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The Kaleidoscopic Vision: Multiple Perspectives in Four Plays by Thomas Middleton

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THE KALEIDOSCOPIIC VISION: MULTIPLE PERSPECTIVES
IN FOUR PLAYS BY THOMAS MIDDLETON

by

Harry Robert Burke

A Dissertation Submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate School
of Loyola University of Chicago in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

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1981

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VITA

The author, Harry Robert Burke, is the elder son of Noella (Chartrand) and the late Robert L. Burke. He was born September 17, 1942 in Chicago, Illinois.

His elementary education was completed at St. Rita Grammar School in Chicago, and secondary education at St. Rita High School where he graduated in June, 1960.

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Mr. Burke is married and lives in Chicago with his wife, Egle Victoria (Aglinskas).

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

My purpose is to investigate the multiple perspectives or angles of vision by which Middleton invites us to view his characters, plots, and themes. The presentation of multiple perspectives resembles the changing views in a kaleidoscope. We see figures arranged in one certain pattern, then another. During the play, the scenes, hence the patterns, change several times so that at the play's conclusion, we have regarded the characters, plots, and themes from several points of view. The result is a comprehensive vision of Middleton's "world."¹ Investigating perspectives can also help us to determine how Middleton guides the audience's sympathies toward or away from individual characters.

Middleton develops his multiple perspectives by presenting changes taking place in characters, new facets of unchanging characters, characters' moral detraction of themselves, challenges to the audience's expectations, and sophistic attitudes on point of view and morality. The last two points require clarification. In A Chaste Maid in

Cheapside, Touchwood Senior expresses fulsome praise for his wife and marriage, but our expectations of a faithful husband are suddenly undercut by Touchwood's admittance of numerous infidelities and by his confrontation with his latest mistress, the Country Wench. Besides surprises in characterization, Middleton also challenges our expectations regarding value systems and plot development. In Women Beware Women, we are encouraged to equate a character's superiority with his cultural sophistication, but then Middleton undercuts this equation by illustrating the moral superiority of boorish characters. In IV.ii. and V.ii. of The Changeling, Middleton presents Tomazo de Piracquo as a conventional revenger, devoting 150 lines to his angry confrontations, but in the final scene, Tomazo has no part in either the discovery of the truth or the death of the murderers. Again, Middleton reverses our expectations.

In addition to challenging our expectations, Middleton incorporates sophistic attitudes toward point of view and morality which may be summarized in two principles: 1) on every issue there are two arguments opposed to each other, and 2) human statutes of morality are relative not absolute. Diogenes Laertius informs us that Protagoras (ca. 490 B.C.-420 B.C.) was the first to say that on every issue there are two arguments opposed to

each other.² Apparently Protagorus illustrated this method in Contradictory Arguments, which is not extant. However, a similar procedure is used in the Dissoi Logoi or double speeches, an anonymous sophistic treatise which Sprague believes was written "some time subsequent to the end of the Peloponnesian War."³ Section titles indicate an emphasis on opposing sides of a question: "Concerning Good and Bad," "Concerning Seemly and Disgraceful," and so forth. In sophistic literature, structuring a discussion by opposites encourages seeing the same incident from different points of view:

Illness is bad for the sick but good for the doctors. Death is bad for those who die but good for the undertakers and grave diggers.

from: "Concerning Good and Bad"⁴

For a woman to have intercourse with her own husband is seemly, but to do so with another woman's husband is most shameful.

from: "Concerning Seemly and Disgraceful"⁵

My opponents declare that it is disgraceful... to deceive one's family...but...suppose one's father or mother ought to drink or eat a remedy and is unwilling to do so, isn't it just to give the remedy in a gruel or drink and to deny that it is in it? Therefore... it is (just) to tell lies and to deceive one's parents.

from: "Concerning Just and Unjust"⁶

A deed in itself is neither good nor bad; what makes it "good" or "bad" is the point of view from which we judge it.

The sophistic habit of arguing both sides of a question gradually influenced assumptions about morality which leads us to the second principle: human statutes of morality are relative not absolute. If judgement hinges on point of view rather than the deed, thing, or person evaluated, then judgement is as relative as point of view. What was morally shameful (e.g. incest) to a fifth century Greek was not to an Egyptian.⁷ Morality is relative to culture, but it is also relative to circumstances. For example, adultery might have a good effect on a marriage devoid of children.

Dramatic conventions such as choric commentary, juxtaposition, the soliloquy, and especially the aside are also helpful in the presentation of multiple perspectives. The actions of choric commentators sometimes contradict their moralistic statements thereby encouraging an ambivalent response to the commentators. By juxtaposing the Duke's seduction of Bianca (II.ii. of Women Beware Women) and her complaints about Mother's lack of material luxuries (III.i.), Middleton invites us to question to what extent Bianca was forced and to what extent she was willingly seduced by the wealthy Duke. Allwit's soliloquy detailing his freedom from torment (I.ii. of A Chaste Maid in Cheapside) offers a different view of him than the servant's disrespectful remarks. Each vision

of Allwit is incomplete without the other.

Though Middleton uses choric commentary, juxtaposition, and the soliloquy regularly, his favorite such device is the aside. In both Women Beware Women and The Changeling, he includes a very large number of asides, and they characteristically give us a second opinion about the action in progress. This is another way of turning the kaleidoscope. The use of asides may suggest changes in one character's relationship with another. For example, up to the end of DeFlores' seduction of Beatrice-Joanna (III.iv. of The Changeling), she speaks most of her asides in his presence while speaking few asides in the presence of Alsemero, a man she admires and trusts. After Beatrice has had sexual intercourse with DeFlores, her relationships with him and Alsemero are reversed, and the asides reflect this reversal. She speaks no more asides in the presence of DeFlores, the man she now considers her protector, but both she and Alsemero speak asides during the virginity test when each distrusts the other.⁸

Dieter Mehl once remarked that Middleton "throws light on situations from different angles."⁹ By offering multiple perspectives on character, plot, and theme, Middleton challenges us not to assume that we have the final answers. Every conclusion inspires a new question; any

point of view can be qualified or even contradicted by another point of view.

CHAPTER II

MICHAELMAS TERM

In Michaelmas Term, Middleton develops conventional plots and characterizations in unconventional ways, thereby undercutting our expectations while exploring new directions for conventional materials. By combining classical, biblical, and Renaissance literary materials, Middleton offers fresh angles of vision on each tradition. This approach is consistent with the Renaissance habit of examining any topic from at least two different points of view.¹

The allegory of the "Inductio" affords Middleton a fresh perspective, in addition to the verisimilitude of the play, from which he can dramatize the city preying upon the country.² The fleecing of the country follows an inevitable pattern: legal writs collect clients from the country the way wild fowl collect straw. The allegorical figure Michaelmas Term justifies the shakedown this way: "birds pick to build their nests,/ Nor no small money that keeps drabs and feasts."³ In addition, the "Inductio" develops a symbolic landscape in which

the country is associated with purity, goodness, fertility, and stability while the city is associated with hell, devils, darkness, corruption, and exploitation.⁴ We shall see later that the trial scene in act five also deals with limitations of the legal system though from a different perspective than the "Inductio." Middleton seems to intend both the "Inductio" and the trial scene to illustrate the many obstacles that can stand between an innocent man and justice.

Middleton commences his characterization of Richard Easy by having the London gallant Cockstone describe Easy to Rearage, another gallant:

One Master Easy; h'as land in Essex,
 A fair free-breasted gentleman, somewhat too open
 (Bad in man, worse in woman,
 The gentry-fault at first); he is yet fresh,
 And wants the city powd'ring. (I.i.52-56)

Easy is too trusting and naive, but apparently these traits typify gentry new to London. Easy has lived most of his life in the country (I.i.42-43) where, as the "Inductio" makes clear, devious plots are absent (ll. 1-3).

Our first perspective of Quomodo is that of a London merchant determined to rise in social status by defrauding Easy of his estate. When Shortyard, Quomodo's accomplice, asks what "mark" he is "shooting at," Quomodo responds:

Why, the fairest to cleave the heir in twain,

I mean his title; to murder his estate,
 Stifle his right in some detested prison.
 There are means and ways enow to hook in gentry,
 Besides our deadly enmity, which thus stands:
 They're busy 'bout our wives, we 'bout their lands.
 (I.i.102-107)

Quomodo's greed for Easy's lands and hatred of the gentry contribute to a satiric/didactic perspective consistent with many of Jonson's characterizations.⁵ However, Quomodo differs markedly from Volpone, Subtle, and Face. They pursue beautiful women and cash. Quomodo shows no interest in either; he specializes in acquiring land.⁶ They harbor no class biases, will gladly steal from anyone. Quomodo betrays a clear bias against gentry: "Gentry is the chief fish we tradesmen catch" (I.i.32). Furthermore, Volpone, Subtle, and Face do not hate their victims; they merely exploit their greed. Quomodo not only hates the gentry represented by Easy but never relaxes that hatred during the entire play.

Although Quomodo is a socially disruptive force, interfering with Easy's legal inheritance of family land, he is also a highly entertaining rascal experienced in clever schemes.⁷ By making Quomodo both an object of satire and a creator of humor, Middleton has his cake and eats it too, just as Ben Jonson, who satirized his villains "but rejoiced in bringing them alive."⁸ Quomodo gives Shortyard specific directions on how to prepare Easy for the "kill:"

Keep foot by foot with him, out-dare his expenses,
 Flatter, dice, and brothel to him;
 Give him a sweet taste of sensuality;
 Train him to every wasteful sin, that he
 May quickly need health, but especially money;
 Ravish him with a dame or two, be his bawd for once,
 I'll be thine forever;
 Drink drunk with him, creep into bed to him,
 Kiss him and undo him, my sweet spirit.
 (I.i.120-28)

Here, Quomodo resembles the Vice figure, the playmaker or stage director arranging events to deceive his victim and enjoying every minute of his clever scheming.⁹

Middleton makes use of the Roman New Comedy tradition in the Rearage-Susan Quomodo relationship.¹⁰ Cockstone asks Rearage about his progress:

Is't yet a match 'twixt Master Quomodo's
 The rich draper's daughter and yourself?
 Rearage.
 Faith, sir, I am vildly rival'd.
 Cockstone.
 Vildly? By whom?
 Rearage.
 One Andrew Lethe, crept to a little warmth,
 And now so proud that he forgets all storms;

 ...Him Master Quomodo affects,
 The daughter him, the mother only me;
 I rest more doubtful, my side being weakest.
 Cockstone.
 Yet the mother's side
 Being surer than the father's, it may prove
 "Men plead for money best, women for love."
 (I.i.57-62, 65-70)

This is the stock Terentian plot transplanted in Jacobean London: the young man prevented from marrying the girl of his choice by the objections of the father. How and why Middleton alters the conventional New Comedy romance

will become clear in subsequent scenes.

Middleton introduces another tradition, the prodigal son theme, through his characterization of Andrew Lethe, formerly Andrew Gruel, who deserted his country birthplace to come to London.¹¹ Lethe's characterization combines the theme of the corrupt prodigal, supporting himself by pandering, with that of the Jacobean gallant seeking money through marriage with the rich merchant's daughter, Susan Quomodo.¹² Instead of having the prodigal son return home and seek forgiveness, Middleton reverses the convention by having the parent seek the son. The effect of this reversal is to emphasize Lethe's permanent corruption. The recently widowed Mother Gruel arrives in London, hoping her son will support her. Rather than welcome his mother and ask forgiveness, Lethe, ashamed of her, keeps his identity secret and decides to exploit her:

Mother Gruel.

Alas, an't please your worship, I never saw such a glorious suit since the hour I was kersen'd.

Lethe [Aside]

Good, she knows me not, my glory does disguise me;
Beside, my poorer name being drench'd in Lethe,
She'll hardly understand me. What a fresh air can do!
I may employ her as a private drudge
To pass my letters and secure my lust,
And ne'er be noted mine, to shame my blood,
And drop my staining birth upon my raiment.

(I.i.263-71)

In a conventional prodigal son story, the parent would express compassion for the son. Instead, Middleton reverses the convention, having Mother Gruel satirize Lethe

by reflecting on his youth:

...He is no gentleman that I mean

 ...I have known the day when nobody
 car'd to speak to him.

 His virtues? No, 'tis well known his father was
 too poor a man to bring him up to any virtues;
 he can scarce write and read.

 ...he has no good parts about him.
 (I.i.248,274-75,281,285)

These comments emphasize Lethe's worthlessness and, at the same time, appear to establish Mother Gruel as a moral commentator or chorus. But just when we have accepted her in that role, Middleton startles us:

Mother Gruel.

There's no woman so old but she may learn, and as an old lady delights in a young page or monkey, so there are young courtiers will be hungry upon an old woman, I warrant you.

(I.i.299-301)

Mother Gruel suddenly reveals a taste for courtly lust! Middleton is undercutting our expectations concerning a conventional parent of a prodigal and is raising doubts about how much we can trust seemingly authorial commentators.

In I.ii., Middleton makes use of the medieval Devil tradition, combining it with a second prodigal story. Like the devil Titivillus in Mankind (ca. 1465-70), Hellgill seeks to control and corrupt the life of a victim, the prodigal Wench who, tempted by Hellgill's inducements, has deserted the country to seek high social status in

London:

Country Wench.

Beshrew you now, why did you entice me from my father?

Hellgill.

Why? To thy better advancement. Wouldst thou, a pretty beautiful, juicy squall, live in a poor thrum'd house i'th' country in such servile habiliments, and may well pass for a gentlewoman i'th' city?...Oh, now in these latter days, the devil reigning, 'tis an age for cloven creatures. But why sad now? Yet indeed 8 'tis the fashion of any courtesan to be seasick i'th' first voyage, but at the next she proclaims open wars, like a beaten soldier.

.....
Country Wench.

If I had not a desire to go like a gentlewoman, you should be hang'd ere you should get me to't, I warrant you.

Hellgill.

.....
I know you are all chaste enough,
Till one thing or other tempt you!

Country Wench.

Beshrew your sweet enchantments, you have won.

Hellgill [Aside]

How easily soft women are undone.
So farewell wholesome weeds, where treasure pants,
And welcome silks, where lies disease and wants.
(I.ii.2-11,27-28,31-32,50-52)

Hellgill's name plus the devil imagery of ll. 7-8 confirm his descendance from the devils of the medieval stage.¹³

The prodigal Wench blames her fall on Hellgill, but actually, like the medieval Devil, his victory over the Wench illustrates her embracing of the folly and corruption inside herself. By combining the medieval Devil and prodigal son traditions, Middleton gives us a new perspective on each.

II.i. parallels I.ii. in many ways; for example, Shortyard, disguised as Blastfield, tempts Richard Easy to

fortune and fame just as Hellgill tempted the Country Wench. Neither victim is able to resist temptation. We are shown two prodigals being initiated into corruption (Easy, Wench) and another already debased (Lethe), as if Middleton were inviting comparison between two different stages of the prodigal story.

We are also given a new perspective on Rearage who is playing dice with the gallants and losing his money:

Rearage.

Oh, worse than consumption of the liver!
Consumption of the patrimony.

.....
Forgive me my posterity yet ungotten!

.....

Drawer.

There are certain countrymen without, inquiring for
Master Rearage and Master Salewood.

Rearage.

Tenants!

Salewood.

Thou reviv'st us, rascal.

Rearage.

When's our next meeting, gentlemen?

(II.i.118-19,121,165-69)

We last saw Rearage as the Roman New Comedy hero hoping to win his love, Susan Quomodo. Now Middleton turns the kaleidoscope, showing Rearage as a prodigal, wasting his "patrimony" in dice games and looking forward to the next game. This incident undermines our acceptance of Rearage as a hero in the play.¹⁴

II.i. also illustrates Middleton's use of an "anticipatory" or foreshadowing perspective to comment upon the

Country Wench's naive dreams of high social status.¹⁵ Both Blastfield and Hellgill make sarcastic references to Lethe's humble beginnings.¹⁶ He wishes fervently that this issue would die, but to his consternation and the audience's amusement, someone is always resurrecting it. By placing these sarcastic references in the scene immediately following the Wench's expression of her social ambitions (I.ii.), Middleton intends us to realize that just as Lethe never succeeded in escaping his past, the Wench's past will always haunt her, stifling her upward ambitions. Lethe's present provides a perspective on the Wench's future. She cannot see this yet, but the audience can.

In II.ii., one 38 line soliloquy, the Country Wench's Father, who has come to London to protect his daughter from corruption, reveals his prodigal background:

Woe worth th' infected cause that makes me visit
 This man-devouring city, where I spent
 My unshapen youth, to be my age's curse,
 And surfeited away my name and state
 In swinish riots, that now, being sober,
 I do awake a beggar.

(II.ii.20-25)

Middleton is turning the kaleidoscope again. Among the country characters, Father alone is wise in the ways of the city. His experiences offer us a new angle of vision on the naively hopeful viewpoints of the other country characters. The Wench, Easy, Mother Gruel, Rearage, even Lethe assume that they will fulfill their hopes in London,

but Father's experience makes us aware that they will reap only disappointment. The phrase "man-devouring city" adumbrates the especially degrading experiences of the Country Wench and Richard Easy.¹⁷ Father's understanding encourages us to accept him as a reliable moral commentator.

In II.iii. Middleton establishes Thomasine as a moral commentator, the first indication being her indictment of Lethe and his sexually indecent letter:

Were these fit words, think you, to be sent
to any citizen's wife: to enjoy the daughter,
and love the mother too for a need?...A base,
proud knave....How does he appear to me when
his white satin suit's on, but like a maggot
crept out of a nutshell.

(II.iii.1-3,9,12-13)

The second indication is her response to Quomodo and Shortyard's clever deception of Easy, who foolishly accepts cloth as part of a loan agreement:¹⁸

Why stand I here (as late our graceless dames
That found no eyes) to see that gentleman
Alive, in state and credit, executed,
Help to rip up himself, does all he can?
Why am I wife to him that is no man?
I suffer in that gentleman's confusion.

(II.iii.202-207)

The fact that Thomasine rejects the wealth and power she would gain if Quomodo's scheme succeeds in favor of the absolute moral standard appears to attest to her honesty and credibility.¹⁹ The third indication is the contrast between her perspective and those of the deceivers

after Easy finally signs the fatal bond:

Quomodo [Aside, while Easy signs]

Now I begin to set one foot upon the land. Methinks
I am felling of trees already; we shall have some
Essex logs yet to keep Christmas with, and that's
a comfort.

Thomasine [Aside]

Now is he quart'ring out; the executioner
Strides over him; with his own blood he writes.

I am no dame that can endure such sights. Exit above

Shortyard [Aside]

So his right wing is cut; he will not fly far
Past the two city hazards, Poultry and Wood Street.

(II.iii.338-345)

Quomodo's aside is a figure of thought called hypotyposes which here shows how very sure of himself Quomodo feels-- a dangerous assumption especially later in the play when he thinks he can accomplish anything--even feign death.²⁰ The figure also illustrates Quomodo's emphasis on self-interest and expediency. The sympathy and moral outrage that Thomasine's aside expresses, points up Quomodo's selfish greed. Finally, Shortyard's coldly objective picture of the injured bird underlines his lack of human sympathy compared to the outraged Thomasine.

In one sense, Easy is the victimized prodigal in II.iii., being educated in the city's deceptive ways. But in another sense, Easy cooperates in his own downfall by insisting that he will be shamed if he cannot finance his supper for the gallants (ll. 126-130), by persuading Blastfield to accept cloth instead of cash as the substance of the loan (ll. 179-182, 208-210), by agreeing to sign second

on the bond (ll. 293-295, 336), and by persuading Blastfield to sell the cloth at a loss to "Master Idem" (l.432). Middleton intends more than irony here. Easy's weaknesses, such as his foolish desire to be accepted among the corrupt gallants and his hurt pride at being rejected as a signer on the bond, move him to embrace his own defeat. By making the deceivers and Easy about equally responsible for his downfall, Middleton encourages an ambivalent response to II.iii. and reflects the Renaissance habit of examining both sides of an issue.

Quomodo's closing soliloquy in II.iii. implies a point of view which will affect the plot in acts four and five:

First have I caught him in a bond for two hundred pound, and my two hundred pound's worth o'cloth again for three-score pound. Admire me, all you students at Inns of Cozenage.

(II.iii.439-442)

Quomodo's emphasis on "I" and "me" ignores Shortyard's invaluable contributions as well as Easy's unwitting cooperation in his own downfall. This egoistic point of view prepares us for Quomodo's two major mistakes: his failure to reward Shortyard and his foolish assumption that he can execute the feigned-death plot without help.

After the Country Wench enters wearing a luxurious gown (III.i.), Middleton offers three perspectives

illustrating relative interpretations of female beauty. Hellgill stresses the deceptive nature of gowns, jewelry, and makeup, which provide a brilliant cover for a woman's vacuous inner nature:

You talk of an alteration; here's the thing
itself. What base birth does not raiment make
glorious? And what glorious births do not
rags make infamous? Why should not a woman
confess what she is now, since the finest
are but deluding shadows, begot between
tirewomen and tailors?

(III.i.1-5)

To Hellgill, appearance is not opposed to reality, it is reality. Middleton counters Hellgill's misogynistic and materialistic view with Father's romantic and idealistic assessment:

...he that has not the heart to serve such a
mistress as your beautiful self, deserves to
be honored for a fool, or knighted for a cow-
ard.

.....
...Amongst such imperfect creatures I ha' not
seen a perfecter; I should have reckoned the
fortunes of my daughter amongst the happiest,
had she lighted into such a service.

(III.i.41-43,54-57)

Lethe's perspective assumes that the Wench's beauty reflects upon his superiority:

Come gallants, I'll bring you to a beauty
shall strike your eyes into your hearts;
what you see you shall desire, yet never
enjoy.

.....
...a gentlewoman of a great house, noble
parentage, unmatchable education, my plain
pung...I may grace her with the name of a
courtesan...but when all comes to all,
'tis but a plain pung.

(III.i.68-70,73-77)

Lethe first places the Wench's beauty above the gallants' reach then places himself above the Wench. Each of the three speakers engages in sophistic relativism, interpreting the Wench's beauty to justify what he wishes to believe.

All three perspectives are proven inaccurate by the end of the scene, but before Father learns the truth, Middleton allows the Wench to score a victory of sorts over Lethe and Hellgill. When Rearage and Salewood begin courting the Wench, Lethe's cowardice prevents him from acting, and the Wench is forced to take action:

...Stand from me; I protest I'll
draw my silver bodkin upon you...

.....
A gentlewoman must swagger a little now and
then, I perceive; there would be no civility
in her chamber else. Though it be my hard
fortune to have my keeper there a coward,
the thing that's kept is a gentlewoman born.
(III.i.165-166,168-171)

Though there is something pitiful about the Wench insisting that she is a "gentlewoman born," her spirited stand proves that she is not the vacuous female Hellgill assumes she is. By having the Wench act rather than one of the gallants, Middleton destroys Lethe's pretensions of superiority over the Wench and underlines his cowardice in the strongest possible terms.

Finally realizing the Wench is a prostitute, Father rejects his idealistic devotion expressed at the beginning

of this scene:

Thou fair and wicked creature, steep'd in art,
 Beauteous and fresh, the soul the foulest part!
 A common filth is like a house possess'd,
 Where, if not spoil'd, you'll come out fray'd
 at least.

This service likes not me; though I rest poor,
 I hate the basest use, to screen a whore.

(III.i.259-264)

In spite of his worldly wisdom, Father mistakenly idealizes the Wench, then has his faith destroyed.²¹ Middleton has undermined Father's credibility as an authorial commentator.

By having Easy explain his feelings about Blastfield in III.ii., Middleton reveals how unformed and immature this prodigal's personality is:

Methinks I have no being without his company;
 'tis so full of kindness and delight, I hold
 him to be the only companion in earth.

Boy [Aside]

Ay, as companions go nowadays, that help to
 spend a man's money.

Easy.

So full of nimble wit...he might keep company
 with any lord for his grace.

.....
 And such a good, free-hearted, honest, affable
 kind of gentleman. Come, boy, a heaviness will
 possess me till I see him. Exit

Boy.

But you'll find yourself heavier then by a
 seven hundred pound weight. Alas, poor birds
 that cannot keep the sweet country, where
 they fly at pleasure, but must needs come to
 London to have their wings clip'd, and are
 fain to go hopping home again. Exit

(III.ii.6-13,15-22)

The emotionally dependent Easy does not realize his predicament and never even mentions the bond; he can only

think how lonely he is without Blastfield. Enter the Boy. Middleton obverts the kaleidoscope, using the street-savvy Boy to counterpoint the naive Easy. One perspective gives context to another, increasing understanding of each. The Boy's perspective sustains the play's pattern of indicting the city by contrasting it with the "honest" country. The fact that in the city even the children are more savvy and cynical than adult country innocents heightens the effect.

Quomodo's dream of himself as landed gentry provides a key to his character:

The land's mine; that's sure enough, boy.

 Now shall I be divulg'd a landed man
 Throughout the Livery; one points, another whispers,
 A third frets inwardly, let him fret and hang.
 Especially his envy I shall have.

 --Whither is the worshipful Master Quomodo and
 his fair bedfellows rid forth?--to his land in
 Essex!--Whence comes those goodly load of logs?
 --From his land in Essex!

(III.iv.2,5-8,13-15)

The audience may feel that the vision is premature since Quomodo's scheme is only half-completed, and this is precisely Middleton's point. Quomodo's overconfidence here prepares us for his crucial mistakes in acts four and five. His success has been so complete that the possibility of a setback never occurs to him. Also, because of his imagined rise in power and social stature, Quomodo's eventual fall will make Middleton's indictment of him all the more emphatic.²²

Anticipating the "kill," Shortyard, disguised as a sergeant, attempts to intimidate Easy with a new characterization of Quomodo:

I must tell you this, you have fell into the hands of a most merciless devourer, the very gull o' the city; should you offer him money, goods, or lands now, he'd rather have your body in prison, he's o' such a nature.
(III.iv.74-77)

This view contradicts the image of the merciful and abused lender that Quomodo emphasized when he first met Easy (II.iii.115-117), but Easy is unaware of the contradiction. The passage shows that the confidence men can easily shift perspectives when it suits their purposes, and Shortyard's purpose here is to frighten Easy into surrendering land that Quomodo ostensibly does not want (IV.i.19-24). The passage also demonstrates once again how indispensable Shortyard is to Quomodo's success. Without Shortyard, Quomodo's scheme would have neither the variety nor the credibility that it has. By having Shortyard play a key role in Quomodo's success, Middleton motivates three later developments: Shortyard's dissatisfaction when he is not rewarded, his seizure of the lands from Sim Quomodo, and his crucial testimony against Quomodo in court.

While the disguised Shortyard looks for "citizens" to post bail for Easy, the fun-loving Quomodo preaches to him:

Oh, what's a man but his honesty, Master Easy?... 133

I'll give you good counsel now. As often as you
 give your name to a bond, you must think you
 christen a child, and take the charge on't, too...

Easy.

Say you so, sir? I'll think upon your counsel
 hereafter for't.

Quomodo [Aside]

Ah fool, thou shouldst ne'er ha' tasted such
 wit but that I know 'tis too late.

146

Thomasine [Aside]

The more I grieve.

Quomodo.

To put all this into the compass of a little
 hoop ring:

"Make this account, come better days or worse,
 So many bonds abroad, so many boys at nurse."

.....
 "The desperate debtor hence derives his name,
 One that has neither money, land, nor fame;
 All that he makes prove bastards, and not bands,
 But such as yours at first are born to lands."

(III.iv.133-137,145-151,158-161)

While Quomodo employs a moral perspective to humiliate Easy, Middleton uses it to expose Quomodo's hypocrisy, vindictiveness and lack of manhood. By equating honesty with manhood (l. 133), Quomodo unwittingly confirms Thomasine's earlier statement--that he is "no man"(II.iii.206). Lecturing Easy now when it is too late does not appreciably help Quomodo's scheme and certainly is not meant sincerely as a warning. Like Volpone, Quomodo loves role-playing, but he also hates the gentry both because of their lands and titles and because of the social superiority that these imply. To feel superior, Quomodo must bring one of them down like the hungry wolf brings down the defenseless deer. Having wounded Easy, he now bleeds him, the moral sententia adding a twist to the knife. By revealing both

the fun-loving and vindictive sides of Quomodo, Middleton encourages a more complex audience response than mere admiration for a clever scheme. He presents us a perspective on evil and its motivation.²³

At the end of III.iv. Middleton presents Thomasine's perspective on Easy's predicament:

"To beguile goodness is the core of sins." 243
 My love is such unto thee, that I die
 As often as thou drink'st up injury,
 Yet have no means to warn thee from't; for "he
 That sows in craft does rape in jealousy."
 (III.iv.243-247)

The objectivity of Thomasine's moral statement (l. 243) is immediately undercut by her emotional expression of love for Easy. By revealing Thomasine's precipitate attraction to Easy and raising questions about her fidelity to her husband, Middleton also raises doubts about her credibility as a choric commentator.

As noted earlier, Middleton uses a symbolic landscape in Michaelmas Term with the country symbolizing purity, simplicity, fertility, and stability.²⁴ At the end of IV.i., Quomodo speaks a soliloquy which contradicts these values and reveals his selfish egoism:

I'll have 'em lop'd immediately; I long
 To warm myself by th' wood.
 A fine journey in the Whitsun holidays, i'faith
 to ride down with a number of citizens and their
 wives, some upon pillions, some upon sidesaddles,
 I and little Thomasine i'th' middle, our son and
 heir, Sim Quomodo, in a peach-color taffeta

jacket, some horse-length or long yard before us--there will be a fine show on's, I can tell you.

