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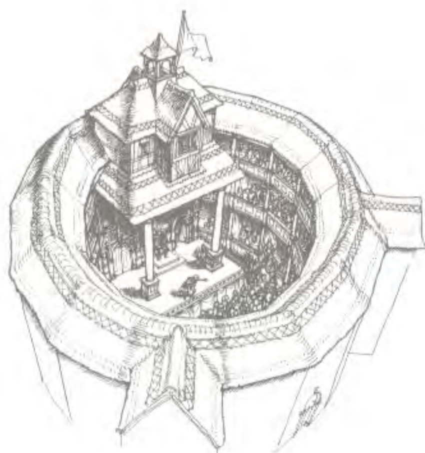
THOMAS MIDDLETON &
WILLIAM ROWLEY

THE CHANGELING

Edited by Joost Daalder

NEW MERMAIDS

General editor: Brian Gibbons
Professor of English Literature, University of Münster



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by C. Walter Hodges

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All for Love
Arden of Faversham
Bartholmew Fair
The Beaux' Stratagem
The Changeling
A Chaste Maid in Cheapside
The Country Wife
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The Witch of Edmonton
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A Woman of No Importance
Women Beware Women

NEW MERMAIDS

THOMAS MIDDLETON & WILLIAM ROWLEY

THE CHANGELING

edited by Joost Daalder

Professor of English
Flinders University of South Australia

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PREFACE

WHEN *The Changeling* was first entered in the Stationer's Register on 19 October 1652 it was described as a comedy by William Rowley. Our century has been more inclined to view it as a tragedy by Middleton. I have no wish to belittle Middleton's contribution, but I have paid more attention to Rowley's than is customary, and not only to the comic aspects of it. It is simplistic to think of the play as a tragedy which happens to have a comic sub-plot, and it is significant that Rowley wrote not only the so-called comic scenes but also the first and last scenes of the main plot. It is the nature of the connection between the two plots which is truly important, and on which I have placed special emphasis in both the introduction and the running commentary on the text, even if not always explicitly.

To me *The Changeling* is as exciting a play, in its profound understanding of human conduct and its artistry, as any I know outside the Shakespeare corpus, and I believe that it offers things which we do not find in Shakespeare. Its grasp of the nature of madness is particularly noteworthy, and is presented with the utmost skill and originality.

I have tried to present a modernized text which is both responsible and lucid. But there has been a much more drastic departure in the area of annotation. I agree with those who feel that the play 'does not rely upon explicit statement or direct speech but upon implication' (M. C. Bradbrook), and this means that as an editor I have had to pay close attention to the language and just what it is likely to imply rather than merely what it says quite obviously. This is particularly – but not uniquely – true in the many cases where the play offers two meanings, of which one is sexual. As Christopher Ricks pointed out in 1960, the play centrally depends on the need for us to be aware of the two levels in these instances, yet editors have done little to elucidate them. The matter is not just one of wit (though it is that too), but more significantly one of what the play is chiefly concerned with, such as (especially) the difference between what we are conscious of and what is in reality more important although not apparent to us because it resides in 'the unconscious', to use Freud's term. In the area of sexual meanings, I have been crucially aided by Ricks' work, but even more by that of Eric Partridge and of James T. Henke.

I have learned something from every previous edition of the play, but most from those to which I repeatedly refer, especially those by Dilke, Dyce, Bawcutt, Williams, and Black. I owe an incalculable debt to the publishers and general editors of 'New

Mermaids', who have twice given me the opportunity to edit a text for the series. On this occasion, I am particularly grateful to the present general editor, Brian Gibbons, for his persistent support, advice and generosity. Over the years I have also been helped tremendously by the editors of *Essays in Criticism*, and they gave me my first chance to publish on *The Changeling*; I have to some extent drawn on my 1988 article for the journal. I should further like to thank, for help and acts of kindness, Professor J. R. Mulryne and two former students, Antony Telford-Moore and Leigh Sutton, as well as, of course, my wife, Truus Daalder, not least as a fellow interpreter of the text. I also acknowledge with gratitude a large debt to Flinders University, and notably its Research Committee.

The edition by Brian Loughrey and Neil Taylor, *Thomas Middleton: Five Plays* (1988), appeared too late for me to make systematic use of it; although I have been able to read it, it has not influenced my own work.

Although I am indebted to many people, I alone of course remain responsible for any shortcomings in this edition.

Adelaide, 1989 JOOST DAALDER

NOTE TO THE FIFTH IMPRESSION (1995)

Since the first impression of this edition appeared in 1990 there have been a few corrections and, especially, some significant additions.

I would now point out in the note to II.ii.77, *scurvy*, that De Flores's skin condition is as likely to be due to syphilis as any other disease. To a Jacobean audience, *scurvy* would have meant much the same as *scabby* or *scabbed*, and could thus readily have indicated the presence of syphilis (cf. H, *scabbard*, etc.). It is, as De Flores points out, not his physical condition which has changed, but Beatrice's attitude to him. When she talks airily about 'the heat of the liver' (line 80) she is ironically unaware that it is no doubt indeed De Flores's sexual passion which has, quite literally, caused his disease.

Adelaide, 1995 J.D.

ABBREVIATIONS

Editions of *The Changeling*

Bawcutt	N. W. Bawcutt, ed., *The Changeling* (1958)
Black	M. W. Black, ed., *The Changeling* (1966)
Dilke	C. W. Dilke, ed., *Old English Plays* Vol. 4 (1815)
Dyce	Alexander Dyce, ed., *The Works of Thomas Middleton* Vol. 4 (1840)
Ellis	Havelock Ellis, ed., *Thomas Middleton* Vol. 1 (1887)
Frost	D. L. Frost, ed., *The Selected Plays of Thomas Middleton* (1978)
Gomme	A. H. Gomme, ed., *Jacobean Tragedies* (1969)
Harrier	R. C. Harrier, ed., *An Anthology of Jacobean Drama* Vol. 2 (1963)
Neilson	W. A. Neilson, ed., *The Chief Elizabethan Dramatists* (1911)
Sampson	M. W. Sampson, ed., *Thomas Middleton* (1915)
Spencer	Hazelton Spencer, ed., *Elizabethan Plays* (1934)
Williams	G. W. Williams, ed., *The Changeling* (1966)

Other Abbreviations

Abbott	E. A. Abbott, *A Shakespearian Grammar* (3rd rev. ed., 1870)
Craik	T. W. Craik, emendations proposed in *NQ*, March–April 1977, 120–2, and August 1980, 324–7
H	J. T. Henke, *Renaissance Dramatic Bawdy (Exclusive of Shakespeare): An Annotated Glossary and Critical Essays*, 2 vols. (1974)
M	Middleton
NQ	Notes and Queries
ODEP	*The Oxford Dictionary of English Proverbs* (3rd ed., 1970)
OED	*The Oxford English Dictionary* (1st ed.)
PDS	Eric Partridge, *A Dictionary of Slang and Unconventional English*, 8th ed., rev. Paul Beale (1984)
PSB	Eric Partridge, *Shakespeare's Bawdy* (3rd rev. ed. 1968)
Q	the 1653 quarto of *The Changeling*, esp. 162.k.10 in the British Library

R	Rowley
Reynolds	John Reynolds, *The Triumphs of God's Revenge against . . . Murder* (1621)
Ricks	Christopher Ricks, 'The Moral and Poetic Structure of *The Changeling*', *Essays in Criticism* 10 (1960), 290–306
sd	stage direction
Slater	A. P. Slater, 'Hypallage, Barley-Break, and *The Changeling*', *The Review of English Studies* n.s. 34 (1983), 429–40
Tilley	M. P. Tilley, *A Dictionary of the Proverbs in England in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* (1950)

Shakespeare references are to Peter Alexander's edition (1951).

INTRODUCTION

THE AUTHORS

THOMAS MIDDLETON WAS born in 1580, the child of a prosperous bricklayer. His father died in 1586, leaving property and bequests to his wife and children. His mother soon after remarried, but her second husband was an adventurer, and quarrels and lawsuits followed when the stepfather, mother and children sought control over the estate. Middleton matriculated in 1598 at the Queen's College, Oxford, but probably did not take a degree. A document of early 1601 describes him as being 'here in London daily accompanying the players'.[1] These players were probably Philip Henslowe's Admiral's Men (the rivals of the company to which Shakespeare belonged: the Lord Chamberlain's Men, later the King's Men). Middleton's early, often collaborative, pieces were written for Henslowe. In 1602 or 1603 Middleton married the sister of an actor in Henslowe's company.

Although Middleton's connection with Henslowe continued, in one way or another, for many years after, his earliest really successful work was done for the boys' companies, especially the Children of Paul's. Plays like *Michaelmas Term* and *A Trick to Catch the Old One* were 'citizen comedies' written for boy players between 1604 and 1606. Broadly speaking, such plays mercilessly satirize and expose the attitudes and actions of contemporary Londoners, especially their greed. From about 1606 the children's companies declined, and with them citizen comedy as a genre. By 1609 there was a growing demand for romantic tragi-comedies in the Beaumont and Fletcher mould. Middleton wrote a number of such plays over the next decade, chiefly for the King's Men. One admires *A Fair Quarrel* (c. 1615), written in collaboration with Rowley. However, for all its psychological interest (something for which Middleton is renowned), few like it as much as *A Chaste Maid in Cheapside* (c. 1613), which, although part of this new stage of Middleton's career, is best viewed as a magnificent city comedy. During the last major phase of his career Middleton concentrated on tragedy, especially *Women Beware Women* (c. 1621) and *The Changeling* (with Rowley, 1622). From 1613 he had written pageants and entertainments for city occasions, and in 1620 he became City Chronologer. His last important play is *A Game at*

[1] Unless otherwise indicated, spellings have been modernized.

Chess, a political satire which caused much stir when it was performed in 1624. Middleton died in 1627.[2]

Although Middleton's star has been rising in recent decades, it is not easy to point at a critical consensus as to just what kind of writer he is or how high a ranking his total output deserves. My sketch above is, of course, only very crude. But it would in any case be very different, as an outline and an assessment, if it included *The Revenger's Tragedy* (c. 1606). The play does not neatly fit into the common view of Middleton's development, but that is no reason for believing that he did not write it. In fact, the internal evidence for Middleton's authorship now appears to be so strong that I agree with the scholars who are moving towards the view that the onus for proving that it is *not* Middleton's has come to lie with those who continue to cling to the traditional belief that Tourneur was the author. This is not the place to argue the matter, but it seems safe to say that, if Middleton's authorship comes to be generally accepted (as I think it will be), our view of his complexity as a writer will be significantly affected, while his reputation – high though that already is – would be boosted so as to make him without doubt one of the leading dramatists of the Renaissance. As things stand, his output is generally seen as uneven, and only his very best work could be regarded as on a par with the best of writers like Shakespeare, Jonson and Marlowe. And, interestingly, the play for which he is best known – and which many would see as one of the greatest tragedies of the age – was not solely his product: *The Changeling* is a tragedy in which Rowley had a substantial, though much disputed, part as co-author.

William Rowley's life (c. 1585–1626) and works are less well known than Middleton's. He was known as an actor and man of the theatre, a member of the Duke of York's (later the Prince's) men, whose leader he had become by 1616; in 1623 he joined the King's Men. He was particularly good at acting the role of a fat clown. In some cases he appears to have written such a part as well as acted it. His gift for creating this type of character is certainly obvious from his portrayal of Lollio in *The Changeling*.

