

UNIT 2 JONSONIAN COMEDY AND *THE ALCHEMIST*

Structure

- 2.0 Objectives
- 2.1 Introduction
- 2.2 Jonsonian Comedy and *The Alchemist*
- 2.3 Critical Extracts
- 2.4 Questions
- 2.5 Annotation Passages

2.0 OBJECTIVES

In this unit an attempt is made to (1) trace the origins of English comedy, a divided stream, (2) contrast Shakespearian and Jonsonian comedy, (3) identify the rival traditions of acting and (4) sketch the interaction between the native morality tradition and the classical comic structure.

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The appreciation of Jonsonian comedy has been complicated by (1) confining his contribution to the virtual invention of the genre, Comedy of Humours, (2) undue emphasis on his classical erudition and (3) alleging the want of a Shakespearian spontaneity of spirit. Moreover, Jonson's occasional observations on the nature and function of comedy, dispersed, as they are, throughout his plays do not offer a consistent conception of comedy except through an over simplification. Jonson's defining of the impact of his Satiric comedy is further highlighted through attention to the Prologue to *The Alchemist*. Jonsonian Comedy is examined in its literary and social and economic dimensions.

2.2 JONSONIAN COMEDY AND *THE ALCHEMIST*

The appreciation of Jonsonian comedy is hindered by the misconceptions about his contribution. On account of the enormous popularity and the notoriety following the production of *Every Man in His Humour* and *Every Man out of His Humour*, he has been dubbed as the virtual inventor of the new genre, the Comedy of Humours. In formulating this form of comedy, Jonson was not attempting to validate his characterization by reference to Renaissance notions of physiology. He was rephrasing the function of comedy in terms acceptable, to the hostile Puritans. By underscoring the therapeutic character of de-humouring, and by re-directing attacks from persons towards follies and foibles, Jonson sought for his comic experiments a *raison d'être*. The point is well raised by Harry Levin when he observes: "The induction to *Every Man Out of His Humour* sets forth the full argument for comedy as a social purgative. It is perhaps as relevant to Jonson's work as psychoanalysis is to the dramas of Eugene O'Neill."

A literal interpretation of the theory behind the Comedy of Humours would also result in the distortion of Jonson's characters. In spite of the mode of caricature Jonson adopts, his characters possess an astonishingly distinguishing traits and

an undeniable vitality. Narrowly conceived, the Comedy of Humours affords scope only for four characters in four moulds. Bobadil and Kitely, Brainworm and Wellbred defy stereotyping. Jonson employs "humour" to mean a fad, a fashion, an affectation as well.

Often Jonson's erudition is considered a liability. The star pupil of the eminent scholar, William Camden, had no rivals for learning among the writers of his time. For some mysterious reason, superior knowledge has been held to be the enemy of creative spontaneity. The failure of *Sejanus* is instructive, for this is wrongly attributed to Jonson's fidelity to Roman sources. All claims to originality are summarily dismissed primarily because of Jonson's scholarship. Even Dryden is guilty on this count. L.C. Knights observes: "Dryden said of him (Jonson) that he was a learned plagiary of all the ancients: 'you track him everywhere in their snow' But this, the common view, violently distorts the sense in which Jonson is 'traditional'. It completely hides the native springs of his vitality".

By sheer bulk, Jonson's observations on comedy dispersed through his numerous prologues, epilogues, and debates in the course of the War of the Theatres, present a formidable critical corpus. By nature occasional, their significance has a specificity, and taken out of context they tend to appear inconsistent and self-contradictory. This is not to deny him a critical stance of his own which has undergone creative mutations over a span of more than three decades. For instance, the mimetic and pragmatic aspects of Jonson's comic theory can be fallaciously made out to be polar opposites.

One way of defining Jonsonian comedy is to contrast it with Shakespearian Comedy. The dramatic world of Jonson is peopled by citizens, and in the absence of loving relationships it seems to deserve and demand "a harsh ethic". On the other hand, in Shakespeare there is greater interaction among men and women of all walks and stations of life, and the spirit of understanding appears to be pervasive. Hardly any of Shakespeare's creations is "incapable of a generous impulse". Hence, Shakespearian comedy has been labelled as sweet and romantic, and Jonsonian comedy as bitter and satiric. Much mischief was caused by linking the hues of the world of the plays to the temperament of the playwright.