(IV.i.68-75)

The Essex trees, standing for decades, symbolize the fertility of the country, and Quomodo's intention to have them "lop'd" to warm himself comments on both his infertility and his giant ego which subordinates everything and everyone to his desires. The details of the journey including the sidesaddles, the peach-color jacket, the ubiquitous citizens and wives all reveal an emphasis on gaudy showmanship.²⁵ By having Quomodo soliloquize on the country, Middleton suggests how far out of place Quomodo would be in this environment. At the same time there is comedy and consistent characterization in a merchant who sees everything from the angle of how it can be used, not how it can be appreciated.²⁶

Quomodo's long soliloquy is also important because it explains his foolish decision to feign death:

...I will presently possess Sim Quomodo of all the land...And because I see before mine eyes that most of our heirs prove notorious rioters after our deaths, and that cozenage in the father wheels about to folly in the son, our posterity commonly foil'd at the same weapon at which we play'd rarely;...being awake in these knowings, why should not I oppose 'em now, and break destiny of her custom, preventing that by policy, which without it must needs be destiny? And I have took the course; I will forthwith sicken, call for my keys, make my will and dispose of all....Then will I begin to rave...grow worse and worse, call upon the devil, and so make an end. I will...in disguise

note the condition of all: how pitiful my wife takes my death, ... my daughter's marrying to my will and liking, and my son's affection after my disposing; for, to conclude, I am as jealous of this land as of my wife, to know what would become of it after my decease.

(IV.i.80-85,88-92,95,99,103-105,108-112)

We noted earlier that Quomodo is the stage director, arranging schemes to deceive Easy, but now he is playmaking beyond human limits by seeking knowledge of events after his death, a privilege allowed to no man. Drunk with power as a result of fleecing and humiliating Easy, Quomodo thinks he can accomplish anything--from toying with death to rewriting destiny's script ("break destiny of her custom"), an achievement even Zeus shrunk from attempting. The very fact that he plans such things suggests that his mind is slipping. Perhaps to a Jacobean audience, such schemes seemed comically entertaining or ridiculously ambitious compared to deceiving a gull who half-defeats himself.

In addition, Middleton's habitual practice in other plays may give us a key to his intentions here. Generally, he prefers that a villain's defeat develop out of his own errors rather than be imposed by some outside force. Perhaps this partially explains why the plot takes such a sudden turn at the conclusion of IV.i. Middleton may have felt that Quomodo's comic overreaching was a natural consequence of his complete success up until the end of IV.i.

When Father and the Wench debate her morals and her career as a prostitute, he argues from the absolute moral standard, and she argues from expediency:

Father.

I thought at first your mind had been preserv'd
 In virtue and in modesty of blood,
 That such a face had not been made to please
 The unsettled appetites of several men,
 Those eyes turn'd up through prayer, not through lust;
 But you are wicked, and my thoughts unjust.

Wench.

Do not all trades live by their ware, and yet call'd
 honest livers? Do they not thrive best when they
 utter most, and make it away by the great? Do you
 think some merchants could keep their wives so
 brave, but for their wholesale? You're foully
 deceiv'd and you think so.

(IV.ii.4-16)

From one point of view the Wench's argument is correct. Expediency is the way of the world in this play, though the Wench's unhesitating classification of herself with ordinary street merchants is comic.²⁷ From another point of view, Father provides a moral perspective by which to judge the Wench just as Mother Gruel provides it for Lethe and Thomasine for Quomodo. The frequent use of alternative perspectives distinguishes Middleton's method in Michaelmas Term from Jonson's method in Volpone and The Alchemist. No one debates Doll Common on her choice of a career; no sister or wife offers moral commentary on Volpone's activities. The closest Jonson comes to a moral commentator is Surly who does not appear in most of the gulling scenes. Middleton seems to see the inclusion of multiple perspectives as essential to developing plot, characterization,

and theme. The argument between Father and the Wench may also suggest Middleton's sheer love of debate. The Wench, who never learns the true identity of Father, need not bother debating her "servant." She could merely dismiss him or have him whipped.

Father never realizes that the girl he is rejecting is his daughter. Consequently, there is no reunion, no forgiveness, no feast, as in the original prodigal son parable. By turning the parable upside down, Middleton undercuts any audience expectations of a happy ending for father and daughter.

When Quomodo's family and accomplices learn of his "death," the Boy's surprising choric comment reveals his new perspective on Quomodo: "Then is as arrant a knave gone as e'er was call'd upon" (IV.iii.5). During the deception of Easy, the Boy fulfilled his role with cool efficiency, never indicating negative feelings toward Quomodo. The strong antipathy now suggests that the unity among the villains was more illusion than reality. By clarifying the Boy's lack of sympathy for Quomodo, Middleton seems to encourage us to qualify our admiration for him also.

This impression is strengthened by Shortyard's gleeful reaction to Quomodo's death: "The happiest good

that ever Shortyard felt!/ I want to be express'd, my mirth is such" (IV.iii.6-7). Though Shortyard was Quomodo's closest confidant and worked harder than anyone to defeat Easy, he reacts like a man freed from prison--or from a tyrant. Just as surprising is Shortyard's new perspective on Richard Easy:

Only good confidence did make him foolish,
 And not the lack of sense, that was not it;
 'Tis worldly craft beats down a scholar's wit.
 (IV.iii.15-17)

By encouraging us to sympathize with Easy, to see him as a victim not a fool, Middleton is asking the audience to adopt a perspective of Easy that is very much at variance with the portrait of him in the first three acts.

Thomasine feels more than sympathy for Easy; she is strongly attracted to him, as evidenced by her gifts of one hundred pounds and an expensive ring (IV.iii.31-33).²⁸ Thomasine's feelings become still clearer when she discusses her husband's death:

I do account myself the happiest widow that ever counterfeited weeping, in that I have the leisure now both to do that gentleman good and do myself a pleasure; but I must seem like a hanging moon, a little waterish awhile.
 (IV.iii.39-42)

By exposing Thomasine's hypocrisy, Middleton is undermining our trust in her as a moral commentator.

Thomasine explains the reasons for her antipathy

against Quomodo when she tells Rearage about her marriage:

...he ne'er us'd me so
well as a woman might have been us'd, that's
certain; in troth, 't'as been our greatest
falling out, sir; and though it be the part
of a widow to show herself a woman for her
husband's death, yet when I remember all his
unkindness, I cannot weep a stroke, i'faith,
Master Rearage.

(IV.iii.54-59)

Middleton obverts the kaleidoscope here, revealing Quomodo's failures as a husband. This description of his domestic life invites comparison with Jonson's characterizations of confidence men. We learn nothing about the domestic lives of Volpone, Subtle, or Face, and about their public "careers" we learn only that Subtle made Face what he is. Admittedly, it was no part of Jonson's intention to portray their domestic history, but the important point is that Middleton makes it his concern to reveal Quomodo's domestic life. The effect of making this aspect specific so late in the play is to undercut the portrait of the clever, successful confidence man.

As the news of Quomodo's "death" spreads, he disguises himself as a beadle, expecting to overhear loving remarks from devoted family and friends. Enter the Liveryman: "Who Quomodo? Merely enrich'd by shifts/ And coznages, believe it" (IV.iv.16-17). The Liveryman was not as close to Quomodo as the Boy or Thomasine yet his condemnation is similar. The Liveryman's viewpoint matters

because, unlike Thomasine, Shortyard, or Rearage, he gains nothing by Quomodo's death and therefore can be absolutely objective. Just as Quomodo's hopes were high before he overheard the Liveryman, his hopes rise again when Sim enters--only to be dashed again:

Troth, if I be not asham'd to go to church with him, I would I might be hang'd; I hear such filthy tales go on him. Oh, if I had known he had been such a lewd fellow in his life, he should ne'er have kept me company.

.....
 But I am glad he's gone, though 'twere long first; Shortyard and I will revel it, i'faith. I have made him my rent-gatherer already.
 (IV.iv.38-41,43-45)

Even the simple-minded Sim, foolish enough to assume that Shortyard will take orders from him, displays no concern for his father. The effect of these perspectives is to deflate Quomodo from a clever deceiver to a comic butt. Our expectations concerning Quomodo are being undercut. Perhaps Middleton is suggesting that evaluation of Quomodo is relative, completely dependent on point of view. While deceiving a naive gull like Easy, Quomodo appears a clever, polished confidence man. However, from the point of view of a street-savvy peer, like the Liveryman, Quomodo is no more than a dishonest annoyance.

The fact that Thomasine cannot even wait for the funeral to conclude before proposing marriage to Easy, suggests her fickleness and lust. As with Mother Gruel and Father, Middleton again undercuts the credibility

of a moral commentator. As IV.iv. concludes, Middleton offers the audience a new perspective on Richard Easy--the romantic lover (IV.iv.72-79), a view at odds with that of the unpolished gull of the first three acts.

V.i. is remarkable for the changing perspectives that Middleton gives us on Shortyard and Easy. Just as Quomodo exclaims over his victory at the beginning of act four, Shortyard, having cheated Sim Quomodo out of the lands, feels so joyful and confident that he spouts three rhyming aphorisms, as if he were the embodiment of wise cozenage (V.i.6-11). But when a transformed and angry Easy suddenly confronts Shortyard, he immediately turns coward:

Easy.

Rogue, Shortyard, Blastfield, sergeant, deputy,
coz'ner!

.....
I thirst the execution of his ears.

Shortyard.

I have cozen'd him again merely for you,
Merely for you sir; twas my meaning then
That you should wed her, and have all again.
O' my troth, its true sir; look you then here, sir.

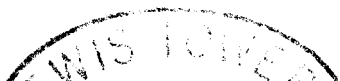
[Giving the writings]

You shall not miss a little scroll, sir. Pray, sir,
Let not the city know me for a knave;
There be richer men would envy my preferment...
If I should be known before 'em.

Easy.

Villain, my hate to more revenge is drawn;
When slaves are found, 'tis their base art to fawn.
(V.i.20,28-34,36-38)

Shortyard's nervousness is suggested by his repetition of the phrase, "merely for you" (V.i.28-29). Middleton



apparently wishes us to believe that Shortyard is all appearances and no substance, that lacking the support of Quomodo and Falselight, he soon crumbles. However, Middleton has not prepared us for Shortyard's cowardly reaction. His conduct is explicable if not defensible on historical grounds: the characterization of Shortyard derives from the Terentian manservant or slave who, when in serious trouble, conventionally reacts with timidity or cowardice.²⁹ But this still does not justify the suddenness of Shortyard's change.

We are equally surprised by Easy's unexpected transformation. He goes from realizing his folly ("Man is ne'er healthful till his follies bleed" V.i.15) to expressing anger and revenge when he confronts Shortyard. Easy's change from malleable to tough and vengeful, from emotionally dependent to proudly independent stretches the limits of decorum. Of course Easy has every right to be angry. He has been fleeced, insulted, and humiliated, his entire style of life and monetary support threatened by Quomodo's thievery. But these reasons would justify Easy's change more effectively if the change were better prepared for. As it is we are left with two faces of Easy, each appearing to be inconsistent with the other.

The major critical issue of V.i. is Middleton's continued deflation of Quomodo, whose overconfidence about

what he can accomplish leads him to sign away all claims against Easy. Critics have found the signing difficult to accept and inconsistent with Quomodo's flawless schemes in the first three acts. However, Quomodo's overconfidence here is really a repetition of the overconfidence he expressed in III.iv.1-18 when he assumed he had the land before actually acquiring it. Also, and more important, during the first three acts, Quomodo had help at every turn from Shortyard, Falselight, and the Boy in an often-practiced scheme. Here, Quomodo is not only planning and executing alone, but his decision to sign in his own name was a last-minute idea (V.i.91-92). Less credible is the sense of authority that Easy conveys during his brief marriage to Thomasine (V.i.98,116). The sharp contrast with the emotionally dependent Easy of III.ii. is difficult to accept.

Quomodo's threat to take Thomasine and Easy to court (V.i.121) functions in at least two ways. First, it demonstrates that without the cunning Shortyard, Quomodo is unable to manipulate the situation and must resort to court action. Second, it illustrates that Quomodo's stubborn arrogance and self-delusion are such that he assumes he can exploit legal means to enforce a fraudulent scheme. Quomodo's anger and hatred are blinding his judgement.

In contrast, Susan's judgement becomes clearer.

Having observed Lethe's arrest for pandering, Susan rejects Lethe for her husband in favor of Rearage, whose aside comments upon Susan's character:

Susan.

Pardon my willful blindness, and enjoy me;
For now the difference appears too plain
Betwixt a base slave and a true gentleman.

Rearage.

I do embrace thee in the best of love.--

[Aside] How soon affections fail, how soon they prove.
(V.ii.8-12)

Rearage's uncomplimentary reference to Susan's fickleness undercuts the conventional happy union of romantic couples in comedy. Ironically, Rearage is in no position to feel superior to Susan: he revealed Lethe's libertinism to her (III.v.1-4,13-17), but failed to disclose his own gambling habits. Rearage the prodigal qualifies Rearage the New Comedy hero. The two traditions pull against one another, but the tension between them produces a rich complexity of meaning which challenges the conventional romantic ending and develops it in new directions.³⁰

Middleton also undercuts audience expectations for a conventional romantic union between Thomasine and Easy by having the judge invalidate their marriage:

Quomodo.

Your lordship yet will grant she is my wife?

Thomasine.

Oh, heaven!

Judge.

After some penance and the dues of law,
I must acknowledge that.

Quomodo.

I scarce like

Those dues of law.

Easy.

My lord,

Although the law too gently 'lot his wife,
The wealth he left behind he cannot challenge.

Quomodo.

How?

Easy.

Behold his hand against it. [Showing memorandum]
(V.iii.55-63)

Not only are Thomasine and Easy divided, but Easy shows very little concern about it, speaking only one line regarding Thomasine. His attention is rivetted on regaining his land. Middleton seems to be abandoning comedy's conventional symbols of social harmony.

Middleton also undermines our expectations that the judicial system can separate truth from falsehood. Easy insists the lands are his but gets nowhere until Shortyard intervenes:

This coz'ner, whom too long I call'd my patron,
To my thought dying, and the fool, his son,
Possess'd of all, which my brain partly sweat for,
I held it my best virtue, by a plot
To get from him what for him was ill got--

Quomodo.

Oh, beastly Shortyard!

Shortyard.

When no sooner mine,
But I was glad more quickly to resign.
(V.iii.81-86)

Shortyard is motivated partly by Quomodo's failure to reward his considerable efforts and partly by a desire to save his ears.³¹ In addition, Shortyard lies twice to the judge and gets away with it. He stole the lands from Sim out of greed not because they were "ill got;" he was

never "glad...to resign" but capitulated to Easy out of fear and cowardice. No one challenges Shortyard's testimony even though he hardly qualifies as either a reliable or an unbiased witness. Easy recovers his lands because the unity between the confidence men crumbles thanks to the selfishness of both, and not because good triumphs over evil. Portia does not preside in this courtroom!

Perhaps the nasty judicial implications of Shortyard's testimony would not stand out so except that Middleton parallels the experience when Lethe's case comes before the court. When the judge is inclined to force Lethe to marry the Country Wench because he has ruined her, she and Hellgill take advantage of the situation:

Judge.

Who for his wife, his harlot doth prefer,
Good reason 'tis that he should marry her.³²

Country Wench.

I crave it on my knees; such was his vow at first.

Hellgill Aside

I'll say so too, and work out mine own safety.---

Such was his vow at first, indeed my lord,

Howe'er his mood has chang'd him!

Lethe.

Oh, vild slave!

(V.iii.101-107)

Again the false passes for the true, as a conniving henchman betrays an evil master. Middleton seems to imply that the court blunders into success--hardly an optimistic view of the judicial system! Like the "Inductio," the trial scene presents a dark view of the judicial system, but it is dark in a different sense. While the "Inductio"

describes a corrupt legal system, the trial scene, unlike the trial scene in Volpone, does not suggest that the judge is corrupt. Instead Middleton guides us toward the conclusion that good triumphs not because of its own merits or efforts but because evil defeats itself.

As the play concludes, Mother Gruel learns that Lethe is her son:

Mother Gruel.

Art thou Andrew, my wicked son Andrew?

Lethe.

You would not believe me mother.

Mother Gruel.

This country has e'en spoil'd thee since thou
cam'st hither;

Thy manners...better than thy clothes,

But now whole clothes, and ragged manners.

It may well be said that truth goes naked,

For when thou hadst scarce a shirt, thou hadst
More truth about thee.

(V.iii.155-56,158-163)

Instead of expressions of tender regard, we are given Mother Gruel's cynical dismissal of Lethe. Once again Middleton rejects convention and presents a new, albeit pessimistic alternative.

We are left with a series of uneasy relationships in act five which give us a key to Middleton's intentions in Michaelmas Term. A mood of doubt rather than joy seems to hover over Rearage and Susan. Thomasine returns reluctantly to Quomodo, and he, having lost confidence in her, foresees uneasiness in their future: "I may no more lie with my wife/ In perfect memory; I know't" (V.iii.65-66).

Lethe agrees to marry the Wench only after the judge orders it. Mother Gruel's reunion with her son appears more like a tense standoff than a reconciliation. All the standard symbols of harmony that generally conclude classical and Renaissance comedies have been undercut. Disharmony, uneasiness, lack of reconciliation are everywhere. All of this suggests that Middleton purposely goes against the grain, purposely strives to develop new, unconventional perspectives on comedy and comic characters. In Michaelmas Term, Middleton concentrates on conflicts between opposites: opposite social classes (merchant versus gentry), opposite standards of conduct (morality versus expediency), opposite literary traditions (classical New Comedy versus biblical prodigal son). Middleton may have felt that any conclusion which glosses over these conflicts, which devalues their sharp opposition by forcing a harmonious conclusion would be facile and artificial. By emphasizing disharmony and uneasiness, Middleton handles conventions of comedy in fresh ways, revising stock situations and characterizations to explore new possibilities.

One of these new possibilities involves the use of moral commentators and the theme of deception. The deceptiveness of appearances is a major theme in Michaelmas Term: Quomodo's pose as the patient and abused merchant (II.iii. 111-117), Lethe's silk suit, the funeral procession, and

so forth. Consistent with the theme of deceptive appearances, Middleton establishes a character as a trustworthy commentator but later undercuts the credibility of that character. We are left with the impression that the commentator only appeared to be trustworthy and that our original faith was misplaced. The effect of this is to encourage us to question our judgements and perspectives, to make us skeptical of what appears to be good or wise. Perhaps Middleton is stimulating audience involvement in the world of the play by having us undergo an experience parallel to that of the characters themselves: the realization that we have been deceived by appearances.

CHAPTER III

A CHASTE MAID IN CHEAPSIDE

In Michaelmas Term, Middleton evokes one response to a character, only to undercut it by encouraging another. He continues this method of stimulating multiple perspectives in A Chaste Maid in Cheapside and develops others. The clear division between villain and victim in Michaelmas Term becomes blurred in A Chaste Maid in Cheapside: some characters are simultaneously villains and victims. Middleton is expanding the use of the kaleidoscope. Expediency as a method of dealing with other characters or acquiring one's desires becomes more widespread. Things having a fixed value in Michaelmas Term such as fertility, money, and children assume relative value in A Chaste Maid in Cheapside. For example, Quomodo sought Easy's land to benefit himself and his family; his stated reason for feigning death is to protect Sim's control of the land. The children's good is an end in Michaelmas Term, but children become merely a means to the parents' ends in A Chaste Maid in Cheapside.

That the Yellowhammers view Moll (Mary) and her

brother Tim as saleable sexual commodities becomes clear when Yellowhammer announces the arrival of Moll's suitor, Sir Walter Whorehound:¹

Sir Walter's come:

He was met at Holborn bridge, and in his company
 A proper fair young gentlewoman, which I guess
 By her red hair and other rank descriptions
 To be his landed niece brought out of Wales,
 Which Tim our son, the Cambridge boy, must marry.
 'Tis a match of Sir Walter's own making,
 To bind us to him and our heirs for ever.

Maudline.

We are honour'd then, if this baggage would be humble
 And kiss him with devotion when he enters.
 I cannot get her for my life
 To instruct her hand thus, before and after,---
 Which a knight will look for,---before and after.
 I have told her still, 'tis the waving of a woman
 Does often move a man and prevails strongly.²

Love is no part of this arrangement; Moll and Tim are not allowed free choice. The Yellowhammers are selling sex, and Sir Walter is buying, in what amounts to legalized prostitution. Both matches are built on sands of deception since Walter's Welsh "niece" is really his whore, and Maudline's vain efforts to teach Moll a new "refinement," the suggestive use of the hands, obviously goes against Moll's virtuous nature.

Middleton emphasizes this society's habitual exchange of flesh for money when Sir Walter explains his intentions to his Welsh mistress and Yellowhammer waits on a customer. Davy, Sir Walter's manservant, provides choric commentary:

Sir Walter.

I bring thee up to turn thee into gold, wench,

And make thy fortune shine like your bright trade;
A goldsmith's shop sets out a city maid.

Davy Dahumma, not a word!

Davy.

Mum, mum, sir.

Sir Walter.

Here you must pass for a pure virgin.

Davy [Aside]

Pure Welsh virgin!

She lost her maidenhead in Brecknockshire.

Sir Walter.

I hear you mumble, Davy.

Davy.

I have teeth, sir;

I need not mumble yet this forty years.

Sir Walter [Aside]

The knave bites plaguily.

Yellowhammer [To Gentleman]

What's your price, sir?

Gentleman.

A hundred pound, sir.

Yellowhammer.

A hundred marks the utmost;

'Tis not for me else.--What, Sir Walter Whorehound?

[Exit Gentleman]

(I.i.100-111)

Davy's asides emphasize Sir Walter's deception in passing off his mistress as a niece, and they educe Whorehound's fear of being exposed as a fraud.³ Middleton's juxtapositions suggest that Sir Walter's intention to exchange his "niece" for gold and the Yellowhammers' intention to marry Moll to Sir Walter are analogous to the gentleman's offer to sell his gold chain. Worse yet, Moll has less freedom than the gentleman. At least he can reject Yellowhammer's low offer and leave the shop; Moll is not permitted the freedom of refusal. When later in the play she tries to escape, Maudline draws her back by the hair. Middleton is developing a dual perspective here: what

appears to be (arranged marriages) versus what is (sale of children for lands and cash).

In contrast with the Yellowhammers who are about to prostitute their children, Allwit has been prostituting his wife for the last ten years. As the Allwits anxiously await the arrival of Mistress Allwit's lover, Sir Walter Whorehound, Allwit soliloquizes on the unique ménage à trois by which Whorehound provides for both him and his wife:

I thank him, 'has maintain'd my house this ten years,
 Not only keeps my wife, but a keeps me
 And all my family: I am at his table;
 He gets me all my children, and pays the nurse
 Monthly or weekly; puts me to nothing,
 Rent, nor church-duties, not so much as the scavenger:
 The happiest state that ever man was born to!

(I.ii.15-21)

Other husbands have tried such an arrangement but found themselves "eaten with jealousy to the inmost bone" (I.ii.45). No such feelings obstruct Allwit's enjoyment of life:

These torments stand I freed of; I am as clear
 From jealousy of a wife as from the charge:
 O, the miraculous blessings! 'Tis the knight
 Hath took that labour all out of my hands:
 I may sit still and play; he's jealous for me,
 Watches her steps, sets spies; I live at ease,
 He has both the cost and torment: when the strings
 Of his heart frets, I feed, laugh, or sing:
 [Sings] La dildo, dildo la dildo, la dildo de dildo.

(I.ii.48-56)

Middleton develops two perspectives simultaneously: Allwit's view of himself and the audience's view of him. While rejoicing in his freedom from jealousy, he is also

revealing how little he cares about his wife. His assumption that he enjoys the "happiest state that ever man was born to" betrays an unawareness that the "man" has descended to a parasite.

To give us an additional point of view on Allwit's self-delusion, Middleton follows the triumphant soliloquy with the servant's perspective, thereby clarifying for the audience what Allwit's position really is:

Allwit.

Now, sirs, Sir Walter's come.

First Servant.

Is our master come?

Allwit.

Your master! What am I?

First Servant.

Do not you know, sir?

Allwit.

Pray, am not I your master?

First Servant.

O, you are but

Our mistress's husband.

Allwit.

Ergo, knave, your master.

First Servant.

Negature argumentum.--Here comes Sir Walter.

[Aside to Second Servant]

He's but one pip above a serving man,

And so much his horns make him.

(I.ii.59-66)

Allwit's attempts to dismiss the servant's remarks and to rationalize his position do not change the fact that he has lost his authority, his wife, and the servants' respect--all in exchange for money.⁴ By juxtaposing positive and negative points of view on Allwit's position, Middleton is consistent with the Renaissance habit of examining both

sides of a question.

Middleton presents positive and negative perspectives on Whorehound's position also. The servant's comments make clear that Whorehound enjoys the authority that accompanies responsibility and the respect of the servants. The negative perspective, the burden of responsibility, appears in Whorehound's aside near the end of I.ii. when he considers where he will apprentice his bastards, Nick and Wat:

How shall I dispose of these two brats now	110
When I am married? For they must not mingle	
Amongst my children that I get in wedlock;	
'Twill make foul work, that, and raise many storms.	
I'll bind Wat prentice to a goldsmith,--	
My father Yellowhammer, as fit as can be!	
Nick with some vintner; good, goldsmith and vintner;	
There will be wine in bowls, in faith.	117
(I.ii.110-117)	

This tendency to examine both sides of a question occurs frequently in A Chaste Maid in Cheapside; juxtaposed points of view place each other in perspective just as they do in most of Middleton's plays. Line 117 seems intended to convey more than humor. It reveals something about Whorehound's thinking: the neat, respectable solution is what counts. Procreate all you wish as long as you can "tidy up" after yourself.

Allwit's abdication of responsibility and Whorehound's determination to segregate his bastards from his legitimate family are perversions of the usual ways we

think of family responsibility. Perhaps Middleton is underlining the corruption of a society which has reinterpreted conventional values to suit its desires for sex, money, and respectability.

Up to this point, the direction of audience sympathy has been clear. We are intended to sympathize with Touchwood Junior and Moll but not with the vulgar, mercenary Yellowhammers. Our reaction to the Allwits seems also intended to be antipathetic, ranging from comic disapproval to disgust. The direction of audience sympathy becomes much more ambivalent with the introduction of Touchwood Senior in II.i.⁵ He and his wife reluctantly decide to cease lovemaking and live apart because they cannot afford any more children: "our desires/ Are both too fruitful for our barren fortunes" (II.i.8-9). Touchwood Senior's encomium to his wife before they depart to separate lodgings suggests a husband sincerely devoted to his wife:

I ne'er knew
The perfect treasure thou brought'st with thee more
Than at this instant minute. A man's happy
When he's at poorest that has match'd his soul
As rightly as his body.

.....
Fullness of joy showeth the goodness in thee;
Thou art a matchless wife: farewell my joy.
Mistress Touchwood.

I shall not want your sight?
Touchwood Senior.

I'll see thee often
Talk in mirth, and play at kisses with thee,
Anything wench, but what may beget beggars.
Mistress Touchwood.

Your will be mine, sir. Exit.

Touchwood Senior.

This does not only make her honesty perfect,
But her discretion, and approves her judgement.

.....
The feast of marriage is not lust but love
And care of the estate.

(II.i.21-25,36-40,42-44,50-51)

Because of Touchwood's warm remarks and seeming sense of responsibility, our first impression of him is very positive.

Just when audience sympathy for Touchwood is at its height, Middleton obverts the kaleidoscope to reveal that Touchwood's marital devotion does not extend to fidelity:

.....of all men 53
I am the most unfortunate in that game
That ever pleas'd both genders: I ne'er play'd yet
Under a bastard: the poor wenches curse me
To the pit where'er I come; they were ne'er served so.

.....
I had no less than seven lay in last progress 63
Within three weeks of one another's time.

(II.i.53-57,63-64)

The comedy of a man so potent that he impregnates every girl with whom he sleeps may mitigate the negative reaction against his continual infidelities, yet his image as the sensitive, devoted husband has been seriously qualified. That image is damaged further, if not altogether destroyed, when suddenly a Country Wench enters with a child, insists that it is Touchwood's and offers to bring a certificate of chastity to prove her claim.⁶ The ensuing conversation should be studied in detail because it reveals an entirely

new perspective on Touchwood Senior's character:

Country Wench.

I was a maid before, 70
I can bring a certificate for it
From both the churchwardens.

Touchwood Senior.

I'll have the parson's
Hand too, or I'll not yield to 't.
Country Wench.

Thou shalt have more,
Thou villain! Nothing grieves me but Ellen,
My poor cousin in Derbyshire; thou hast crack'd 75
Her marriage quite;...

Touchwood Senior.

.....if that
Be all thy grief, I'll tender her a husband.
I keep of purpose two or three gulls in pickle
To eat such mutton with, and she shall choose one.
Do but in courtesy, faith, wench, excuse me
Of this half yard of flesh, in which, I think,
It wants a nail or two.⁷

Country Wench.

No, thou shalt find, villain, 85
It hath right shape and all the nails it should have.
Touchwood Senior.