Rowley wrote a few plays under his own name – e.g., *All's Lost by Lust* (c. 1619) – which at present are, to my mind unjustly, neglected. His chief talent, however, appears to have been for collaboration, and his hand has been detected (or claimed to be present) in a very large number of plays. Middleton was by no means his only distinguished co-author, though the collaboration between the two seems to have been particularly fruitful. According to the late seventeenth-century stage historian Gerard Langbaine, Rowley was 'beloved by those great men, Shakespeare, Fletcher, and Jonson.' The judgement of posterity clashes most oddly with that of leading playwrights contemporary with Rowley. One reason is no doubt that we are not altogether sure of the nature of Rowley's contribution, but more probably he is the victim of some strange misunderstandings, such as the thought that a collaborator is automatically inferior to someone who writes a play completely on his own, and, in the case of *The Changeling*, that something both intrinsically difficult and hard to relate to the remainder of the play must somehow be defective. There are signs that the prevailing attitude to his work is becoming less negative, and it is likely that his contribution will be revalued as it becomes better understood.

[2] For a fuller survey of Middleton's life (and of his works), R. H. Barker's *Thomas Middleton* (1958) still remains useful. See also, as a good introduction offering a more modern approach, J. R. Mulryne's *Thomas Middleton* (1979).

DATE AND SOURCES

The Changeling was written in 1622. The earliest information on its existence is that it was licensed to be acted by the Lady Elizabeth's Servants at the Phoenix, 7 May 1622; but it must have been composed (at least in part) after 11 March, as one of its sources – Digges' book, see below – was then entered for printing. Clearly the dramatists worked fast.

The major source for the play (inasmuch as it deserves the epithet 'major') was John Reynolds' *The Triumphs of God's Revenge against the Crying and Execrable Sin of Wilful and Premeditated Murder*, Book I, History IV. Reynolds' book (1621) is a collection of thirty 'Tragical Histories', in all of which greed and adultery prompt murder and result in death for the perpetrators.

In Reynolds, Alsemero falls in love with Beatrice when he meets her in a church. However, her father wants her to marry Alonzo. Beatrice returns Alsemero's love, and persuades De Flores (described as a gallant young gentleman) to murder Alonzo – something De Flores is willing to do because he is himself in love with her. As a reward De Flores receives many willing kisses from Beatrice, but she gets married to Alsemero. However, after three months Alsemero becomes inexplicably jealous of Beatrice. His actions alienate her, and this provides De Flores with an opportunity. Alsemero kills the lovers when he finds them in adultery. Alonzo's brother, Tomazo, challenges Alsemero, who kills him treacherously. He is caught, and at his execution confesses that Beatrice and De Flores killed Alonzo; their bodies are taken up out of their graves, then burnt, and their ashes thrown into the air.

Even this bare outline will show that there are broad similarities, but also significant differences. In Reynolds, Beatrice does

not find De Flores at all unattractive, and her later love for him develops naturally enough once Alsemero shows himself jealous. Alsemero is much less respectable than in the play. The characters are flat and contrived; there is little by way of convincing (leave alone profound) psychological treatment; and the plot (which is not firmly related to the characters) is crudely manipulated for its banal moral purpose. Although several detailed similarities could be quoted, the general effect of *The Changeling* is totally unlike that of Reynolds' story, and in all important respects the dramatists owe little to him.

Some elements in the plot were derived from Leonard Digges' *Gerardo The Unfortunate Spaniard*, a translation from a Spanish tale. One of the characters is somewhat like De Flores, but it is especially the way in which a substitute is used on the wedding night and then murdered which reminds one of *The Changeling*. Again, some detailed similarities exist, but again they are ultimately trivial.[3]

No source has been found for the sub-plot. The idea of using scenes set in a lunatic asylum is not unique; neither is the motif of the jealous elderly husband. Some points may have been derived from close observation of the practices in the leading madhouse of the day, Bethlehem Hospital, just outside London. But the overall concept of the sub-plot appears to be novel, as is the way its relationship with the main plot is handled. The truth is that *The Changeling* is a highly original play, and even the odd verbal borrowing from Shakespeare, for example, does not show any marked derivativeness, especially as the vision and presentation of the dramatists appear to be inspired and fresh throughout.

THE MIDDLETON-ROWLEY COLLABORATION

Who Wrote What?

According to the evidence of modern scholarship there was no dramatist with whom Middleton collaborated so extensively and intensively as Rowley; their collaboration lasted for several years and resulted in the co-authorship of five dramatic works, of which *The Changeling* was the last.

Some of the nineteenth-century readers of the play had a pretty shrewd idea of the division of authorship in *The Changeling*. Indeed, F. G. Fleay very nearly gave the division which has since been accepted by almost all scholars.[4] His attempted attribution is

[3] For relevant excerpts from Reynolds and Digges, see Bawcutt.

[4] *A Biographical Chronicle of the English Drama, 1559–1642* (2 vols, 1891), vol. 2, p. 101

the more remarkable because it does not appear to have been based on any systematic investigation of facts. Such an investigation was subsequently carried out by P. G. Wiggin, in *An Inquiry into the Authorship of the Middleton-Rowley Plays* (1897). Wiggin agreed with Fleay that the division of labour was:

Rowley:	I; III. iii; IV. iii; V. iii
Middleton:	the remainder

In other words, Rowley wrote the first and last scenes, and the whole of the sub-plot (of which I. ii is part).

Much of what Wiggin argues seems to me by itself debatable. On the other hand, some of her evidence remains compelling even now. For example, she was right to point out that Middleton was inclined to use feminine endings more often than Rowley, though I think she exaggerates what she sees as the rhythmical irregularity of the latter. Few appear to have accepted Wiggin's large and loose assertion that, compared with Middleton, Rowley believed in 'the essential dignity and beauty of human nature'; one difficulty about this type of remark is that, even if one agreed that Rowley's scenes showed such an attitude, it would be impossible to be sure that what is conveyed is anything other than the result of a dramatic strategy which the dramatists jointly adopted. Yet Wiggin goes so far as to contend that Middleton actually changed his attitude to life, as expressed in this play, under Rowley's influence.[5]

A much more rigorous and responsible attitude to the problems of authorship which have surrounded the Middleton canon has been adopted by a number of recent scholars whose work will in my view prove difficult to refute. Of great excellence has been the work of Cyrus Hoy; for our purposes, it is sufficient to refer to his article 'The Shares of Fletcher and his Collaborators in the Beaumont and Fletcher Canon (V)'.[6] Hoy's approach was essentially the one adopted, and successfully applied to a large body of evidence, by D. J. Lake in *The Canon of Thomas Middleton's Plays* (1975) and by M. P. Jackson in *Studies in Attribution: Middleton and Shakespeare* (1979). Starting with work which one can feel confident is Middleton's (such as *A Game at Chess*, which survives in his hand and which all external evidence firmly establishes as his), these scholars have tried to identify certain linguistic traits which, especially when taken together, set Middleton apart in the way a fingerprint would. They avoid tellingly expressive phrases

[5] Uneven though her approach is, Wiggin does seem to point to several features which are characteristic of each author. Rowley is approached in a similar vein by D. M. Robb, in 'The Canon of William Rowley's Plays', *Modern Language Review* 45 (1950), 129–41.

[6] *Studies in Bibliography* 13 (1960), 77–107

which might readily be produced by imitators and concentrate instead on seemingly insignificant features such as, for example, the form *I've* for *I have*. In *The Changeling*, *I've* occurs 7 times and only in the sections of the play traditionally considered Middleton's. In the five plays which Middleton and Rowley wrote together, Middleton appears to have used *I've* 28 times and Rowley never. Conversely, in those same plays, Jackson found that *hath* occurs 29 times in the Rowley sections but only twice in the Middleton portions; parentheses are used 120 times by Rowley, but only 25 times by Middleton.[7]

The point is not, of course, that a single occurrence of, say, *hath* immediately identifies a scene as Rowley's. The evidence gathers weight, however, not only when each context is considered in which *hath* occurs, but when it is also found that *hath* tends to occur in the same contexts as parentheses, etc. In this way, combinations of features are found which are hardly likely to be accidental; extensive comparisons with the works of other dramatists of the period show that such combinations can, in fact, confidently be associated with certain individuals and no others. Moreover, these linguistic habits are not conditioned, it appears, by literary considerations of, for example, character. The forms in question are truly *authorial*, and are found in quite different literary environments. And it is impossible to attribute their occurrence to the habits of scribes or printing houses: on the contrary, it is remarkable to note that authorial forms of this nature frequently survive in printed texts which materialized in a variety of ways.

It does not matter that Wiggin's division remains largely unaltered (in fact, the only change is that we are to accept IV. ii. 1–16 as Rowley's) – we can feel secure, now, that her attribution has been confirmed by a more objective method than some, at least, of those which she employed. In this edition, I give the authorship of each scene in my commentary on the text, but it may be useful to have it set forth here as well:

Rowley:	I. i (main plot), ii (sub-plot); III. iii (sub-plot); IV. ii. 1–16 (main plot); IV. iii (sub-plot); V. iii (main plot)
Middleton:	the remainder (main plot)

What Was the Nature of the Collaboration?

It is a measure of Hoy's quality as a scholar that despite all his work on questions of authorship he was able to write: 'The criticism of collaborative drama, however, has yet to catch up with – to make any real use of – the scholarly gains that have been made over the

[7] Jackson, pp. 130–1

past quarter of a century in the work of defining authorial shares which is the necessary prerequisite to any informed critical appraisal of this body of drama.'[8] Interestingly, he mentioned *The Changeling* as perhaps the finest product of collaboration which the Jacobean theatre produced.

It does appear to be fairly generally agreed that in this play each dramatist wrote better than at any other time, as though the sum of the collaborative process transcends the parts – presumably because each author was inspired to do something which he would normally have been incapable of doing on his own. Yet the obvious good sense of this assumption is constantly eroded by a critically unsympathetic attitude to Rowley. It is no longer necessary to take seriously the suggestion that Rowley merely revised a play written by Middleton, or that he was no more than a 'pupil-assistant' (a view proposed as late as 1970).[9] But the view of, for example, Samuel Schoenbaum, in *Middleton's Tragedies: A Critical Study* (1955), still seems to be the general one. He holds that 'Middleton is responsible for the characterization of the principal figures and the general conduct of the main action' and that 'Rowley was entrusted with the composition of the first and last scenes and the minor plot' (pp. 216–17). Clearly Middleton is here seen as the controlling genius; inasmuch as Rowley was 'entrusted' with the composition of the first and last scenes of the main plot he obviously worked under the guidance of Middleton, to whom the actual credit for what matters in the main plot is due. Of late, the argument has assumed a rather different form. Following the early suggestions of William Empson in *Some Versions of Pastoral* (1935) and M. C. Bradbrook in *Themes and Conventions of Elizabethan Tragedy* (1935), the 'minor' plot (which people like Schoenbaum saw as the play's 'worst blemish') is treated with less disrespect. Several critics have traced detailed resemblances between the two plots and acknowledge that the sub-plot contributes something of importance to the general impact of the play.[10]

I believe that critics have still not been willing to take the sub-plot as seriously as they should. Major aspects of it, as well as

[8] 'Critical and Aesthetic Problems of Collaboration in Renaissance Drama', in *Research Opportunities in Renaissance Drama* 19 (1976), 3–6

[9] By D. M. Holmes, in *The Art of Thomas Middleton* (1970), p. 217

[10] See especially Richard Levin's searching volume *The Multiple Plot in English Renaissance Drama* (1971), pp. 34–48, and M. E. Mooney, '"Framing" as Collaborative Technique: Two Middleton-Rowley Plays', *Comparative Drama* 13 (1979), 127–41. A useful earlier essay remains K. L. Holzknecht, 'The Dramatic Structure of *The Changeling*', *Renaissance Papers* (1954), 77–87; reprinted in Max Bluestone and Norman Rabkin, eds, *Shakespeare's Contemporaries* (1961). There are also some good pointers in L. S. Champion's *Tragic Patterns in Jacobean and Caroline Drama* (1977), pp. 166–79.

several matters of detail, still remain unexplored. The real nature of the relationship between the two plots has not been given enough thought, even if there is an awareness of many parallels and of the general fact that the sub-plot offers some sort of ironically comic version of the main plot. The sub-plot is an indispensable part of the play. Likewise, the idea of Middleton as the instructor must be abandoned. Quality is of course more important than quantity, but we do well to realize that Rowley wrote about 54% of the play, and Middleton no more than 46%. (These figures, incidentally, are not inconsistent with those for the collaboration in the five plays now held to be their joint work, of which Middleton is supposed to have written 5000 lines and Rowley 6500.)[11] More importantly, it is a fact that Rowley wrote the very substantial first and last scenes of the play. It is just as plausible that *he* was the main originator of what the play should contain as that Middleton was. If Middleton was the *auctor intellectualis*, one would have expected him to write these crucial scenes, not Rowley. If, as I believe, the play is concerned especially with madness and shows that through an intimate connection between the two plots, it becomes virtually impossible to believe that Middleton first invented that connection and then expected Rowley to give effect to it. More probably, Rowley thought of the way in which the theme of madness could be introduced by connecting the two plots, and then implemented his idea by writing the first two scenes: I. i as part of the main plot immediately establishing psychological disjunction in Alsemero and particularly Beatrice (notably when she drops her glove), and I. ii to illuminate what otherwise might not be understood in the main plot. Of course the authors would have discussed their collaboration thoroughly, and Middleton shows in what follows that they are working towards the same purpose.