Rightly understood, neither Shakespeare nor Jonson was offering through his dramatic world clues to his temperament. Both were adopting earlier traditions, the Medieval and the Renaissance versions of comedy were derived ultimately from the Latin grammarians of the fourth century. Making up for the paucity of theories of comedy, they viewed tragedy as an illuminating foil. Since tragedy dealt with kings and generals and portrayed a movement from happiness to calamity, comedy had to be peopled by private people and trace the movement from wretchedness to happiness. Unlike in tragedy, life in comedy is not to be dreaded but embraced. Vices and follies are to be punished. Thus, elements of the Romantic comedy and of the Satiric co-existed originally. The Romantic elements surfaced early, i.e. in the Middle Ages; The Satiric lay underground for a long time to become prominent only in the Renaissance, and Jonsonian comedy is a characteristically Renaissance manifestation. It is Shakespeare's Romantic Comedy which harks back to the medieval times, to genial Chaucer. The difference between the two traditions is quite radical.

When Asper, a spokesman for Jonson, states his aim in the introduction to *Every Man in his Humour*,

Well I will scourge those apes:
And to those courteous eyes oppose a mirror,
As large as is the stage, whereon we act:
Where they shall see the time's deformity
Anatomiz'd in every nerve, and sinew,
With constant courage, and contempt of fear

he echoes the views of Renaissance theorists like George Whetstone: "For by the reward of the good, the good are encouraged in well doing: and with the scourge of the lewd, the lewd are feared from evil attempts;" and Sir Philip Sidney, "Comedy is an imitation of the common errors of our life, which he represents in the most ridiculous and scornful sort may be; so as it is impossible that any beholder can be content to be such a one."

In tune with its quinessential corrective function, Jonsonian comedy deals with contemporary movements, real life figures and pastimes. When L.C. Knights remarks, "Of the dramatists handling social themes Jonson is undoubtedly the greatest", he has in mind the gulls and the cheats of a society governed by the acquisitive impulse. Though it is true that the gulls call into being the cheats, and that Jonson's satire is directed against the cozeners, the individuals drawn from varied occupations really present a cross-section of society. A pageant of vices is transformed into an all devouring organism, and both gulls and cozeners are unified by their ruthless individualism and obsessive acquisitiveness. The clerk and the churchman, the shopkeeper and the countryman are welded by their greed and lust.

As a keen observer of nascent capitalism, Jonson documented social change, notably the rise of the new merchant class, dispossessing traditional landed aristocracy. Jonson's concern for realism for "deeds and language such as men do use" is well known. In portraying contemporary manners, he was not content to provide a mere reflection. For Jonson, imitation and mirroring involved praise and blame, i.e. taking a moral stand. The playwright did not adopt the moral standard of the emerging world of entrepreneurs, nor did he express a merely personal code. His standards of moral judgement were indeed from an earlier era, summed up in M.C. Brabrook's phrase "the traditional economic morality inherited from the Middle Ages".

The opening note of the play, the involuntary and habitual projection of three tiers of self-images by the cozening triumvirate, Subtle, Face and Dol constitutes a parody of leading social institutions: in their "republic", Subtle is the "sovereign," Face, the "general" and Dol their "cinque port" and before they call a truce, they are but a cur, a mastiff, and a bitch, and alternately, "Bawd!", "Cowherd!", "Conjurer!" "Cutpurse!" and "Witch!" The abuses hurled at each other and the ranks they assign themselves illustrate the range of roles they can play.

Since the playwright's relationship with the players is a vital dimension of the former's career, Jonsonian comedy had to interact significantly with acting styles of the time. There was the tradition of the Revels, which included mimes and spectacle, and brought actors and audience close to one another. There was also the courtly, academic, learned tradition heavily leaning towards rhetoric, and declamation on moral themes. The former lacked shape and structure for it presented isolated scenes loosely connected. The latter lacked flexibility and spontaneity. Satiric drama, Jonsonian drama called for the greatest interaction between actors and audience, and flourished however briefly because of a fortuitous circumstance - "The momentary fusion of the popular and learned traditions, the temporary interaction of two modes which were not compatible."