Faith, I am poor. Do a charitable deed, wench;
I am a younger brother and have nothing.

Country Wench.

Nothing! Thou hast too much, thou lying villain,
Unless thou wert more thankful.

Touchwood Senior.

I have no dwelling;
I broke up house but this morning. Pray thee, pity me;
I am a goodfellow, faith, have been too kind
To people of your gender; if I ha't
Without my belly, none of your sex shall want it.

[Aside] That word has been of force to move a woman. 95

[To her] There's tricks enough to rid thy hand on't
wench:

Some rich man's porch, tomorrow before day,
Or else anon i' the evening; twenty devices.

[Giving money] Here's all I have, i'faith, take
purse and all;

[Aside] And would I were rid of all ware i' the shop so!

Country Wench.

Where I find manly dealings, I am pitiful:
This shall not trouble you.

Touchwood Senior.

And I protest wench,
The next I'll keep myself.
(II.i.70-102)

Middleton has developed audience sympathy for Touchwood Senior only to rip off the mask, exposing the corruption and cynicism behind. Touchwood Senior's insistence on the parson's statement seems harsh, especially since he previously admitted in soliloquy that seven of his bed partners gave birth within three weeks of each other (ll. 63-64 quoted earlier). He has deflowered a virgin and ruined cousin Ellen's marriage. Though some may see this as a comic example of unusual potency, it also illustrates sexual irresponsibility and lack of respect for marriage--both his own and others'. His keeping of gulls to match with pregnant, unmarried women betrays both the cynical planning behind his deceptions and his attitude toward sexual intercourse as a game with the deceived women functioning as mere playthings. When Touchwood Senior asks to be excused "of this half yard of flesh," he is equating the baby with meat for sale that he hopes to avoid paying for. His nasty suggestion that the wench is syphilitic (ll. 84-86) is another cynical attempt to escape responsibility by denying fatherhood. Middleton takes care that Touchwood's plea for pity based on poverty will not secure audience sympathy, by following that plea with his lie about being a younger brother (l. 88) when actually he is an older one. When he again implores pity,

this time based on past kindnesses to numerous women (ll. 92-94), Middleton again discourages audience sympathy by interjecting an aside (l. 95) which exposes Touchwood Senior's insincerity by indicating that he has played this deceptive game for pity many times before. Also intended to discourage audience sympathy are Touchwood's callous suggestions for disposing of the baby (ll. 96-98), his lie that he is giving the wench all the money he has (l. 99), when only 30 lines later he easily produces thirteen shillings fourpence for Touchwood's Junior's marriage license (ll. 128-29), his cynical aside dismissing baby and mother as store merchandise (l. 100), and finally his lie about keeping the next baby (l. 103) which, incidentally, implies that Touchwood will continue his extra-marital affairs. This conversation exposes the irresponsibility, promiscuity, deception, and cynicism in Touchwood Senior's character and places his encomia on his wife and marriage in an entirely new light.⁸

Touchwood Senior holds children and fertility in light regard because he has so much of each, but he respects money highly because he has so little. Middleton shows that these are relative and by no means unanimous views through his portraits of Sir Oliver and Lady Kix who value children and fertility highly because they lack

these, but have no great concern for money:

Lady Kix.

To be seven years a wife and not a child,
O, not a child!

Sir Oliver.

Sweet wife, have patience.

Lady Kix.

Can any woman have a greater cut?

.....

Sir Oliver.

I spare for nothing, wife, no, if the price

Were forty marks a spoonful,

I'd give a thousand pound to purchase fruitfulness.

(II.i.133-35,139-41)

Just as we are about to applaud the Kixes' praiseworthy regard for children, Middleton undercuts our response:

Lady Kix.

Think but upon the goodly lands and livings
That's kept back through want on't.

Sir Oliver.

Talk not on't, pray thee;

Thou'lt make me play the woman and weep too.

Lady Kix.

'Tis our dry barrenness puffs up Sir Walter;
None gets by your not-getting but that knight.

(II.i.150-54)

The Kixes first see children as good but later see them as expedient means to retain the family estates and disinherit Sir Walter. Middleton encourages an ambivalent response to the Kixes just as he did toward Touchwood Senior. We applaud the Kixes placing the value of children above money ("what serves wealth for" II.i.185), but we are alienated by the mercenary motives that accompany their desire to be parents. The contrasts inherent in Touchwood Senior and the Kixes indicate a sophistic perspective on Middleton's part: nothing, not children, not fertility, not money has

any absolute value. The value of anything is relative, depending on one's point of view and need.

Samuel Schoenbaum and Ruby Chatterji are correct in stressing that A Chaste Maid in Cheapside is about family relationships, but it is also about the credibility of authority, both private and public.⁹ This is evident in the promoters' scene. The promoters confront two men, each with meat in his basket, and finally the Country Wench with her baby in a basket. Each public confrontation reflects upon the private authority figures in the play. The promoters treat the first man in a stringent manner as they confiscate his meat:

First Promoter.

We must see what you have under your cloak there.

Man.

Have! I have nothing.

First Promoter.

No? Do you tell us that?

What makes this lump stick out then? We must see, sir.

Man.

What will you see, sir? A pair of sheets and two

Of my wife's foul smocks going to the washers?

Second Promoter.

O, we love that sight well! You cannot please us better.

[Takes meat out of basket]

What, do you gull us? Call you these shirts and smocks?

Man.

Now, a pox choke you!

You have cozen'd me and five of my wife's kindred

Of a good dinner; we must make it up now

With herrings and milk-pottage.

(II.ii.101-109)

The promoters' overbearing conduct parallels and comments upon private authority figures such as the Yellowhammers' tyrannical treatment of Moll or Whorehound's determination

to dominate the Allwits. All of these authority figures are repressive and self-indulgent.

The second man with a basket is allowed to keep his meat because his master has bribed the promoters:

First Promoter.

'Tis Master Beggarland's man, the wealthy merchant
That is in fee with us.

.....
You know he purchas'd the whole Lent together,
Gave us ten groats a-piece on Ash Wednesday.

(II.ii.123,125-26)

Slaves to money, the promoters allow it to rule them and their decisions, just like the private authority figures-- Yellowhammer, Whorehound, and Allwit. The Country Wench enters next. She cleverly disposes of her baby by tricking the promoters into keeping a basket which they think contains only meat. Upon discovering the baby, the promoters become upset:

Second Promoter.

The quean made us swear to keep it too.

First Promoter.

We might leave it else.

Second Promoter.

Life, had she none to gull but poor promoters
That watch hard for a living?

First Promoter.

Half our gettings
Must run in sugar-sops and nurses' wages now,
Besides many a pound of soap and tallow;
We have need to get loins of mutton still,
To save suet to change for candles.

(II.ii.158-165)

Why should promoters show any concern for an abandoned baby? This is another incident (like Quomodo's feigned death in Michaelmas Term) which is difficult to justify on

a literal level but which has thematic significance. For promoters as public authority figures to assume responsibility for an abandoned baby functions as a strong indictment of those private authority figures, such as Touchwood Senior and Allwit, who refuse to take responsibility for their bastards. The three confrontations with the promoters distance us from the private authority figures, providing a fresh perspective on three of Middleton's targets for satire in this play--oppressive domination, mercenary motives, and irresponsibility regarding children.¹⁰

Like the promoters, the puritan women emphasize religious forms and discipline. At the christening party, one puritan praises the manner by which Mistress Allwit's baby is christened:

And, verily, well kursen'd, i' the right way,
 Without idolatry or superstition,
 After the pure manner of Amsterdam.
 (III.i.3-5)

Praising Mistress Allwit's courage in labor, a puritan describes her as "well mettled, like the faithful, to endure/
 Her tribulation here and raise up seed" (III.ii.17-18). The puritans' verbal emphasis on form and discipline is soon undercut by their actions, the effect being to underline their hypocrisy. When comfits are served, Allwit criticizes the greed and gluttony of the puritan women:

[Aside] Now out comes all the tassell'd handkerchers,

They are spread abroad between their knees already;
 Now in goes the long fingers that are wash'd
 Some thrice a day in urine; my wife uses it.
 Now we shall have such pocketing: see how
 They lurch at the lower end!

First Puritan.

Come hither, nurse.

Allwit [Aside]

Again? She has taken twice already.

First Puritan.

I had forgot a sister's child that's sick.

[Taking comfits]

Allwit [Aside]

A pox! It seems your purity loves sweet things well
 That puts in thrice together. Had this been
 All my cost now, I had been beggar'd;
 These women have no conscience at sweetmeats,
 Where'er they come.

(III.ii.50-62)

Allwit is equally upset when the puritans swill wine as greedily as they pocketed comfits:

[Aside]

Now the cups troll about
 To wet the gossips' whistles. It pours down, i'faith;
 They never think of payment.

First Puritan.

Fill again, nurse. [Drinks]

Allwit [Aside]

Now, bless thee, two at once! I'll stay no longer;
 It would kill me and if I paid for 't.

(III.ii.77-81)

Some critics see a problem in having the corrupt Allwit presume to pass moral judgement on the hypocritical puritans.¹¹ But actually this gives Middleton an advantage that he would not have if a "pure" character such as Moll satirized the puritans. Having one flawed character comment on another resembles seeing an image through colored glass. We experience not only the image itself but the unique perspective that the colored glass affords, such as viewing a red rose through yellow glass and having the

rose appear orange. The unique perspective that Allwit provides (and that Moll could not) is the economic point of view. Allwit does not object to gluttony per se, as Moll might, but rather, he satirizes the entire scene in terms of how much it would cost him if he were paying for it. But he is not paying for it, which encourages the audience to realize that Allwit is as unwilling to spend money that is not even his own as he is to assume any responsibility for his family's needs. Having Allwit expose the puritans' gluttony, simultaneously exposes Allwit's niggardliness and this, I think, is precisely Middleton's point. Having Allwit satirize the puritans has another advantage. Their gluttony seems inconsequential compared to Allwit's ten-year prostitution of his wife, and therefore, ironically, Allwit comes off worse in the comparison.

Allwit is involved in another comparison when Middleton juxtaposes three different perspectives on marriage. Shocked by Davy's news that Whorehound will marry, Allwit becomes desperate to perpetuate Whorehound's adultery with Mistress Allwit:

Davy.

My master's upon marriage.

Allwit.

Marriage, Davy? Send me to hanging rather!

Davy [Aside]

I have stung him.

Allwit.

When, where? What is she, Davy?

Davy.

E'en the same was gossip, and gave the spoon.

Allwit.

I have no time to stay, nor scarce can speak,
I'll stop those wheels, or all the work will break.

(III.ii.195-200) Exit

In contrast with Allwit's anxiety, Touchwood Junior's serenity is based on Moll's continued devotion to him alone, as he happily contemplates a second attempted elopement with her:

...though she be lock'd up, her vow is fix'd
Only to me; then time shall never grieve me,
For by that vow e'en absent I enjoy her,
Assuredly confirm'd that none else shall,
Which will make tedious years seem gameful to me.

.....
Fortune dotes on me....

Touchwood Senior.

Life, what makes thee so merry?

.....

Touchwood Junior.

.....I look for her
This evening, brother...

By the firm secrecy and kind assistance
Of a good wench i' the house,.....

.....she's led through gutters,
Strange hidden ways, which none but love could find,
Or ha' the heart to venture.

(III.iii.3-7,21,23,26-27,29-33)

Juxtaposed to Touchwood Junior's serenity and his anticipation of marriage is the continual bickering of the Kixes who offer a third perspective on marriage:

Sir Oliver.

...'tis thou art barren.

Lady Kix.

...I barren?

'Twas otherways with me when I was at court;
I was ne'er call'd so till I was married.

Sir Oliver.

I'll be divorced.

Lady Kix.

Be hanged! I need not wish it.
That will come too soon to thee: I may say
'Marriage and hanging goes by destiny,'
For all the goodness I can find in't yet.
(III.iii.50,52-58)

Implying that all of the fun took place before she married Sir Oliver, Lady Kix's satirical hits at marriage undercut Touchwood Junior's joyful serenity. Middleton is obverting the kaleidoscope to show three perspectives on marriage: the coldly expedient prostitution of a wife, the idealistic view of the engaged couple, and the frustrations of the unfulfilled couple. It is as if Middleton refuses to let us rest comfortably in any one position, instead preferring to challenge the audience with several points of view.

Middleton's habit of stimulating multiple interpretations of the same thing extends to Tim's relationship with the gentlewoman. To encourage Tim to accept the Welsh girl, Maudline has her sing a song:

Cupid is Venus' only joy,
But he is a wanton boy,
A very, very wanton boy;
He shoots at ladies' naked breasts,
He is the cause of most men's crests,--
I mean upon the forehead,
Invisible but horrid;
'Twas he first thought upon the way
To keep a lady's lips in play.
.....
The pleasing sport they only know
That close above and close below.
(IV.i.152-160, 176-77)

The bawdy song is open to two interpretations. The Welsh girl wants Tim to view her as a sexually knowledgeable and

therefore desirable mate, and this he does. The second perspective, that a girl who sings such a song may be morally loose and likely to cuckold him, completely eludes Tim. The fact that Maudline hears the song but still encourages the match demonstrates that, as with Moll, Tim's welfare is less important to Maudline than gaining possessions, in this instance the 19 mountains and 2000 runts.

As with Tim, Middleton develops multiple perspectives on Yellowhammer and Allwit. The point is that these characters understand neither themselves nor the people around them. When Allwit visits Yellowhammer in order to discourage Moll's marriage to Whorehound by exposing him, Yellowhammer opens the conversation by characterizing himself:

You're welcome, sir, the more for your name's sake,
 Good Master Yellowhammer; I love my name well:
 And which o' the Yellowhammers take you descent from,
 If I may be so bold with you? which, I pray?

Allwit.

The Yellowhammers in Oxfordshire near Abingdon.

Yellowhammer.

And those are the best Yellowhammers, and truest bred;
 I came from thence myself, though now a citizen.

(IV.i.183-189)

Yellowhammer's superior view of himself is soon undercut. Though he describes Whorehound's kept husband as an "incomparable wittol" (l. 218), a "base slave" (l. 220) and rejects Whorehound as a suitor to Moll, Yellowhammer reveals himself to be an insensitive, base slave when, after Allwit

exits, he rationalizes his decision to retain Whorehound as suitor:

Well, grant all this, say now his deeds are black,
 Pray, what serves marriage but to call him back?
 I've kept a whore myself, and had a bastard
 By Mistress Anne, in anno _____
 The knight is rich, he shall be my son-in-law;
 No matter, so the whore he keeps be wholesome,
 My daughter takes no hurt then; so let them wed:
 I'll have him sweat well ere they go to bed.
 (IV.i.240-42,247-50)

Yellowhammer unwittingly proves that he is no better than the "knave" Whorehound both because of his past affair with Mistress Anne and his present determination to sell Moll.

Middleton also reveals Allwit's distorted view of himself and enslavement to money. After Yellowhammer agrees to reject Whorehound as a suitor, Allwit congratulates himself on what he imagines to be a successful manipulation of both Yellowhammer and Whorehound:

[Aside] Ha, ha, ha! This knight will stick by my
 ribs still;
 I shall not lose him yet; no wife will come;
 Where'er he woos, I find him still at home.
 Ha, ha! Exit
 (IV.i.237-39)

Allwit's self-satisfaction is actually self-delusion since he does not realize that he is dealing with a man as greedy as himself.

How Middleton really intended the audience to view Allwit probably approximates Allwit's self-indictment during his conversation with Yellowhammer when he describes

himself as the kept husband who sells his wife for a living, "as other trades thrive, butchers by selling flesh,/ Poul- ters by vending conies, or the like, coz" (IV.i.216-17). There is much humor in having Allwit function as his own moral commentator, judging himself against the conventional moral standard. Yet from another angle of vision, he is practicing expediency--doing whatever is necessary to continue receiving Whorehound's money. Allwit's performance resembles a series of Chinese boxes, one meaning wrapped inside another, or reflecting mirrors inside a kaleidoscope, each altering the original image.

We have noted imaginative uses of a flawed moral commentator--Allwit's criticism of the puritan women and his self-indictment. But in A Chaste Maid in Cheapside, Middleton also makes use of conventional moral commen- tators, "good" characters who indict villainous conduct. Middleton prepares us to accept the watermen in that role by having them described as honest, four times in the first 18 lines of IV.ii. The watermen's honesty throws into relief the hypocrisy and dishonesty of Yellowhammer and Allwit; the watermen's willingness to help the young lovers points up the Yellowhammers' mercenary abuse of their children.

Having established the watermen's honesty in IV.iii., Middleton employs them in IV.iv. as choric commentators

intended to encourage audience antipathy against the Yellowhammers.¹² Maudline has caught Moll attempting to elope and is drawing her home by the hair:

Maudline.

I'll tug thee home by the hair.

First Waterman.

Good mistress, spare her!

Maudline.

Tend your own business.

Second Waterman.

You are a cruel mother.

Exeunt [Watermen]

Moll.

O, my heart dies!

Maudline.

I'll make thee an example

For all the neighbors' daughters.

Moll.

Farewell, life!

(IV.iv.19-22)

It would be difficult to imagine a scene more antithetical to the joyful, romantic sixteenth century English Renaissance comedy. Middleton seems determined in this play to emphasize the sorrows of romantic involvement. When critics mention the uneasy response evoked by A Chaste Maid in Cheapside, they usually have this scene in mind.¹³ Middleton is doing more than emphasizing Maudline's cruelty; he is undercutting the romantic plot in order to demonstrate Maudline's determination to control Whorehound's money and to demolish any opposition to that goal, no matter how high-minded. If the flower of young love must be crushed in the process, then so be it. Maudline's attempt to make Moll an example to neighbors' daughters will actually make Maudline herself an unforgettable

example of parental cruelty. She acts more like a madame retrieving a runaway prostitute than a mother, and perhaps this is Middleton's point. By having Maudline twice refer to Moll as baggage (IV.iv.29,40), and having Yellowhammer insist on a "sunrise" marriage to Whorehound (IV.iv.36), Middleton is emphasizing an idea suggested in I.i.: that what may appear to be an arranged marriage from the parents' point of view, is actually legalized prostitution, sex for cash, from the playwright's point of view.

The duel between Touchwood Junior and Whorehound at the end of IV.iv. is more than a concession to romantic convention. Middleton may be suggesting the complete inadequacy of verbal persuasion, sympathy, or any power short of force to dissuade Whorehound and the Yellowhammers from their mercenary exploitation of Moll.

A major critical question in act five is the change in Sir Walter Whorehound from the lustful, mercenary suitor to the dying penitent. Wounded in the duel with Touchwood Junior, Whorehound arrives at the Allwit home where he indicts Allwit's moral conduct:

Touch me not, villain! My wound aches at thee,
Thou poison to my heart!

Allwit.

He raves already.

13

His senses are quite gone, he knows me not.---

.....
Sir Walter.

If anything be worse than slave or villain
Thou art the man.

.....

No devil can be like thee.

.....
 None knew the dear account my soul stood charg'd with
 So well as thou, yet, like hell's flattering angel, 26
 Wouldst never tell me on't, let'st me go on,
 And join with death in sleep; that if I had not
 Wak'd now by chance, even by a stranger's pity,
 I had everlasting slept out all hope
 Of grace and mercy.

(V.i.12-14,18-19,21,25-31)

Some critics explain Whorehound's change by claiming that he undergoes a christian repentance, but the transformation is really more complex than that.¹⁴ Allwit has hardly said anything, and already Whorehound is calling him "devil." Sir Walter is rationalizing his years of immorality by blaming Allwit who, though he cooperated fully with Whorehound's lust, can hardly be held completely responsible for his corruption. Whorehound is playing Eve to Allwit's serpent, but it will not wash because even in the quasi-fatalistic Calvinist theology, one who falls to temptation is responsible for his choice.¹⁵ Allwit's assumption that Sir Walter is delirious (ll. 13-14) suggests that he too is rationalizing his part in Sir Walter's corruption.

Whorehound's suggestion that Touchwood Junior's "pity" (l. 29) saved him from everlasting punishment implies that Whorehound assumes he can still be saved. Having equated Allwit with the devil, Whorehound intensifies his rationalization, portraying Mistress Allwit as worse than the devil and adding a new touch--self-pity:

Thou loathsome strumpet!.....

.....
 The devil himself
 Shows a far fairer reverence and respect
 To goodness than thyself...

.....
 Hast thou less manners and more impudence
 Than thy instructor?

.....
 Thou shouldst be rather lock'd many rooms hence
 From the poor miserable sight of me,
 If either love or grace had part in thee.
 (V.i.34,40-42,45-46,48-50)

Whorehound is invoking an absolute moral standard for purposes of expediency just as Allwit did while speaking to Yellowhammer, but with a twist. Whereas Allwit applied the absolute standard to himself in hopes of alienating Yellowhammer and holding on to Whorehound's money, Whorehound uses the absolute standard to indict the Allwits' vices and excuse his own to achieve the expedient goal of salvation.

Having exhausted every opportunity to blame others, Whorehound, in his most poetic speech, finally admits his guilt:

Who sees me now, her too and those so near me,
 May rightly say I am o'ergrown with sin.
 O, how my offences wrestle with my repentance!
 It hath scarce breath;
 Still my adulterous guilt hovers aloft,
 And with her black wings beats down all my prayers
 Ere they be half way up. What's he knows now
 How long I have to live? O, what comes then?
 My taste grows bitter; the round world all gall now;
 Her pleasing pleasures now hath poison'd me,
 Which I exchang'd my soul for: 80
 Make way a hundred sighs at once for me!
 (V.i.70-81)

Whorehound has always paid for whatever he wanted, and now

he hopes to "purchase" salvation by this lengthy "repentance" which mixes terror of death with an attempt to talk his way out of eternal damnation. Lines 80-81 suggest a comic Faustus who, though he exchanged his soul for pleasure, is all too willing to repent out of fear of hell. By having Whorehound both blame others and admit his guilt, Middleton is consistent with his practice of providing multiple perspectives by examining both sides of a question.

The audience sees the Allwits in a new perspective when, angered by Whorehound's moral indictment of them and aware that he will no longer "maintain" them, they assume a moral stance of their own:

Allwit.

I must tell you, sir,
 You have been somewhat bolder in my house
 Than I could well like of; I suffer'd you
 Till it stuck here at my heart; I tell you truly
 I thought you had been familiar with my wife once.
 Mistress Allwit.

With me? I'll see him hanged first: I defy him,
 And all such gentlemen in the like extremity.

(V.i.142-47)

This about-face has stimulated much critical comment.¹⁶

The ironic understatement and denial provide more than humor: by feigning moral outrage, the Allwits are reversing their previous roles as pander and mistress and completely undercutting audience expectations. The result is richer characterization, exposing additional selfish motives. Feeling insulted, the Allwits indict their

critic in order to express their vindictiveness and reassert their pride. "Pride" seems a strange word to use about the Allwits since normally they would stoop to any indignity to gain money, but now that Whorehound's support is lost, they can afford to give vent to their pride since they have nothing to lose.

After Whorehound exits, the Allwits discuss their future. Those in the audience who expect the Allwits to continue their moral stance are again surprised when the couple decides to use Whorehound's expensive household gifts to set up a brothel in the Strand:¹⁷

Allwit.

What shall we do now, wife?

Mistress Allwit.

As we were wont to do.

Allwit.

We are richly furnish'd, wife,

With household stuff.

Mistress Allwit.

Let's let out lodgings then,

And take a house in the Strand.

Allwit.

In troth, a match, wench:

We are simply stock'd with cloth-of-tissue cushions

To furnish out bay-windows; push, what not that's

quaint

And costly, from the top to the bottom;

Life, for furniture, we may lodge a countess!

(V.i.155-162)

Not only do the Allwits escape punishment at the end of the play, they learn nothing from Whorehound's indictment of them. Rather than reform they worsen, descending from singular prostitution of Mistress Allwit to multiple prostitution of courtesans. Critics offer contrasting

interpretations as to why the Allwits escape punishment.¹⁸
 Perhaps Middleton wished to suggest for satirical purposes that corruption and prostitution will continue after the time of the play, just as several plot situations exist before the time of the play such as the marital agreements between the Yellowhammers and Whorehound, Allwit's ten-year prostitution of his wife, and the young lovers' sincere committment to each other.¹⁹

When Yellowhammer realizes that Moll is dying, he finally expresses some compassion for her:

'Las, my poor girl!
 The doctor's making a most sovereign drink for thee,
 The worst ingredients dissolv'd pearl and amber;
 We spare no cost, girl.

(V.ii.23-26)

Ironically, Yellowhammer assumes that expensive cures will somehow prove his concern for Moll. When Touchwood Senior spreads the news that Touchwood Junior has died, Yellowhammer's reaction is telling:

Touchwood Senior.

He's dead: 'twas a dear love to him,
 It cost him but his life, that was all, sir;
 He paid enough, poor gentleman, for his love.

Yellowhammer Aside

There's all our ill's remov'd, if she were well now.--

.....

Maudline.

Dead, sir?

Yellowhammer.

He is. Aside Now, wife, let's but get the girl
 Upon her legs again, and to church roundly with her.

(V.ii.51-54,76-77)

Middleton seems to be doubling back upon himself again--

having Yellowhammer express seeming concern only to undercut that concern with greed for Whorehound's money. The fact that before he was wounded, Whorehound hoped to gain money from Yellowhammer shows how narrow-minded is each man's view of the other.

After telling Yellowhammer that Touchwood Junior has died, Touchwood Senior indicts Yellowhammer's cruel treatment of the lovers: "the restraint of love, and your unkindness,/ Those were the wounds that from his heart drew blood" (V.ii.58-9). Again, Middleton uses one flawed character to provide choric commentary on another. From one perspective, Touchwood Senior is hardly in a position to criticize anyone else's "restraint of love" or "unkindness," given his callous treatment of the pregnant wench. Yet by using Touchwood Senior as a chorus, Middleton can continue to satirize Yellowhammer's conduct, develop the audience's ambivalent response to Touchwood Senior and, above all, reveal more of his hypocrisy whereby he applies one standard to himself and another to other people. Encouraging multiple responses to flawed characters stimulates the audience to question and modify their conclusions about such characters.

Hearing that Touchwood Junior has died, Moll swoons, and the Yellowhammers, assuming her dead, panic:

Yellowhammer.

All the whole street will hate us, and the world

Point me out cruel: it is our best course, wife,
 After we have given order for the funeral,
 To absent ourselves till she be laid in ground.

Maudline.

Where shall we spend that time?

Yellowhammer.

I'll tell thee where, wench:

Go to some private church and marry Tim

To the rich Brecknock gentlewoman.

Maudline.

Mass, a match!

We'll not lose all at once, somewhat we'll catch.

Exeunt

(V.ii.92-99)

Middleton obverts the kaleidoscope, revealing a new side of the Yellowhammers. Something besides money does concern them, but only because neighbors' wrath carries the threat of social ostracism. Rejection of Moll's wishes threatened no punishment; therefore, she was not respected. Respectability must join money as a priority which takes precedence over concern for children. Just as Whorehound's criticism taught the Allwits nothing, Moll's "death" has taught the Yellowhammers nothing, merely motivated them to lose no time recouping their losses by marrying Tim to the Welsh "heiress."

The dark mood of V.ii. highlights by contrast Sir Oliver's joy in V.iii. over Lady Kix's pregnancy. Yet the joy stems from an immoral act--adultery between Touchwood Senior and Lady Kix. Ironically, the ecstatic Oliver is living a lie: he thinks that he is now a man, but he is actually a cuckold. On the other hand, a number of benefits flow from this immoral use of fertility. Both

Kixes got what they wanted: she, a baby and he, a reputation as a man. Furthermore, the entire family can enjoy the lands and revenues previously in question because Touchwood's fertility has cut Whorehound out of the Kixes' estates. What is the audience expected to make of all this? The scene is sophistic in conception, challenging the limits of the absolute moral standard, which would prohibit adultery under any circumstances. Middleton gives us a new perspective on the absolute standard, questioning whether an act's morality (adultery) may sometimes be less important than the results it achieves. On the other hand, the results were all bad when Touchwood Senior committed adultery with the wench. By inviting contrary responses to the same act, Middleton seems to put forward the sophistic notion that an act is neither good nor bad--only the circumstances matter.²⁰

In V.iv. Middleton continues to develop multiple perspectives and to encourage multiple responses to them. Touchwood Senior delivers an eulogy on the "dead" lovers:

Never could death boast of a richer prize
 From the first parent; let the world bring forth
 A pair of truer hearts...

.....
 But for this maid, whom envy cannot hurt
 With all her poisons, having left to ages
 The true, chaste monument of her living name,
 Which no time can deface, I say of her
 The full truth freely, without fear of censure:
 What nature could there shine, that might redeem

Perfection home to woman, but in her
 Was fully glorious? Beauty set in goodness
 Speaks what she was....

(V.iv.1-3,10-18)

From one angle of vision, Touchwood's words give Middleton a final opportunity to build audience sympathy for the lovers. But from another angle, Middleton is using what Anthony Covatta calls "the play's most lecherous figure" to praise Moll's chastity.²¹ Such praise is completely undercut by our knowledge of Touchwood Senior's private indifference to the plight of young women, both married and unmarried whom he has deceived, impregnated, and then discarded. Again the "flawed" commentary cuts two ways: we recognize both Moll's value and the speaker's hypocrisy.