It will never be possible to work out exactly how the collaboration may have proceeded, and I do not think that, from a critical point of view, we need to know, or to try and establish who was the more important author. On the contrary, I think we should approach the play as a fully integrated artefact. With due respect to Hoy and his followers, I therefore do not see the question of authorship as ultimately very significant. It is likely that most readers who do not read the play with the fact of dual authorship in mind will experience it as though it was the product of one unified sensibility. That, in essence, is how T. S. Eliot saw it when he wrote his early essay 'Thomas Middleton'.[12] At the end of his piece, Eliot says: 'Incidentally, in flashes and when the dramatic

[11] Jackson, p. 131

[12] 1927; reprinted in, e.g., *Elizabethan Dramatists* (1963)

need comes, he is a great poet, a great master of versification', and, by way of example, he then quotes V. iii. 149–57. The passage which he cites to make an important point about Middleton was, however, written by Rowley. Eliot's error is no doubt one that would have delighted the dramatists, who obviously did not intend us to ask such questions as 'Who wrote what?' and 'What was the nature of the collaboration?'

THE PLAY

In the main, *The Changeling* offers us a picture of the operation of folly and madness within the mind. In doing so it explores 'abnormal' mental states. While the focus is on what happens within the individual, the impact on others is not ignored. Madness is of greater concern than folly, and is presented particularly in association with sex.

It is impossible to understand the play adequately without grasping what happens in the sub-plot, and how that provides a pointer to the significance of the main plot. The presentation of madness (or for that matter folly) in the main plot is so subtle that generations of critics who have paid insufficient attention to the sub-plot have failed to detect it.[13] Admittedly the play is difficult in this regard. One of its chief points is that madness at a sophisticated level of society – i.e., in people like Beatrice and those of her class – is not noticed by most people, as it lurks under the surface of people's actions and words. With careful attention, a perceptive observer can nevertheless discover the signs of madness before it violently erupts. In order to direct our attention to the symptoms, notably in Beatrice, the authors leave no doubt that madness is their central concern by making it prominent in the sub-plot. The same is true of folly, but this is less significant within the play, and one of the chief reasons why the dramatists show its essence is that this way they make their picture of 'abnormal' psychology more comprehensive, and – perhaps yet more importantly – understandable.

For the distinction between madness and folly is emphatic and crucial. As in Bethlehem Hospital ('Bedlam'), Alibius' madhouse in the sub-plot has two wards, one for fools and one for lunatics. There is one counterfeit fool in the sub-plot, Antonio, and one counterfeit madman, Franciscus (though Isabella also briefly

[13] Nicholas Brooke, in *Horrid Laughter in Jacobean Tragedy* (1979), is exceptional in seeing both Beatrice's genuine madness and, in part, its composition. And in all respects his discussion (pp. 70–88) is among the most perceptive ones, though I disagree with him about the connection between the two plots (and some other matters).

assumes the role of a lunatic). One of the purposes of these disguises is that by implication it enables the dramatists to say: 'When you consider these characters you will know what we mean by fools and madmen, for we are using labels to separate the two categories (and those and "normal" people); and when a character acts the part of a fool, we can all study it in isolation from such a complex mixture as an individual's mind might offer us in real life.'

The basic distinction which the authors make between fools and madmen was one officially recognized by their society: 'For the purposes of the Court of Wards and Liveries the difference between idiots (natural fools) and lunatics (*non compos mentis*) rested simply on the congenital nature of the condition; natural fools were those "mentally subnormal from birth" and lunatics were those "whose intellect and memory [failed] sometime after birth."'[14] Antonio acts the role of someone whose intelligence is subnormal from birth. As 'Tony', he can answer certain simple questions correctly, or at least without making a mistake. In III. iii, his keeper Lollio asks him 'How many is five times six?' to which he replies: 'Six times five'; but the answer to 'How many is one hundred and seven?' eludes him – his simple but defective logic leads him to say 'Seven hundred and one' (ll. 156–61). There is a touch of pathos in the fact that he cannot do better than this, comic though the situation is at the same time. But the play is not primarily concerned with provoking an emotional response on our part; rather, it gives us facts as they are.

Within its larger framework, too, the play is clinically objective towards folly rather than emotional, although, again, it does not seem to show itself harsh towards it. We must realize, of course, that the characters are not of below average intelligence. Inasmuch as we are shown any 'real' patients in Alibius' hospital, they are lunatics, and in Vermandero's castle there are no congenital fools either. Rather, those who are foolish lapse into folly temporarily, and under the impact of emotion. In this respect, we can see some similarity with those who are mad, but those people are seriously out of touch with reality, and either institutionalized because their disease is easy to recognize or dangerous because it is not. In the case of essentially normal people, folly is a relatively innocuous lapse. Antonio decides, as he is sexually attracted to Isabella, to disguise himself as a fool, and in so doing he does not just act a role but for the time being *is* a fool. However, this state is largely harmless and one which is curable. It is for this reason that people like

[14] See my essay 'Folly and Madness in *The Changeling*' (containing an earlier and more elaborate discussion of these matters), *Essays in Criticism* 38 (1988), 1–21. This quotation occurs on p. 6.

him at the end are part of a 'comic', i.e., a happy, ending. Even those who are not seriously mad can partake in that, as their madness, too, shows in temporarily foolish behaviour but is not ultimately incurable or as dangerous as that of, especially, Beatrice.

Even so, we should recognize the 'semi-mad' for what they are. In the sub-plot, the most striking example is ironically (and almost predictably) the 'psychiatrist', Alibius, who is in charge of the insane while his keeper, Lollio, has the humble task of looking after mere fools. Alibius' insanity is a form of what we would now popularly call 'paranoia'. He is old and married to an attractive young wife, and comes to imagine that she will be unfaithful to him if ever he is absent. In a state of temporary folly brought on by this mad fantasy, he locks her up in his madhouse, asking Lollio to look after her. He is out of touch with reality in more than one way. Above all, he is wrong to mistrust his wife, for, although she is subjected to temptation and human enough to experience it and almost to succumb,[15] she is essentially trustworthy, and probably the sanest person in the play, even though she is surrounded by people 'officially' considered mad, and tempted by Antonio, Franciscus, and ironically Lollio himself. Certainly Alibius' action subjects Isabella to considerable discomfort and humiliation; on the other hand, she has so constructive an attitude to life that she ends up improving the mental health of curable people around her and enjoys much of her experience.

In the main plot, Alibius' comparatively innocuous insanity is paralleled by that of Alsemero. In essence Alsemero is quite a normal man. The play shows, however, how even such a person can, so to speak, lose his head under the influence of his libido. To begin with, Alsemero develops a somewhat unhealthy intensity when he allows himself to be infatuated with Beatrice. We see an incipient madness in the way he does not recognize his own sexual impulse for what it is, but rationalizes it as though it were something totally different – in fact spiritual and noble. Even so, we can perhaps regard his decision to marry her as a foolish act rather than a mad one. But his behaviour comes to resemble that of Alibius when once his marriage has come about. The dramatists obviously imply, not so much that sex is bad (though they do appear to see it as almost by definition harmful), but that it is particularly dangerous when we do not understand it, yet act upon it and then allow it to dominate our lives; someone who has taken a definite step based on this urge by forming a relationship is bound to be in a particularly perilous state. At the beginning of the play, we learn from Alsemero's servant, Jasperino, that Alsemero had never been

[15] In a minor way and temporarily she does succumb, but not seriously and not when a real test comes.

interested in women; yet at the beginning of Act IV it turns out that he has something like a private laboratory which will enable him to test whether his wife is still a virgin, or even whether she is pregnant. Critics have attacked this circumstance as improbable, but that is because they have read the play as though it should be 'realistic'. Renaissance drama asks us to use our imagination and not to be surprised if things happen very quickly; but, more importantly, Alsemero's unhealthy interest is perfectly understandable if we view him, as we should, from a psychological point of view, and understand that at this point *he* is a pathological case and has no reason (as allowed by the evidence at his disposal) for being suspicious of his wife. In other words, Alsemero, like Alibius, shows himself paranoid: jealous in the absence of facts that justify his fantastic assumption. A difference with Alibius' situation is that in the end Alsemero's jealousy does come to match the facts, and in his defence we can say that he felt instinctive discomfort when he came to know Beatrice at the beginning of the play. But the difference is one of situation rather than character: Alsemero, like Alibius, can be saved because fundamentally he is a normal person, and thus on the one hand he is absorbed into the 'comic' ending while on the other hand, as he loses Beatrice and his happiness, his ending is also 'tragic'. (We shall return to the question of what is 'comic' versus 'tragic' later in this discussion.)

The key point to remember in our consideration of madness will be that it has nothing to do with stupidity *per se*: on the contrary, it is likely to affect someone who has the kind of imagination for which intelligence is required (there is not much that a stupid person can imagine), and who is capable of such rationalization as will be persuasive to the self as well as others. Someone truly mad, in the terms of this play, bases an unrealistic belief on a powerful – usually sexual – emotion which prompts the person's fantasy towards a distorted view that the intellect embraces on the strength of spurious but plausible and seemingly clever reasons.

The character who most clearly allows us to see what the playwrights mean by madness is Franciscus, whose psychology is totally different from Antonio's if we study him as though he were truly mad. For example, Franciscus addresses Isabella thus when he first meets her:

> Hail, bright Titania!
> Why stand'st thou idle on these flow'ry banks?
> Oberon is dancing with his Dryadēs;
> I'll gather daisies, primrose, violets,
> And bind them in a verse of poesy. (III. iii. 49–53)

The immediate effect is one of exuberant bizarreness. But the passage should not be dismissed as showing no more than that

(effective though it is as such). Nor should we be content to note that Franciscus pays Isabella an exaggerated, flirtatious compliment underneath his 'madness' and tries to seduce her while pointing out that Alibius (Oberon) is sporting elsewhere with his 'nymphs' (Dryadēs). The passage in fact tellingly reveals to us what real madness is like. The difference between 'Tony' and this 'madman' is that the latter lives in a fantasy world. The cardinal point is that the speaker persuades himself of the existence of a 'reality' quite different from what we know to be true on the basis of fact and reason, and is so convinced of the accuracy of his belief that he acts on it. Of course, if someone in our presence does act in this way we realize the madness, and that is why such people end up in asylums. Much of the main plot is concerned with the exploration of more subtle, less identifiable forms of madness which nevertheless are similarly based on a confusion of fantasy and reality as commonly perceived.