The nature and function of Jonsonian comedy was enunciated in Cicero's dictum cited in the introduction to *Every Man Out of His Humour*: "Comedy is an imitation of life, a mirror of manners and an image of truth". Imitation involved interpretation, mirroring some degree of evaluation, and imaging a certain measure of permanence. Jonsonian comedy because of its focus on the momentous changes of his time makes us aware of "a great reorientation of attitude", which according to L.C. Knights, anticipates our own anxieties and concerns. It is the double focus of Jonsonian comedy on things as they are and as they ought to be, rather than his scholarship, which is of the essence of his 'classicism'.

In the prologue to *The Alchemist*, Jonson envisages "fair correctives" beyond "The rage / Or spleen of comic writers." The foibles of the contemporary scene are to be presented in their essence, their universal dimension with such realism that individuals may not be able to recognise themselves.

If there be any, that will sit so nigh
Unto the stream, to look what it doth run,
They shall find things, they'd think, or wish, were done,
They are so natural follies, but so shown,
As even the doers may see, and yet not own.

Correction is to be brought about not by exposure to consequences of specific manners, vices, or humours, but by the ineffable impact of the deeper, universal dimension of folly. That is why the doer may not own his deed.

2.3 CRITICAL EXTRACTS

J.B. Steane

This does not mean that Jonson is an irresponsible moralist here, or that *The Alchemist* is 'mere' entertainment. It is a very highly organised, sharply pointed moral comedy, but its sting is directed not so much at the exploiters as at the society, which by its greed and folly is so open to exploitation... The gulls are so varied as to show in cross-section a society led by greed and lust to folly and loss. The nobleman, the countryman, the little clerk, the churchman, the small shopkeeper: Jonson's net is cast widely enough over society to take in all these... What might have been a parade of assorted vices gains unity and purpose from the motive that is common to all of them: an obsessive desire for easy money. In this way the play does more than offer a rich collection of satirical portraits; it depicts a whole society, ruthlessly individualistic and acquisitive, and ultimately deluded and impoverished by its own false values... Greed for wealth is so much the unifying factor in *The Alchemist* that it almost seems an end in itself, but Sir Epicure reminds us that the play's attack extends to the delusive ways of life that folk propose to themselves as ends. Here Mammon is the means; the complete Epicure the end. The bed and the table become the twin centres of life.

Michael Jamieson

Professor Nevill Coghill has usefully demonstrated that two traditions of comedy existed in Elizabethan times, with different antecedents, both stemming from theoretical reversals of Aristotle's notions of tragedy. Romantic Comedy begins with wretchedness and the threat of danger but ends happily. Satiric Comedy teaches by exposing the errors of city folk. Shakespeare, and Jonson, Professor Coghill argues exemplify the two comic forms... The quality of a Jonsonian Comedy, however, lies not only in its construction and in its presentation of character as obsession, but also in its language. The master-theme in Jonson's satirical comedies is human folly,

L.C. Knights (1937)

... the material on which the dramatists work – in comedy and history play - is drawn from-has an immediate reference to the movements, the significant figures of contemporary life: the satire on usurers, the profiteers and the newly rich, on social ambition and the greed for money, can be abundantly illustrated. And the social interest that are drawn on are not those of one class alone... Of the dramatists handling social themes Jonson is undoubtedly the greatest... In his handling of ambition, greed, lust, acquisitiveness and so on he implicitly, but clearly, refers to a more than personal scheme of values. Jonson in short was working in a tradition.

What we have to determine is where that tradition 'came from'... These significant developments- most of them were aspects of the growth of capitalism; and company-promoting, 'projecting' and industrial enterprise certainly formed an important part of the world which Jonson and his fellows observed, the world which gave them their knowledge of human nature. The Elizabethan drama owed, if not its existent patronage of the governing class, a class drawing its wealth mainly from the land and conscious of the encroachment of the 'new man' of commerce and industry.

M.C. Bradbrook.

Sweet and bitter comedy, romantic and satiric comedy, or Shakespearean and Jonsonian comedy have all been used as terms of description for the two main divisions, of which the first may be said to be characteristically Elizabethan, and the second Jacobean.... Behind Elizabethan drama there lay at least two modes of acting first, the tradition of the revels, whether country or popular, and all that these implied of intimate collaboration between actors and audience... Second, the learned tradition of rhetorical and satiric drama upon moral themes, built up in the schools and universities, found expression in an even more intimate private presentation... When these two traditions coalesced, the great age of Elizabethan drama began. Jonson was bold in his readiness to modify classical precept, he admired the native tradition, and the form which he evolved was as far removed from the pedantic as it was from the spontaneous....