We are pleased when the lovers rise from their coffins and are married by the parson, but from another perspective, Touchwood Senior's warning ("Nay, do not hinder 'em now, stand from about 'em," V.iv.30) reminds us that goodness on its own could never have triumphed, two attempted elopements having already failed. Goodness needed the help of craft to defeat the Yellowhammers' self-interest, just as in Michaelmas Term, Easy could not have defeated Quomodo in court without Shortyard's help.²²

From one perspective, Sir Oliver's generous offer to Touchwood Senior has a good benefit, allowing him and his wife to resume living together:

I charge you both,

Your wife and thee, to live no more asunder
 For the world's frowns: I have purse, and bed, and
 board for you:
 Be not afraid to go to your business roundly;
 Get children, and I'll keep them.
 (V.iv.72-76)

From another perspective, the situation threatens to turn into another Whorehound-Allwit ménage à trois.²³ The dual implications of Sir Oliver's invitation once again suggest Middleton's sophistic view of cuckoldry.

Both a bright side and a dark side attend Tim's situation also. Though he now realizes that he will be marrying Whorehound's former mistress, both he and the Welsh girl have an opportunity to start life afresh:²⁴

Welsh Gentlewoman.

Sir, if your logic cannot prove me honest,
 There's such a thing call'd marriage, and that
 makes me honest.

Tim.

I'll love her for her wit, I'll pick out my runts there;
 And for my mountains, I'll mount upon---
 (V.iv.105-106,111-112)

Middleton probably intended Tim's marriage to the Welsh girl as a comic foil to the Touchwood Junior/ Moll romantic match; the presence of each couple helps us to understand the opposite couple more clearly.

Middleton encourages an ambivalent response even in the closing lines, spoken by Yellowhammer:

So fortune seldom deals two marriages
 With one hand, and both lucky; the best is,
 One feast will serve them both!
 (V.iv.113-115)

On the one hand, the lovers will finally marry, the tension and cruelty between characters having ceased, but on the other hand, Yellowhammer's money-madness sways his thinking to the very end.²⁵

We have seen that things which have a fixed, positive value in Michaelmas Term, such as children and fertility, assume relative value in A Chaste Maid in Cheapside. This idea that something changes its value depending on the circumstances does occur in Michaelmas Term (for example, Father versus the Wench on prostitution), but the idea is much more widespread in A Chaste Maid in Cheapside, suggesting that the latter is a more sophistic play than the former. In addition, relative values imply a greater number of points of view to express those values, meaning that the method of shifting perspectives, the kaleidoscopic vision, is exploited much more fully in A Chaste Maid in Cheapside than in Michaelmas Term. The fact that A Chaste Maid... includes more subplots than Michaelmas Term is no accident.

Middleton's revised use of moral commentators also affects multiple perspectives. In Michaelmas Term, Middleton establishes a commentator's moral authority then has the commentator judge another character: Thomasine, Mother Gruel, and Father judge Quomodo, Lethe, and the Country Wench respectively. Only later is each commentator's moral

authority undercut. In A Chaste Maid in Cheapside, Middleton undercuts Touchwood Senior and Allwit's moral authority long before the former judges Yellowhammer and Moll, or the latter judges the puritan women and Whorehound. The effect of this reversal is to create much more ambiguous confrontations between commentator and the character(s) being judged. Having a "flawed" commentator pass judgement stimulates new perspectives about the commentator's character weaknesses and motivations for judgement. The relativity of values and the ambivalence in characterization encourage more complex responses to A Chaste Maid in Cheapside than to Michaelmas Term.

CHAPTER IV

WOMEN BEWARE WOMEN

Like A Chaste Maid in Cheapside, Women Beware Women examines the influence of wealth upon love and marriage. In the main plot, the Duke's wealth and power rupture Bianca's marriage to Leantio, and the young people begin to see Florence from two different perspectives. In the subplot, Fabritio does to Isabella what Yellowhammer wanted to do to Moll: marry her to a rich suitor and make a profit on the deal. Whereas Moll escapes her parents' mercenary plots, the best Isabella can manage is a new perspective on her marriage through her affair with Hippolito.

As the play opens, Leantio, a poor merchant's clerk, has brought his 16 year old Venetian bride Bianca home to meet his mother and live in Florence. In I.i. all three characters reveal their perspectives on the marriage. Leantio feels that his "theft" of Bianca from her wealthy family was justified by the happiness that she can bring him and by his passion for her. He never considers how he can make Bianca happy or that marriage to him might

be grossly unfair to her:

I must confess I am guilty of one sin, Mother,
More than I brought into the world with me;
But that I glory in: 'tis theft, but noble
As ever greatness yet shot up withal.

Mother.

How's that?

Leantio.

Never to be repented, Mother,
Though sin be death; I had died, if I had not sinned.
And here's my masterpiece: do you now behold her!
Look on her well, she's mine. Look on her better.
Now say, if't be not the best piece of theft
That ever was committed; and I have my pardon for 't;
'Tis sealed from heaven by marriage.

Mother.

Married to her!

Leantio.

You must keep counsel, Mother, I am undone else;
If it be known, I have lost her; do but think now
What that loss is--life's but a trifle to 't.¹
(I.i.35-48)

This joy that Bianca inspires however, does not make Leantio grateful enough to allow her freedom over her own life. His will, sexual desires, and limited money will guide their life, not any desires of hers. His main worry is that the Mother may inspire rebellion in Bianca by suggesting she assert herself or buy numerous gowns:

I pray do not teach her to rebel
When she's in a good way to obedience;
To rise with other women in commotion
Against their husbands, for six gowns a year,
And so maintain their cause, when they're once up,
.....
If you can but rest quiet, she's contented
With all conditions that my fortunes bring to her:
To keep close as a wife that loves her husband;
To go after the rate of my ability,
Not the licentious swinge of her own will,
Like some of her old school-fellows.
(I.i.74-78,88-93)

It never occurs to the naive, narrow-minded Leantio that

his stifling domination might itself trigger a revolt.

Disturbed by the social impropriety of a poor clerk marrying a girl of wealthy background, Mother astounds Leantio with her contrasting perspective. Rather than give Bianca happiness, Leantio has wronged her, depriving her of her inherited fortune and substituting poverty:

To draw her from her fortune---which no doubt,
At the full time, might have proved rich and noble--
You know not what you have done...

.....
And hitherto your own means has but made shift
To keep you single, and that hardly too.
(I.i.59-61,63-64)

Mother's sensitivity to Bianca's rights puts Leantio's selfish joy in perspective. She realizes that Leantio's unnatural and unrealistic plan to maintain Bianca as a kind of weekend recreation would stifle the young woman's developing future:

What ableness have you to do her right then
In maintenance fitting her birth and virtues?
Which ev'ry woman of necessity looks for,
And most to go above it; not confined
By their conditions, virtues, bloods or births,
But flowing to affections, wills, and humours.
(I.i.65-70)

Mother's perspective crystallizes the flaws of Leantio's views on Bianca and the marriage. Through Mother's eyes we see that Leantio has gotten carried away with his desire to possess a beautiful girl whose family would never have approved of him, that his plans for the present and the future say more about his selfishness and narrow

mind than about his love for her. To Leantio, Bianca is the fulfillment of his dream; Mother's perspective shows us how misguided and illusory that dream is.

J.R. Mulryne explains Bianca's silence through the first 124 lines of I.i. by suggesting that she is observing her new environment.² This is undoubtedly true, but in addition, Middleton wishes to emphasize Leantio's rhapsodies on Bianca's stunning beauty while implying how little else he understands about her. Like Mother, Bianca has only one speech of significant length in I.i. Her comments reveal a compassionate and generous heart. To reassure both Mother and son, she addresses the concerns that Mother has raised. For example, Bianca allays worry about her noble family in Venice by severing those ties, dedicating her life and love to Leantio:

I'll call this place the place of my birth now,
And rightly too: for here my love was born,
And that's the birthday of a woman's joys.
(I.i.139-141)

Bianca does all she can to establish a warm relationship with her new family. Middleton is carefully distinguishing the newlyweds' perspectives. Bianca shares some of Leantio's idealism and naivete, but her dedication and generous heart place in bold relief Leantio's selfishness and narrow-mindedness. Middleton strengthens this impression by his handling of the aside in I.i. Unlike

Leantio, Bianca speaks no asides. This has the effect of distancing her from the audience which accepts her reassuring, generous words to Mother because that is all it has to go by. This is not to say that Bianca has no "strategy." She is sincere, but she is also a good politician and more elusive than Leantio. Bianca makes sure she gets along with the mother-in-law because her main concern is a peaceful environment: "Heaven send a quiet peace with this man's love" (I.i.127).³ That concern for peace will affect Bianca's later perspectives on her environment.

While I.i. offers three perspectives concerning a marriage based on free choice and affection, I.ii. presents numerous perspectives on an impending arranged marriage between Isabella and the foolish, rich Ward.⁴ Fabritio, Isabella's father, is forcing the marriage in the hopes of increasing his wealth.⁵ Realizing that Isabella has never even met the Ward, Fabritio's sister Livia emphasizes the unnaturalness of the marriage:

...call't injustice
 To force her love to one she never saw.
 Maids should both see, and like; all little enough;
 If they love truly after that, 'tis well.
 Counting the time, she takes one man till death,
 That's a hard task, I tell you...
 (I.ii.30-35)

Ignoring Livia's advice, Fabritio alienates audience sympathy by stubbornly insisting that Isabella marry the Ward

and by directing his imperious views at Isabella in a nasty tone:

See what you mean to like; nay, and I charge you,
Like what you see. Do you hear me? There's no dallying,
The gentleman's almost twenty and 'tis time
He were getting lawful heirs, and you a-breeding on 'em.
(I.ii.76-79)

To provide another angle of vision on this unjust match, Middleton now develops the character of the foolish Ward who is as fond of beating people (I.ii.91,95-96) as he is of playing physical games like "cat-stick." His insensitivity is revealed in his attitude toward games:

...When I am in game, I am
furious; came my mother's eyes in my way, I would
not lose a fair end. No, were she alive, but with
one tooth in her head, I should venture the striking
out of that. I think of nobody when I am in
play, I am so earnest.

(I.ii.98-102)

Middleton again uses a character's gross disrespect for his mother to alienate audience sympathy just as he did with Lethe's callous treatment of Mother Gruel in I.i. of Michaelmas Term. Having seen the Ward's foul skin and heard his viewpoint on games, Isabella understandably becomes quite depressed. In an aside we hear her point of view both about the Ward and about the virtuous marriage she had always anticipated:

Marry a fool!
Can there be greater misery to a woman
That means to keep her days true to her husband,
And know no other man! So virtue wills it.

(I.ii.159-162)

At this point in the play, audience sympathy is completely behind Isabella partly because of her father's insensitivity, partly because the Ward is her complete opposite and likely to beat her after marriage, but also because Isabella appears a virtuous young lady who assumes that when she marries she will be faithful to her husband.⁶ At this point, we also admire Livia for her spirited defense of Isabella's rights.

Besides the multiple views on the arranged marriage, Middleton examines kinship, presenting its public and private faces. Fabritio and Guardiania, the Ward's uncle and guardian, extol the virtues of close kinship between Isabella and her uncle Hippolito, Fabritio stressing its companionship and affection, Guardianio the purity of its love, free of the corruption of lust:

Fabritio.

Those two are ne'er asunder; they've been heard
 In argument at midnight, moonshine nights
 Are noondays with them: they walk out their sleeps,
 Look you, I told you truth, they're like a chain:
 Draw but one link, all follows.

Guardiano.

Oh affinity,
 What piece of excellent workmanship art thou!
 'Tis work clean wrought, for there's no lust,
 but love in't,
 And that abundantly; when in stranger things
 There is no love at all but what lust brings.

(I.ii.63-65,68-69,70-73)

This is the public face of kinship, the morally acceptable, emotional ties that all approve because they strengthen and unite families. Near the end of I.ii. Middleton turns

the kaleidoscope, showing a side of Hippolito that Fabritio and Guardiano would not approve. In an aside, Hippolito reveals a painful internal conflict between strong sexual attraction to Isabella, which she is unaware of, and guilt about incest:

... 'tis most meet that I should rather perish
 Than the decree divine receive least blemish.
 Feed inward you my sorrows; make no noise,
 Consume me silent, let me be stark dead
 Ere the world know I'm sick.

(I.ii.154-158)

This is the private face of kinship in this play, the morally forbidden attraction which, once discovered, will spread destruction beyond Fabritio's own family. Hippolito's secret revelation both provides a new perspective on his kinship to Isabella and adds a sharp ironic edge to Fabritio and Guardiano's praise of that kinship.

Besides this additional perspective on kinship, Hippolito serves two other useful purposes in I.ii. First, his sensitivity both to his own conflict and to Isabella's feelings (I.ii.205-6) highlights by contrast the total insensitivity of the Ward. Second, when Hippolito, overwhelmed by emotion, reveals his incestuous feelings to Isabella, Middleton takes the opportunity to cement the impression of a virtuous Isabella in the mind of the audience. She rejects unhesitatingly both Hippolito's tentative advances and any future contact with him:

I'll learn to live without ye, for your dangers

Are greater than your comforts. What's become
 Of truth in love, if such we cannot trust---
 When blood that should be love is mixed with lust?
 (I.ii.224-227)

At the end of act one, the audience has definite perceptions about each character. By shifting perspectives, Middleton will alter these perceptions in subsequent scenes. The audience's favorable view of Livia is the first to be changed. Whereas in I.ii. Livia argued against her niece Isabella being forced to marry the Ward sight unseen, she now volunteers to make Isabella the mistress of Hippolito, Livia's brother. Though she enjoys manipulating people, her chief motives for deceiving Isabella are love and pity for Hippolito:

I take a course to pity him so much now
 That I have none left for modesty and myself.
 This 'tis to grow so liberal--y'have few sisters
 That love their brothers' ease 'bove their own
 honesties,
 But if you question my affections,
 That will be found my fault.
 (II.i.68-73)

This new perspective deepens the characterization of Livia, but in addition, perhaps Middleton is exploring the limits of human feeling. Joel Altman has suggested that English Renaissance plays are questions rather than statements, and possibly Middleton is developing questions here.⁷ Anyone can be virtuous when no temptations exist, but what happens when an uncle's lifelong concern for his niece is suddenly challenged by a new feeling: sexual passion? A loving aunt defends a niece against an arranged marriage,

but what if the aunt's love of her niece suddenly conflicts with her strong, perhaps incestuous feelings for her brother? II.i. is sophistic in concept because characters make decisions on the basis of emotional priorities and extenuating circumstances, not absolute standards.

A new perspective on Isabella shows how her morals are affected by changed circumstances. Before Livia spins her lies about Isabella's parentage, the young girl expresses her disgust for the Ward: "I loathe him more than beauty can hate death/ Or age, her spiteful neighbor" (II.i.83-84). Then Livia convinces her that Fabritio is not her true father, and consequently, Hippolito is not actually her uncle.⁸ Isabella suddenly sees Hippolito and the Ward in an entirely new light. She now pities Hippolito and regrets her rejection of him:

...Would I had known it
But one day sooner, he had then received
In favours, what, poor gentleman, he took
In bitter words--a slight and harsh reward
For one of his deserts.

(II.i.184-88)

When Hippolito happens into the room, Isabella's imagery of food and appetite emphasizes her desire that Hippolito be her lover after her marriage to the Ward (II.i.198-201, 220-224). She also decides that the Ward will make a fine husband because marriage to him will veil her adultery with Hippolito:⁹

...Should my father
Provide a worse fool yet, which I should think

were a hard thing to compass, I'd have him either:
 The worse the better, none can come amiss now,
 If he want wit enough. So discretion love me,
 Desert and judgement, I have content sufficient.
 (II.i.211-216)

At this point, the audience's shock might best be expressed by Hippolito's reaction: "This is beyond me" (II.i.229). Isabella scorns incest with Hippolito but welcomes adultery with him. Apparently her "morality" extends only to ultimate taboos; less extreme forms of immoral behavior, such as adultery, are acceptable providing they can be concealed. Perhaps Isabella sees the adultery as both an expression of her frustration in an arranged marriage and a relief from that frustration.

Our original impression of Isabella as a virtuous maiden excluded any hint of her corruptibility. We are not seeing a changed Isabella but the corruption inside her that was there all along. Middleton waited the length of two scenes before revealing the truth. These delaying tactics have the effect of shocking us to the reality of false appearances. Middleton has been encouraging us to accept the image of a high-minded, virtuous Isabella; then that image is undercut, exposing the ugliness beneath. Had Middleton revealed the truth immediately, the seductive nature of false appearances would have been completely lost on us. Middleton avoids the easy conclusion; instead, he encourages us to experience the truth for ourselves. The shock of contradictory perspectives and the delaying

tactics accomplish much more than superficial aphorisms about deceptive appearances ever could.

During the seduction scene, Middleton encourages us to see Bianca as a tragic victim, not a promiscuous adulteress. For example, the Duke is more forceful and fearsome than the Duke in Middleton's probable source for the main plot: Celio Malespini's Ducento Novelle (Venice, 1609).¹⁰ Whereas Malespini's tepid Duke leaves the room when Bianca pleads for her honor, Middleton's Duke threatens force if Bianca will not comply (II.ii.344-45). Unconsciously, the Duke uses imagery which casts him as the serpent in the Garden of Eden:

She that is fortunate in a duke's favour
Lights on a tree that bears all women's wishes;
If your own mother saw you pluck fruit there
She would commend your wit, and praise the time
Of your nativity. Take hold of glory.
(II.ii.370-74)

Furthermore, the Duke touches an open nerve when he offers a solution to Bianca's primary need--peace of mind: "Put trust in our love for the managing/ Of all to thy heart's peace" (II.ii.385-86). This reassurance is misleading since the only "heart's peace" Bianca ever receives from the Duke is material.¹¹

While the physical seduction of Bianca is taking place off stage, Guardiano's aside gives us his perspective on Bianca's predicament, providing Middleton another means

to encourage sympathy for Bianca:

I can but smile as often as I think on't:
 How prettily the poor fool was bequiled,
 How unexpectedly; it's a witty age.
 Never were finer snares for women's honesties
 Than are devised in these days....
 (II.ii.394-98)

Even if J.R. Mulryne is correct that the phrase "poor fool" is a term of pity not contempt, Guardiano's light-hearted cynicism emphasizes Bianca's hopeless situation and the corruption of Florentine society.¹²

Arthur Kirsch believes that Livia's chess game with Mother functions as a simile rather than a metaphor because it distances us from the Duke's violation of Bianca.¹³ This is true but in another sense the chess game clarifies the Duke's perspective on his enjoyment of Bianca. To the Duke, the enjoyment of Bianca is the conclusion in a game of love intended to amuse and satisfy a bored libertine, not the moral catastrophe that Bianca assumes it is. The clever arguments preceding sexual intercourse are the stimulating strategies in the game, fun in themselves but also arousing the sexual appetite preparatory to the thrilling conclusion. To the Duke, both the arguments and sexual intercourse are organized entertainments aside from a day's usual activities, as if a man interrupted his business schedule to play tennis---or chess! The Duke lives by the sophistic notion that might is right, and he sees

Bianca's fears of eternal punishment as mere self-created fantasies:

Bianca.

I have a husband.

Duke.

That's a single comfort;

Take a friend to him.

Bianca.

That's a double mischief,

Or else there's no religion.

Duke.

Do not tremble

At fears of thine own making.

(II.ii.346-49)

Consistent with the sophistic assumption that an event's goodness or badness depends on one's point of view, the other characters involved also see the seduction from their own personal vantage points. To Livia, it is the clever fulfillment of a request from the Duke, one more proof that she is Florence's arch manipulator. To Guardiano, it means advancement at court, leading to future promotions.¹⁴ Bianca's reaction is ambivalent: on the one hand, the seduction means a "leprous" honor that belies her physical beauty and justifies suicide:

Yet since mine honour's leprous, why should I

Preserve that fair that caused the leprosy?

Come poison all at once.

(II.ii.424-26)

On the other hand, there is the suggestion that Bianca enjoyed the seduction:

...I'm like that great one

Who making politic use of base villain,

He likes the treason well, but hates the traitor.

So I hate thee, slave.

Guardiano [Aside]

Well, so the Duke love me,

I fare not so much amiss then.
 (II.ii.441-445)

Through multiple perspectives, we are experiencing Bianca's complicated response and the relative meaning of the seduction. Middleton is challenging the audience not to reduce its response to a simplistic negative reaction.

After the seduction, Bianca rejoins Livia, Guardiano, and Mother downstairs and courageously maintains her composure. Livia even remarks her cheerfulness (II.ii.449). The presence of Mother, who is unaware of what has occurred, functions to educe Middleton's shrewd contrast between Bianca's inner torment and her outer control because, if Mother were not present, Bianca would not need to dissemble since everyone else in the room is aware of what happened. The sharp contrast between Bianca's polite remarks to Guardiano before the "tour" of Livia's home ("...this courteous gentleman/ ...wears a kindness in his breast so noble," II.ii.281-82) and her sarcastic asides to Guardiano and Livia after the violation, shows that her innocent naivete has been replaced by a new cynicism: [Aside to Guardiano] "I thank thy treachery, sin and I'm acquainted,/ No couple greater," [Aside to Livia] "Y'are a damned bawd" (II.ii.440-41, 464). Unlike Middleton's portrayal of Isabella which reveals new sides of an unchanging character, Bianca undergoes a real change, and our perception of her changes also. Livia's final

soliloquy in II.ii. gives us a perspective on the corrupted Bianca for whom sin will become a habit: "Sin tastes at the first draught like wormwood water,/ But drunk again, 'tis nectar ever after" (II.ii.476-77).

When we next see Bianca (in Mother's humble home), her mind is in a transitional state between the wide-eyed newlywed anxious to be accepted and the corrupt mistress of the Duke. Her querulousness indicates her disorientation, yet Middleton could have accomplished this in soliloquy without any need for Mother. By adding Mother's asides to stress her confusion over Bianca's alteration, Middleton creates a dual perspective. We see Bianca from the outside, through the eyes of the uncomprehending Mother, and from the inside, through the agitation conveyed in Bianca's speech.

All of Bianca's complaints concern physical luxuries. She implies that having them will content her, but a restlessness of spirit accompanies her words.¹⁵ The unreasonableness of Bianca's material demands indicates the depth of her discontent. Having lost her spiritual purity, she seeks physical luxuries, hoping they will fill the emptiness. The pathos conveyed through Bianca's frustration encourages audience sympathy.¹⁶ In III.i. Bianca is a confused 16 year old girl feeling abused and isolated by what has occurred. She feels she cannot confide in Mother, yet

she desperately needs some sense of comfort. At this point in the play, Middleton probably intends the audience to pity Bianca, to empathize with her emotional and spiritual torment. The pathos also expresses a recurring theme in Middleton's canon: the suffering of women, particularly young women, from physical and mental abuse.

Leantio, unaware of Bianca's submission to the Duke, soliloquizes smugly on his marital happiness. His self-righteousness moves him to assert the superiority of his "honest wedlock" to "base lust:"

...Honest wedlock
 Is like a banqueting-house built in a garden,
 On which the spring's chaste flowers take delight
 To cast their modest odours; when base lust
 With all her powders, paintings, and best pride,
 Is but a fair house built by a ditch side.
 (III.ii.8-13)

His anticipation of making love to a sex-starved Bianca (She'll be so greedy now, and cling about me,/ I take care how I shall be rid of her" III.ii.25-26) shows that his perception of her is physical and sexual, never mental or emotional. It never occurs to him that Bianca, a stranger both to Florence and to low class life, might have experienced difficulties while he was away. Though Leantio's weakness, poverty and self-righteous morality function as foils to the Duke's forcefulness, wealth and immorality, both men at this point in the play seem to perceive Bianca primarily as a source of sexual pleasure and exploit her

for their own ends.

Middleton obverts the kaleidoscope again in III.ii., which is perhaps most remarkable for the extensive change in Bianca: she has developed a roving eye. Her expressed desire to see and meet a variety of gallants (III.ii.49-50, 65-66) is best explained in an aside when Bianca exclaims that the Duke has taken "my good name" (III.ii.127). And with it has disappeared that self-respect that accompanies a woman's spotless reputation. Before the Duke's seduction of Bianca, she was virtuous and sincere, but the shock of the seduction and her apparent enjoyment of it have changed her. Feeling tarnished and dirty, she no longer cares about fidelity to a single person. There is nothing more to protect, so why worry. Instead, she will drown her moral anxieties in anger, cynicism, and the attentions of various men.¹⁷ The Duke's violation of Bianca has destroyed her virtue, overthrown her content and, as J.R. Mulryne suggests, initiated her into the Duke's dissolute world.¹⁸ I reject what we might call the "onion peel" theory which holds that Middleton gradually reveals Bianca's vices, as if he were removing the layers of an onion one by one. I contend that two Bianca's exist--one virtuous and sincere before the violation, then going through a transitional stage, after which she becomes a different woman--hypocritical and unconcerned about virtue,

though very concerned about respectability.¹⁹

The Duke's messenger arrives at Mother's home with an invitation for Bianca to the Duke's banquet. When Leantio disapproves of Bianca's accepting the Duke's invitation, she responds: "No? I shall prove unmannerly,/ Rude, and uncivil, mad, and imitate you" (III.ii.180-81). Bianca's adjectives betray a concern for surface respectability over morals--the same perspective on life shared by Livia, the Duke et al. When Mother decides to accompany Bianca, she remarks in an aside: "Why here's an old wench would trot into a bawd now,/ For some dry sucket, or a colt in marchpane" (III.ii.188-89). Bianca's crude words and cynical dismissal of Mother's morals imply a perverse desire to discover self-serving motives even in the guileless Mother.

The ineffectual Leantio cannot deal with the change in Bianca; the more he tries, the more ridiculous he appears. His soliloquy after Bianca and Mother leave for the Duke's banquet is a comic reversal of his encomium on "honest wedlock" at the opening of III.ii.²⁰ Now Leantio describes wedlock as "the ripe time of man's misery" (III.ii.190); he praises prostitution as a means of enjoying sex and maintaining emotional distance from women. His imagery reflects these reversals: flowers, symbolic of wedlock in the earlier soliloquy, now become "overladen

trees" (III.ii.191). The "treasure" and "peace" which he formerly equated with Bianca and marriage, he now equates with bachelorhood. The contrasting soliloquies reveal Leantio as a comical fool, yet they also illustrate Middleton's sophistic manner of thought, his habit of showing how changed circumstances, in this instance Leantio's relationship to Bianca, can alter, even reverse, one's point of view. Bianca initiates a change in Leantio that will be completed by Livia. His new interest in prostitution as a sexual outlet anticipates his prostitution to Livia later in the play.

Middleton presents more new perspectives on major characters in III.iii. than in any other scene in the play. The results are fuller understanding of those characters, their motives and the society they inhabit. In II.ii. Middleton stressed the Duke's forceful domination of a frightened Bianca. Now we see the Duke from a different angle of vision: the contented leader sensitized by Bianca's presence. Praising Bianca as an example of perfection to all women, the Duke notes how her influence has altered his view of women: "I'll believe/ Henceforward they have ev'ry one a soul too/ 'Gainst all the uncourteous opinions/ That man's uncivil rudeness ever held of 'em" (III.iii.24-27). In performance, the Duke might well speak these lines humorously, yet they still indicate a

change in attitude from women as playthings to women deserving respect. This transformation comes as a surprise to us because we are not prepared for it; Middleton gives us no scene between the seduction and the banquet which would explain the Duke's change.

Even more surprising than the Duke's new perspective on women is the change in Livia when she sees Leantio for the first time. Just as the Duke experienced lust at first sight for Bianca, Livia feels an immediate and overwhelming passion for Leantio: "Nor ever truly felt the power of love/ And pity to a man, till now I knew him" (III.iii. 61-62).²¹ Livia, the cool manipulator of other people's fortunes is suddenly being manipulated by her own passions, as if Leantio awakened feelings in her that had long slept. The Duke's remark about women and Livia's remark about Leantio are spoken between the Ward's bawdy comments on Bianca and on Isabella:

Guardiano.

Fall back, here comes the Duke.

Ward.

He brings a gentlewoman,

I should fall forward rather.

.....
Ward (referring to Isabella)

...She might have the kindness i'faith

To send me a gilded bull from her own trencher,

A ram, a goat, or somewhat to be nibbling....

(III.iii.22,72-74)

The Ward's comments obvert the kaleidoscope, qualifying our understanding of the Duke and Livia's transformations. It is as if Middleton juxtaposes sensitive views of love as

seen in delicate mirrors of a French salon with comic views in a distorted carnival mirror. Each perspective alters our understanding of the others, yet we must not assume that the Ward will always be on the negative side of a comparison. Middleton is holding back a surprise until act four.

Now Bianca converses for the first time since her argument with Leantio in III.ii. Middleton perhaps intends us to contrast that argument with this lighthearted banter during the Duke's banquet:

Duke.

Yes, by the law of Bacchus---plead your benefit;
You are not bound to pledge your own health, lady.

Bianca.

That's a good way, my lord, to keep me dry.

Duke.

Let Bacchus seek his 'mends in another court.
Here's to thyself, Bianca.

Bianca.

Nothing comes

More welcome to that name than your Grace.

Leantio [Aside]

...Ours is near kin now

To a twin-misery born into the world.