The play pays some attention to the question as to how 'the madman' Franciscus came to be mad, and it is an important point in both plots that while fools are subnormal from birth, someone who goes mad is likely to do so as a result of experience. It is not implied, of course, that all of us react to experience the same way; nor are we all subjected to identical events. The sub-plot gives us an indication of what the dramatists think does happen, for example in Lollio's comment in I. ii. 207–9: 'There's no hope of recovery of that Welsh madman was undone by a mouse that spoiled him a permasant; lost his wits for't.' The Welshman must have had an inclination towards madness anyway, or else the incident would not have affected him so grievously. (There is of course a joke here, to the effect that *all* Welshmen might go mad if deprived of cheese, but the very absurdity of that suggestion leads us to a more accurate appraisal of this particular individual.) What we are to understand is that a person like this might remain sane under propitious circumstances but will become mad if some particular event brings on the condition. Thus, although it would be quite wrong to suggest that, in the main plot, Beatrice goes mad as a simple result of external events, they do play a part. The wayward nature of the sub-plot enables the dramatists to make a crucial observation like this in a way which is fully dramatic yet clear, and it helps us to understand the main plot.

Yet, informative though the sub-plot is about folly and madness, its world is quite different from that of the main plot. We never see the real fools supposedly cared for by Lollio, and the implication is that they are both psychologically easy to understand and harmless. We do get some slight glimpse of the lunatics, and it is obvious, after analysis, what the nature of their disease is. This does provide interesting psychological insight, but they too

are not dangerous. For the remainder, there are Antonio and Franciscus, the former just a little foolish and the latter just a little mad, but predominantly just play-acting and no real threat to anyone. Isabella is in fact a model of sanity. Lollio is more complex. He is certainly sex-obsessed, and as such some discomfort to Isabella, but no worse than that, and capable of understanding his own libido and that of others. He is certainly not mad. Neither is he a fool in the sense that he lacks intelligence. Yet to say that in general he is sane and perceptive is not to say that he is altogether free from a tendency towards madness or folly. None of these characters can be regarded as people who should be institutionalized because they are a danger to themselves or others. Those who are more seriously mad are to be found outside the asylum, and this is no doubt one reason why the dramatists present Alibius as spending so little time inside it.

It would be too simple to suggest that the sub-plot contains a sane woman within a madhouse and the main plot an insane woman in a sane world. Beatrice's Alicante, for one thing, would be viewed much too idealistically. Still, something like this ironic mirror-image is offered to us in the main plot, and the contrast between the two women, at any rate, is largely of this nature.

Environment does not appear to be the chief thing to set them apart in their conduct. Being surrounded by lunatics, Isabella might well have caught their madness, but she does not, and much the same goes for the sexual temptation to which she is subjected. By contrast, Beatrice's world is on the surface much easier to contend with, and it would be impossible to argue that what is below the surface and outside her is responsible for what she is and does. Of course, such external factors are not to be ignored. She has a father who on the one hand has materialistically spoiled her yet on the other hand is keen to get her married, without contradiction, to a suitor whom he likes. But critics are often too sentimental and partisan about this latter supposed handicap. It is quite plain from the evidence – and Beatrice herself never denies – that she was a very willing party in her engagement to Alonzo. It makes more sense to see her wish to get her own way in everything as at least partly something for which her background is responsible. The fact that she is confronted with attractive young men like Alsemero is nothing remarkable, and does not explain her conduct at all fully. On the other hand, De Flores is a more extraordinary creature to contend with, but again it would be quite wrong to blame him for everything she does. For one thing, many of the people around her do not respond to him the way she does, either positively or negatively.

It should be clear that, from the beginning of the play, there is something very wrong about Beatrice which escapes the attention

of many around her, but to which Alsemero instinctively responds:

> 'Twas in the temple where I first beheld her,
> And now again the same. What omen yet
> Follows of that? None but imaginary:
> Why should my hopes of fate be timorous? (I. i. 1–4)

Many would, like Alsemero, reject what their instinct tells them. After all, what is the evidence for his misgivings? What the dramatists imply, however, is that one's instinct may at times be a far more reliable guide than we are usually prepared to believe. Everything that follows makes it evident that Alsemero should have trusted it.

The quality in Beatrice which frightens Alsemero is present also, in a different form, in De Flores. Beatrice's reaction to De Flores is in this regard similar to Alsemero's response to her. In both instances, the reaction says something about those inspiring it, namely Beatrice and De Flores, and also about those affected. Beatrice's reaction to De Flores is the peculiarly interesting one, as it is so very bizarre. Only she expresses extraordinary loathing for De Flores, although later Tomazo de Piracquo's feelings approximate to hers somewhat (in a much milder form). For one thing, then, Beatrice's attitude to De Flores is somehow abnormal.

What inspires it? At a positive level, one might say that she is capable of an instinctive response which most are not equipped for, and which is similar to Alsemero's at the beginning of the play. But she is also similar to Alsemero in feeling attracted to the person about whom she feels misgivings. The similarity thus establishes tellingly one of the main facts of the play that we might readily overlook – and will overlook if we take things at face value – namely, that Beatrice is attracted to De Flores without knowing it. The attraction is 'unconscious': it exists in a part of her mind which she refuses to acknowledge, and her 'conscious' attitude is to deny what her unconscious[16] tells her. It is precisely because her feeling for De Flores is so sexual and strong that she vehemently describes him as a poison (in a play which regularly associates food and sex).

But on the whole Beatrice's attitude at the beginning of the play seems almost normal. It is perhaps only with the wisdom of hind-

[16] I am uneasily aware of the fact that at times I slip into using the language of psychoanalysis. This, however, is for want of a better vocabulary, and not because I believe the play to match a modern intellectual system. There is, nevertheless, some considerable overlap between a Freudian view of things and that of *The Changeling*, and I agree with Freud himself that the poets and philosophers before him discovered the unconscious. But such an analysis as Emil Roy's 'Sexual Paradox in *The Changeling*', *Literature and Psychology* 30 (1975), 124–32, seems to me fanciful and mistaken.

sight that we find her amorous shift from Alonzo to Alsemero very sudden. Its significance, however, appears to be that her sexual impulse is stirred quite easily. She knew little about Alonzo, and when she meets Alsemero she says: 'This was the man was meant me. That he should come / So near his time and miss it!' (I. i. 84–5). She imputes her change of heart to having relied on her eyes before, not judgement. But in fact she is almost as ill-acquainted with Alsemero as with her fiancé, and clearly this new love is accepted by her as a result of rationalization. What propels her is her libido, and it will be directed very rapidly towards De Flores.

The erotic basis of her feeling for him becomes obvious to us at the end of I. i, if we have not been able to guess at it before. She says to herself 'Not this serpent gone yet?' (l. 223), and then drops a glove. The serpent, De Flores, is an image for the devil, and in her conscious mind Beatrice rejects him. But the dropping of the glove constitutes a sexual invitation that she extends unconsciously. It is clear that she is not aware of her action because her father draws her attention to the fact that her glove has fallen. That the glove has to be seen as sexual is something of which De Flores is at least partly aware, for, as he understands her action, it expresses extreme distaste for him, to the extent that

> She had rather wear my pelt tanned in a pair
> Of dancing pumps than I should thrust my fingers
> Into her sockets here. (ll. 230–2)

In other words, she would rather see him dead and step on him than admit him into her body. The imagery of 'fingers' thrusting into various kinds of holes is plainly sexual throughout the play, and traditional as such. De Flores is correct in thinking of Beatrice's gesture as sexually expressive, but he misunderstands its unconscious purpose, which is to establish sexual contact with him, not to repel him.

The dramatists must signpost the development of Beatrice's sexual urge in this way since it is fundamental in their design that it is unconscious and thus part of Beatrice's insanity while yet it will inevitably run its course and thus should not seem quite arbitrary to us later in the play. The critics who think that Beatrice's later willingness to copulate with De Flores arises merely from his 'blackmailing' her clearly miss the point – that action only provides a trigger and her unconscious sexual interest in him should be apparent to us long before. The ugliness of his face and inner being appears to mesmerize her.

By the end of I. i her fascination with him has been revealed to us. But in her conscious mind, Beatrice remains attracted to Alsemero, and this leads her, ironically, to invite De Flores to kill

Alonzo (her official fiancé) on her behalf. At this point we should begin to realize that Beatrice has a profound link with De Flores not only in that both are intensely sexual, but also in that they are violent whenever their sexual drive is thwarted. Again, of course Beatrice is not aware of this aspect of her psychology. She just acts on her irrational impulses, and thus we find her flattering De Flores in II. ii. This has an unfortunate impact on De Flores of which she is not conscious: he understands that he himself is a sexual creature (and is thus much saner than she), but he misinterprets Beatrice's attitude to him as showing that she too is consciously aroused. It may well be, of course, that ironically Beatrice finds it easier to flirt with De Flores because of the unconscious passion which she has been developing towards him. But if so the fact is not within her conscious mind, which still rejects De Flores; and the latter – whom critics often credit with such full insight as he does not possess – is dangerously (even if understandably) deluded in supposing that she seeks his help because she wishes to be united with him. In fact, at the end of this scene both characters are shown as living in a fantasy world. Beatrice thinks that she will be able to rid herself of both Alonzo and De Flores – the former by his death, and the latter by bribing him to live elsewhere. De Flores imagines her in his arms already. However, that notion is more firmly rooted in reality than Beatrice's idea that she can expect him to kill Alonzo for her, and to be flattered, without intensifying his longing (which she knew of before).

To Beatrice, murder is merely something one thinks about in abstract terms, not as a reality, and when De Flores shows her the finger with the ring upon it in III. iv, she exclaims: 'Bless me! What hast thou done?' (l. 29). Her mind's refusal to accept the murder for what it is is combined with her horror of sex at this point as the finger is not only that of a dead man but also phallic (ironically held fast by her ring, symbolic of her vagina). In what follows De Flores makes her aware, at least in part (and not permanently), of the reality of both violence and sex. Contrary to what he suggests, we may ourselves resist his implication that because she is 'dipped in blood' as his accomplice she should not talk of sexual modesty (l. 126). Even so, there is a compelling element in his harsh logic, and Beatrice fails to answer it both because there *is* no effective answer and because she is part of his world anyway. We should connect what happens in III. iv to what had occurred earlier in the play. Even if Beatrice's sexual feeling had been only for Alsemero, the fact that she is prepared to engage in murder to satisfy it makes her like De Flores, who kills Alonzo because he believes in his turn that it will enable him to satisfy his lust for her. But it is not only this similarity of sentiment which is important: De Flores and Beatrice have become obvious partners because,

unconsciously, Beatrice reciprocated his feeling for her when she threw down her glove. If we insist on misreading the play as though Beatrice is conscious of what she does on such an occasion, her later surrender to De Flores will continue to strike us as 'unrealistic', in the negative sense of the word. But III. iv, where it occurs, makes perfect sense if we understand that De Flores brings into action here a deep current of feeling for him of which Beatrice had not been aware. Her sexual enjoyment at the end of this scene is obvious when De Flores comments: ''Las, how the turtle pants!' This is not an emotion produced by bullying, leave alone something like rape, as is so often claimed. I do not mean, of course, that there is no bullying – only that it cannot by itself explain Beatrice's positive sexual response.