W. David Kay

Like Dickens, to whom he is often compared, Jonson also offers evocative glimpses of the city's seemier side.... Jonson's local allusions, however, are not merely 'atmospheric', but are instrumental to his satire, and although his humour characters are increasingly particularized, they are conceived as contemporary manifestations of enduring follies and vices, given new artistic life by the realistic detail with which they are invested.

Nevill Coghill

Shakespeare was not simply following the chances of temperament in designing his comedies, any more than Jonson was; each was following earlier traditions, that evolved during the Middle Ages and at the Renaissance, from the same parent stock of thought which is to be found in the writings of the Latin grammarians of the fourth century.... The Renaissance view of Comedy was entirely different: suddenly the Satiric, after more than a thousand years of hibernation, sprang fully armed out of the ground and possessed the new theorists. For them the proper, the only, concern of Comedy was ridicule; it offered no necessary antithesis to Tragedy, it gave no suggestion, however rudimentary, of containing a narrative line... Such, then, were the two theories of Comedy, the Romantic and the Satirical, of the Middle Ages and the Renaissance respectively, that twinned out of the late Latin grammarians to flower in Tudor times. Faced by a choice in such matters, a writer is wise if he follows his temperament. Ben Jonson knotted his cat-o-nine-tails. Shakespeare reached for his Chaucer.

Jonathan Haynes

Forcing someone who was borrowing money to take up worthless commodities was a well-known form of sharp dealing, so Face's business sense has a touch of the underworld about it, but it nevertheless extends to a centralized market in credit and commodities.

Marquette Chute

The Alchemist is exactly what the great critic inside Jonson intended it to be-a vast, brilliant portrait of his own times set within the strictest limits of classical

requirements *The Alchemist* is a realistic play, rooted in the Jacobean London of Jonson's own day... some of the touches in the play that would like a poet's fantasy, imagination are actually an echo of sober civic records.

L.C. Knights (1955)

The best of Jonson's play are living drama because the learning and 'classical' elements are assimilated by a sensibility in direct contact with its own age ... 'I believe', said Coleridge, 'there is not one whim or affectation in common life noted in any memoir of that age which may not be found drawn and framed in some corner or other of Ben Jonson's dramas Jonson, in short, is neither the classicist whose learning puts a barrier between himself and the experience of his age, nor the purely native product in whom a certain provinciality is the price of forthright vigour, he is man who, having seen and learnt from other civilizations, is thoroughly at home in his own time and place. The result of this blend is an uncommon poise and strength The issues with which he chose to deal were among the most deeply ingrained preoccupations of his age... when we think of the sixteenth century we think not only of 'the Development of the Individual', 'the Revival of Antiquity', 'the Discovery of the World and of Man', but of the thrust of capitalist enterprise, the rise of economic individualism, the development of an a-moral 'realism' in political thought and action.

J.B. Bamforth (1967)

The Alchemist has a fair claim to be called Jonson's most brilliant play... The fact that it seems on the stage like improvisation by the characters is a tribute to Jonson's skill Obviously one of the difficulties of the Unity of Place was finding plausible reasons for all the characters to arrive at the same spot... Making Lovewit's house a centre for a sequence of frauds and confidence tricks gets over the difficulty completely; ... Jonson really solved the problem of the Unity of Action by not having a plot at all, but rather a series of episodes unified by involving the same characters and happening in the same place The real Unity of *The Alchemist* is more a unity of theme: it is a study in Greed and Self-deception.

D.Y.K. Raghavacharyulu

Ben Jonson's comedy is in the final analysis apocalyptic and terrifying, elemental and intellectual in its perception of mortal time as Kali-Yuga. With a satirical passion as intense as Marlowe's Icarian euphoria and Webster's charnel-house melancholia, Ben Jonson presents his figures as emblems of damnation not to look upon which is to turn to stone. A mimetic world meticulously created and offered not for adoption but avoidance: such is the stern didactic premise of the Jonsonian comedy Ben Jonson lets common sense triumph over abstraction and civilization prevail over attitudinization. The ethical arbitration is motivated by a comic anagnorisis, the essence of which is an awareness of human limitation from which nobody is free.