.....
Oh equal justice, thou hast met my sin
With a full weight; I'm rightly now oppressed;
All her friends heavy hearts lie in my breast.
(III.iii.81-83,85-87,89-90,94-96)

The restlessness and sarcasm in Bianca's speeches of III.ii. have been replaced by a spirit of conviviality. Middleton has obverted the kaleidoscope, showing us a Bianca we have never seen, a Bianca seemingly adjusting quite comfortably to a court probably similar to the Venetian splendor of her childhood. This is a good example of how multiple

perspectives educe complexity in characterization. For the moment, Middleton encourages us to believe that Bianca is really happy. In a later perspective, he will expose the nagging discontent lying beneath Bianca's surface cheerfulness.

The present conviviality between the Duke and Bianca highlights by contrast Leantio's misery and vice versa. Leantio senses that the Duke is everything to Bianca that he would like to have been. Being bought off by an appointment to the fort (III.iii.41) does not console him. The loss of his "jewel" has created an emptiness that neither money nor promotion can fill. Leantio's handling of Bianca was pig-headed and selfish, yet we sympathize with him here partly because the captaincy means little to him but more because for the first time, he realizes his loneliness without Bianca and feels himself deserving of punishment:

I'm like a thing that never was yet heard of,
 Half merry and half mad: much like a fellow
 That eats his meat with a good appetite,
 And wears a plague-sore that would fright a country;
 Or rather like a barren, hardened ass
 That feeds on thistles till he bleeds again---
 And such is the condition of my misery.
 (III.iii.52-58)

This is the first of a number of speeches intended to shift our evaluation of Leantio from self-righteous weakling to victim deserving pity.

While Middleton gradually shifts our sympathies behind Leantio, he continues to develop our new perspective

on the love-struck Livia:

[Aside] I am as dumb to any language now
 But love's, as one that never learned to speak.
 I am not yet so old but he may think of me;
 My own fault, I have been idle a long time,
 But I'll begin the week, and paint tomorrow.
 (III.iii.136-140)

We have never seen Livia feeling so insecure, so dependent upon another's approval. Critics usually explain Livia's complex change by showing that she is a composite of three characters from Middleton's sources.²² This explains the richness of her characterization but does not clarify the direction that Middleton is taking or why. Livia's surprising change contributes to a pattern of changes including the Duke, Bianca, Leantio and Isabella. This pattern suggests a theme: the transforming power of love. Leantio, the Duke, and Livia all assumed that they could control other people's lives, but in the attempt, they encountered a power stronger than their own--the power of their emotions. Yet whereas Leantio's change is believable, the new perspective on Livia, as with the Duke, is difficult to accept because Middleton does not prepare us for it.

The transforming power of love, however, affects not only the manipulators but also their victims: Bianca and Isabella. Though the Duke showed little pity during his seduction of Bianca, she comes to love him. The most obvious proof is her joining him in death at the end of the play. The power of love may partially explain Isabella's

acceptance of Hippolito as a lover, though she originally intended to be a faithful wife. Isabella's weak morals plus her lifelong affection for her uncle were not enough to allow Hippolito as lover, but Livia's removal of the ultimate taboo (incest) and the forced marriage to an ugly fool were enough to tip the scales, converting lifelong affection for Hippolito into love, which motivated acceptance of Hippolito as lover. These examples of love's powers are reminiscent of Phaedra's predicament in Euripides' Hippolytus in which Aphrodite, the goddess of sexual love, controls Phaedra's emotions and consequently her actions. What Middleton has done is to internalize Euripides' Aphrodite. The multiple perspectives on the Duke, Livia, Leantio, Bianca, and Isabella express the powerful transformations that love affects in these characters.

We have already seen two contradictory perspectives on Isabella; now at the banquet, Middleton shows us Isabella the polished singer and dancer. Like the chess game, Isabella's song clarifies a point of view; it also foreshadows Isabella's bleak prospects:

Song

What harder chance can fall to woman
 Who was born to cleave to some man,
 Than to bestow her time, youth, beauty,
 Life's observance, honor, duty,
 On a thing for no use good,
 But to make physic work, or blood

Force fresh in an old lady's cheek?
 She that would be
 Mother of fools,
 Let her compound with me.

Ward.

Here's a tune indeed! Pish, I had rather hear one
 ballad sung i' th' nose now, of the lamentable drowning
 of fat sheep and oxen, than all these simpering tunes
 played upon cat's guts, and sung by little kitlings.

.....
 Duke [Aside to Bianca]

Methinks now, such a voice

To such a husband
 Is like a jewel of unvalued worth,
 Hung at a fool's ear.

Fabritio.

May it please your Grace

To give her leave to show another quality.

Duke.

Marry as many good ones as you will, sir,
 The more the better welcome.

165

Leantio [Aside]

But the less

The better practiced: that soul's black indeed
 That cannot commend virtue; but who keeps it?
 The extortioner will say to a sick beggar,
 Heaven comfort thee, though he give none himself: 170
 This good is common.

(III.iii.143-157,161-171)

Middleton obverts the kaleidoscope here---first creating
 one angle of vision then qualifying it with another.

Isabella's song implies that the Ward's physical and intel-
 lectual loathsomeness is useful only for stimulating a
 laxative or causing old ladies to blush. This implication
 completely eludes the Ward, and his sarcastic dismissal of
 the song as "simpering tunes," rather than indict Isabella,
 confirms her indictment of his gross insensitivity.²³ The
 Duke's simile for the Ward's unsuitability to be Isabella's
 husband further alienates audience sympathy from the Ward,
 but from another angle, it suggests the distorted ends that

marriage is forced to serve in this society--such as filling Fabritio's coffers (III.iii.104-06) and cloaking Hippolito's incest.

When the Duke agrees to watch another of Isabella's "qualities," Leantio's aside exposes the hypocrisy of this court which recognizes the praise of virtue as a social "grace" but ignores the practice of virtue. Middleton emphasizes the Ward's lack of cultivation by contrasting it with Isabella's and the Duke's social polish, but just when the audience accepts the equation that cultural sophistication equals superiority, Middleton interjects Leantio's aside (ll. 166-68) to knock the pillars out, questioning the moral fiber of those "polished" people. Middleton establishes a standard then questions the validity of that standard, as if he were challenging us not to assume we have the final answers. Every answer provokes a new question; every angle of vision stimulates yet a new angle of vision. Only the summation of views, the kaleidoscopic vision, is a trustworthy vista.

When Fabritio invites the Ward to dance with Isabella, he of course refuses to be the first, adding lack of courage to his other admirable qualities. Hippolito agrees to dance with her but implies a meaning beyond festivity:

[Aside] I have a strange office on't here:
'Tis some man's luck to keep the joys he likes

Concealed for his own bosom, but my fortune
 To set 'em out now, for another's liking---
 (III.iii.193-96)

Again a public entertainment comments on a private reality: Hippolito and Isabella's dance is a simile for their secret sexual intercourse.²⁴ The Ward speaks wiser than he knows when he remarks: "I'll venture but a hornpipe with her" (III.iii.212).²⁵ When the Ward finally does dance with Isabella, the couple's lack of harmony previews the strain of their forced marriage.

Just as the harmonious dance between Hippolito and Isabella emphasizes the disharmony of the Ward and Isabella, the wit and congeniality shared by the Duke and Bianca (III.iii.230-38) highlight by contrast the emotional torment that Leantio suffers:

[Aside]Bianca...I ne'er felt
 The loss of thee till now; 'tis an affliction
 Of greater weight than youth was made to bear,
 As if a punishment of after-life
 Were fallen upon man here; so new it is
 To flesh and blood, so strange, so insupportable
 A torment, e'en mistook, as if a body
 Whose death were drowning, must needs therefore
 suffer it
 In scalding oil.²⁶

(III.iii.243-251)

Leantio can describe his pain only by alluding to the indescribable. Suffering has cleansed self-righteousness and lustful references from his speech. He no longer speaks of controlling Bianca but of the painful emptiness her loss leaves behind, a pain brought into sharp focus

by the cordiality between Bianca and the Duke.

This speech of Leantio's, like his acknowledgement of guilt quoted earlier (III.iii.89-90,94-96), encourages the audience to revise its view of his faults, to see his earlier selfishness and self-righteousness in terms of his present suffering. Middleton seems to suggest that one view of a character is never sufficient for understanding. Changed circumstances can educe sides of a character that we never knew existed. The unfolding of Leantio's character continues with a perspective from the past as he reminisces poignantly about the elopement with Bianca:

[Aside] Canst thou forget
 The dear pains my love took? How it has watched
 Whole nights together, in all weathers for thee,
 Yet stood in heart more merry than the tempests
 That sung about mine ears²⁷

.....
 And then received thee from thy father's window
 Into these arms at midnight; when we embraced
 As if we had been statues only made for 't,
 To show art's life, so silent were our comforts,
 And kissed as if our lips had grown together!²⁸
 (III.iii.253-56,258-62)

Some may feel that the exposition should have been completed in the first act, not continued into the third. However, the pathos of remembered joys now gone amplifies Leantio's deep sorrow and increases audience sympathy for him. Detailing the romantic rendezvous and the elopement earlier would not have carried the emotional impact of detailing them now, when Bianca and Leantio are married in name only.

The remaining 113 lines of III.iii. are spoken by Livia and Leantio, yet Bianca is so often the topic of speech that memory of her assumes a haunting presence on stage quite independent of the real Bianca. Middleton emphasizes Leantio's attempts to work out his feelings about Bianca and Livia's attempts to drown Leantio's memory of Bianca and win him as her lover. While Leantio is lost in thought about Bianca, certain that she was deceived by "some close bawd's working" (III.iii.267),²⁹ he is oblivious to Livia's attempts to get his attention. Middleton encourages audience sympathy for Leantio both by having him excuse Bianca's conduct and by this exchange:

Livia.

Know most assuredly she is a strumpet.

Leantio.

Ha? 'Most assuredly!' Speak not a thing
So vile so certainly, leave it more doubtful.

(III.iii.275-77)

Leantio is trying to evade something he fears may be true but cannot bear. Livia then tries to prove the hopelessness of his marriage to Bianca:

Young gentlemen that only love for beauty,
They love not wisely; such a marriage rather
Proves the destruction of affection--
It brings on want, and want's the key to whoredom.

(III.iii.282-85)

Allowing for Livia's obvious stake in proving Bianca a whore, her indictment of poor men marrying for beauty encourages us to see Leantio's naive idealism of act one from the perspective of practical experience.

Livia now develops a clever twelve-line argument offering her pity, to which Leantio can only reply, "What's that, madam?" (III.iii.298). This failing, she responds with a nine-line argument, offering to "maintain" him richly, to protect him from the "storm of fortune" (III.iii.306). His distracted response, "Oh my life's wealth, Bianca!" shows that he is not even listening. Livia, the master of rhetorical argument, feels completely frustrated at the failure of her best weapon:

[Aside] Still with her name? Will nothing wear it out?
 He's vexed in mind, I came too soon to him;
 Where's my discretion now, my skill, my judgement?
 I'm cunning in all arts but my own love.
 (III.iii.308,311-13)

Livia is experiencing nagging self-doubt. This is a new perspective on the once supremely confident Livia, and it works well. She has sexual needs just like other characters in the play, needs that are screaming for fulfillment. Having found someone more attractive than her two former husbands, Livia has no further interest in avoiding emotional involvement. But there are consequences. She can still argue effectively, but behind the cool facade lie waves of discontent that ebb and flow when she sees Leantio.

Having failed to spark interest, Livia exits. Meanwhile, as Leantio's tormented mind questions the value of marriage, Middleton encourages our sympathy for him while

simultaneously preparing us for a major shift in his perspective:

Is she my wife till death, yet no more mine?
That's a hard measure; then what's marriage good for?
Methinks by right, I should not now be living,
And then 'twere all well...

.....
For nothing makes man's loss grievous to him
But knowledge of the worth of what he loses;

.....
She's gone for ever, utterly; there is
As much redemption of a soul from hell
As a fair woman's body from his palace.

(III.iii.320-23,325-26,328-30)

What value can marriage have in a society where emotions are acted upon without regard to social or religious restraints? Leantio's willingness to die rather than have Bianca die, his insisting on her worth rather than accusing her of whoredom, his blaming the Duke's lust for Bianca's loss rather than accusing her of opportunism-- these feelings inspire pity for Leantio. He goes on to blame himself for Bianca's situation, using such phrases as "my own shame," "Guilty of law's breach," "mine own abusing" (III.iii.335-36). Leantio's torment will find no relief unless the pain is somehow siphoned off. He must rechannel his emotions. Torment gives way to yet another side of Leantio--hatred and self-justification:

Then my safest course,
For health of mind and body, is to turn
My heart, and hate her, most extremely hate her;
I have no other way. Those virtuous powers
Which were chaste witnesses of both our troths
Can witness she breaks first.

(III.iii.337-42)

Middleton seems to have a dual intention here. He apparently wishes to maintain audience support for Leantio and to develop all sides of his character. Leantio's tendencies to avoid tit for tat, to reject blaming Bianca are slipping away. His extreme reaction (he'll not just hate her but hate her "most extremely") is consistent with his weak character. Yet in another sense, his hatred reveals how deeply he loves Bianca, since his feelings would never be so strong toward a woman to whom he was indifferent.

The slight comfort Leantio feels in justifying his hate leads to thoughts of more practical matters-- the low pay of his captaincy, remarks which Livia overhears. With perfect timing, she offers him endless gifts including a page, a footman, race-horses and a rich inheritance upon her death in exchange for sexual fidelity to her. Leantio accepts Livia's offer ("Troth then, I'll love enough, and take enough" III.iii.375), perhaps assuming that these luxuries will provide an escape into materialism from his emotional torment. This parallels Bianca's attention to materialism after the Duke seduced her.

III.iv. concerns the formal betrothal of the Ward and Isabella, and their first conversation. By juxtaposing Livia's money-for-love agreement with Leantio at the end of III.iii. with the money-inspired betrothal of the Ward and Isabella, Middleton may be suggesting that this

arranged marriage projects the face of virtue and respectability while masking a bought relationship not unlike Livia's agreement of convenience with Leantio. Each arrangement is a moral variation on the other, slight turns in the kaleidoscope. In their own ways, Fabritio and Guardiano show as little respect for marriage as do Livia and the Duke, and in one sense, the affair is more humane than the arranged marriage. At least Livia and Leantio negotiate their own agreement based on free consent. The Ward and Isabella are thrown together by outsiders, and although they eventually consent to the choice made for them, both Fabritio and Guardiano make it clear that the marriage will be made without their consent (I.ii.128-29; III.iv.14-15).

While the Ward and Sordido scrutinize Isabella as if she were meat for sale, Isabella expresses her viewpoint in an aside:

What an infernal torment 'twere to be
 Thus bought and sold, and turned and pried into;
 when alas
 The worst bit is too good for him! And the comfort is
 'Has but a cater's place on't and provides
 All for another's table.

(III.iv.35-39)

Middleton achieves a two-way perspective here which sums up the future course of the couple's marriage. On the one hand, Isabella is physically exposed to the Ward; the idea that she is meat on sale torments her. On the other hand, she is distanced from the Ward by her relationship with

Hippolito, which contents her. The two-way perspective emphasizes both the hypocrisy of this marriage and the unbreachable distance between the partners.

This entire "inspection" scene functions in a way opposite to the naked display of bride and groom to each other in More's Utopia.³⁰ There, the examination is a metaphor warning us to know our partners very well before marrying. In Women Beware Women, the Ward's inspection of Isabella underscores his superficial understanding of her. For example, when he examines her teeth and mouth, we realize that he cannot probe deeply enough to see her adulterous heart. Critics emphasize the Ward's coarseness in this scene and rightly so, but Isabella's double entendres and thoughts of Hippolito suggest an additional angle of vision. Is the Ward's coarseness any worse than Isabella's deception and adultery? Middleton's handling of his material seems to encourage this question. The Ward's coarseness is easily observed and, for the most part, harmless. Isabella's moral coarseness is carefully concealed and therefore, more potentially harmful.

Middleton's comic characters, such as Quomodo and Yellowhammer, frequently speak or act in a high-handed manner only to be humbled by subsequent developments. In IV.i. Middleton employs a similar approach, first with Bianca and then with the Duke. When the courtesans at the

Duke's palace banter about whose watch tells the exact time, Bianca sets herself above the other women by referring to her connection with the royal "sun," the Duke:

I'll end this strife straight. I set mine by the sun,
I love to set by th' best; one shall not then
Be troubled to set often.

.....
If I should set my watch as some girls do
By every clock i' th' town, 'twould ne'er go true;
And too much turning of the dial's point,
Or tamp'ring with the spring, might in small time
Spoil the whole work too.

(IV.i.8-9,11-15)

Bianca implies that her sexual behavior is above reproach since she sleeps only with the Duke whereas other girls sleep with many men. Bianca conveniently forgets that she is an adulteress.³¹ Her very efforts to prove her superiority may suggest a moral queasiness; she wishes to drown any remaining guilt by justifying her conduct. While her bawdy clock metaphors show how well she has adjusted to clever court language, they also betray the moral erosion of her innocence in I.i.

When the courtesans leave, allowing Bianca to relax her defenses, she reflects on the contrast between her life as the Duke's mistress and her strict religious upbringing:

How strangely woman's fortune comes about;
This was the farthest way to come to me,
All would have judged, that knew me born in Venice 25
And there with many jealous eyes brought up...

.....
...Yet my hap
To meet it here, so far off from my birth-place,

My friends, or kindred; 'tis not good, in sadness, 30
 To keep a maid so strict in her young days;
 Restraint breeds wand'ring thoughts, as many
 fasting days
 A great desire to see flesh stirring again.
 I'll ne'er use any girl of mine so strictly:
 Howe'er they're kept, their fortunes find 'em out; 35
 I see 't in me.³²

(IV.i.23-36)

Middleton delayed until III.iii. to give us Leantio's perspective on the elopement; he has delayed until IV.i. to give us Bianca's perspective on her youth. Her perspective serves two purposes: it clarifies her feelings toward Leantio and helps to justify her current conduct. Feeling socially repressed by her family and curious about male company, Bianca seized the first opportunity to escape: Leantio's offer to elope. Apparently, Leantio was not uppermost in Bianca's mind during the elopement as she was in his. In lines 23 and 35 quoted above, Bianca justifies her conduct by blaming it on fortune, which is the easy way out. The court's luxuries and the Duke's pampering and protection have made it easier for Bianca to rationalize her conduct than to alter it.

Enter Leantio in a silk suit. As he and Bianca trade one-line comments, each of his sarcastic compliments on her luxurious surroundings is matched by Bianca's corresponding sarcastic remarks on Leantio's rich suit (IV.i. 51-60). This stichomythia demonstrates that he has been bought as well as she, and therefore has no right to condemn her. However, he condemns her anyway, revealing his

myopic point of view by applying a standard to Bianca that he fails to apply to himself:³³

Y' are a whore

.....
An impudent spiteful strumpet.

.....
I shall find time
To play a hot religious bout with some of you,
And perhaps drive you and your course of sins
To their eternal kennels.

.....
Why here's sin made, and ne'er a conscience put to't;
A monster with all forehead, and no eyes.
Why do I talk to thee of sense or virtue,
That art as dark as death?

.....
So to an ignorance darker than thy womb
I leave thy perjured soul: a plague will come.
(IV.i.61-2,82-85,92-95,103-4)

Leantio's strong indictment of Bianca, hypocritical as it is, undercuts both her pretense of moral superiority and her self-justifying view of her upbringing. Bianca is shaken by Leantio's words, and after he exits, she voices her anger and frustration:

...I'll have this sauciness
Soon banished from these lodgings, and the rooms
Perfumed well after the corrupt air it leaves:
His breath has made me almost sick in troth.
A poor base start-up!
(IV.i.106-110)

Even though Bianca knows that Leantio has also been corrupted, reminders of her own "leprous" soul still bother her--like a festering wound.

No one need have known of Leantio's visit or taken action against him if Bianca could have kept quiet at this point. But she is so upset by Leantio's charges that she

cannot help complaining to the Duke when he enters her chamber:

...his threats...were as spiteful
As ever malice uttered, and as dangerous,
Should his hand follow the copy.

.....
I love peace, sir.
(IV.i.121-23,125)

Bianca's determination to rid herself of Leantio makes her partially responsible for his death in IV.ii. One sin is entangling her in another.

Determined to protect his mistress' respectability, the Duke promises Bianca, "All shall be well and quiet" (IV.i.124) and sends for Hippolito. When Hippolito arrives, the Duke distorts Leantio's meaning and intentions: "One that does raise his glory from her (Livia's) shame,/ And tells the midday sun what's done in darkness" (IV.i.151-2). The Duke also pretends to have arranged a marital match for Livia with a rich, famous husband:

Nothing sads me so much, as that in love
To thee, and to thy blood, I had picked out
A worthy match for her, the great Vincentio,
High in our favour, and in all men's thoughts.
(IV.i.156-59)

No single passage in the play reveals the Machiavellian depths of the Duke's hypocrisy as does this one. Every phrase expresses the exact opposite of what the Duke really feels with the exception of the praise for Vincentio, and even that is suspect. Leantio's hypocrisy seems minor in comparison, and perhaps this is precisely Middleton's

point. Again he encourages us to comprehend one character in terms of another.

Leantio's surprise visit to Bianca and his indictment of her conduct is now paralleled by the Cardinal's sudden arrival and condemnation of his brother, the Duke. The Cardinal's stand puts the Duke's policy of expediency in a moral perspective:³⁴

...what a misery 'tis then
 To be more certain of eternal death
 Than of a next embrace! Nay shall I show you 200
 How more unfortunate you stand in sin
 Than the low private man? All his offenses,
 Like enclosed grounds, keep but about himself
 And seldom stretch beyond his own soul's bounds;

But, great man,
 Ev'ry sin thou commit'st shows like a flame
 And with a big wind made of popular breath 210
 The sparkles fly through cities....
 (IV.i.198-204,207-211)

The reference to the uncertain time of the Duke's death (199-200) comments ironically on his high-handed abrogation of Leantio's life and emphasizes his arrogance. The Cardinal's sincere religious indictment of the Duke highlights by contrast Leantio's hypocritical religious threats to Bianca. When the Cardinal compares the "great man" with the "low private man," Middleton probably intends an allusion to Leantio. The offenses of the "low private man" exert no wide influence, and yet the Duke has arranged Leantio's murder for crimes lesser than his own. The Cardinal's moral perspective serves additional purposes: it points out the Duke's responsibility for bad example since

upon his decisions rest the welfare and reputation of the city-state; it stresses the time differential between eternal damnation and the minutes of sexual intercourse; it implies that the basest person in the play is not Livia but the Duke.

The Duke neither argues nor tries to justify his reform:

...let me weep the first of my repentance in thy bosom,
 And show the blest fruits of a thankful spirit;
 And if I e'er keep woman more unlawfully,
 May I want penitence at my greatest need.
 (IV.i.252-56)

This emotional reaction and the expression of gratitude reveal another side of the Duke that we have not seen before, and again Middleton has not prepared us for it. The Duke's sudden outburst seems inconsistent with his cool demeanor elsewhere in the play and perhaps challenges the credibility of Middleton's characterization of him. In this instance, the multiple perspective tends to obfuscate rather than illuminate character.

After the Cardinal exits, the Duke reflects:

...I have vowed
 Never to know her as a strumpet more,
 And I must save my oath. If fury fail not
 Her husband dies tonight...

 Then will I make her lawfully mine own,
 Without this sin and horror.
 (IV.i.268-71,273-74)

Murder bothers the Duke less than breaking his oath. He really thinks that having Leantio killed will bring about

a moral improvement in the situation. It is Middleton's radical way of dramatizing exactly how perverted moral thought has become.

To the Duke's perverted value system illustrated at the end of IV.i., Middleton now juxtaposes Hippolito's warped value system. Hippolito's soliloquy at the opening of IV.ii. clarifies his motives for murdering Leantio:

...I know myself
 Monstrously guilty, there's a blind time made for 't;
 He might use only that, 'twere conscionable--
 Art, silence, closeness, subtlety, and darkness
 Are fit for such a business; but there's no pity
 To be bestowed on an apparent sinner,
 An impudent daylight lecher. The great zeal
 I bear to her advancement in this match
 With Lord Vincentio, as the Duke has wrought it
 To the perpetual honour of our house,
 Puts fire into my blood, to purge the air
 Of this corruption...

.....
 I love her good so dearly, that no brother
 Shall venture farther for a sister's glory,
 Than I for her preferment.

(IV.ii.4-15,17-19)

Hippolito's assumption that murder will somehow express his devotion for his sister Livia perhaps signals the moral and emotional complexities in this play. A sinner's guilt is mitigated by his timing: as long as no one sees or hears, adulterers may continue unhindered. To Hippolito, Leantio's real crime is violation of this society's highest value: respectability.

That Hippolito would plan a murder based on the Duke's lies comments on the cheapness of life in this

society.³⁵ Hippolito's "zeal" to promote the "honour of our house" by assisting Livia's marriage to Lord Vincentio is highly ironic since Hippolito is undercutting that very honor by committing incest with Isabella and by murdering Leantio. That Hippolito fails to see this or refuses to, indicates that, like the Duke, his arrogance and willfulness result in moral blindness.

Knowing nothing of Livia's efforts to seduce Leantio, Hippolito attacks him, wounding him from behind. As Leantio draws his sword to defend himself, the course of his life suddenly comes clear:

How close sticks envy to man's happiness!
 When I was poor, and little cared for life,
 I had no such means offered me to die;
 No man's wrath minded me....

(IV.ii.32-35)

All of his adult life Leantio worried about money, and now it has cost him his life. Leantio's most truthful self-perspective is also his last, as Hippolito easily murders him. We must call it murder not self-defense since Leantio was a mere merchant's clerk, unskilled in the use of a sword. These facts plus Leantio's final self-perspective stimulate audience sympathy for him. At times, Middleton has encouraged our sympathy for Leantio, at other times, discouraged it just as strongly. Far from implying a confused artistic outlook or a cold lack of concern, this ambivalence suggests a complex handling of character and

theme, a development we must not depreciate with reductive oversimplifications.

When Livia learns of Leantio's death, her devotion to her beloved brother is forgotten in her hysteria over her dead lover:

Leantio? My love's joy? [To Hippolito] Wounds stick
upon thee
As deadly as thy sins; art thou not hurt?
.....
Drop plagues into thy bowels without voice,
Secret and fearful. [To the others] Run for officers,
.....
You know him not as I do, he's a villain,
As monstrous as a prodigy and as dreadful.
(IV.ii.50-51,53-54,59-60)

As Hippolito pleads for a chance to explain, Livia's hysteria moves her to reveal the incest to people standing about, including Isabella:

[To Isabella] Look upon me, wench!
'Twas I betrayed thy honour subtly to him
Under a false tale; it lights upon me now;
His arm has paid me home upon thy breast,
My sweet beloved Leantio!
(IV.ii.63-67,72-76)

Suffering a tremendous shock, Livia loses all control here. Early in the play, we saw Livia, the cool manipulator of other people's lives. Later, Middleton obverts the kaleidoscope, changing the circumstances to reveal her passionate hunger for Leantio. Temporarily, she loses that cool control, that firm grasp on the arts of deception. Now the circumstances have changed again, and Livia loses her source of sexual and emotional satisfaction. Overwrought,

no longer able to restrain her feelings or her tongue, Livia strikes back at Hippolito in the most damaging way she can--revealing the incest. This latest perspective on Livia suggests that people in this society tell the truth only when under a severe emotional strain; lying to others and themselves is the usual way of life.

Consistent with his habit of presenting multiple views, Middleton juxtaposes other characters' reactions to the revelation. The effect is to put Livia's hysteria in context:

Guardiano [Aside]

Was my judgement

And care in choice so dev'lishly abused,
So beyond shamefully--all the world will grin at me.

Ward.

Oh Sordido, Sordido, I'm damned, I'm damned!

Sordido.

Damned, why, sir?

Ward.

One of the wicked; dost not see 't, a cuckold,
a plain reprobate cuckold.

Sordido.

Nay, and you be damned for that, be of good cheer,
sir, y' have gallant company of all professions;
I'll have a wife next Sunday too, because I'll
along with you myself.

.....
Guardiano.

I'll list to nothing but revenge and anger,
Whose counsels I will follow.

(IV.ii.77-86,93-94)

Typical of this society in which respectability and self-interest take priority over morals and regard for others, Guardiano's first thought is that people will laugh at him, not how Isabella's incest will affect his nephew, the Ward.

His determination to seek "revenge and anger" seems more an outgrowth of injured pride than moral outrage. The Ward's fear of damnation adds humor to the scene, but it also serves a thematic purpose. Assuming he is damned because he is a cuckold, the Ward confuses respectability with moral standards since a cuckold may be disgraced in terms of social respectability but not damned in moral law. The Ward's confusion is perfectly understandable. It reflects this society's warped value system which places respectability above morals while relegating the latter to an object of vacuous praise. That morality ranks low in this society is further evidenced by the lack of concern over Leantio's death except for Livia. Sordido's comment places Guardiano and the Ward's personal reactions in a wider context while adding more humor. Middleton's kaleidoscopic view has taken us from Livia's vengeful exposure of the incest to Guardiano's hurt pride to the Ward's and Sordido's humor. It is a sophistic approach showing us the multiple and relative meanings that one event can have for various characters.

After Livia and Guardiano exit bearing Leantio's body, the Ward and Sordido reflect on the disgraced Isabella:

Ward.

This is she brought up so courtly, can sing and dance--and tumble too, methinks. I'll never marry wife again that has so many qualities.

