of crime represented by Mosca, and the three would be heirs, Voltore, Corbaccio and Corvino, and above all Volpone whose end is considered the tragical element in the play as he decides to throw off his disguise and expose the whole crimes by his own will.[41] Thus his end turns to be:

1st Avocatore: … Thou, Volpone,
By blood, and rank a gentleman,
canst not fall
Under like censure; but our
judgment on thee
Is, that thy substance all be
straight confiscate
To the hospital, of the *Incurabili:*
And, since the most was gotten by
imposture,
By feigning lame, gout, palsy,
and such diseases
Thou art to lie in prison, cramped
with irons
Till thou be'st sick, and lame
indeed…

Volpone: This is called mortifying of a fox.

(V, xii, 116-125)

With the censure that such end may be faced with, Ben Jonson has been the first critic of *Volpone* when he anticipates in the *Dedicatory Epistle* of the play the problem of the ending:[42] "And though my catastrophe may, in the strict rigour of *comic law* meet with censure… I desire the learned and the charitable critic to have much faith in me, to think it was done of Industry"(*The Epistle*, 108-111). At the same time, Jonson admits that he could not end the play joyfully because his major aim is the punishment of vice, to provide an instruction to life [43] and to "put the snaffle in their mouths that cry out, we never punish vice in our interludes" (*The Epistle*, 114-115). Moreover, by creating such an end as "the fox be punished by the Laws" (Epilogue, 153), Jonson frees his audience from the tension of feelings as they

keep on watching Volpone's enjoyment in the world of tricks and vice. Furthermore, as he creates Volpone a tool of moral condemnation, Jonson portrays in Volpone a character apt for admiration and raise a feeling of irrational pleasure in his audience due to the different tricks that Volpone practices on his rouges, exposing their fooleries and absurdities.[44] Thus, *Volpone* stands as one of Jonson's typical comedies that fulfills his aim of "mix[ing] profit with… pleasure" (Prologue, 8), to achieve the change he is looking forward to.

Soyinka, on the other hand shares Jonson in his belief in the moral responsibility of the dramatist toward his society. Soyinka states his claim that the committed playwright should always work for the ultimate good of his society by projecting the needs and problems of his people with the aim of initiating lasting solutions.[45] In adopting such belief, Soyinka is not speaking in vacuum unless there are serious problems in society that demand an urgent treatment. As he has found in drama the most perfect weapon to address social, cultural and political issues, Soyinka has made his decision to criticize and satirize the great confusions in human values resulting from long periods of coloniliazation and dictatorships.[46] Soyinka has always believed that by such criticism, though it sometimes turns to be destructive, he is going to recreate a new spirited society with new social values, but most importantly, tradition must survive and take an active role as the source of the process of recreation. This process of destruction and recreation of Soyinka [47] is very much intensified in *The Lion and the Jewel*. Despite the temporary damage that results from Baroka's seduction of Sidi, the process of recreation is coming forth represented by Sidi's coming child:

> Sidi: Mother of brides, your blessing…
>
> Sadiku: [*lays her hand on Sidi's head*] I invoke the fertile gods. They will stay with you. May the time come soon when you shall be as round-bellied as a full moon in a low sky.
>
> Sidi: Now bless my worldly goods.
> [*Turns to the musicians*.]
> Come, sing to me of seeds
> Of children, sired of the lion stock.
>
> (Night, p.64)

Sidi's newly conceived child and the celebrational atmosphere of the wedding of Sidi and Baroka reflect the hopeful part in the process of recreation. The effect of destruction has been only temporary, but the effect of recreation is continual through the coming generations assisted by tradition

that provides the solid background on which society relies on its way of change. This is the moral message that Soyinka mixes with the elements of delights in *The Lion and the Jewel* which represents also a part of Soyinka's classical adherence to adopt, as Jonson has done before him, the classical rules of teaching by delight, to moralize his people by entertaining them. Quite significantly, such entertainment in both plays is achieved through a very important technique that is the lyricism of the language used in both plays the matter that is intended by the two playwrights to show the ironies of the different situations they put their foxes in. Moreover, such use of lyrical language serves the central object of both playwrights; to give an expanded space to satire and moralism that both intensify in their plays.

Interestingly, despite the sharp difference in the ends of the two plays, Soynika's *Lion and the Jewel*, shows great affinities with Jonson's *Volpone* not only in matters of theme(s) and characterization only but also in technique. Of course such affinities cannot appear from nothing unless there is a real and a direct influence of Ben Jonson's *Volpone* on Wole Soyinka's *Lion and the Jewel* that has led Soyinka to elaborate and recreate of Jonson's Fox his own African Fox. Significantly, such Jonsonian influence is reflected deeply in the way both dramatists create of their foxes a unifying force through which they blend all the components of their plays according to the actions and reactions of the two foxes with the societies they find themselves in, communicating one message: the need to purgate and free society from all its crippling defects with a hope of a better life to come. Thus, the two foxes are turned to be more than mere literary figures; their effect creates of them a powerful embodiment of a universal theme shown and expressed in both plays by those foxes, that is the Fox Theme.

NOTES

[1] Robert N. Watson, (Intro.), *Volpone, or the Fox*, (London: The New Mermaids, 2003), p.xiii.

[2] B.R.Parker, "Wolfit's Fox: An Interpretation of *Volpone*", (*University of Toronto Quarterly. A Canadian Journal of the Humanities*, vol.45, 1976, pp.200-20), p.201.

[3] Don Beecher, "The Progress of Trickster in Ben Jonson's *Volpone*", (*Cahiers Elizabethains*, vol. 27, April, 1985, pp.43-51), p.44.

[4] Arnold P. Hinchliffe, *Volpone*: *Text and Performance*, (London: Macmillan Publishers Ltd, 1985), p.20.