2.4 QUESTIONS

1. Discuss the differences between Shakespearian Comedy and Jonsonian Comedy.
2. Describe the misconceptions about Jonson's theory of comedy.
3. Bring out the note of social realism in Jonsonian comedy.
4. Consider Jonson as a Renaissance theorist of comedy.
5. Comment on the satiric function of comedy according to Jonson.
6. Summarise some of Jonson's dispersed observations on his art.

2.5 ANNOTATION PASSAGES

Annotate the following passages with reference to context.

- i) Now you set your foot on shore
In novo orbe; here's the rich Peru;^o
 And there within, sir, are the golden mines,
 Great Solomon's Ophir! He was sailing to't^o
 Three years, but we have reached it in ten months.
 This is the day wherein to all my friends,
 I will pronounce the happy word, 'be rich'.
 This day you shall be *spectatissimi*.^p
- ii) No more^o
 Shall thirst of satin or the covetous hunger
 Of velvet entrails for a rude-spun cloak,
 To be displayed at Madam Augusta's, make^o
 The sons of sword and hazard fall before^o
 The golden calf, and on their knees, whole nights,^o
 Commit idolatry with wine and trumpets,
 Or go a- buy feasting, after drum and ensign.^o
- iii) But when you see th' effects of the great medicine,
 Of which one part projected on a hundred
 Of Mercury or Venus or the Moon
 Shall turn it to as many of the Sun;^o
 Nay, to a thousand, *so ad infinitum*.^o
 You will believe me.
- iv) He that has once the flower of the sun,
 The perfect ruby, which we call elixir,^o
 Not only can do that, but by its virtue
 Can confer honour, love, respect, long life,
 Give safety, valour—yea, and victory,
 To whom he will.
- v) 'Tis the secret
 Of nature naturized 'gainst all infections,^o
 Cures all diseases coming of all causes,
 A month's grief in a day; a year's in twelve;
 And of what age soever, in a month,
 Past all the doses of your drugging doctors.
- vi) Will you believe antiquity? Records?
 I'll show you a book where Moses and his sister
 And Solomon have written of the art;
 Aye, and a treatise penned by Adam.^o
- vii) Such was Pythagoras' thigh, Pandora's tub,^o
 And all the fable of Medea's charms,
 The manner of our work; the bulls, our furnance,
 Still breathing fire; our argent-vive, the dragon;
 The dragon's teeth, mercury sublimate,^o
 That keeps the whiteness, hardness, and the biting;
 And they are gathered into Jason's helm^o
 (Th' alembic) and then sowed in Mars his field,^o
 And thence sublimed so often, till they are fixed.^o

- viii) Both this, th' Hesperian garden Cadmus' story,^o
Jove's shower, the boon of Midas, Argus' eyes,^o
Boccace his Demogorgon, thousands more,^o
All abstract riddles of our stone.
- ix) For I do mean
To have a list of wives and concubines
Equal with Solomon, who had the stone^o
Alike with me; and I will make me a back
With the elixir that shall be as tough
As Hercules, to encounter fifty a night.^o
- x) I will have all my beds blown up, not stuffed;
Down is too hard. And then mine oval room
Filled with such pictures as Tiberius took
From Elephantis, and dull Aretine
But coldly imitated. Then, my glasses^o
Cut in more subtle angles, to disperse
And multiply the figures as I walk
Naked between my *succubae*.
- xi) My mists^o
I'll have of perfume, vapoured 'bout the room,
To loose ourselves in; and my baths like pits
To fall into, from whence we will come forth
And roll us dry in gossamer and roses.—
- xii) The few that would give out themselves to be
Court and town stallions, and eachwhere belie
Ladies, who are known most innocent, for them,^o
Those will I beg to make me eunuchs of,
And they shall fan me with ten ostrich tails
Apiece, made in a plume to gather wind.
- xiii) We will be brave, Puff, now we ha' the medicine.
My meat shall all come in in Indian shells,
Dishes of agate, set in gold, and studded
With emeralds, sapphires, hyacinths and rubies.
Dressed with an exquisite and poignant sauce;
For which, I'll say unto my cook, 'there's gold,
Go forth, and be a knight.'
- xiv) My shirts
I'll have of taffeta-sarsnet, soft and light
As cobwebs; and for all my other raiment
It shall be such as might provoke the Persian,^o
Were he to teach the world roit anew.
My gloves of fishes' and birds' skins, perfumed
With gums of paradise, and eastern air—^o
- xv) My venture brings it me. he, honest wretch,
A notable, superstitious, good soul,
Has worn his knees bare and his slippers bald,
With prayer and fasting for it; and, sir, let him
Do it alone, for me, still. Here he comes,
Not a profane word afore him! 'Tis poison.
- xvi) You're covetous, that thus you meet your time
I' the just point, prevent your day, at morning.
This argues something worthy of a fear