Sordido.

...Likely when they are taught so many, they will
 have one trick more of their own finding out.
 Well, give me a wench but with one good quality,
 to lie with none but her husband, and that's
 bringing-up enough for any woman breathing.
 (IV.ii.105-112)

Refinements are not necessarily an indication of superior quality because they are not a reliable index of morality; they may only mean that a sparkling appearance masks a corrupt soul. The Ward and Sordido are fulfilling a new purpose. In acts one through three, they exemplified superficial thinking, and functioned as coarse foils to the sophisticated characters or as vehicles of humor. Here they function as a moral chorus for Middleton, putting social respectability in its true perspective: inferior not superior to moral conduct. We had been laughing at the "fools," but with regard to morality, they are wiser than the "refined."

Since Livia's revelation of the incest, Isabella has maintained an eerie silence. Now Middleton finally allows us to hear her point of view:

[Aside] Was ever maid so cruelly beguiled
 To the confusion of life, soul, and honour,
 All of one woman's murd'ring!

.....

Oh shame and horror!
 (IV.ii.129-31,133)

Condemning her own conduct as well as Hippolito's, Isabella breaks all contact with him:

[To Hippolito] 'Tis time we parted, sir, and
 left the sight

Of one another; nothing can be worse
 To hurt repentance; for our very eyes
 Are far more poisonous to religion
 Than basilisks to them. If any goodness
 Rest in you, hope of comforts, fear of judgements,
 My request is I ne'er may see you more.

(IV.ii.136-42)

Typical of the moral complexities in this play, Isabella, having just implied an intention to repent, undercuts this intention by vowing revenge on Livia:

... [Aside] But for her
 That durst so dally with a sin so dangerous,
 And lay a snare so spitefully for my youth,
 If the least means but favor my revenge,
 That I may practice the like cruel cunning
 Upon her life, as she has on mine honour,
 I'll act it without pity.

(IV.ii.144-49)

Isabella has no interest in equity. To avenge her ruined honor, she will murder. The punishment is more severe than the crime just as when the Duke arranged Leantio's death after he threatened Bianca with public ridicule. Murder has become a habitual tool of vengeance suggesting again that life is valued less than respectability.

What motivates Isabella's desire for revenge is, of course, her hatred of incest. Characters in this play plan or commit their worst crimes when trying to make moral judgements.

While Isabella plans revenge, Livia regains her composure and promises to help Guardiano achieve revenge against Hippolito. Feigning friendship for Hippolito and

Isabella, Livia tries to convince them that her accusation of incest was all a mistake:

What I am now returned to, sense and judgement,
Is not the same rage and distraction
Presented lately to you;...

...I am now myself

That speaks all peace and friendship; and these tears
Are the true springs of hearty penitent sorrow.

Isabella Aside

Well, I had a mother,
I can dissemble too.

(IV.ii.169-74,183-84)

In one sense, Livia is exercising stronger self-control than ever, yet in another sense, she is being manipulated by her own zeal for revenge. Her feigned friendliness does not deceive Isabella who has learned her lessons well in Aunt Livia's school of deception, unlike Hippolito who does not learn from experience.

As IV.iii. begins, the Cardinal, cured of his naivete regarding the Duke just as Isabella was regarding Livia, interrupts the marriage ceremony between the Duke and Bianca:

Are these the fruits of your repentance, brother?

.....

Must marriage...be now made the garment
Of leprosy and foulness? Is this penitence
To sanctify hot lust?...Is this the best
Amends that sin can make after her riots?
As if a drunkard, to appease Heaven's wrath,
Should offer up his surfeit for a sacrifice.

(IV.iii.14,16-22)

The rhetorical questions evince that the Duke's recent conduct is the surest proof of his guilt. As in IV.i. the Cardinal's angry words put the Duke's actions in a

moral perspective. Unlike Webster who, in The Duchess of Malfi has us determine for ourselves (with some help from Bosola's choric comments) how far the Cardinal and Duke Ferdinand diverge from morality, Middleton, through the Cardinal's speeches, provides clear signals as to how he apparently wanted the audience to view the Duke. In the source for the main plot, the Cardinal is politically ambitious and prevents doctors from reaching the poisoned Duke and Bianca. Despite this and despite the evil reputation of Italian cardinals in seventeenth century England, I find no hint in the text of the play that Middleton's Cardinal either wills the death of the Duke and Bianca or that he is politically ambitious. Furthermore, in Women Beware Women, asides reveal a character's secret thoughts or hidden motives, but Middleton assigns no asides to the Cardinal.

Attempting to defend her lover, Bianca attacks the Cardinal:

...Heaven and angels	55
Take great delight in a converted sinner;	
Why should you then, a servant and professor,	
Differ so much from them?...	
.....	
Pray, whether is religion better served,	
When lives that are licentious are made honest,	
Than when they still run through a sinful blood? 67	
(IV.iii.55-58,65-67)	

Middleton probably expected his audience to dismiss these arguments as misleading and ironical. The Duke is hardly

a "converted sinner" since he stopped his adultery not by repentance but by murder. Line 67 exemplifies best how Bianca's argument turns on itself. She means that the Duke has discontinued adultery, but the audience realizes that the Duke still "runs through sinful blood" by proceeding from adultery to murder. Bianca's weak arguments shed more heat than light on the subject. The angry tone in her arguments suggests that although she realizes she is wrong, Bianca will justify herself and the Duke to the end. In addition, her speech demonstrates complete acceptance of her relationship with the Duke and illustrates once again Middleton's love of debate.

Before the marriage masque begins, the Duke tries to mediate peace between the Cardinal and Bianca. The Cardinal expresses a desire for peace and kisses Bianca. Although nothing in the Cardinal's speeches or the scene directions suggest that he has any evil intentions against Bianca, she feigns friendship for the Cardinal while secretly plotting his murder:

[Aside] Cardinal, you die this night, the plot's
laid surely--

.....
For he that's most religious, holy friend,
Does not at all hours think upon his end;
He has his times of frailty, and his thoughts
Their transpotations too through flesh and blood.
(V.ii.24-27)

This revealing perspective shows that the Duke has corrupted Bianca intellectually as well as sexually; like him,

she is descending from adultery to murder. Her stated motives are fear that the Cardinal may harm her and that he has weaknesses like any sinner. Since Bianca has no evidence against the Cardinal, her actual motive may be determination to silence a critic of her morals. The Bianca of act one would never have dreamed of murder, but now her aims are as twisted as the Duke's.

During the marriage masque, Livia plays Juno, the arbitress of lovers' quarrels. She will help a young maid (played by Isabella) decide between two suitors (played by Hippolito and Guardiano). When the maid offers sacrifice to Juno, Isabella's poisoned incense gradually overcomes Livia, but not before she throws flaming gold upon Isabella, killing her. Both women are revenged on each other. Guardiano's plot miscarries; he falls through the trap door, impaling himself on the points. The Cupids shoot Hippolito who, while dying, tries to make sense out of the characters' experiences by placing them in a moral perspective:

Lust and forgetfulness has been amongst us,
 And we are brought to nothing...Man's understanding
 Is riper at his fall than all his life-time.

.....
 ...vengeance met vengeance
 Like a set match, as if the plagues of sin
 Had been agreed to meet here altogether.

.....
 ...'tis the property
 Of guilty deeds to draw your wise men downward.³⁶
 (V.ii.146-47,152-53,157-59,164-65)

The self-indulgent characters pursued their sexual appetites and disregarded moral standards. Since self-interest guided conduct with everyone playing the game by his or her own rules, perhaps a clash of strong wills leading to multiple murder was inevitable.

Realizing that her "cup of love" has poisoned the Duke rather than the Cardinal, Bianca drinks from the poisoned cup in order to join her lover in death.³⁷ As she dies, Bianca reflects on her life:

Thou hast prevailed in something, cursed poison,

 But my deformity in spirit's more foul--
 A blemished face best fits a leprous soul.

 ...Oh the deadly snares
 That women set for women, without pity
 Either to soul or honour!
 Pride, greatness, honours, beauty, youth, ambition,
 You must all down together, there's no help for 't.
 Yet this my gladness is, that I remove
 Tasting the same death in a cup of love.
 (V.ii.202, 204-5, 211-13, 218-21)

Bianca's realization of her guilt explains her defensiveness with the Cardinal and her anger with Leantio, yet she also realizes the extent of Livia's complicity. In spite of all this, Bianca does not condemn her life with the Duke: she found a love worth dying for, and for that, she is glad. Bianca's ambivalent comments reflect the moral complexities of the play as a whole.

The Cardinal's comments, like Hippolito's, show an

awareness that an entire society has suffered tragically:

The greatest sorrow and astonishment
That ever struck the general peace of Florence
Dwells in this hour.

.....
Sin, what thou art these ruins show too piteously.

.....
So where lust reigns, that prince cannot reign long.
(V.ii.198-99, 222, 225)

Unlike the Cardinal in Middleton's probable source who plots Bianca's death and refuses remedies when she and the Duke are dying, Middleton's Cardinal does nothing to hurt Bianca or the Duke.³⁸ He seems sympathetic when the Duke is dying (V.ii.184, 191), and he even tries to stop Bianca from drinking the poisoned cup (V.ii.208). The difference between the two cardinals suggest something of Middleton's intentions. He seems to have meant the Cardinal as a moral foil whose criticism puts the Duke and Bianca's immoral conduct in perspective.³⁹ Perhaps Middleton felt that the Cardinal would be more useful as a foil figure than as an additional source of corruption. If this was his intention, it would be consistent with his general practice of encouraging multiple points of view on each situation and character.

Critics have both attacked and defended the marriage masque.⁴⁰ Perhaps we might view it as another public entertainment, like the singing and dancing, intended to clarify the meaning of the play. In both the main plot and the subplot, multiple levels of meaning exist.

On the first level, we experience what characters say to one another, what they want each other to believe that they mean. This is the level of social respectability, the public face that each character wishes the others to accept as true. At a deeper level, through asides, soliloquies and choric comments, Middleton brings us much closer to what the characters really feel, such as the searing passions beneath the cool demeanor. These multiple levels help to reveal the complexity and hypocrisy of this society. Abuses are disguised in friendship and accomplished through indirection. The beautiful Bianca must be enjoyed by the Duke but only after she thinks she is on a friendly tour and only if Mother is kept ignorant and otherwise employed. The Duke must kill Leantio, certainly not by approaching him directly, but by indirection, motivating Hippolito with lies and half-truths. Indirection, hypocrisy, the reality beneath appearance--these are the ways of life in this society, and this is one point that Middleton may be trying to express through the marriage masque. It provides another customary social cover to mask what the characters are really thinking and doing. This is the way the characters have been acting all through the play, and therefore, the masque, a celebration concealing murder, is consistent both with Middleton's characterization and with the approach to life that this society encourages.

As in A Chaste Maid in Cheapside, public incidents give us a fresh perspective on private reality. We have seen that the promoters' scene and the christening scene comment upon oppressive and mercenary private authority figures in A Chaste Maid in Cheapside. In Women Beware Women, the chess game, the dancing at the banquet, and the concluding marriage masque present the public appearance of friendship and social harmony while concealing the secret reality of deceit and corruption.

CHAPTER V

THE CHANGELING

The previous three plays that I have examined use change in perspective primarily as a method to illuminate character, theme, and plot, but none makes change and changing perspective the major topics of the play. In The Changeling, changing perspective is both the method and the subject of the play, both the form and the content. Another difference I shall note between The Changeling and the three previous plays involves the more imaginative use of the subplot vis-a-vis the main plot. Karl Holzknecht has noted three ways that the meaning of the title, The Changeling, applies to the play: 1) "one given to change, a fickle or inconstant person, a waverer," for example, Beatrice; 2) "a person or thing surreptitiously put in exchange for another," for example, Diaphanta; 3) "a pseudo imbecile and madman," for example, Franciscus.¹

Alsemero's change in character and Beatrice's change in affections from Piracquo to Alsemero are the main topics of I.i. Religious imagery dominates Alsemero's speech as he reflects upon his sighting of Beatrice in

church:

'Twas in the temple where I first beheld her,

 The place is holy, so is my intent:
 I love her beauties to the holy purpose,
 And that, methinks, admits comparison
 With man's first creation, the place blest,

 The church hath first begun our interview, 10
 And that's the place must join us into one,
 So there's beginning and perfection too.²

We receive our first impression of Beatrice, a woman associated with the holiness of a church, through Alsemero's religious imagery. That impression will be undercut and then entirely reversed in subsequent scenes. Alsemero resembles a Petrarchan lover imagining an ideal union with his lady; he even alludes to the circle of perfection (l. 12). Actually, his idealism is folly, a type of love madness, based on nothing but appearances, since he has not even spoken to Beatrice yet.³ Alsemero is defining virtue in physical terms, a mistake he will make again with the virginity test. All of these elements --Petrarchan idealism, love as madness, judgement by appearances, and defining virtue in physical terms will be challenged by contrary or qualifying points of views as the play progresses.

Having established a first impression of Alsemero as a bemused Petrarchan lover, Rowley immediately undercuts that impression and obverts the kaleidoscope by having Jasperino contrast Alsemero's past with his present

conduct.⁴ The devoted traveller is suddenly uninterested in travelling (I.i.26-28, 52-54). Alsemero used to be an independent spirit remaining aloof from women:

Lover I'm sure y'are none, the stoic was
 Found in you long ago; your mother nor
 Best friends, who have set snares of beauty (ay,
 And choice ones, too), could never trap you that
 way.

(I.i.35-38)

But the past is contradicted by the present; Alsemero is a type of changeling. As Beatrice exits from the church, Alsemero not only greets the beautiful stranger but kisses her, and Jasperino is shocked:

[Aside] How now! The laws of the Medes are chang'd
 sure, salute a woman? He kisses too: wonderful!
 Where learnt he this? And does it perfectly too;
 in my conscience he ne'er rehearsed it before.
 Nay, go on, this will be stranger and better news
 at Valencia than if he had ransom'd half Greece
 from the Turk.

(I.i.58-63)

This conduct indicates more than simply a new facet of Alsemero's makeup. It constitutes a major change in his character, and this change achieves several purposes. It suggests the superiority of Beatrice's physical beauty over those women whom Alsemero has previously rejected and raises audience expectations about this unique woman. It underlines the devastating powers of the eye and the emotions to influence rational judgement.⁵ Also, the change illustrates the aberrant behavior that results when a person is caught up in the power of love, behavior so different from normal conduct that it resembles a kind of

madness, a suspension of usual behavior and the judgement that guided it.

As Alsemero converses with Beatrice, she also experiences a change, but rather than being a major transformation in her character (as with Alsemero), this change illustrates a new facet of an unchanged character--her fickleness:

[Aside] For five days past
To be recall'd! Sure, mine eyes were mistaken,
This was the man was meant me; that he should come
So near his time, and miss it!

(I.i.83-86)

Beatrice has just met Alsemero. They have spoken only 20 lines of conversation, yet she is anxious to replace her betrothed, Piracquo. Rowley is obverting the kaleidoscope here, balancing an attractive trait, physical beauty, against an unattractive one, fickleness. Because she is fickle, Beatrice is a type of changeling. Like Alsemero, her feelings and decisions are based on first impressions. Furthermore, Beatrice's aside separates what the audience knows about her from what Alsemero knows. Up to this point, the audience has seen Beatrice largely through Alsemero's eyes and Jasperino's reactions to his altered conduct. Now suddenly, the audience learns that Beatrice is about to be married, a fact Alsemero is unaware of. As their conversation continues, she still does not tell him. This is strange since a seventeenth century woman's marriage was the most important event in her life. Apparently,

Beatrice is afraid of losing Alsemero's interest. Meanwhile we become more aware of her flirtatious nature and begin to see a difference between her beautiful face and the reality hidden behind that face. Rowley cleverly emphasizes this distinction with an analogy spoken by Vermandero, Beatrice's father, when she introduces him to Alsemero: "our citadels/ Are plac'd conspicuous to outward view,/ On promonts' tops; but within are secrets" (I.i.163-165). Failing to mention the betrothal anticipates the other secrets that Beatrice will conceal from Alsemero and constitutes part of the unspoken or non-verbal drama implicit in the script.

Nearly 40 lines later (I.i.189), Alsemero finally learns (from Vermandero) that Beatrice is soon to be married. Rowley obverts the kaleidoscope to reveal a new facet of Alsemero's character:

[Aside] I must now part, and never meet again
With any joy on earth; [to Vermandero] sir, your pardon,
My affairs call on me.

Vermandero.

How, sir? By no means;
Not chang'd so soon, I hope? You must see my castle,
And her best entertainment, ere we part,
I shall think myself unkindly us'd else.
Come, come, let's on, I had good hope your stay
Had been a while with us in Alicant;
I might have bid you to my daughter's wedding.

Alsemero [Aside]

He means to feast me, and poisons me
beforehand;

[To Vermandero] I should be dearly glad to be there, sir,
Did my occasions suit as I could wish.

Beatrice.

I shall be sorry if you be not there

When it is done, sir;--but not so suddenly.
Vermandero.

I tell you, sir, the gentleman's complete,
A courtier and a gallant, enrich'd
With many fair and noble ornaments;
I would not change him for a son-in-law
For any he in Spain, the proudest he,
And we have great ones, that you know.
(I.i.198-216)

Alsemero's ecstasy at discovering Beatrice, has turned to sorrow at the realization of her loss. His sudden change reveals strong passion for Beatrice but also suggests his foolish naivete in imagining marriage with a woman of whose situation and character he is entirely ignorant. Vermandero's joyous insistence on entertaining Alsemero functions as an effective foil to Alsemero's deep depression. This is a classic example of the relativism we find in the anonymous Greek sophistic treatise--Dissoi Logoi: two contradictory but equally valid points of view on the same situation.⁶ Individual passion (Alsemero) is in conflict with society's will, here symbolized by Vermandero's unchanging commitment to Piracquo, a cultivated courtier. Consistent with his honor and discipline as a soldier (I.i. 184-86), Alsemero tries to effect a diplomatic withdrawal. So far, his reason controls his passion; he does not contemplate murdering Alonzo. Rowley invites the audience to see both sides of the issue--Vermandero's and Alsemero's.

Besides the changes in Alsemero and Beatrice, Rowley reveals one facet of DeFlores' character in I.i.:

[Aside] Fates do your worst, I'll please myself with sight

Of her, at all opportunities,
 If but to spite her anger; I know she had
 Rather see me dead than living...

.....
 She had rather wear my pelt tann'd in a pair
 Of dancing pumps, than I should thrust my fingers
 Into her sockets here, I know she hates me,
 Yet cannot choose but love her: 235
 No matter, if but to vex her, I'll haunt her still;
 Though I get nothing else, I'll have my will.⁷
 (I.i.103-106, 232-237)

DeFlores' masochistic passion for the stunning Beatrice compels him to be in her presence in spite of her contempt for him.⁸ Being a servant in Vermandero's household, DeFlores is powerless to act on his strong feelings. The result is abject behavior which would rather endure any insult than suffer the absence of Beatrice. His infatuation with the physical Beatrice, suggested by the double entendre (ll. 233-34) is quite at odds with the "holy intent...the holy purpose" that Alsemero speaks of (I.i.5-6). Beatrice educes aberrant behavior in both men: they react in contrasting ways, but each is experiencing a type of love-madness.

From another angle of vision, Alsemero, Beatrice, and DeFlores resemble comic figures.⁹ Alsemero plans marriage with a woman whom he has only seen briefly and not yet spoken to (I.i.10-12). We would expect this of an inexperienced boy not a mature man, and therefore the situation is comic. DeFlores, a former gentleman and current servant (II.i.43-9), invents excuses to visit Beatrice, only to suffer the pain of insult. But the only relief

from the torture of not possessing her is to visit her again--and be insulted again, whereupon the maddening fever of lust returns. This unending cycle of frustration coupled with DeFlores' servile behavior through it all is comic by its very excess. The beautiful and dignified Beatrice approves one suitor to be her husband, but after only two minutes of conversation with a second man, of whom she knows nothing, she is anxious to throw over the first man in favor of the second. When she drops a glove and a servant attempts to hand it back, she speaks as if he had tried to undress her. Such behavior is not rational; indeed its very irrationality is comic. What are we intended to make of all this? Is Rowley poking fun at Petrarchan conventions?¹⁰ Doesn't he take his material seriously or feel any concern for the characters? Perhaps the kaleidoscope can provide an answer. The sophists taught that every issue can be seen from contrasting points of view. The kaleidoscopic method encourages us to see characters from contrasting points of view. The Changeling is a tragedy with characters who are victims of their own passions and choices. But in the very act of pursuing their passionate desires, they transform themselves into comic figures, comic in their extreme reactions, comic in the seriousness with which they view themselves, comic in their conflict with social mores, and comic because sin, being stupid and foolish, is ultimately comic. Sin was so viewed

on the medieval stage. Small wonder therefore that perceptive critics have noticed vestiges of the medieval stage in Middleton's dramaturgy.¹¹

We have seen that the aberrant behavior which love or lust educes resembles both madness and comedy. Rowley emphasizes these ideas in the madhouse scenes of the subplot which present new angles of vision helpful in comprehending the main plot. The subplot accomplishes this by clarifying the authors' attitude toward their own material, commenting ironically on the conduct of characters in the main plot, and providing physical representations of mental states in the main plot.¹² I.ii., set in Dr. Alibius' asylum, comments upon I.i. For example, a main concern in I.i. is the developing affection between Alsemero and Beatrice, an affection that is carefully kept secret from Vermandero. Also, we have noted that Beatrice keeps her impending marriage secret from Alsemero for as long as she can until her father finally reveals it. At the beginning of I.ii., Alibius discusses a secret with his assistant, Lollo:

Lollo, I must trust thee with a secret,
But thou must keep it.

Lollo.

I was ever close to a secret, sir.

Alibius.

.....

Lollo, I have a wife.

Lollo.

Fie, sir, 'tis too late to keep her secret, she's
Known to be married all the town and country over.

Alibius.

Thou goest too fast, my Lollo, that knowledge
I allow no man can be barr'd it;

But there is a knowledge which is nearer,
Deeper and sweeter, Lollio.

Lollio.

Well, sir, let us handle that between you and I.

Alibius.

'Tis that I go about man; Lollio,
My wife is young.

Lollio.

So much the worse to be kept secret, sir.

Alibius.

Why, now thou meet'st the substance of the point:
I am old, Lollio.

Lollio.

No, sir, 'tis I am old Lollio.

(I.ii.1-3,7-20)

Secret knowledge is a motif in both I.i. and I.ii. By presenting a common motif in comic form, Rowley is not suggesting that the lovers' secrets are unimportant or ridiculous but rather that they should be viewed with comic detachment, and that there is a comic dimension to tragic stature, or at least to the tragic stature of characters in this play. This attitude affects the characterization of Beatrice, Alsemero, and DeFlores.

One plot frequently reverses the situation in the other plot. In I.ii. Alibius fears that Isabella may cuckold him if she is not watched carefully, yet he foolishly entrusts her surveillance to Lollio, the man most likely to cuckold him (I.ii.38-40). In II.i. Piracquo refuses to question Beatrice's fidelity to him in spite of Tomazo's wise counsel. An old man suspects a woman who is steadfast; a young man trusts a woman who is changeable. The authors present us one image and then reverse it.

Though Alibius and Alonzo behave in opposite ways, they are both naive. Are the authors suggesting the foolishness of extreme conduct, whether it be excessive suspicion or blanket approval? If so, are they implying the need for rational control of the feelings, for a via media or middle course in dealing with others? Are the quite contrary passions of Alsemero and DeFlores equally neglectful of the guiding power of reason, of the via media?

In II.i. Middleton has DeFlores describe his ugly face partly to encourage audience antipathy toward him and the evil he represents, but more importantly, to develop a unique moral perspective in the play:

[Aside] I must confess my face is bad enough,
 But I know far worse has better fortune,
 And not endur'd alone, but doted on:
 And yet such pick-hair'd faces, chins like witches',
 Here and there five hairs, whispering in a corner,
 As if they grew in fear one of another,
 Wrinkles like troughs, where swine-deformity swills
 The tears of perjury that lie there like wash
 Fallen from the slimy and dishonest eye,--
 Yet such a one pluck'd sweets without restraint,
 And has the grace of beauty to his sweet.
 (II.i.37-47)

Portraying DeFlores as ugly is an original touch with Middleton, since in the source for the main plot, DeFlores is a handsome young man.¹³ The Elizabethans sometimes associated a misshapen body with an ugly soul, and Middleton probably counted on the audience making this connection when he stressed DeFlores' ugliness.¹⁴ I suggest that Middleton intends DeFlores' conduct and ugliness

first as a standard of evil against which to mark the moral decline of Beatrice, but ultimately DeFlores' ugliness comes to symbolize the ugly state of Beatrice's soul.

Beatrice's expressions of fear concerning DeFlores further encourage audience antipathy toward him and indicate that at this point in the play, she has no idea that she might have anything in common with DeFlores:

[Aside] This ominous ill-fac'd fellow more disturbs me than all my other passions.

.....
I never see this fellow, but I think
Of some harm towards me, danger's in my mind still;
I scarce leave trembling of an hour after.

(II.i.53-4, 89-91)

For now, Middleton is content to have the audience see and loath DeFlores the way Beatrice sees and loathes him. Later, Middleton will show a moral kinship between the two; he will gradually reverse our sympathies regarding Beatrice and completely undercut her as a tragic heroine.

Middleton obverts the kaleidoscope on Alsemero in II.ii. When Beatrice complains that Piracquo obstructs her happiness, Alsemero is the first to suggest that Piracquo be removed:

One good service
Would strike off both your fears, and I'll go near
it too,
Since you are so distress'd; remove the cause,
The command ceases, so there's two fears blown out
With one and the same blast.

Beatrice.

Pray let me find you, sir.

What might that service be so strangely happy?
 Alsemero.

The honorablest piece 'bout man, valour.
 I'll send a challenge to Piracquo instantly.
 (II.ii.21-28)

The same man who spoke of a holy and rational love at the opening of the play would now use violence to prevent a holy and fully sanctioned marriage between Piracquo and Beatrice.¹⁵ The same man who earlier tried to make a diplomatic withdrawal after hearing that Beatrice is to be married would now concoct an accusation against an innocent man and take his life.

Alsemero is a potential hero in this play, and yet Middleton is deliberately undercutting that heroic image. His intention seems to be to show that Alsemero has moral and emotional weaknesses of his own. Since Alsemero's first impulse to withdraw honorably, he has experienced a change of heart.¹⁶ Beatrice's beauty and wit have inflamed his mind, taken strong hold on his emotions. Respect for the absolute standard indicated by respect for marriage, the honorable thing to do, no longer seem bearable alternatives to this changeling. Expediency, might is right, are now the answers whereby Alsemero's heart can finally have its desire. But expediency is what we associate with DeFlores who would do anything to enjoy Beatrice. Middleton has obverted the kaleidoscope to show that feelings can distort judgement, that Alsemero may have something in common with DeFlores, that superficial contrasts may be

deceptive. One effect of this is to undermine the conventional hero-villain opposition; the main characters are much more complex than such an opposition would imply.

Up to this point Beatrice has felt only fear and loathing toward DeFlores. We see a new facet of her character in II.ii.--feigned friendliness toward DeFlores and a determination to employ him to murder Piracquo:

[Aside] Why, put case I loath'd him
 As much as youth and beauty hates a sepulchre,
 Must I needs show it? Cannot I keep that secret,
 And serve my turn upon him?
 (II.ii.66-69)

We now see that expediency forms a part of Beatrice's makeup, but we must also remember that Alsemero put the idea of killing Piracquo into her head. She rejects both the absolute moral code forbidding murder and her earlier intuition of harm from DeFlores (II.i.89-91) in order to pursue her ultimate goal--marriage to Alsemero. She now hates Piracquo "beyond all depths" (II.ii.111), a feeling totally unjustified by his conduct. Indeed, he was quite gracious in allowing a postponement of the marriage ceremony. When DeFlores assures Beatrice that his desire to serve her makes him want to murder Piracquo, her response is ruthless and chilling: "Then take him to thy fury" (II.ii.133). As Middleton gradually reveals the depths of Beatrice's pride and amorality, he also exposes the fallacies of Alsemero and Piracquo's idealistic views of her.

Beatrice has been trading on her lovely face all of her life. She assumes that her beauty sets her apart from ordinary mortals and gives her power to get whatever she wants. She takes for granted that all who serve her have her desires alone in mind and entertain no independent desires of their own. That DeFlores might be serving her for his own selfish motives never occurs to Beatrice.¹⁷ Middleton obverts the kaleidoscope again to reveal how limited is her understanding of DeFlores, how short-sighted her schemes:

[Aside] I shall rid myself
 Of two inveterate loathings at one time,
 Piracquo, and his dog face. Exit.
 DeFlores.

Oh my blood!
 Methinks I feel her in mine arms already,
 Her wanton fingers combing out this beard,
 And being pleased, praising this bad face.
 (II.ii.146-49)

Beatrice's ruthlessness is betrayed by her lack of cleverness; she has no idea of what she is getting involved in. Middleton is revealing a new side of DeFlores character also. He is no longer the powerless, fawning, strangely comical servant desperate to see Beatrice. Her debt to DeFlores will give him power to exploit her as expediently as she has exploited him. The intensity of his sexual desire includes none of the gentility of Piracquo, none of the romanticism of Alsemero. DeFlores utters no more talk about wishing just to see Beatrice and spite her; his ambitions are much higher now.