Beatrice's surrender should not be taken to mean that she has now reached an adequate understanding of herself. In fact, it is part of her tragedy that she is largely incapable of doing so. Sexual enjoyment, the dramatists imply, does not guarantee greater consciousness of one's psychological make-up. To protect her position, Beatrice thinks up the absurd scheme of letting her maid Diaphanta substitute for her on her wedding night. Diaphanta's own sexual urge, of which, unlike Beatrice, she is at all times conscious, is nonetheless dangerous and ultimately proves her undoing. But more important than the potency of Diaphanta's sexuality is the state of Beatrice's mind. When she thought up the scheme, she did not want Alsemero to detect that she had lost her virginity. In her conscious mind, she continues yet more emphatically to do what she thinks society demands, even now that she has followed the true inclination of her 'blood' (chiefly, her sexual urge). She is still not willing to admit that inclination to herself. She manages to persuade herself that she is an honest, respectable person, and this comes particularly to the fore at the beginning of Act V:

> One struck, and yet she lies by 't! – O my fears!
> This strumpet serves her own ends, 'tis apparent now,
> Devours the pleasure with a greedy appetite,
> And never minds my honour or my peace,
> Makes havoc of my right. But she pays dearly for't:
> No trusting of her life with such a secret,
> That cannot rule her blood to keep her promise.
> Beside, I have some suspicion of her faith to me,
> Because I was suspected of my lord,
> And it must come from her. (ll. 1–10)

The measure of Beatrice's insanity here lies in the extent to which she deludes herself about feelings and actions which she imputes to Diaphanta (i.e., she 'projects' them), when she should recognize them as her own. Diaphanta can hardly be called a 'strumpet', but

Beatrice had shown herself a whore in her affection, as De Flores puts it (III. iv. 142), by switching from Alonzo to Alsemero. Now that she has a sexual relationship with De Flores, begun even before her wedding to Alsemero, there can be no doubt that the word 'strumpet' is more applicable to her than to Diaphanta. She accuses Diaphanta of a 'greedy appetite' because that is what she has herself, though significantly she will not admit that to her conscious mind. Her talk about Diaphanta not minding her 'honour' shows just how confused she is about what she is doing. A normal person might try to keep up appearances while aware of her own sin; Beatrice, by contrast, has persuaded herself that it is Diaphanta who is sinning. Throughout the speech, Beatrice's staggering ability to avoid seeing the truth about herself can only be explained on the assumption that she is insane. Indeed, she is insane exactly because she cannot see the truth about herself, and thus comes to invent a 'reality' which does not exist.

As I suggested before, De Flores' grasp on reality is not perfect either. The lustful relationship between him and Beatrice has become habitual by V. i, and, to protect what he calls 'Our pleasure and continuance' (l. 50), he proposes to set fire to part of Diaphanta's chamber, in order to wake up the household, including Diaphanta. This mad scheme alarms even Beatrice, who points out that it may 'endanger the whole house' (l. 33). Probably the dramatists want us to see the fire as symbolic of the sexual passions of the lovers, which De Flores is more dominated by than he knows. Although he is conscious of the fact that his relationship with Beatrice gives him 'pleasure', he appears to be unaware that it is clouding his judgement. He now appears to be influenced by Beatrice's psychology, for he counters her fear with the statement: 'You talk of danger when your fame's on fire?'

The reference to her 'fame' (i.e., reputation) immediately and tellingly distracts Beatrice's mind from her consideration of a danger that might well occur in reality, and her reaction is simply: 'That's true; do what thou wilt now'. De Flores explains to her that either the others will think that Diaphanta has escaped from her room because of the fire, or, if she hastens back towards her lodging, he will shoot her. This solicitude for her welfare prompts Beatrice to say:

> I'm forced to love thee now,
> 'Cause thou provid'st so carefully for my honour. (ll. 47–8)

Such a statement, in such a situation, does not proceed from a normal person who is merely lying; it shows the confusion and self-deceit of a sick mind. One of the many interesting implications here is that Beatrice is now beginning to seek a rationalization

for her love for *De Flores* rather than Alsemero. Similarly, when the fire has been discovered, she exclaims:

> Already! How rare is that man's speed!
> How heartily he serves me! His face loathes one,
> But look upon his care, who would not love him?
> The east is not more beauteous than his service. (ll. 69–72)

And, in fact, De Flores' plan works, so that for the time being she can continue to live in her fantasy world. But Jasperino, who in IV. ii had already informed Alsemero of the illicit relationship between De Flores and Beatrice, now produces the proof which had been lacking. Thus V. iii opens with his statement:

> Your confidence, I'm sure, is now of proof.
> The prospect from the garden has showed
> Enough for deep suspicion. (ll. 1–3)

Obviously De Flores and Beatrice no longer bother even to disguise their liaison carefully. When Alsemero, acting on what he has seen, accuses Beatrice of being a whore, she replies:

> What a horrid sound it hath!
> It blasts a beauty to deformity;
> Upon what face soever that breath falls,
> It strikes it ugly. O, you have ruined
> What you can ne'er repair again! (ll.31–5)

Typically, and insanely, Beatrice is preoccupied with the 'sound' of the word 'whore', not with the content as it applies to her – indeed, she makes out that it is Alsemero who is doing her harm by using such an ugly word, and her words are those of a person who is lying to herself rather than to him. She tries to evade the reality which lies behind the word, as though the two can be separated.

Even when the truth comes closer to her, she still tries to turn it away and into something different. Amazingly, she comes to boast of the murder of Alonzo as an act caused by her love for Alsemero; and she sees similar virtue in her having 'kissed poison for it, stroked a serpent' (l. 66). Strikingly, she now begins once again to deny her feelings for De Flores, and it does not take her long to persuade herself that she has been faithful to Alsemero all along. In her conception of things, that loyalty is compatible with the adulterous relationship which she has just confessed to having, and thus she no doubt believes her own falsehood when she says to Alsemero:

> Remember I am true unto your bed. (l. 82)

Shortly afterwards, however, she experiences a rare moment of insight, and then admits:

> Alsemero, I am a stranger to your bed. (l. 159)

By this time, De Flores has spoken openly about their misdeeds to Alsemero, who has then locked up the pair in his closet. What happens there appears to be hinted at unmistakably in the text. Tomazo, Alonzo's brother, comes to seek recompense for 'murder and adultery' (l. 138). What he refers to, of course, is Alonzo's murder, and the adultery which he feels Alsemero has committed by marrying Beatrice. But exactly as the words 'murder and adultery' are spoken, Beatrice, in the closet, is heard to utter 'O, O, O!', and Alsemero comments 'Hark! 'Tis coming to you!' What he means is that at this very moment Beatrice and De Flores are engaged in adultery,[17] and De Flores in murder as he stabs her. Again, sex and violence are combined. However, this shocking and bizarre episode jolts Beatrice into recognition of reality, and she is thus able to say to her father:

> O come not near me, sir; I shall defile you.
> I am that of your blood was taken from you
> For your better health. (ll. 149–51)

At last, Beatrice confirms to us what, at a deep level, has been plain throughout the play: that *she* is the most quintessential changeling, not Antonio, to whom that role is assigned in the Dramatis Personae. Antonio is no more than a counterfeit fool; and, as the sub-plot and the main plot are related ironically, this means that the real changeling is a person who is genuinely mad. That person is Beatrice. She turns out to be the ugly child that her father to his distress must accept in lieu of the beautiful daughter he thought he had. As the play makes clear in its language, there are several characters who 'change' and are 'changelings' in that sense, while others are substitutes (notably Diaphanta), and Antonio is a 'changeling' in the sense of 'idiot'. But, as Bawcutt points out, the word in the seventeenth century 'referred in the first place to the ugly or mentally deficient child which the fairies were supposed to leave in place of a normal child which they stole' (p.3); and this meaning, with some variation, can only apply to Beatrice. Her origin is found in the bad blood which would have made her father insane if he had kept it, although this truth comes to light only now.

The Changeling is usually seen as a play with a tragic main plot and a comic sub-plot. This might suggest that, as the comic plot

[17] The incident is approached quite differently by Dorothea Kehler, in 'Middleton and Rowley's *The Changeling*, V. iii. 175–7', *The Explicator* 26 (1968), item 41, but we agree on the question of intercourse. I offer further details in the commentary.

would have a lower status, the play has an unhappy ending. It has been my contention that the importance of the comic plot is generally underrated, and that the play cannot be adequately understood without it. But I think its significance is such that we must also seriously question whether the final view of the play is a tragic one. If we say that a play has an 'unhappy' ending, we must also ask: for whom, and with what effect? The ending certainly is not a happy one for either Beatrice or De Flores. However, many probably do not feel sad about their deaths, as they find it difficult to see these characters as anything but evil. And so they are, in that they clearly cause unhappiness for others. But some of the moral evaluations of them strike me as simplistic or misguided. Much of the moralism is based on the assumption that Beatrice consciously chooses to do evil. I do not wish to suggest that she never does so, but I submit that much of the time the question of a moral judgement does not arise because an insane person cannot be held responsible for actions which spring from the unconscious. This is not to say that the dramatists therefore condone her actions or wish us to see them as excusable – merely that they are more interested in Beatrice's psychology than her morality. In any case, however, it is difficult to experience a sense of grave loss at her parting, though we can come to terms with it more easily as a result of her having at the end some awareness of the evil she has done. De Flores is a different proposition. He is highly conscious of having sinned against conventional morality but shows himself unrepentant. It is again difficult to apply a moral judgement to this. His unorthodox attitude is shocking, but that means that his death is not very tragic either, while his defiance provides a curiously pungent contrast with the rather shallow characters around him and is almost comically entertaining. (He should in more than one sense be compared with the unorthodox sex-obsessed Lollio.) I do not mean that the dramatists are frivolous or do not offer a profound insight into human nature; rather, it seems to me that they try to prevent us from interpreting things in a simplistic or platitudinous fashion.

The deaths of Alonzo and Diaphanta are perhaps less 'deserved' than those of Beatrice and De Flores, but I do not think that we are allowed to identify very closely with either character. Much of *The Changeling* is emotionally very distant from people while it shows a more intimate grasp of what goes on inside them than many plays that enable us to feel more warmly towards at least some of the characters in them. Even Isabella, however commendable or indeed human in a pleasing fashion (as when she rebukes her husband), does not invite the kind of feeling that we may develop for, say, Cordelia: her plight is too 'normal' for that, and she deals with

it too toughly and capably. This is not to say we can feel no sympathy, but that a sense of awe or pathos such as is often characteristic of tragedy is not what this play inspires. Of course, Isabella is part of the comic plot, and at the end the two plots merge. We could even argue that the ultimate mood is comic rather than tragic in that the most evil characters are dead, Isabella is triumphant, Alibius will learn (or so he says), and the society of Alicante appears to be quite harmonious. On the other hand, we would deceive ourselves if we believed that this kind of order is characteristic of human affairs, and that people like Beatrice and De Flores could not be amongst us again at any moment.