Of importune and carnal appetite.
 Take heed you do not cause the blessing leave you,
 With your ungoverned haste. I should be sorry
 To see my labours, now e'en at perfection,
 Got by long watching and large patience,
 Not prosper where my love and zeal hath placed 'em.

- xvii) Infuse vinegar,
 To draw his volatile substance and his tincture,
 And let the water in glass E be filtered,
 And put into the gripe's egg. Lute him well;^o
 And leave him closed *in balneo*.
- xviii) As, if at first, one ounce convert a hundred,
 After his second loose, he'll turn a thousand;
 His third solution, ten; his fourth, a hundred.
 After his fifth, a thousand thousand ounces
 Of any imperfect metal, into pure
 Silver or gold, in all examinations
 As gold as any of the natural mine.
 Get you your stuff here, against afternoon,
 Your brass, your pewter, and your andirons.
- xix) It is, of the one part,
 A humid exhalation, which we call
Materia liquidu, or the unctuous water;^o
 On the other part, a certain crass and viscous
 Portion of earth; both which, congregate,
 Do make the elementary matter of gold,
 Which is not yet *Propria materia*.^o
 But common to all metals and all stones.
 For where it is forsaken of that moisture,
 And hath more dryness, it becomes a stone;
 Where it retains more of the humid fatness,
 It turns to sulphur, or to quicksilver,
- xx) Of your elixir, your *lac virginis*,
 Your stone, your medicine, and your chrysosperm,
 Your sal, your sulphur, and your mercury,^o
 Your oil of height, your tree of life, your blood,^o
 Your marcasite, your tutty, your magnesia,
 Your toad, your crow, your dragon, and your panther,^o
 Your sun, your moon, your firmament, your adrop,^o
 Your lato, azoth, zarnich, kibrit, heautarit,
 And then, your red man, and your white woman,^o
 With all your broths, your menstrues, and materials
 Of piss, and egg-shells, women's terms, man's blood,
 Hair o' the head, burnt clouts, chalk, merds, and clay,
 Powder of bones, scalings of iron, glass,
 And worlds of other strange ingredients,
 Would burst a man to name?
- xxi) Was not all the knowledge
 Of the Egyptians writ in mystic symbols?^o
 Speak not the Scriptures oft in parables?
 Are not the choicest fables of the poets,
 That were the fountains and first springs of wisdom,
 Wrapped in perplexed allegories?

- xxii) I urged that,
And cleared to him that Sisyphus was damned°
To roll the ceaseless stone only because
He would have made ours common.
- xxiii) O, by this light, no, Do not wrong him. He's
Too scrupulous that way. It is his vice.
No, he's a rare physician, do him right.
An excellent Paracelsian! And has done
Strange cures with mineral physic. He deals all
With spirits, he. He will not hear a word
Of Galen, or his tedious recipes.°
- xxiv) You're very right, sir; she is a most rare scholar,
And is gone mad with studying Broughton's works.°
If you but name a word touching the Hebrew,
She falls into her fit, and will discourse
So learnedly of genealogies,
As you would run mad, too, to hear her, sir.
- xxv) An this be your elixir,
Your *lapis mineralis*, and your lunar,°
Give me your honest trick, yet at primero,
Or gleeck; and take your *lutum sapientis*,°
Your *menstruum simplex*.
- xxvi) O, what else, sir?
And that you'll make her royal with the stone,
And empress; and yourself king of Bantam.°
- xxvii) A townsman born in Taurus gives the bull,
Or the bull's head; in Aries, the ram.
A poor device. No, I will have his name
Formed in some mystic character, whose *radii*,
Striking the senses of the passers-by,
Shall, by a virtual influence, breed affections,
That may result upon the party owns it;