[5] Martin Esslin, "Two Nigerian Playwrights", *Introduction to African Literature: An Anthology of Critical Writing*, Ulli Beier (ed.), (London: Longman Group Limited, 1979, pp.281-288), p.287.

[6] The Mountebank, a kind of theatrical doctor who sells medicine in markets and streets of Italy, but for the Elizabethans the mountebank is known as a real life actor, juggler and a performer of card tricks not as a seller of medicine. On the other hand, the Scoto of Mantua is a real Italian mountebank who has visited England and Queen Elizabeth by the year 1576. Peter Womack, *Ben Jonson*, Terry Eaglton (ed.), (New York: Basil Blackwell, Ltd, 1987), p.138.

[7] Ibid, p.140.

[8] Jonas A. Barish (ed.), "The Double Action in *Volpone*", *Ben Jonson: A Collection of Critical Essays*, (New Jersey: Prentice – Hall, Inc., 1936, pp.93-105), p.97.

[9] Eldred Durosimi Jones, *The Writing of Wole Soyinka*, (London: Heinemann Educational Books Inc., 1988), p.52.

[10] Watson (Intro.), *Volpone*, p.viii.

[11] Robert N. Watson, *Ben Jonson's Strategy: Literary Imperialism in the Comedies*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1087), p.89.

[12] Watson (Intro.), *Volpone*, p.ix.

[13] John Creaser, "*Volpone*: The Mortifying of the Fox", (*Essays in Criticism: A Quarterly Journal of Literary Criticism*, vol.25, 1975, pp.329-56), p.338.

[14] *Carp Diem*, a Latin phrase that means "seize the day", and is used to design a theme or motif, especially in lyric poetry, that warns about the brevity of life and the finality of death. The origin of the phrase is Horace's Odes. Kathleen Morner and Ralph Rausch, *From Absurd to Zeitgeist: The Compact Guide to Literary Terms*, (Illinois: NTC/Contemporary Publishing Company, 1991), (S.V. *Carp Diem*).

[15] Creaser, p.339.

[16] L.C.Knights, "Tradition and Ben Jonson", *Elizabethan Drama: Modern Essays in Criticism*, R.J.Kauffmann (ed.), (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1968, pp.153-169), p.159.

[17] Creaser, p.341.

[18] Dorothy E. Litt, "The Unity of Theme in *Volpone*", (*Bulletin of the NewYork public Library*, vol.73, 1969, pp.218-226), p.221.

[19] Beecher, p.44.

[20] Esslin, p.287.

[21] Martin Banham, *Wole Soyinka: The Lion and the Jewel, A Critical View*, Yolande Cantu (ed.), (London: Collins International Text Books, 1985), p.21.

[22] Bernth Lindfors, "Wole Soyinka and the Horses of Speech", (*Spectrum*, vol.III, 1973), cited in, *Wole Soyinka: The Lion and the Jewel, A Critical View*, Yolande Cantu (ed.), (London: Collins International Text Books, 1985), p.33.

[23] Jones, p.52.

[24] Ralph A. Cohen, "The Setting of *Volpone*", (*Renaissance Papers*, 1078, pp.64-75), p.65.

[25] Watson (Intro.), *Volpone*, pp.iii-iv.

[26] M.C. Bradbrook, *The Growth and Structure of Elizabethan Comedy* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1964), p.145.

[27] B.R. Chaudhuri, *Ben Jonson: Volpone*, (New Delhi: Aarti Book Centre, 1985), p.50.

[28] Ibid.

[29] Ace G. Pinkington, "*Volpone* and Jonson: A Study in Contradictions", *Insights*, 1991, www.bard.org , 30-8-2005.

[30] Watson, *Ben Jonson's Strategy*, p.93.

[31] Barish, p.94.

[32] Ibid, p.96.

[33] Ibid, p.94.

[34] Jones, p.47.

[35] Oscar G. Brockett and Mark Pape, *World Drama*, (Texas: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1984), p.33.

[36] Oyin Ogunba, "The Movement of Transition", cited in, *Wole Soyinka: The Lion and the Jewel, A Critical View*, Yolande Cantu (ed.), (London: Collins International Text Books, 1985), p.33.

[37] Banham, p.14.

[38] Jones, p.51.

[39] Esslin, p.287.

[40] Chaudhuri, p.255.

[41] Robert Ornstein, "The Moral Vision of Ben Jonson's Tragedy", *Elizabethan Drama: Modern Essays in Criticism*, R.J.Kaufmann (ed.), (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1961, pp.187-207), p.188.

[42] Kathleen A. Prendergast, "Ben Jonson Unmasked", www.englishlitrature.org , 11-8-2005.

[43] Russel Thomas (ed.), *The Plays and the Theatre*, (Boston: D.C. Heath and Company, 1937), p.80.

[44] Creaser, pp. 342-43.

[45] Tracie Chima Utoh, " Dramatic Parables, Imperatives for Social Change in Postcolonial Nigeria: A Critical Analysis of Contemporary plays", *African Cultures, Visual Arts, and the Museum*, (Amsterdam & New York: Editors Rodopi, 2002, pp.273-281), p.274.

[46] Robert W. July, "The Artist's Credo: the Political Philosophy of Wole Soyinka", (*The Journal of Modern African Studies*, vol.19, no.3, pp.477-498), p.477.

[47] A massive part of Soyinka's philosophy of destruction and recreation is attributed to Ogun, the Yoruba god with whom Soyinka believes he has the closest affinities and provide the most lucid and succinct declaration of Soyinka's role as an artist: "the duality of Ogun, the seeming contradiction in his nature- he is both the creative and the destructive essence- makes him an enigmatic symbol both in Soyinka's own creative work and in his criticism", Jones, p.5.

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