



كلية: الآداب

القسم او الفرع: قسم اللغة الإنجليزية

المرحلة: الثالثة

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اسم المادة باللغة الإنكليزية: **Drama**

اسم المحاضرة الأولى باللغة العربية: الرموز الرئيسية في مسرحية فولبون

اسم المحاضرة الأولى باللغة الإنكليزية: **Symbols in Volpone**

Symbols in *Volpone*

Venice

Venice, as the setting of *Volpone*, serves as a powerful symbol of greed, corruption, and decadence, playing into the long-standing stereotypes that existed in English drama during the Renaissance. Historically, Venice was perceived as a city of immense wealth, beauty, and sophistication, but also as a place of moral decay, sensuousness, and corruption. The Italian reputation for producing cunning politicians like Lorenzo de Medici and Cesare Borgia, as well as Machiavelli's notorious writings on political manipulation, contributed to this image. Additionally, Italy's rich tradition of love poetry, which was often erotic and passionate, fed into English suspicions that Italians indulged in decadent, immoral behavior.

In *Volpone*, Venice is not just a backdrop but a representation of the moral decay that drives the play's characters. For English audiences of the time, Venice symbolized a distant, foreign land where vice and greed thrived unchecked. The English feared that this type of decadence, associated with Italy, could "infect" their own society if they were not careful. The subplot involving Sir Politic Would-be, an English knight who becomes corrupted by Venetian culture, illustrates this fear. Sir Politic's transformation from a respectable figure into a lying, would-be thief demonstrates the perceived "power of Venice" to morally corrupt those who immerse themselves in its ways. He "goes Venetian," losing his sense of English virtue and becoming entangled in the deceitful and immoral world of Venice.

However, this Venetian setting, while essential to Jonson's plot, may have also distanced English audiences from the moral implications of the play. By setting *Volpone* in a city already infamous for its corruption, Jonson risked making the play's themes of greed and moral decay feel too remote from England's own society. Instead of confronting their own cultural flaws, audiences could dismiss the greed and vice as characteristic of faraway Venice, rather than recognizing that these same moral dangers might lurk closer to home, in the heart of London itself. Jonson's intention may have been to use Venice as a mirror for English society, but the foreign setting allowed audiences to detach themselves from the critique.

Animalia

A pervasive symbol throughout *Volpone* is the use of animals to represent the characters and their behaviors. This animal symbolism not only adds depth to the play but also helps Jonson craft a satirical "beast fable," a genre that typically uses animals to convey simple moral lessons. In *Volpone*, the animal names assigned to the characters reveal their base instincts and predatory nature, reinforcing the theme of greed and parasitism.

At the center of this animal symbolism is the character of Volpone, whose name means "fox" in Italian. The fox is traditionally seen as a cunning, sly creature, and Volpone embodies these traits fully. He spends the play tricking others into giving him wealth by pretending to be on his deathbed, just as a fox might lure its prey through deception. Mosca, whose name means "fly," is Volpone's parasite, a creature that feeds on decay and thrives by attaching itself to a more powerful entity. Mosca buzzes around Volpone, helping him trick others while feeding off his master's wealth and influence.

The legacy hunters—Voltore, Corbaccio, and Corvino—are all named after predatory or carrion birds, emphasizing their greed and scavenger-like nature. Voltore, whose name means "vulture," is a lawyer who is always on the lookout for opportunities to pick apart the fortunes of others. Like a vulture, he has sharp eyesight when it comes to seizing wealth but lacks any sense of morality or loyalty. Corbaccio, the "raven," is an elderly man who, like the raven known for abandoning its young, seeks to disinherit his own son, Bonario, in a ruthless pursuit of Volpone's fortune. Finally, Corvino, the "crow," is greedy and possessive, willing to offer his wife, Celia, to Volpone in exchange for the promise of wealth. These bird-like characters circle Volpone, hoping to benefit from his supposed death, but in the end, they are all duped, losing their feathers—symbolically their wealth and dignity—to the cunning fox and his parasite.

The animal imagery not only highlights the characters' base, predatory instincts but also emphasizes the theme of parasitism. In the play, the characters feed off one another, using deceit, manipulation, and flattery to gain power and wealth. Volpone tricks the legacy hunters into giving him gifts by promising them his fortune, while Mosca feeds off Volpone's success, gradually gaining control over him. This parasitic relationship reflects the broader theme of exploitation that runs throughout the play, where one life form (or character) feeds on another to survive and thrive.