Laughter is regularly (though not inescapably) associated with comedy, which tends towards a more optimistic view of human affairs than tragedy and offers a happy ending. Much of the sub-plot of *The Changeling* is very witty indeed. I have argued that it has a serious purpose, but that is not incompatible with humour. I do not think that the play offers us the comparative comfort of satire, with its moral perspective and the implication that we could obtain order if only we avoided the vices ridiculed. *The Changeling* does, in its sub-plot as in its main plot, concern itself with a presentation of what is irrational in our conduct. The main plot does this more soberly, as it shows that outside lunatic asylums people like to believe that they are controlled by reason; the sub-plot, however, gives free rein to a highly imaginative and audacious rendering of the irrational part of our nature. It would be wrong to see it as making fun of incurable patients who deserve our sympathy. We get our ideas of folly and madness from the roles played by Antonio and Franciscus; real imbeciles are not presented, and the little we see of the insane makes them frightening and pathetic rather than amusing. Even so, the actions of Antonio and Franciscus do allow us to see folly and madness in mankind as funny – in the sense of bizarre and incongruous.[18]

Imagery in both plots is firmly functional, relatively sparse and generally free of connotation. The creative imagination expresses itself not so much in figurative language as in irony, punning, and

[18] For stimulatingly different discussions of the relationship between the 'comic' and the 'tragic' elements in the play, see Mooney (note 10) and Brooke (note 13). The play often permits more than one response to one and the same thing. For example, De Flores' lust is responsible for a good deal of evil, but we can also see how it makes him suffer. Beatrice's self-centredness generally is either insane or morally repugnant but has a touch of pathos in 'I must trust somebody' (V. i. 15)

the imaginative handling of characters and plots.[19] Even images are often treated punningly and ironically. Let us briefly return to the imagery of fingers and holes. By the time De Flores cuts off Alonzo's finger with Beatrice's ring on it we are possibly more aware of the sexual significance of the finger and ring than their mere physical presence. Our sense of irony springs from such awareness. Beatrice and Alonzo were meant to be man and wife: ironically, Alonzo is killed, but, yet more ironically, De Flores, when cutting off the finger, is unconsciously confronted with the fact that the Beatrice-Alonzo union continues. We may further see his violent action as having ironic implications for the course of his own sexual union with Beatrice, the ending of which appears to be anticipated. Puns, or at least double meanings, abound particularly in the sub-plot, though they are also frequent in the main plot. They make us aware of things which we do not normally see. Very often, the characters are not themselves aware of more than one meaning, though Lollio-the-realist is a master-punner. There is thus a close relationship between punning and irony. One of the play's fundamental points is that we very frequently are too stupid – or more often too obsessed – to be aware of a fact outside us which in the end we cannot dodge. A pun enables a dramatist to show the existence of such a fact at the same time as our unawareness of it in our preoccupation with something else, with resultant irony. Nor is it accidental that so many of the puns are sexual. We are tremendously indebted to Christopher Ricks' seminal article 'The Moral and Poetic Structure of *The Changeling*',[20] which first dealt with this matter extensively and illuminatingly and remains essential reading for admirers of the play. Interestingly, Ricks made the point that 'a major connection [between the two plots] still seems lacking' and added 'I must admit that the thesis which I have put forward cannot establish one' (p. 301). This is true, but Ricks' work can help us to see the function of the sexual puns more clearly now that we shall perhaps come to agree that the major connection between the two plots is such as I have argued. If that argument is accepted, a chief significance of the puns is that they

[19] My remarks on irony and puns here are general; for details, see the commentary. I also discuss there many of the images, but it may be useful to mention some of the more significant ones here. Images of disguise (and thus change) are associated with, e.g., Antonio and Franciscus, but more gravely with Beatrice. (De Flores dons no disguise inasmuch as his appearance shows his nature.) The madhouse should be compared with the fortress: it is outwardly secure, but 'within are secrets' (I. i. 164). Food and drink are usually associated with sex. De Flores is a serpent in Beatrice's eyes and thus like the Devil, while she seems like Eve to Alsemero. Barley-break is a game involving the exchange of partners, with one couple ending up in a place called Hell.

[20] *Essays in Criticism* 10 (1960), 290–306

reveal on the one hand that our actions are prompted by an insatiable sexual drive while on the other hand we are often not conscious of that fact.

The command of double meanings and irony seems to me absolutely dazzling in this play, as does that of the relationship between the two plots and the inventive presentation of characters like Antonio and Franciscus in the sub-plot. The creative energy displayed shows an imaginative capacity of the first order and is often underrated in a quest for a Shakespearean type of language. That quest seems misguided, as it will not do justice to the very real artistic qualities of the play and applies an irrelevant yardstick to it. It certainly is the case that the language of *The Changeling* lacks such resonance as is often typical of Shakespeare. But that is because the characters are not conceived in the grand manner, and a rather more prosaic view of mankind is adopted; also, because the artistic methods – which are no less exciting and clever when once understood – have a very different emphasis and nature. It would be misleading to put too much emphasis on the more spectacular aspects of the play's art, for its greatest success, I believe, lies in the way in which the sub-plot points towards a profound presentation of madness in the main plot which is based on an extraordinarily subtle and unusual kind of dramatic suggestiveness.

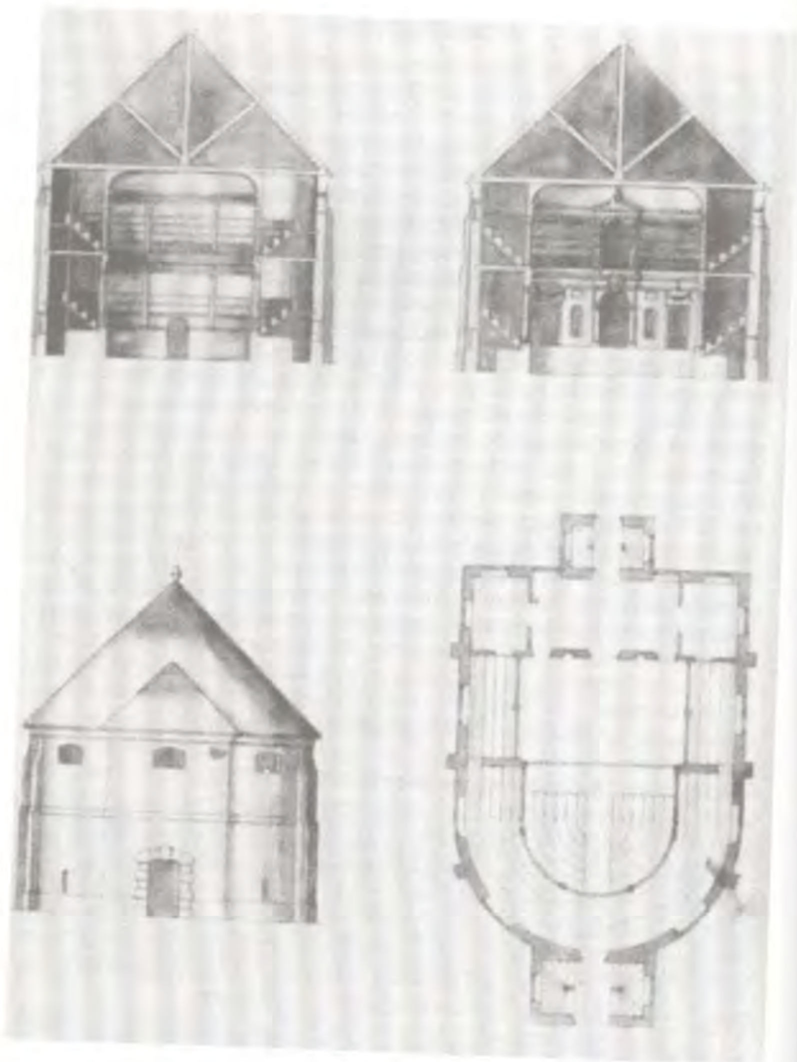
THE PLAY IN PERFORMANCE

Imagining the Play in its Jacobean Theatre

It is possible to derive great enjoyment from *The Changeling* purely by reading it. Indeed, a performance of the play could not proceed without a thorough and appreciative study of its text. But the dramatists wrote for the stage, and the reader who does not at least try to imagine a performance of the play within the Jacobean theatre for which it was intended will inevitably do less than ideal justice to Middleton and Rowley's work. It is in such a theatre, too, that the play should preferably be performed.

The play was licensed to be acted in 1622 at the Phoenix, a small private theatre in Drury lane. Despite attempts at reconstruction[21] and analysis of what the original may have looked like, we can only form an approximate notion. The Cockpit or Phoenix was built by Christopher Beeston in 1616. A plan which was drawn up by Inigo

[21] In recent years there has been tremendous interest and progress in this area. A tiny version of something like the Phoenix has been reconstructed by C. Walter Hodges as 'The Plaie House' for the Bear Gardens Museum, London.



Plans made in about 1616 by Inigo Jones, probably for Beeston's Cockpit playhouse in Drury Lane. A theatre something like this may have been used for the first performance of *The Changeling*. (Photo by courtesy of the Syndics of Cambridge University Library, reproduced by permission of the Provost and Fellows of Worcester College, Oxford)

Jones in 1616–18 survives and may have been intended for this theatre.[22] It should be understood, however, that it has been argued that the plan could never have been acted upon as the basis for a real building, that the Cockpit may well have been quite different from the Inigo Jones plan, and that there is no certainty that Jones' plan was meant for this particular theatre. Furthermore, the Cockpit (so named because it was probably adapted from an old game house) was burned down in a riot in 1617, and the Phoenix – supposedly arising from its ashes – was probably not identical. Even so, both the drawing and what is known of private theatres generally may allow one a plausible guess at what kind of theatre we should envisage.

The theatre was no doubt small enough to give the audience itself, and not only the characters in the play, the sense of being within an enclosed space, which is especially fitting in the case of *The Changeling*. As, moreover, the stage jutted out well into the audience, which largely sat around it, it would have been natural for all involved to feel that they were part of the same action (within a fortress, madhouse, or indeed hell from which no escape was possible), and the many asides and soliloquies so characteristic of the play would have seemed much more normal than on a typical modern stage: it would not look strange, in such a situation, for an actor to address the audience rather than another character on stage. A sense of 'alienation' – of distance from the emotions of the characters, resulting from awareness that one was watching something illusory – would have arisen naturally and is exploited by the dramatists along with the fact that, nevertheless, the audience was allowed to view the inner workings of the characters' minds more readily than can be achieved with a large stage placed well in front of the audience.

But for this play the actual structure of the stage itself is perhaps yet more important for us to consider. Almost certainly, the central division between the audience and the characters on stage on the one hand and the actors in the 'tiring-house' (where they dressed and stayed when not on stage) on the other was formed by what is called the facade, parting the two areas. This would have presented the appearance of two levels, which together could have seemed like a fortress, madhouse, or any other building. The lower level was the more important one. It no doubt looked like a wall which could be either external or internal, so that it was unnecessary to change sets, leave alone to use a lot of properties: the audience was given the basic image of the static facade and

[22] See the illustration opposite and Andrew Gurr's comments in his valuable volume *The Shakespearean Stage 1574–1642* (2nd (rev.) ed., 1980), especially on pp. 147–50. Also see Gurr's *Playgoing in Shakespeare's London* (1987).

used its imagination in relation to that. Thus at the beginning of the play we are to imagine that the area (on stage) before the facade is a harbour with the castle in the background, and later scenes must be thought of as taking place, now within one room of the castle, then in another.

The make-up of the lower level of the facade would have been one central opening flanked by two doors, each at some distance from the central opening, which would normally have been used for entrances and exits. Thus at the beginning of II. i, where Beatrice and Jasperino enter 'severally', they appear on stage through separate doors. At the end of what we now somewhat misleadingly call 'scene i' of Act III, De Flores and Alonzo leave through one door and re-enter through the other – that is, they use one of the two doors for their exit at the end of the scene and the other for their entry in the next.

It is likely that the larger opening in the centre also had a door (cf.IV. i. 17–18), but whether it had or not, it often would have been much easier to cover it, when not in use, with a curtain, and that would also allow the audience to hear the madmen 'within', Beatrice's cries in the closet (V. iii) and anything else that might be staged in similar fashion. The area 'within' is traditionally called the 'inner stage', and I think that this word is more useful in the case of *The Changeling* than such modern terms as the 'discovery space', so long as we realize that the 'inner stage' is not separate from the main stage but merely a recessed area at the back of it, so to speak 'beyond' the facade or 'through' it, in which no really separate scenes were acted out, but in which certain parts of the action could nevertheless appropriately take place.