III.i. and III.ii. are noteworthy for the new facets of DeFlores' character that they reveal. By having DeFlores disarm Piracquo under the guise of friendship before stabbing him repeatedly in the back, Middleton emphasizes DeFlores' base cowardice. His mind is devoid of nobility. Middleton is not being sensational here but rather illustrating that DeFlores' conduct reflects his character. He is a slave to his passions, and therefore his passions, not any code of behavior, motivate his conduct. Perhaps Middleton is also suggesting what a powerful motive sexual passion can be, what horrible effects can occur when uncontrolled passion eradicates any influence of reason.

III.iii., the second madhouse scene, comments upon the main plot in several ways. Isabella's complaint that she is being confined inside the asylum is a physical representation of a mental state in III.iv. during which Beatrice becomes the prisoner of DeFlores' blackmail. That Rowley intends the asylum as a perspective on the world outside seems clear by the following exchange:

Lolloio.

He says you have company enough in the house, if you please to be sociable, of all sorts of people.

Isabella.

Of all sorts? Why, here's none but fools and madmen.

Lolloio.

Very well: and where will you find any other, if you should go abroad?

(III.iii.12-16)

Having established the asylum as a metaphor for the world,

Rowley develops it. Lollo connects love with madness when he explains that Franciscus "fell...mad for love" (III.iii.44-45). This clearly recalls DeFlores "mad qualm" over Beatrice and Tomazo's description of Piracquo's lack of perception as "love's tame madness" (II.i.79,154). Costumes also symbolize mental states. Tony relates his foolish costume ("shape of folly") to the transforming power of Isabella's "powerful beauties" (III.iii.119-21). Tony's physical change in costume corresponds to Alsemero's foolish mental transformation in I.i. under the influence of Beatrice's powerful beauty. These physical-mental correspondences are developed further when the madmen appear disguised as birds and beasts to symbolize that the sane can be bestial and that sexual irregularities equal madness.¹⁸

Besides using physical images to represent mental states, Rowley presents conduct which offers an alternative to occurrences in III.iv. Having seen Tony kiss Isabella (as DeFlores had seen Beatrice and Alsemero kiss), Lollo attempts to enjoy Isabella, but she takes control immediately by threatening him: "be silent, mute,/ Mute as a statue, or his injunction/ For me enjoying, shall be to cut thy throat" (III.iii.240-42). Isabella controlled her feelings for Tony and was therefore able to prevent Lollo from taking advantage of her. Beatrice failed to control either her hatred for Piracquo or her passion for Alsemero

in earlier scenes; consequently, she lacks the bargaining edge that innocence gave to Isabella and is therefore at a disadvantage when DeFlores threatens exposure (III.iv. 148-49) and demands his will. The effect of dramatizing Isabella's control of Lollo before Beatrice's surrender to DeFlores is to highlight how poorly Beatrice has managed her affairs which in turn undermines her potential as a tragic heroine.

In III.iv. we see Beatrice from perspectives indicating how shallow and myopic are her assumptions about herself, other people, and the world around her. When DeFlores shows Beatrice the bleeding ring finger, she grants him the ring as a gift:

I pray, bury the finger, but the stone
 You may make use on shortly; the true value,
 Take't of my truth, is near three hundred ducats.
 (III.iv.41-43)

The fact that the only value she attaches to the ring is monetary indicates how little Piracquo or his memory mean to her.¹⁹ The casual manner in which she gives away her first gift to Piracquo betrays a moral shallowness and a cold indifference to the sanctity of a man's life, which means nothing to her compared to the fulfillment of her selfish desires. This goes far beyond merely hating a man. Middleton is exposing more of the ironic differences between Beatrice's beautiful appearance and her ugly soul.

An effective example of how Middleton exploits

multiple perspectives to educe subtleties of character occurs when Beatrice offers DeFlores 3000 golden florins as payment for the murder:

DeFlores.

Do you place me in the rank of verminous fellows, 64
To destroy things for wages? Offer gold?
The life blood of man! Is anything
Valued too precious for my recompense?

Beatrice.

I understand thee not. 68

DeFlores.

I could ha' hir'd
A journeyman in murder at this rate,
And mine own conscience might have slept at ease, 70
And have had the work brought home.

Beatrice [Aside]

I'm in a labyrinth;

What will content him? I would fain be rid of him.

[To DeF] I'll double the sum, sir.

Deflores.

You take a course

To double my vexation, that's the good you do.

Beatrice [Aside]

Bless me! I am now in worse plight than I was 75

I know not what will please him.

(III.iv.64-76)

Some critics interpret lines 64-71 to mean that DeFlores has more of a conscience than Beatrice.²⁰ I think, however, that Middleton had something quite different in mind. DeFlores is feigning revulsion toward murder for pay, feigning respect for human life and using these moral arguments expediently to persuade Beatrice that only her virginity constitutes adequate recompense. She fails to see through his rhetorical arguments, and it is clear from her remarks at lines 68, 71-2, 76, 82, and 92 that she is exceedingly slow to apprehend what he wants.²¹ Furthermore, she never thinks to turn the tables on DeFlores by denying involvement for example, or to control him (as Isabella controlled

Lollo). She possesses neither the quick wit of Bianca nor the nobility of the Duchess of Malfi. Instead of resembling a noble, strong woman maintaining her dignity in spite of all, Beatrice appears a spoiled, peevish girl who does not comprehend what is happening around her. Just when we would expect Middleton to build Beatrice's tragic stature, he seems to be undermining it.

When Beatrice finally realizes what DeFlores wants, she sees Piracquo in an entirely new light:

Oh misery of sin! Would I had been bound
 Perpetually unto my living hate
 In that Piracquo, than to hear these words.
 Think but upon the distance that creation 130
 Set 'twixt thy blood and mine, and keep thee there.

DeFlores.

Look but into your conscience, read me there,
 'Tis a true book, you'll find me there your equal:
 Push, fly not to your birth, but settle you
 In what the act has made you, y'are no more now. 135
 (III.iv.127-135)

The sophists believed that nothing is absolutely good or bad, only good or bad compared to something else. Piracquo, whom Beatrice once viewed as an absolute evil, she now sees as a minor annoyance compared to DeFlores. This reversal in her perspective illustrates how her passion for Alsemero distorted her judgement and how she greatly underestimated DeFlores, the onetime fawning, even comic servant, who has advanced to master. By indicating her new equality with DeFlores (l. 133 above), Middleton reduces further Beatrice's high stature at the opening of

the play.²² Her claim of social distance between her and DeFlores is nothing more than a hollow pretense, a deception masking reality--like her beautiful face.

DeFlores' character traits are not all negative. Middleton obverts the kaleidoscope in III.iv. to show us his keen intelligence, as demonstrated by his perceptive analysis of Beatrice's moral character:

Though thou writ'st maid, thou whore in thy affection!
 'Twas changed from thy first love, and that's a kind
 Of whoredom in thy heart; and he's changed now,
 To bring thy second on, thy Alsemero, 145
 Whom (by all sweets that ever darkness tasted)
 If I enjoy thee not, thou ne'er enjoy'st;
 I'll blast the hope and joys of marriage,
 I'll confess all; my life I rate at nothing. 149
 (III.iv.142-49)

DeFlores understands that purity is a mental as well as a physical condition: a woman may be a virgin physically while being a whore, a changeling in her affections. How this perspective differs from Alsemero's will become clear when we discuss the virginity test.

Middleton continues to undermine Beatrice's tragic dimension at the conclusion of III.iv.:

Beatrice.

Stay, hear me once for all; [kneels] I make thee master
 Of all the wealth I have in gold and jewels:
 Let me go poor unto my bed with honour,
 And I am rich in all things.

.....
 Vengeance begins;

Murder I see is followed by more sins.
 Was my creation in the womb so curs'd, 165
 It must engender with a viper first?

(III.iv.156-59, 163-66)

Beatrice's weak submission highlights the contrasts in strength, courage, and intelligence between her and Isabella. Beatrice does finally fathom that the murder of Piracquo, far from ending her problems, has created new ones. However, even that recognition is undercut by lines 165-66 in which Beatrice "blames heredity for her plight, not the failure of reason or moral conviction."²³ Beatrice continues to rationalize her conduct; she still has not learned that she alone is responsible for her own moral choices.

The murder of Piracquo and the mutilation of his body might encourage an audience familiar with revenge tragedy to expect the intervention of a revenger. The audience is reminded of the moral atmosphere of the play when Tomazo confronts Vermandero in IV.ii. and demands an accounting of his brother's disappearance.²⁴ We know from his warnings to Piracquo in II.i. that Tomazo sees reality clearly. However, in IV.ii. he trusts DeFlores when he should suspect him (ll. 42-3), and he suspects Alsemero when he should trust him (ll. 70-73), demonstrating that the most perceptive person can be deceived by appearances. Tomazo's determination, plus the significant amount of time (61 lines) allotted to his confrontations with Vermandero, DeFlores, and Alsemero, create the expectation that he will have some important role in the discovery of the truth and the punishment of DeFlores and Beatrice. How

and why Middleton later destroys these expectations will become clear in V.iii.

While Middleton leads us to expect Tomazo's discovery and punishment of the murderers, he undermines the heroic expectations that we may have of Alsemero. Informed by Jasperino that Beatrice has been overheard speaking intimately with DeFlores, Alsemero decides to give her a virginity test. Many Jacobean would have found Alsemero's test and his complete faith in it to be "ludicrous."²⁵ The very idea of such a test is foolish because "it equates virginity, a physical state, with virtue, a moral condition."²⁶ Unlike DeFlores, Alsemero completely confuses the two, demonstrating that he still fails to distinguish between appearance and reality, just as at the opening of the play, and that he probably knows little about women, which would be consistent with a life lived aloof from women (I.i.59-61).²⁷ Even Jasperino indicts the virginity test when he remarks, "this is the strangest trick to know a maid by" (IV.ii.142). DeFlores would certainly recognize the total absurdity of a physical test as evidenced by his distinction between technical and real purity (III.iv.142-45). All of this has the effect of undercutting Alsemero as the heroic figure in the play and making difficult our acceptance of him as an ideal contrast to the depraved DeFlores.

The virginity test affects our perception of Beatrice also.²⁸ When she mimics the expected results of the test by gaping, sneezing, and then laughing in order to persuade Alsemero of her virginity (IV.ii.137-144), she appears to be a comic butt that Middleton is purposely degrading, just as he comically degraded Quomodo in the feigned-death scenes of Michaelmas Term. By portraying Beatrice as a comic figure, Middleton may be alluding to the medieval view of sin which saw the devil as a comic butt. In this sense, the virginity test becomes a comic metaphor for Beatrice's degradation through sin. On the other hand, there is something pathetic about the scene also: the onetime great lady being made to look ridiculous. In any event, Middleton has taken Beatrice down quite a few pegs since I.i. when she was revered by her father and nearly adored by her suitors. In IV.ii. Middleton has obverted the kaleidoscope on Tomazo, Alsemero, and Beatrice.

IV.iii. is an imaginative effort to comment upon the weaknesses of characters in the main plot. When Lollio and Alibius discuss the performance of the madmen and fools at Vermanero's marriage feast, Lollio stresses the need to control them:

Alibius.

.....

--so no rough behaviors

Affright the ladies; they are nice things, thou know'st.

Lollo.

You need not fear, sir; so long as we are there with our commanding pizzles, they'll be as tame as the ladies themselves.²⁹

(IV.iii.59-62)

Consistent with the associations between madness and love/lust throughout the play, the "commanding pizzles" are physical representations of the internal discipline that reason must impose upon the sexual passions if they are to be controlled. Neither DeFlores nor Beatrice would discipline their sexual passions, and therefore those passions went out of control, resulting in the murder of Piracquo. Once again an incident in the subplot "distances" us from the main plot, thereby allowing a more objective angle of vision on character weaknesses in the main action.

After disguising herself as a madwoman and teasing Tony, Isabella reveals her true identity and emphasizes that she will remain faithful to old Alibius:

Antonio.

Ha! Dearest beauty!

Isabella.

No, I have no beauty now,
Nor never had, but what was in my garments.
You a quick-sighted lover? Come not near me!
Keep your caparisons, y'are aptly clad;
I came a feigner to return stark mad.

(IV.iii.131-35)

In the conventional January-May marriage, the young wife cuckolds the old husband. By remaining faithful to Alibius, Isabella reverses the stock situation, thereby undercutting audience expectations that she would eventually become Tony's mistress. The effects of this are to

highlight Isabella's fidelity and to establish her as a necessary foil to Beatrice. The authors are preparing the audience "for the emergence of Isabella as the example of excellence."³⁰

In V.i. Middleton again obverts the kaleidoscope on Beatrice. The fact that she and DeFlores independently conclude that Diaphanta must die symbolizes the completeness of their union.³¹ Beatrice changes from reluctant endurance of DeFlores to love of him.³² She has come full circle from loathing him in Act I. When he details his plan for murdering Diaphanta, she remarks: "I'm forc'd to love thee now,/ 'Cause thou provid'st so carefully for my honour" (V.i.47-48). When only moments later, DeFlores shoots Diaphanta, preventing her from revealing Beatrice's deceit, she praises his efforts:

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.

.....

Here's a man worth loving.
 (V.i.69-72, 76)

Besides illustrating that DeFlores was right about Beatrice "whoring" in her affections, this latest perspective also reveals her selfish motives for loving: she loves DeFlores not for himself but for his "service" to her "honour." The irony of this motive, considering that DeFlores contributed to the ruin of that honor, exemplifies Beatrice's muddled thinking. Furthermore, she misunderstands his

motives. The fact that his main concern is not her honor becomes clear when he mentions his reason for killing Diaphanta: "Slid, it concerns the safety of us both,/ Our pleasure and continuance" (V.i.49-50). DeFlores' actual motives are the continued enjoyment of Beatrice's body and control of her life for as long as he can get away with it. The irony of Beatrice's muddled thinking and her inaccurate assessment of DeFlores' motives further undermine her as a tragic heroine. The sophistic situation of having Beatrice and DeFlores interpret Diaphanta's death from two entirely different points of view underlines the selfishness of each. Their alliance is one of expediency in which each uses the other.

Middleton presents a new facet of Tomazo's character in V.ii.: he changes his attitude toward DeFlores from friendliness to loathing and distrust. Why he changes is the key question. DeFlores explains it as "instinct" (V.ii.38-40). Tomazo's soliloquy, describing DeFlores as "deadly venomous" and "poison" to any weapon (V.ii.17-18) indicates that Tomazo is no longer deceived by DeFlores' false humility and "honest heart" (IV.ii.48-9, 57). Furthermore, Tomazo confronts DeFlores forcefully, striking him and calling him "coward" (V.ii.25-31). DeFlores flatters Tomazo in a servile fashion and submits weakly to his will. Because of all this, we continue to expect Tomazo to play a major role in bringing Beatrice and DeFlores to justice.

Middleton now undermines that impression by having Tomazo change again (to a friendly, respectful guest) when he thinks that Piracquo's murderers have been found (V.ii. 64-69). Although Vermandero and Alibius' evidence is purely circumstantial (that the day of the murder, Francisus and Antonio lied about where they were going and entered the asylum in disguise), Tomazo foolishly accepts the coincidence as proof of guilt:

Time's too precious
 To run in waste now; you have brought a peace
 The riches of five kingdoms could not purchase.
 Be my most happy conduct; I thirst for 'em:
 Like subtle lightning will I wind about 'em,
 And melt their marrow in 'em. Exeunt
 (V.ii.82-87)

Not only do we realize that Tomazo is *wrong*, but also, the intensity of his words emphasizes his ridiculousness. By having the play's stock revenger be completely deceived, Middleton doubles back upon himself, leading us down one path only to hoist a "dead end" sign. He avoids the predictable victory of good over bad in The Changeling. This is not the perspective on evil that Middleton wishes us to have. Such a solution would be simplistic and untrue to the real nature of evil because it totally ignores the corruptive influence of evil upon itself.

That Middleton is doubling back upon himself, becomes more apparent at the beginning of V.iii. Alsemero and

Jasperino witness Beatrice and Deflores in the garden together and realize that they are lovers. Moments later, under questioning by Alsemero, Beatrice admits that she had Piracquo murdered. These developments remove Tomazo as an instrument of justice and consign him to the role of mere spectator in the final revelation of the truth.

Another shift in perspective occurs as a result of the garden sighting. Alsemero changes to the man of reason who finally realizes that Beatrice's beautiful appearance is masking an ugly soul rather than projecting a pure one. Cured of the "madness" he suffered between Acts I and IV, Alsemero can now personify the absolute moral code in opposition to Beatrice's expediency.³³ When Beatrice explains that she had Piracquo killed out of desperate desire to be Alsemero's wife, he responds:

Oh, thou art all deform'd!
Beatrice.

Forget not, sir,
It for your sake was done; shall greater dangers
Make the less welcome?
Alsemero.

Oh, thou shouldst have gone
A thousand leagues about to have avoided
This dangerous bridge of blood; here we are lost.
(V.iii.77-81)

This appears to be the standard moral indictment of expedient conduct, but it is more than this. Alsemero conveniently forgets that he was the first to suggest that Piracquo be "blown out" and that he even volunteered to remove Piracquo by forcing a duel (II.ii.22-28). Seen in

this light, Alsemero's present conduct appears self-righteous and condescending. He may even be piqued that the stunning Beatrice ended in DeFlores' arms instead of his own. All of this is not to deny Alsemero's role as the voice of the conventional moral code in V.iii., but rather to suggest that Alsemero's self-righteous conduct betrays a narrow-mindedness that further undercuts his heroic dimension in the play.

We seem to be progressing toward a solemn solution of Piracquo's murder when suddenly, Rowley interjects comedy. Vermandero rushes on stage and argues with Alsemero as to which man has found the true murderers of Piracquo:

Vermandero.

Oh, Alsemero, I have a wonder for you.

Alsemero.

No, sir, 'tis I have a wonder for you.

Vermandero.

I have suspicion near as proof itself
For Piracquo's murder.

Alsemero.

Sir, I have proof

Beyond suspicion for Piracquo's murder.

Vermandero.

Beseech you hear me; these two have been disguis'd
E'er since the deed was done.

Alsemero.

I have two other

That were more close disguis'd than your two could be,
E'er since the deed was done.

Vermandero.

You'll hear me!--these mine own servants--

Alsemero.

Hear me;--those nearer than your servants,
That shall acquit them, and prove them guiltless.

(V.iii.121-132)

Comic scenes in English Renaissance tragedy are commonplace,

but comedy in the final scene of a tragedy is rare. Rowley is deliberately breaking the serious, moral tone (established during Alsemero's confrontations with Beatrice and then DeFlores) by interjecting this comic disagreement. He is encouraging a multiple perspective on what is happening, a perspective at once moral and comic; he is encouraging us to detach ourselves emotionally from the tragedy, to distance ourselves from it, the better perhaps to comprehend it. In addition, he may be suggesting that tragedy and comedy interweave, that inevitably there are comic elements in tragedy and tragic potential in comedy. Or he may be emphasizing something suggested earlier: the medieval view that sin is ultimately comic because foolish, and therefore deserving of laughter.

After Alsemero calls the "twins of mischief" from the closet (V.iii.142), Beatrice, wounded by DeFlores' penknife, attempts to shift the blame for her sins to fate and DeFlores:

Beneath the stars, upon yon meteor
 Ever hung my fate, 'mongst things corruptible;
 I ne'er could pluck it from him: my loathing
 Was prophet to the rest, but ne'er believ'd;
 Mine honour fell with him, and now my life.
 (V.iii.154-58)

By having Beatrice avoid accepting responsibility for her own crimes, the authors once again deflate her as a tragic heroine.³⁴ Perhaps for moral or satirical reasons, Middleton and Rowley wanted to prevent Beatrice from

acquiring tragic dignity in her final lines. By taking credit when events seem to be going well (II.i.13), but blaming others when events turn out poorly, Beatrice appears pathetic and ridiculous, and perhaps this is the point. Her girlish pride prevents her from facing the truth in her final moments, and so she ends a "common thing" whose "wonders" (I.i.74-75) are no more than mere appearances. Even her final words, a plea for forgiveness, are undercut by her father's response, which betrays a greater concern for his tainted reputation than for his daughter's fate:³⁵

Beatrice.

Forgive me, Alsemero, all forgive;

'Tis time to die, when 'tis a shame to live. Dies

Vermandero.

Oh, my name is enter'd now in that record

Where till this fatal hour 'twas never read.

(V.iii.178-81)

Both DeFlores and Beatrice die from wounds inflicted by DeFlores' penknife. Again the authors are undercutting our expectations, since the standard revenge play formula calls for the sinners to die either at the hands of a revenger (Tomazo), or through some form of divine retribution. Middleton and Rowley ignore convention and provide a new perspective on the death of sinners in order to emphasize the self-destructive nature of evil.³⁶ DeFlores and Beatrice corrupted themselves, and out of that corruption must develop the seeds of their own destruction. Such a psychological perspective would be ruined if vengeance

were imposed by an outside force such as Tomazo.

Like the three previous plays that I examined, The Changeling includes multiple perspectives presented through the aside, soliloquy, juxtaposition, expedient use of the moral standard, choric commentary, witnesses and so forth. Also like the three previous plays, when evil is defeated, it defeats itself. It is not defeated by the forces of good. Each of the four plays includes at least one "benchmark" character, one who speaks for the absolute moral standard or at least personifies decent, moral behavior. Such characters are Thomasine, Mother Gruel, and Father in Michaelmas Term; Moll and the bargemen in A Chaste Maid in Cheapside; The Cardinal in Women Beware Women; Isabella, Vermandero, Tomazo, and, to a lesser extent, Alsemero in The Changeling.

The differences between The Changeling and the other three plays are more telling than the similarities. Changing perspective is a major theme in The Changeling, no longer just a method by which themes are expressed, as in the previous three plays.³⁷ Passion changes people and their perspectives; consequently, moral and intellectual vision becomes clouded. Temptation forces choices between passion and reason, vice and virtue, will and law. Unexpected changes may occur if incorrect choices are made. Sin changes people's perspective so that in the very act

of pursuing their goals, they may lessen and even destroy themselves.

Another difference between The Changeling and the three previous plays involves the function of the subplot. The subplots in the other plays confine themselves to developing parallels or reversals in characterization or plot in order to show the main action in new, sometimes ironic perspectives. The subplot in The Changeling accomplishes these objectives also, but in addition, it develops visual representations that correspond to mental and emotional states in the main plot, such as the physical imprisonment of Isabella corresponding visually to Beatrice's mental imprisonment to DeFlores, the disguises of a fool (Antonio) and a madman (Franciscus) representing visually the mental and emotional aberrations of a fool (Alsemero) and a madman (DeFlores).

Additional differences involve the presentation of moral alternatives and the tone of the subplots. Though subplot characters in the other three plays may give voice to the absolute moral code (Mother Gruel, Allwit, Hippolito), they do not conduct themselves in ways that suggest moral alternatives to the conduct of characters in the main plot, yet this is clearly true of Isabella vis-à-vis Beatrice. The tone of the subplots in the three previous plays are so similar to the tone of their respective main plots that they tend to reenforce each other's effects. A

different situation occurs in The Changeling. The comic and farcical elements in the subplot qualify the predominantly serious tone of the main plot, questioning and challenging its meaning, thereby encouraging more complex, suggestive responses.

Women Beware Women is the only other tragedy I have discussed, and it contrasts sharply with The Changeling in moral atmosphere. Society as a whole exerts no moral pressure to conform in Women Beware Women, and the Duke and Bianca have nothing to fear from it. Middleton presents Leantio's empty threats and the Cardinal's sermonizing as annoyances separate and distinct from Florentine society at large. Those who practice expediency are punished by others who practice expediency. In The Changeling, society, represented by Vermandero, Tomazo, Isabella, Alibius, and Alsemero, does function both as a moral force and as a foil to the expediency of DeFlores and Beatrice. DeFlores alludes to this moral background when he is trying to persuade Beatrice that they are united through sin:

Why, are not you as guilty, in (I'm sure)
As deep as I? And we should stick together.
Come, your fears counsel you but ill, my absence
Would draw suspect upon you instantly;
There were no rescue for you.

Beatrice [Aside]

He speaks home.

(III.iv.83-87)

Unlike Bianca, Beatrice need not fear a man's physical force so much as the scandal of discovery.³⁸ To state the

difference another way, Women Beware Women illustrates the consequences of expedient conduct. The Changeling illustrates expedient conduct in conflict with society's social and moral standards.

All of these differences make The Changeling a richer theatrical and poetical experience than the other three plays. How much of this we owe to Rowley can never be known in every detail, though contemporary critics of the play agree that the collaboration was very close.³⁹ Whatever the details of his contribution, Rowley helped Middleton to reach heights of dramatic achievement that he was unable to attain on his own.

CONCLUSION

It should be apparent from the preceding chapters that Middleton's multiple perspectives are not always fully integrated into the plot and characterization. In IV.ii. of Michaelmas Term, Father offers an alternative view to the Wench's defense of prostitution, but after a brief appearance in IV.iii., he simply disappears from the plot. The multiple perspectives on Easy, Shortyard (Michaelmas Term) the Duke, and Livia (Women Beware Women) are not all consistent with each other. Middleton provides no explanation or preparation for the sudden changes in these characters. The aggregate of diverse perspectives do not quite add up to four well-rounded characterizations. We come away puzzled by the contrasts between diverse perspectives rather than pleased by their integration.

Yet in spite of limitations, we can see progress. In Michaelmas Term, Father's and the Country Wench's opposite perspectives on prostitution assume the form of a rhetorical debate including ironic exordia and rebuttals. In A Chaste Maid in Cheapside, Yellowhammer's viewpoint favoring prostitution of Moll (under the disguise of an arranged marriage), and her opposing perspective are

implied through informal dialogue and action. There is no need for a formal debate. In Women Beware Women, the Duke corners Bianca and threatens her with force if she will not submit to him. Isabella is tricked into sexual intercourse with her uncle. Middleton encourages the perspective that both heroines are victims of circumstances and that their corruption is at least initiated by outside forces. In The Changeling, characterization of the heroines is more psychologically satisfying. The perspective is that of corruption developing from within Beatrice, not imposed by outside forces. DeFlores merely exploits the consequences of that corruption, and Beatrice has mainly herself to blame for her dependence on him. Isabella's fidelity to Alibius also results from free choice not forced circumstances. Like Beatrice, her story revolves around how she handles temptation.

Though Middleton's use of multiple perspectives may not always be entirely successful, his general purposes appear consistent: to challenge conventions of characterization, plot, and morality, to develop these conventions in new directions by presenting new possibilities. Even when Middleton dramatizes sophistic principles in order to confront the absolute moral standard, he seems not to be rejecting that standard but to be testing its limits and stimulating the spirit of inquiry. The predictable and the conventional are rejected. Nothing is

to be taken for granted; everything is to be questioned.

In his plays, Middleton evokes one response only to undercut it by encouraging another. And perhaps this is the point. A complexity of responses stimulates a more sophisticated appreciation of characterization, plot, and theme and results in a more challenging and therefore enjoyable interaction between audience and actors.

NOTES

CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

¹ When using the term the play's "world," I have in mind Maynard Mack's explanation: "each part implies the other parts, and each lives, each means with the life and meaning of the rest." "The World of Hamlet" in Tragic Themes in Western Literature, ed. Cleanth Brooks (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1955), p. 30.

² The Older Sophists, ed. Rosamond Kent Sprague (Columbia, South Carolina: University of South Carolina Press, 1972), p. 4. Hereafter cited as "Sprague."

³ Ibid., p. 279.

⁴ Ibid., pp. 279-80.

⁵ Ibid., pp. 281-2.

⁶ Ibid., p. 285.

⁷ W.K.C. Guthrie, The Sophists (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1971), p. 166.

⁸ Bruno Nauer, Thomas Middleton, A Study of the Narrative Structures (Zurich: Juris Druck, 1977), p. 151.

⁹ Dieter Mehl, The Elizabethan Dumb Show: The History of a Dramatic Convention (1966, German ed. 1964), quoted in The Popular School: A Survey and Bibliography of Recent Studies in English Renaissance Drama, ed. Terence P. Logan and Denzell S. Smith (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1975), p. 57.

CHAPTER II: MICHAELMAS TERM

¹ Joel Altman demonstrates convincingly that arguing both sides of a question was habitual in the Renaissance. See chapter II, especially pp. 31-2, The Tudor Play of Mind (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1978).

² Concerning the "Inductio," Ruby Chatterji has written: "the allegorical style...with its personifications and masque is...quite out of keeping with the more realistic treatment of the play itself." See "Unity and Disparity: Michaelmas Term," SEL, 8 (1968), 352. Perhaps we should keep in mind Arthur Kirsch's suggestion: "the peculiar mixture of realistic and unrealistic in Middleton's plays, ...far from being a sign of either moral or artistic confusion, is often the signature of an entirely coordinated moral and dramatic purpose." See Jacobean Dramatic Perspectives (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1972), p. 85.

³ "Inductio," lines 61-62. Henceforth act, scene, and line numbers will appear in parentheses following quotations and references. The text is Richard Levin's edition of Michaelmas Term, Regents Renaissance Drama series (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1966).

⁴ George E. Rowe, Jr., Thomas Middleton and the New Comedy Tradition (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1979), pp. 63-4.