It is this area, I feel, of which the dramatists make superb use in *The Changeling*, not just for mundane theatrical purposes, but especially for symbolic ones. As David Bevington writes in his illuminating work *Action is Eloquence: Shakespeare's Language of Gesture* (1984), to the dramatists of the period the significant element of their stage is 'not scenic verisimilitude but spatial relationship' (p. 108). Thus it was quite usual for the facade to represent a seemingly reassuring fortress, while the world behind it is used to suggest that 'an inner weakness vitiates what appears to our visual sense to be so strong' (p. 102). The apertures in the facade thus 'stress a duality between what is seen and unseen, between what a character supposes to be within and what in fact is to be found there' (p. 109). The world behind the facade is not to be thought of as something separate from the remainder of life, however, for that which is hidden, lying within, 'exists only in contrast to what is visible' (p. 116). At all times there is a relationship between the main action and the hidden world behind the facade inasmuch as that is made part of the play; therefore the action of the 'inner

stage' is never something which we should think of as isolated. This is of course particularly true when that recess actually gets used, but it is also true by extension of the whole inner world that we may be called on to imagine as lying behind the facade.

In the case of *The Changeling*, the unseen world of which the characters are normally unaware – as indeed are we – is of course especially important, and the stage is brilliantly exploited to match the language. Such a fusion is one which we should try to recover in our age, which too often presents visual communication as something totally separate from the verbal language which we have come to associate with books. The reader may of course experience the total effect of a play imaginatively but if that does not happen might not understand the significance of the words that are placed in Vermandero's mouth: 'our citadels / Are placed conspicuous to outward view / On promonts' tops, but within are secrets' (I. i. 162–4). I admit there is no guarantee that a spectator would grasp all the implications at once, but proper connections are more likely to establish themselves in the mind, at least gradually, if one actually *sees* the fortress as Vermandero speaks.

Some of the things which happen behind the facade are hidden from sight in a rather obvious way: a significant theatrical effect would be lost if in V. iii Beatrice and De Flores were presented as copulating in full view instead of behind a curtain (or door), and De Flores' stabbing of Beatrice, too, must come as a surprise to most of the characters on stage as well as the audience. Even here, however, the action has more significance than at first appears, as the more general point of the play is reinforced that the libido and violence are usually related psychologically and unseen for that reason rather than because sexual and violent actions are often kept secret from others. The hidden world behind the facade thus not only represents one of, for example, illicit sex or murder, but, far more meaningfully and unusually, an inner world of 'secrets' which is totally unknown to superficial people like Vermandero, especially the world of the unconscious. It is thus no accident if the fortress contains within it a world of madness which is *not* public knowledge, unlike that of Alibius' madhouse. Thus any sympathetic staging of the play which makes use of some such facade as that used in Jacobean times would almost inevitably bring out the essential connections between the superficial security of our 'outer' world which we like to think of as a fortress, another 'outer' world of recognized madness which we try to keep from view (it is an 'inner' world in that we do not usually see the madmen in Alibius' hospital), and yet another world of madness which we normally do not see at all, and which throughout the play is suggested rather than actually shown. The upper level of the facade, containing what I prefer to call the 'upper stage', on one occasion

presents Alibius' madmen visually: in III. iii, where they make Isabella aware of sexual promptings which she can deal with, unlike Beatrice who is not conscious of them, so that the workings of her inner world erupt into that of the fortress only at the end of the play.

Brief Outline of Performances

The Changeling was licensed to be acted at the Phoenix in 1622, but the earliest recorded performance took place on 4 January 1624, at Court. However, there is nothing remarkable about this situation, and it is the association with the Phoenix which is important. The company then acting there was called the Lady Elizabeth's Servants, but when this disbanded during the plague of 1625, the acting rights of the play remained with Christopher Beeston, the owner of the Phoenix. Subsequently Queen Henrietta's Company produced the play in the Phoenix until 1636, when it faced another outbreak of the plague and moved to the Salisbury Court Theatre in Whitefriars. It performed *The Changeling* there, until the Lord Chamberlain intervened and assigned the rights to Beeston's son William for performance by the King and Queen's Young Company, who were then playing at the Phoenix. In 1642 the Phoenix was closed, like the other theatres, and was perhaps inhabited by one John Rhodes, a former actor, who in 1659 – just before the Restoration – assembled another company at the Phoenix which included the play in its repertoire. This company (the Duke of York's) played at the Salisbury Court Theatre for a while until it moved to its new theatre in Lincoln's Inn Fields in 1661. Before this move, Samuel Pepys had seen the play on 23 February and reported that 'it takes exceedingly'. On the whole, the popular part in these early performances turned out to be that of Antonio. However, a performance at Court on 30 November 1668 is the last before the twentieth century (the play's revival amongst readers dates from the nineteenth century).

Modern interest in the play as a script for performance is extensive and dates back to about 1930. There have been numerous performances in countries as far apart as Britain, the United States and New Zealand, not only in a variety of theatres and theatrical modes, but also on the radio and on television. Modern technology should not necessarily be seen as incompatible with the play's nature. It was a pity that a performance on BBC radio in 1950 omitted the sub-plot, but in principle radio drama can do justice to the 'enclosed' world of *The Changeling* and the vigour of its language. A 1974 BBC television version was generally considered successful, not only because of the superb acting (with Stanley Baker as De Flores and Helen Mirren as Beatrice), but also as a

result of the fact that 'the close proximity and intensity of the work was achieved because of the dictates of the small screen'.[23]

As far as Britain is concerned, a useful tool for finding one's bearings concerning modern theatrical performances is provided by Lisa Cronin's *Professional Productions in the British Isles since 1880 of Plays by Tudor and Early Stuart Dramatists (Excluding Shakespeare)*, commendably published in 1987 by the University of Warwick (edited from the Graduate School of Renaissance Studies, which also produces an informative *Renaissance Drama Newsletter*). Cronin lists 42 different productions from 1950 to 1984 (of which 26 date from 1978 and after) and also mentions reviews. No doubt Cronin's survey will be updated and thus come to include, for example, a production by the National Theatre in 1988.

The first performance listed by Cronin is an amateur one by the First Folio Theatre Club in London in 1950. The first professional production (one of considerable importance) was directed by Tony Richardson for the English Stage Company at the Royal Court in February–March 1961. The play was set in the period of Goya's Spain. Richardson liked the Royal Court as 'an intimate theatre and therefore one which suits the intimate style of *The Changeling*'.[24] He saw the relating of the sub-plot to the main plot as a special difficulty, which he tried to help 'by introducing certain of the minor characters into the main plot at points where they were not originally written and in putting in the discovery of the two counterfeit madmen during the Masque of the fools and madmen.'

Of the many performances that have taken place since Richardson's, two in 1978 drew considerable attention, one directed by Peter Gill at the Riverside Studios, Hammersmith, and another directed by Terry Hands for the Royal Shakespeare Company at the Aldwych. In Gill's performance, the lunatics were interestingly allowed to roam below the audience, which was placed on raked seating formed on scaffolding. The use of lighting was significant in this production, especially as the intrinsic disadvantage of a large stage could at appropiate moments be counteracted by constricting it, while at other times full lights were not unsuitable. By comparison with Gill's, Hands' production was often seen as unnecessarily gross, with, for example, its presentation of a cardboard Beatrice getting married to Alsemero during the dumb show while the 'real' Beatrice and De Flores copulated at the back of the stage. Yet, although this presentation does not show the restraint of the text, one can say in Hands' defence, against his

[23] Michael Scott, *Renaissance Drama and a Modern Audience* (1982), p. 88
[24] *Plays and Players*, April 1961, 5

detractors, that he certainly presented, in visual language, a duality in Beatrice which the text wishes us to imagine. In a case like this, I would suggest that the point is not so much whether it is legitimate for the director to show the fornication on stage, but whether he manages to suggest that it serves the purpose which the dramatists imply: in other words, I would see such explicit sex as inappropriate if it was merely sensationalist or used to imply conscious hypocrisy on Beatrice's part, but not necessarily if it is offered as a visual sign of what we know she actually does and wishes to do in her unconscious. Hands' production emphasized the importance of sexual puns in the play (which seems to me proper), and his use of red and black as the dominant colours of the production, suggesting particularly sex and death, was commented on by reviewers; these colours are defensible.

Recent events make plain that there is considerable controversy about the question as to how the play should be staged: a controversy which at the very least suggests a lively involvement on the part of those engaged in it. Richard Eyre's production for the National Theatre in 1988 was very widely reviewed, but what was in question was not so much the intrinsic quality of the play (or even whether it *could* be a theatrical success), but whether Eyre's production was of the right kind. One reviewer stated his concern as prompted by 'the sense that the play's meaning is being imparted visually rather than verbally'. I am not sure that there is anything wrong in emphasizing visual effects, but I would agree that such an emphasis is wrong if it obscures the sense of the words of the text or goes against them. In the case of Eyre's production, this indeed appears to have happened: there is no reason, for example, why De Flores should be presented in such a way that (in the words of another reviewer) 'the livid marks on the face of... De Flores – a man of primitive drives which, once released, cannot be stopped – are tribal scarifications'. This kind of approach tells us more about the director than the play and is in no sense justified by it.

Ultimately, there is the real risk that some of the costly and exuberant modern productions do more harm to the play than more elementary non-professional ones, of which there have been plenty, and which we are always in some danger of ignoring. There is, however, more than one way in which the play can legitimately be performed, and the success of the performance, of whatever kind and in whatever mode, will depend less on the question of cost or technology or flamboyance of effect than on whether an honest and intelligent attempt is made to do justice to what the play seems to say. It will thus always be necessary for us to weigh our own individual reactions to the text as written against the interpretations of others, whether critics or performers.

(1993) During 1992 and 1993 the Royal Shakespeare Company offered a noteworthy production of the play, directed by Michael Attenborough. It commenced at the Swan in Stratford and afterwards moved to the Pit in London's Barbican. In both cases the small theatre was generally found to be congenial to the spirit of the play. The audience felt involved as it was seated close to the action. Staging was simple and economical. There were very few properties, the largest being Beatrice's bride-bed. In the Swan, the fools and mad people were kept under the stage, entering and leaving through the trap-door. In the Pit, there was a set which served throughout as the exterior of a castle. Emerging from slits in this wall were numerous clawing, grasping, beseeching hands. Overall, in both theatres, there was a feeling of intimacy and claustrophobia, of a closed world and hidden secrets.

I asked two spectators who both admire the play to give me their accounts of this production. One, a man well aware of the interpretation of the play advanced in this edition, was a little disappointed. To him, the production—which he saw in Stratford—came across as too 'safe'. The best scene in the play, he found, was the fools' and mad people's masque, which was presented as a terrifying, grotesque parody of the action so far; he considered that more could have been done to present the nature of madness, particularly in the case of Beatrice. 'Her initial loathing of De Flores gave no suggestion of sublimated attraction. Even when De Flores had subdued her to his will—during his "dove-panting" speech, as he held her tightly to his chest—there was only the faintest, momentary indication of sexual interest on her part. It was so brief you wondered if the actress intended it as such. In this portrayal of her, Beatrice-Joanna was simply a wilful thoughtless woman who was beguiled by a villain. Interestingly, this made her seem a faintly absurd figure. Deprived of any motive beyond that of which she herself was conscious, the character seemed curiously less alive, more of a mere stage-figure.'

This spectator felt that De Flores, also, was rather too one-dimensional and that there should have been a richer evocation of that man's soul. The other spectator, however, a woman who saw the play (which she did not know) later, in London, felt that Malcolm Storry's De Flores was extraordinarily dynamic. She at once sensed hidden (and potentially evil) depths. De Flores' vivid purple birthmark did not make him repellent or hideous; rather, it set him apart from others, perhaps in part explaining Beatrice's initial aversion, while his raw sexuality was bound to disturb her. 'When Beatrice dropped her glove it was hard to decide whether she did it deliberately, and in their early scenes together you were never quite sure whether she truly loathed him as much as she kept protesting. But I think this ambiguity should be there—it certainly

is in the text. The *suggestion* of unrecognised or unacknowledged lust was certainly present in Cheryl Campbell's Beatrice, and it became stronger at the end of III.iv, when De Flores takes her in his arms. Her love scenes with Alsemero never approached the intensity of passion that *every* scene with De Flores achieved.'

Whatever the reasons for these two very dissimilar reactions, it is clear that the two performances (which may have differed from each other) provoked a good deal of interesting thought in these two theatre-goers. The future of *The Changeling* on stage looks assured.

Unfortunately the most recent TV performance known to me, broadcast on BBC2 (11 December 1993), appears to have been far from successful. Despite the presence of Bob Hoskins as a powerful De Flores, the *Times* reviewer (13/12/93) complained that the words were whispered inaudibly rather than spoken. Amazingly, the sub-plot was removed. Yet the play provides an excellent script for a TV or film production.

NOTE ON THE TEXT

The only seventeenth-century text of the play is a printed one produced a long time after it was written (1622) and after Middleton and Rowley died. *The Changeling* had appeared on stage many times before its publication rights were acquired in 1652 by Humphrey Moseley, who had it printed by Thomas Newcomb so as to appear late in 1652 or early in 1653. Two title pages exist: the one of which a facsimile reproduction appears on page 1 below and one which omits the reference to Moseley, simply stating 'LONDON, Printed in the Year, 1653'. These title pages do not refer to different editions but appear due to the fact that Moseley chose a bad time for publication of his Quarto: the Puritans had been responsible for the closing of the theatres in 1642, and by 1653 even the printing of a play could get one into trouble, which presumably Moseley's new title page was intended to avoid. There is a third title page accompanying a reissue of the play by Moseley's widow in 1668; again, this version is not a different edition, as the sheets used for the play were those of the 1653 version. Thus, despite the variation in title pages, there is only one seventeenth-century edition of the play.

There is therefore no point in, for example, comparing a 1668 copy of the play with one produced in 1653 in the hope of finding significant differences. Differences between individual copies do occur, but they are not related to the question of title pages; instead, they are due to the fact that some corrections were made to the sheets while printing was in progress. (Indeed, uncorrected

sheets were used in 1668.) The corrections were not carried out systematically. Nevertheless, where they occur they are generally an improvement and have on the whole been accepted as such by editors on the basis of good sense, although nothing is known about their authority.

Like other editors, I have compared a number of copies to study the variants which occur. All copies which are held by the British Library and by the Bodleian Library in Oxford have been collated for this purpose, but I have discovered nothing new. One or two trivial variants appear according to the reports of other scholars in copies examined by them which I have not seen.[25] There is general agreement that for the purposes of a modernized edition only three variants need to be noted as substantial. In II. i. 149 uncorrected 'we are' was changed into 'w'are', as the metre demands; in II. ii. 131 the nonsensical 'my selfe that' became 'myself of that'; and in IV. ii. 88 'tho' was turned into 'thou'. As this last change was wrong (the earlier 'tho' correctly represented 'though', while 'thou' makes no sense), it can be assumed that the proofreader responsible for it was guessing rather than basing his judgement on a manuscript, although it remains possible that he did so in other instances.

It is not easy to decide how reliable Q is. It is unlikely that the printed text was based directly on work done by the dramatists, although there are a few traces of their linguistic habits which have survived the process of transmission. It is more probable that the source for Q was a transcript of a promptbook, and it has been suggested that Moseley had such a transcript of the play prepared before he sent it to the printer.[26] But in any case the text as it has come down to us is probably some stages removed from the work of the dramatists. Opinions differ as to how much faith we should put in what we do have. There appears to be more evidence for the belief that one compositor set the type than that more were involved, but we do not know how accurate that compositor was. The earliest editors of the play, notably Dilke and Dyce (but also many of their successors), were inclined to emend the text of Q fairly readily where they considered it deficient in sense or metre.

[25] See especially R. G. Lawrence, 'A Bibliographical Study of Middleton and Rowley's *The Changeling*', *The Library*, March 1961, 37–43; see also Richard Proudfoot, in *NQ*, April 1968, 154, where he discusses Black's edition.

[26] Williams (p. xi) believes that the text has been set not from authorial foul papers or from a promptbook, but probably from a fair scribal transcript (written in secretary hand) of the authors' foul papers. Bawcutt thinks that Q's source was 'probably a transcript from theatrical prompt-copy' (p. xvi), either a private transcript made some years before 1653 or one specially commissioned by Moseley. Certainly Q's spelling is typically that of c. 1650.

Earlier this century such an approach was rejected, and editors perhaps veered towards the other extreme, defending Q readings as though Q were sacrosanct. In the present edition I have tried to steer a middle course, but I do believe that Dyce, in particular, was far more often likely to be correct than those whose confidence in Q seems close to dogmatic. It is surprising to see such confidence expressed and acted on given the fact that we know so little about Q's authority and that there are so many errors which appear to have been conceded by all editors. Even so, where I could persuade myself that Q could possibly be correct (whether I liked what I saw or not) I have tended to follow it, and I have in any case indicated all substantial departures. (As in many editions, only very obvious errors like misprints have been silently emended.)

Unless otherwise specified, the version of Q which I refer to is the copy in the British Library (London) which has the pressmark 162.k.10 and which was used by N. W. Bawcutt in his facsimile edition of the play.[27] The copy is a good, clear one. I think it is a major advantage that anyone who wishes to see what I have done can compare my text with a facsimile of the copy which I have used, even though the facsimile is far from ideal. It is true that 162.k.10 contains a few trivial misprints which are known to have been corrected in other copies, but these are really of no concern for the present edition, and the copy contains several more pages on which corrections are known to occur, including the substantial alterations discussed above. I have moreover very thoroughly inspected the other Q copies to which I had direct access and have equally carefully collated my own edited text with all other editions. Collation of the original quartos has been as direct as I could make it (unfortunately one cannot take a copy from one library to another!). Eye-contact with an original copy is always better than reliance on photographic reproduction, including microfilms, as certain details – for example, faint letters – will often only be visible in the original, and may vary from one copy to another.

I have drastically modernized the text, retaining original features only where they served a genuine purpose. I see no point in, for example, retaining *burthen* instead of *burden*. On the other hand, I have retained contracted forms like *y'are*, not only for metrical reasons but also because they are clear and inoffensive enough in a modern text. It so happens that some of these forms are helpful in determining the matter of authorship, but I have not been concerned to preserve them for that reason. Someone who wishes to carry out serious research into such a matter should not use my edition anyway, but the original quartos. Thus, although

[27] Published by Scolar Press in 1973

'um is Rowley's form rather than Middleton's, I have, in keeping with the policy for 'New Mermaids', adopted *'em* throughout. To most modern readers, *'um* would seem peculiar if not unintelligible; there is no difference in meaning; and there is no loss in artistic effect if *'em* is used. I have no doubt that Middleton and Rowley, who wrote as collaborators for the stage, would not object to the consistent use of *'em* if they were alive today.

That criterion – 'What would the dramatists want one to do?' – has in fact guided my thought in the whole process of modernization. Some modern editors have modernized the words of the text but been coy about changing its punctuation. The fact is, though, that seventeenth-century punctuation on the whole served a rhetorical function rather than the grammatical one that modern punctuation does. Furthermore, I agree with those who believe that the Q punctuation is singularly bad (misleading rather than helpful in any respect) and cannot be regarded as authoritative (Middleton's own practice in the holograph of *A Game at Chess* differs radically from that used in Q). I have therefore punctuated the text in a modern way which I hope will be natural and useful in bringing out syntactical connections and divisions. However, I have not refrained from retaining Q punctuation (or equivalent modern marks) where I believed that it might be truly significant; I have also commented on some such instances even where I departed from Q.

The 1653 quarto divided the play into acts but not into scenes. This was first done by Dyce, whose arrangement has become the accepted one. Indications of scene, like expanded speech prefixes ('Jasperino' for 'Jasp.' etc.) and a number of stage directions which do not occur in Q, are a feature of modern editions, including this one. Added material (apart from expanded speech prefixes) is enclosed in square brackets. The stage directions were in general first suggested by Dilke and Dyce and have been adopted (sometimes adapted) by their successors, but I have given more liberal guidance than many of my predecessors and added directions where I felt they were needed. As such material is kept apart from that which is part of Q, the additions can hardly harm, whether offered within the body of the text or in notes. I have borne in mind not only the needs of those staging the play but also those of readers, who are often at a loss as to what they should imagine is happening unless this is clearly indicated. On the other hand, I have tried to provide essential directions rather than merely fanciful ones.

I have paid more attention than is customary to the question as to how the lines should be pronounced. This is a controversial matter, and one's answers depend on one's sense of English pronunciation in the 1620s as well as one's view of the likely prosodic

intentions of the authors. As usual I have given the facts of Q but have not refrained from showing my hand by suggesting alterations. Prosody is dealt with in the Appendix, and I here indicate only what practices have been adopted within the text. The lineation, largely based on that of Dilke and Dyce, has been drastically revised from that found in Q. (See the Appendix for a list of the departures.) The general result has been to produce iambic verse where Q does so imperfectly even though its presence seems to be implied and to turn into prose some of the 'verse' given to some of the 'low' speakers, notably Lollio. Accent marks are employed where I believe a word is stressed in an unexpected way, e.g. 'survéy' (noun). The diaeresis is used to suggest the presence of an extra syllable (e.g., 'deceivëd' as trisyllabic). The following line shows the function of both marks (I. i. 211):

A courtiër and a gallánt, enriched

Here 'courtiër', is trisyllabic (and as it happens also has *metrical* stress on its last syllable), while 'gallánt' is disyllabic but stressed on its second syllable. (I have provided these marks wherever the modern reader could be in any doubt, and probably have been modest even so.)

Q is highly consistent in differentiating between verbal forms with suffix *-ed* spelled in full and those ending instead with a mere *'d* or *t*. Those with *-ed* may be like 'discarded', where the *-ed* is sounded as it is now, while the shorter forms (Q 'stretcht', etc.) indicate that the suffix is not sounded (as in modern 'stretched'). As the modern reader will not confuse these two categories anyway, *-ed* has been used throughout. Where, however, the *-ed* is used in Q to indicate that the syllable is sounded for *metrical* purposes (something the reader could not otherwise automatically infer), I have used the diaeresis to indicate the fact – thus 'deceivëd' as in I. i. 15. (See the Appendix for more detailed comments.) Verbal forms like 'stretcht' are exceptional in having been expanded; thus I have preserved monosyllabic 'that's' instead of using 'that is', etc.

FURTHER READING

There is a good deal of worthwhile writing on *The Changeling*. Some of it is mentioned in the course of the Introduction. Recent bibliographies should be consulted, and a useful start is provided by Dorothy Wolff, *Thomas Middleton: An Annotated Bibliography* (1985), which offers full listings and pertinent comments. Previous editions like those by Bawcutt and Williams contain valuable material. For stimulating discussions see:

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Sara Eaton, 'Beatrice-Joanna and the Rhetoric of Love', in David Scott Kastan and Peter Stallybrass, eds, *Staging the Renaissance* (1991)
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Marjorie Garber, 'The Insanity of Women', in Valeria Finucci and Regina Schwartz, eds, *Desire in the Renaissance: Psychoanalysis and Literature* (1994)
Deborah G. Burks, '"I'll want my will else": *The Changeling* and Women's Complicity with Their Rapists', *ELH* 62, 4 (1995), 759-90
Marjorie Garber, 'The Insincerity of Women', in Margreta de Grazia, Maureen Quilligan and Peter Stallybrass, eds, *Subject and Object in Renaissance Culture* (1996)

THE CHANGELING:

As it was Acted (with great Applause) at the Privat house in DRURY-LANE, and *Salisbury Court*.

Written by { *THOMAS MIDLETON*, and *WILLIAM ROWLEY*. } Gent'.

Never Printed before.

LONDON,
Printed for HUMPHREY MOSELEY, and are to be sold at his shop at the sign of the *Princes-Arms* in St. *Pauls* Church-yard, 1653.