⁵ I agree with Brian Gibbons' contention that Middleton has definite satiric and didactic intentions in Michaelmas Term. See Gibbons' Jacobean City Comedy (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1968), pp. 131, 151-2.

⁶ This distinction suggests structural differences between Michaelmas Term, Volpone, and The Alchemist. Jonson's main plots tend to parade gulls who give presents or money to swindlers in the hope of gaining more in return, with several brief deceptions being repeated in cycles. Middleton's main plot features one drawn out deception with one prize in view. Jonson has the advantage of variety over Middleton; Middleton has the advantage of depth over Jonson.

⁷ Alexander Leggatt, Citizen Comedy in the Age of Shakespeare (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1973), pp. 72-73.

⁸ An important distinction made by Brian Gibbons, p. 207. An evaluation of Quomodo's characterization which emphasizes the fun-filled aspect and dismisses any satiric or didactic purpose distorts Middleton's intentions. He, like Jonson, accepted Sidney's belief that one responsibility of comedy is to teach.

⁹ Kirsch, p. 81. Tucker Brooke points out that in the late interludes, the Vice's pranks tended to be "mischievous rather than soul-destroying." Albert C. Baugh ed., A Literary History of England (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., 1948), p. 365.

¹⁰ Rowe, pp. 67-68.

¹¹ Ibid., p. 66. Lethe's name refers first and most obviously to the mythological river of forgetfulness, but it has additional significance. Middleton combined the name of Scotland's patron saint (Andrew) with the name of its chief river (Leithe). The fact that anti-Scottish feeling was running high at this time suggests that Middleton is manipulating audience sympathy against Lethe. Andrew Lethe's original surname, "Gruel" is a satirical allusion to the main staple of the Scottish diet. See Baldwin Maxwell, "Middleton's Michaelmas Term," Philological Quarterly 22 (1943), 33-34.

¹² For an analysis of Lethe as a Jacobean social climber, see Anthony Covatta, Thomas Middleton's City Comedies (Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 1973), p. 81.

¹³ Numerous references to devils appear in the play. See for example, II.i.1,3,52 and II.ii.38.

¹⁴ Rowe, pp. 61, 67-68.

¹⁵ This is Larry Champion's term for a perspective "in which the spectators are led to expect significant events and thus to share the emotions inherent in such anticipation." Perspective in Shakespeare's English Histories (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1980), p. 10.

¹⁶ See II.i.46-47, 56-61, 140-41. The numerous allusions to Lethe's forgetfulness suggest how desperately he wants to separate himself from his past.

¹⁷ Ruby Chatterji states that there is no "justification" for Father's "urgency of tone." SEL, 8 (1968), 355. I contend that Father's speech foreshadows the seriousness of what is about to happen to the Wench and Easy.

¹⁸ See II.iii.183-84, 211-13, 280. Quomodo's scheme would not operate so smoothly without the help of False-light and the Boy, but he could not succeed at all without Shortyard's abilities to assume numerous disguises and to think on his feet. Critics who give all of the credit to Quomodo underestimate Shortyard's importance.

¹⁹ The difference between Thomasine's and Quomodo's standards comes down to the contrast between an absolute moral order featuring permanent values like honesty, honor, loyalty, compassion and a relativistic order based on expediency and stressing self-interest and self-assertion. This distinction goes back at least as far as the sophists in the fifth century B.C. For a contemporary application of these contrasting world views to Shakespearean tragedy, see Bernard McElroy's Shakespeare's Mature Tragedies (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1973). On pp. 10-12, Dr. McElroy presents the best-detailed and most convenient summary of these opposed views that I have seen.

²⁰ Hypotyposes is a vivid description "when some picture suddenly appears in the eyes, that brings things forcefully to the sight or to the mind." Sister Mary J. LaFontaine ed., A Critical Translation of Philip Melancthon's 'Elementorum Rhetorices Libri Duo' (dissertation completed for the University of Michigan, 1968), p. 203.

²¹ Covatta, p. 87.

²² Most criticism of Michaelmas Term asserts that the audience is not prepared for Quomodo's mistakes in acts four and five and that Middleton's characterization of Quomodo in those acts is inconsistent with his characterization in the first three acts. Middleton does make some effort to prepare us for Quomodo's change through his visions in III.iv. and IV.i. which reveal character weaknesses, including narrow-mindedness and his habit of

confusing what is with what he wishes to be. As Brian Gibbons points out, Quomodo lacks Volpone's intelligence and imagination. Gibbons, p. 129. See also note 18.

²³ Critics have long recognized the psychological dimensions of Middleton's characterizations. In acts four and five Middleton gets behind the "public" face of Quomodo the professional confidence man to reveal the weaknesses of Quomodo the private family man.

²⁴ Rowe, p. 63.

²⁵ Quomodo's mention of Thomasine and Sim indicates that improving their lives and social status are additional motives for his scheme against Easy. This domestic side of Quomodo's life clearly distinguishes him from Volpone, Subtle, and Face.

²⁶ The first time Quomodo is on stage he explains his emphasis on expediency:

Know, then, that I have not spent this long vacation
Only for pleasure's sake. Give me the man
Who out of recreation culls advantage,
Dives into seasons, never walks but thinks,
Ne rides but plots. (I.i.93-97)

²⁷ Leggatt, p. 119.

²⁸ Thomasine's gifts to Easy amount to a counterplot against Quomodo, a dismantling of his achievement. This follows the normal plot pattern in Renaissance drama whereby the conventional counterturn begins in act four. See Marvin T. Herrick, Comic Theory in the Sixteenth Century (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1964), p. 121. Thomasine also intends to destroy Quomodo's hopes of having Susan Quomodo married to Lethe, see IV.iii.77-78.

²⁹ See Herrick, pp. 165-67, and Edwin W. Robbins, Dramatic Characterization in Printed Commentaries on Terence 1473-1600 (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1951), pp. 77-80.

³⁰ George Rowe, Jr. comes to the opposite conclusion, arguing that the "juxtaposition of two contradictory structures" results in "confusion." Rowe, p. 71.

³¹ See V.i.22, 46. Shortyard's fear of having his ears cut off is not surprising when we remember that a few writers in sixteenth century England were threatened with having their hands cut off.

³² The judge's rhyming sententia suggests that Lethe gets his just deserts--marriage to a harlot.

CHAPTER III: A CHASTE MAID IN CHEAPSIDE

¹ Middleton may have named the daughter "Moll" to signal the parents' commercial exploitation of the virtuous girl since "Moll" was a common name for prostitutes. At I.i.25 she is called "Mary," emblamatizing chastity, as R.B. Parker points out. See p. 2n of Parker's edition of A Chaste Maid in Cheapside.

² I.i.38-52. The text is R.B. Parker's edition of A Chaste Maid in Cheapside for the Revels Plays (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1969). Subsequent references to this edition will be cited as "Parker."

³ The similarities and differences between Whorehound's plot and Witgood's in A Trick to Catch the Old One are enlightening. Witgood enlists the help of a "rich country widow" who expresses her affection for Witgood and her willingness to cooperate in his plot. Her speeches encourage audience sympathy for Witgood. Middleton assigns no such speeches to the Welsh Gentlewoman to encourage sympathy for Whorehound. Witgood's other accomplice, the Host, expresses his friendship for Witgood and does all he can to help him, further encouraging audience sympathy. Davy, on the other hand, takes no positive action to help Whorehound but instead, exposes his deceptions, thereby alienating audience sympathy from Whorehound.

⁴ Alexander Leggatt states: " [Allwit] is in many respects the most enslaved character in the play." He is not allowed to sleep with his own wife and is completely dependent on Whorehound for favors. Alexander Leggatt, Citizen Comedy in the Age of Shakespeare (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1973), p. 140.

⁵ Critics have noticed difficulties with Touchwood Senior's characterization. For example, R.B. Parker states: "though we are expected to assess Sir Walter and Touchwood

Senior differently, their careers are curiously alike." Parker, p. xliv. Bruno Nauer notes: "the same actions, payment for sexual activity, appear to carry less moral weight" against Touchwood Senior than Whorehound. Nauer, p. 46.

⁶ R.B. Parker informs us that this is "the certificate of good conduct required of all people moving out of their parish," according to Elizabethan statute. "In the wench's case this would amount to a certificate of chastity." Parker, p. 30n.

⁷ Touchwood Senior is implying that the wench is syphilitic and therefore, the baby is not his. Parker, p. 31n.

⁸ In connection with Touchwood Senior's indifference toward his child by the wench, we should bear in mind Anthony Covatta's perceptive remark: "attitudes toward children, one's flesh and blood are important throughout the play, almost a touchstone by which to judge the various characters." Covatta, p. 152. Robert Williams' reading of Touchwood's encounter with the Country Wench is contrary to mine: [Touchwood Senior] "is generous and tender-hearted, qualities which Middleton emphasizes by having...Touchwood give [the Country Wench] what little money he has. In response to his honesty and kindness, the Country Girl expresses what we ourselves feel, "Where I find manly dealings, I am pitiful." See "Machiavelli's Mandragola, Touchwood Senior and the Comedy of Middleton's A Chaste Maid in Cheapside," SEL, 10 (1970), 388-89. I cannot agree with this reading. It seems to me that Professor Williams is ignoring the implications of the asides and Touchwood Senior's purchase of the marriage license. As for the wench's final remark ("Where I find manly dealings, I am pitiful"), I suggest that this is not "what we ourselves feel." On the contrary, Middleton is creating two levels of meaning. The wench is obviously convinced that Touchwood has given her all of his money, but his quick funding of the marriage license suggests that Middleton intends the audience to see through the ruse and to realize that the wench has been deceived.

⁹ Samuel Schoenbaum, "A Chaste Maid in Cheapside and Middleton's City Comedy," Studies in the English Renaissance Drama in Memory of Karl Julius Holzknecht (New York: New York University Press, 1959), p. 292. Ruby Chatterji, "Theme, Imagery, and Unity in A Chaste Maid in Cheapside," Renaissance Drama 8 (1965), 106-07.

¹⁰ R.B. Parker states: "In A Chaste Maid's world of

hypocrisy and deceitful appearance,...all authorities are discredited...." Parker, p. lvi.

11 Margot Heinemann states: "the strongest condemnation of puritan forms is put into the mouth of the profiteer-cuckold Allwit, which rather takes the edge off it as moral comment." See Puritanism and Theatre: Thomas Middleton and Opposition Drama Under the Early Stuarts (Cambridge: the University Press, 1980), p. 84.

12 I would be inaccurate to give the impression that choric commentary is the only reason that Middleton stresses the watermen's honesty. R.B. Parker suggests historical factors: "there are two possible reasons why the Swan company may have wanted to please watermen at this time. They could be flattering the waterman Jacob Meade, who was Henslowe's new partner...or, more probably, they could be soothing the watermen's resentment at the decrease in their vital theatre business....The Swan was farther from London Bridge than the other Bankside theatres and therefore more reliant on water traffic...." Parker, pp. xxxii-iii.

13 Ruby Chatterji remarks: "The comic tone ranges from hilarious farce to the grimly grotesque, and all shadings from the light to the somber are present in this chiaroscuro effect." Chatterji, 125.

14 George Rowe, Jr. reiterates the traditional view: "Whorehound...suddenly steps into the role of Christian penitent." Rowe, p. 136. Charles Barber is perhaps closer to the truth when he states: "What Sir Walter expresses in these speeches is nothing like Christian repentance: it is terror of death, horror at what he has done and its possible consequences for himself...." Charles Barber ed., A Chaste Maid in Cheapside, the Fountainwell Drama Text series (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1969), p. 6.

15 John Calvin, Institutes of the Christian Religion, translated by Henry Beveridge, Vol. I (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1979), p. 188.

16 Robert Williams remarks that the Allwits are withdrawing into respectability. Williams, 392. Anthony Covatta states that the Allwits repay Whorehound in kind: "if he is a repentant sinner, they are offended burghers." Covatta, p. 154. J.R. Mulryne suggests that the mood of the audience is "suspended between laughter and shock." Mulryne, pp. 22-23.

17 Though Middleton is not completely clear on this point, Nauer (p. 44) and Covatta (p. 147n) agree that the move to the Strand and the list of expensive gifts suggest that the Allwits intend to set up a brothel.

18 Critics often relate their explanation of why Allwit is not punished to the larger issue of Middleton's "realism." Richard Barker takes the view that Allwit escapes punishment because Middleton "is not willing to distribute rewards and punishments in a completely unrealistic way." See Thomas Middleton (New York: Columbia University Press, 1958), p. 86. Barber concludes that because Yellowhammer and Allwit "are left flourishing,...Middleton is a realist." Barber, p. 7. Such conclusions seem hazardous. For an alternative and persuasive argument as to why A Chaste Maid in Cheapside is "anything but a realistic survey of Jacobean life," see Williams, 394-95. My own view is that Middleton is not attempting to "photograph" seventeenth century London. I would agree with R.B. Parker that in A Chaste Maid in Cheapside, "what we have is a self-consistent play world, reflecting on but clearly distinguished from the real world." Parker, p. lix.

19 Bruno Nauer suggests a similar reading of the Allwit situation: "this absence of a final revelation (and an expected ensuing judgement) creates the impression that this sort of mercenary life goes on merrily as before: some roles have changed, but the facts remain the same...." Nauer, pp. 154-55.

20 R.B. Parker has also noticed Middleton's ambivalent treatment of adultery: "Middleton's moral standpoint in the play is....hard to pin down. He seems to be both for and against lust, for and against its social and religious disciplining...." Parker, p. lvi.

21 Covatta, p. 145.

22 Robert Williams states: "the conclusion to which one is drawn...is that a good heart alone will not guarantee survival in the vicious environment of middle-class London. Wit is needed, cleverness without encumbrance of moral sensitivity is needed, and romantic values like goodness, bravery, and sensitivity will not by themselves prevail over money lust." Williams, 394.

23 R.B. Parker notes: "it is ironical, of course, that one seducer (Touchwood Senior) should supplant the other

(Whorehound), but it undercuts any simple moral interpretation of the play." Parker, p. xlv.

²⁴ George Rowe, Jr. suggests that "the happy ending of A Chaste Maid in Cheapside is contrived and arbitrary in the worst sense of the two words....We are encouraged to view the play's festive conclusion with distrust, to remain distanced and vaguely uncomfortable." Rowe, p. 147. This seems overly negative. Both the Welsh girl and Tim now know the truth about each other. Their relationship, therefore, has been cleansed of mercenary motives and can begin on a new footing. Each seems to benefit: she gains the protection of his name and the security of marriage, and he gains a worldly-wise mate who can function as a corrective to his abstract, impractical learning.

²⁵ Alexander Leggatt points out that speaking the final lines is "a function usually reserved for sympathetic or reformed characters. Money counts (with Yellowhammer) right up to the final curtain." Leggatt, p. 143. Yet to have Yellowhammer suddenly give up his concern for money would, it seems to me, damage the consistency of a characterization that Middleton has been carefully developing since the first scene.

CHAPTER IV: WOMEN BEWARE WOMEN

¹ I.i.35-48. Henceforth act, scene, and line numbers will appear in parentheses following quotations and references. The text is J.R. Mulryne's edition of Women Beware Women (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1975). Subsequent references to this edition will be cited as "Mulryne."

² Ibid., p. lxvii.

³ Mulryne notes that Bianca expresses a desire for peace several times in the play. See p. lxx.

⁴ Dorothy Farr suggests that Middleton balances Bianca's "imprudent match" in I.i. with the "mis-marriage" of Isabella and the Ward in I.ii. in order to focus "attention on marriage, its dangers and abuses, at the opening of the play." See Thomas Middleton and the Drama of Realism (New York: Barnes & Noble Books, 1973), p. 74. Each of the marriages is unnatural in its own way.

⁵ Christopher Ricks asserts that Middleton's aim is to "connect the world of money with the world of love and to demonstrate how they interpenetrate." See "Word-Play in Women Beware Women," Review of English Studies, 12 (1961), 238.

⁶ Concerning Isabella's feelings about marrying the Ward, Margot Heinemann states: "the original audience was surely intended to sympathise up to a point, as a modern one would, with Isabella's resentment...." Heinemann, p. 194.

⁷ Altman, p. 6.

⁸ In Middleton's source for the subplot, both Hippolito and Isabella hear and believe the lies about Isabella's parentage; in Women Beware Women Isabella alone hears it while Hippolito gladly accepts her alteration without ever knowing the reason. I agree with J.R. Mulryne that the effect of this change is to draw our sympathy to Isabella who is isolated in her ignorance. See Mulryne, pp. xlix-l. Middleton's source for the subplot may have been, Histoire Veritable des Infortunees et Tragiques Amours d'Hypolite & d'Isabella, Neapolitains (Rouen, 1597), or its English translation published some thirty years later. For a discussion, see Mulryne, pp. xliv-xlvii.

⁹ J.B. Batchelor suggests that we are intended to see Isabella and Bianca "as duplicate victims of society who come to terms with their predicament in contrasting ways, the one secretly and the other openly." See "The Pattern of Women Beware Women," Yearbook of English Studies, 2 (1972), 85.

¹⁰ Specifically, novelle 84 and 85 of Part Two in Ducento Novelle. See Mulryne, p. 168.

¹¹ Nauer, p. 52.

¹² Mulryne, p. 67n.

¹³ Kirsch, p. 92.

¹⁴ George Core notes that for Guardiano, "the feasts of lust occasion joy and celebration." See "The Canker and the Muse: Imagery in Women Beware Women," Renaissance Papers, 1968 (1969), p. 72.

15 I agree with Arthur Kirsch's assertion that after the Duke seduces Bianca, "the army of vices within herself follows relentlessly, manifesting itself in the materialism of her imagery, in her lust, her contempt for Leantio and his mother and in her final role as a murderess." See Kirsch, pp. 82-3.

16 Referring to The Changeling and Women Beware Women, Samuel Schoenbaum states a contrary view: "In neither play does Middleton create sympathetic figures; never does he regard his personages with anything but pitiless detachment and irony." See Middleton's Tragedies: A Critical Study (New York: Columbia University Press, 1955), p. 102.

17 Charles Hallett states: "In Women Beware Women Middleton traces the psychological stages in the growth of a cynic. Livia, representing the accomplished cynic, is a key to what Bianca will become." "The Psychological Drama of Women Beware Women," SEL, 12 (1972), 375.

18 Mulryne, p. lxx.

19 My reading is consistent with views held by William Empson, Some Versions of Pastoral (New York: New Directions Publishing Corp., 1974), p. 55, and J.R. Mulryne, p. lxvi. For a concise and illuminating survey of twentieth century criticism on Bianca's character, see Mulryne, pp. lxv-lxvi.

20 For more on the comic elements in Women Beware Women, see George E. Rowe Jr., p. 194f.

21 Middleton never clarifies the basis of this passion. Livia has been married twice (I.ii.50), yet her attraction to Leantio easily supersedes her feelings for her two husbands. Leantio is never described physically, and the attraction could not be his clothes since he does not receive rich attire from Livia until later in the play. In terms of plot, however, Livia's strong attraction for Leantio is crucial since his murder triggers her revelation of the incestuous relationship between Hippolito and Isabella with disastrous results.

22 Bruno Nauer provides the most clear and concise explanation of the fusion of roles in the character of Livia: "In Malespini's novels 84 and 85 of his Ducento Novelle

(1609), Signora Mondragone is Bianca's bawd; the rich widow Cassandra is the betrayed husband's later lover. Another source, The True History of the Tragick Loves of Hipolito and Isabella Neapolitans, provides material for the subplot. A nun there plays the part of the apparent helper/ real harmer of Isabella. By fusing Signora Mondragone, Cassandra, and the nun into one figure, Middleton has not only created a highly complex character but joined two plots." Nauer, p. 116. A danger in combining three characters into one is that the separate emotional makeups may conflict. Livia, who has been controlling other people, suddenly changes into a helpless victim of her own passions, and Middleton offers very little explanation: two lines spoken by Livia (III.iii.61-2).

23 In the Renaissance, a man's sensitivity or insensitivity to music was considered an index to his cultural sophistication. The Ward's preference for barnyard ballads suggests his unsuitability for a courtier's role.

24 Bruno Nauer puts it a different way: "the dances inform the audience in dumb-show style of what has happened and will happen, similar to the game of chess in the main plot." Nauer, p. 56.

25 J.R. Mulryne notes that the hornpipe usually involved a single dancer and that Middleton is also alluding to cuckold's horns. Mulryne, p. 102n.

26 Isolating the prepositional phrase "in scalding oil" on a separate line intensifies the entire simile of the drowning body.

27 Middleton reverses Spenser's use of the pathetic fallacy in the January eclogue of the Shepheardes Calender in which "wynters stormy state" mirrors Colin Cloute's depression over Rosalinde's rejection of him and his music. See The Poetical Works of Edmund Spenser ed. by E. De Selincourt (London: Oxford University Press, 1912), pp. 421-22. Here, in Women Beware Women, the foul weather functions as a foil to Leantio's joyful expectation of seeing Bianca.

28 Leantio's view of the elopement suggests that he and Bianca were perfectly suited to each other. Later, we shall see that Bianca's perspective on her past differs significantly.

²⁹ In Middleton's probable source, Leantio knows of Bianca's original visit with the Duke and approves, hopeful of advancement at court. Middleton's Leantio knows none of the details of this visit and consequently suffers mental torture, which attracts audience sympathy to him. See Mulryne, pp. 1-11.

³⁰ Thomas More, Utopia, translated and edited by Robert M. Adams (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., Inc., 1975), p. 66.

³¹ Mulryne, p. 119n.

³² Bianca's contradictions expose the falsity of her arguments. Line 34 argues against a strict upbringing while line 35 suggests that the upbringing makes no difference.

³³ Leantio feels deeply hurt at the loss of Bianca, and his harsh words betray an impulse to strike back that he could not resist. Dorothy Farr suggests that Leantio's "every line" during this encounter "is tinged with pain." Farr, p. 78.

³⁴ Inga-Stina Ewbark suggests that the Cardinal is necessary to the play because the other characters "'walk round' such thoughts of sin as occur to them." Also the Cardinal "represents to the play audience, a closing-in on the characters of the moral scheme they have ignored." See "Realism and Morality in Women Beware Women," Essays and Studies by Members of the English Association 1969, p. 63.

³⁵ Hippolito has a distorted view of himself also. As Dorothy Farr states, he sees himself not as an assassin but as a "surgeon putting the patient (Livia) asleep before amputating a 'lost limb'" (Leantio). See IV.i. 174-76. Farr, p. 85.

³⁶ Inga-Stina Ewbark feels that this speech encourages the audience to see the tragedy from the Cardinal's point of view. Ewbark, p. 61.

³⁷ J.R. Mulryne suggests that the characters die in ways that parallel their conduct during life: "Livia, who arranges marriages and wrecks marriage, is cast as Juno Pronuba, the marriage-goddess, who in the course of the masque is poisoned by her fictional votary, Isabella. Hippolito,

a man misled by desire, dies of Cupid's poisoned arrows, as they pretend to 'wound' him in love. Isabella, who had acquiesced in a marriage-for-wealth with the Ward, dies in a shower of flaming gold. Guardiano, the contriver, dies in his own trap. Bianca thinks to give the Duke a cup of love, but gives him instead a cup of poison and dies of it herself." Mulryne, p. lvii.

³⁸ Mulryne, pp. 176-77.

³⁹ I disagree with those critics who dismiss the Cardinal as hypocritical and his language as insincere, though this is true of the Cardinal in Middleton's probable source. I do not find it surprising that Middleton reverses the portrayal of the Cardinal since several of the characters including Leantio and the Duke bear little resemblance to the corresponding figures in the probable source.

⁴⁰ R.B. Parker says of the masque: "the effect is so nearly absurd that it quite insulates the characters from emotional sympathy." "Middleton's Experiments with Comedy and Judgement," Jacobean Theatre (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1960), p. 198. George Rowe, Jr. suggests that the marriage masque, a conventional symbol of harmony, is reversed in Women Beware Women to suggest discord. Rowe, p. 200.

CHAPTER V: THE CHANGELING

¹ Karl Holzknacht, "The Dramatic Structure of The Changeling," Renaissance Papers, ed. by Allan H. Gilbert (Columbia, South Carolina: University of South Carolina Press, 1954), pp. 78, 81. For a comprehensive survey of how critics have variously applied the title of the play to its meaning, see Henry E. Jacobs, "The Constancy of Change: Character and Perspective in The Changeling," Texas Studies in Literature and Language, 16 (1975), 651-53.

² I.i.1, 5-8, 10-12. The text is N.W. Bawcutt's edition of The Changeling for the Revels Plays (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1958). Subsequent references to this edition will be cited as "Bawcutt."

³ Penelope B.R. Doob, "A Reading of The Changeling," English Literary Renaissance, 3 (1973), 190, 206.

⁴ The many linguistic and thematic connections between the main plot and the subplot have convinced me that The Changeling is the result of very close collaboration between Middleton and Rowley, but for the sake of brevity, I shall use the name of the author generally agreed to have been mainly responsible for a particular scene: Rowley for the opening and closing scenes and the subplot, Middleton for the remainder of the main plot. See Bawcutt, p. xxxix.

⁵ Edward Engelberg notes: "When the play opens, Beatrice and Alsemero are destined for separate lives; but a first sight of each other embarks them jointly on a course that will bring disaster to each." "Tragic Blindness in The Changeling and Women Beware Women," Modern Language Quarterly, XXIII (1962), 22.

⁶ Sprague, p. 279.

⁷ For discussions of Anti-Petrarchan elements in Beatrice's relationship with DeFlores, see Robert Jordan, "Myth and Psychology in The Changeling," Renaissance Drama, n.s. 3 (1970), 160-61 and also Robert Ornstein, The Moral Vision of Jacobean Tragedy (Madison, Wisconsin: University of Wisconsin Press, 1965), pp. 179-90.

⁸ Discussing DeFlores' character, George Rowe, Jr. states: "On one hand, he is helpless and masochistic, a foolish and unworthy suitor who vainly worships at the shrine of a woman who is idealized by everyone and who loathes the sight of him." Rowe, p. 190.

⁹ Several critics have commented on the comic elements in Middleton's tragedies, most recently George Rowe, Jr., pp. 192-94; Dorothy Farr, Thomas Middleton and the Drama of Realism, pp. 62-3; Dorothy Farr, "The Changeling," Modern Language Review, 62 (1967), 588-597, and Penelope B.R. Doob, 200-201.

¹⁰ See Thomas L. Berger, "The Petrarchan Fortress of The Changeling," Renaissance Papers 1969 (1970), 37-46, and Jordan, 160-61.

¹¹ See Doob, 200-201, and Kirsch, pp. 80-81, 95.

12 N.W. Bawcutt puts it differently, suggesting that what is "implied in the main plot becomes literal in the subplot." Bawcutt, p. lxvi.

13 Bawcutt, p. xxxii. The source for the main plot is the fourth of five histories in Book I of John Reynolds' The Triumphs of God's Revenge Against...Murther (1621). The motifs of a love-crazed servant and of a murdered substitute may have come from Leonard Digges' Gerardo the Unfortunate Spaniard (1622), a translation of a Spanish novel. Bawcutt, pp. xxxi, xxxiii.

14 George W. Williams ed., The Changeling, Regents Renaissance Drama series (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1966), p. xix. For more on the correspondence between physical appearance and the soul, see J. Chesley Taylor, "Metaphors of the Moral World: Structure in The Changeling," Tulane Studies in English, 20 (1970), 45n.

15 Taylor, 52.

16 Bruno Nauer interprets Alsemero's change differently, stating that he "seems to have forgotten his renunciation." Nauer, p. 69.

17 Richard Levin, The Multiple Plot in English Renaissance Drama (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1971), p. 40.

18 Williams, p. xxii; Bawcutt, p. lxvii. Penelope B.R. Doob notes the theme of "reductio ad bestiam" in the works of Thomas Nashe and Robert Burton. Of the latter, she writes: "Burton, like most Renaissance psychologists, describes all sins as forms of madness which render the sinner akin to unreasonable beasts." Doob, 185, 198.

19 For a full discussion of the multiple symbolic meanings of the diamond ring, see Doob, 204-05.

20 "It is DeFlores who has a conscience, who appreciates the enormity of murder for pay." Doob, 193.

21 M.C. Bradbrook writes: "the barriers of her modesty, dignity, and stupidity are not easily broken." Themes and Conventions of Elizabethan Tragedy (Cambridge: Cambridge

University Press, 1964), p. 218. George Williams notes: "Beatrice is as yet unaware that she has fashioned her own ruin; to this wisdom she comes only in the last act....The difference between the heroines stands out clearly...." Williams, p. xxiii.

²² Penelope B.R. Doob writes: "saintliness and nobility come from deeds, not from birth, and by her deeds Beatrice has made herself DeFlores' equal." Doob, 192.

²³ Taylor, 50.

²⁴ Dorothy Farr observes, "Tomazo...haunts the wedding festivities like an embodied justice." Farr, "The Changing," 587.

²⁵ Doob, 201.

²⁶ Taylor, 48.

²⁷ J. Chesley Taylor suggests that Alsemero's understanding of morality is "not far removed from that of Alibius, who cages his wife in an attempt to force a fugitive and cloistered virtue upon her." Taylor, 54.

²⁸ This section owes a significant debt to Penelope B.R. Doob's perceptive analysis, 200-201.

²⁹ Bawcutt states that Alibius and Lollo's comments "reflect ironically on the behavior of Beatrice and Diaphanta." Bawcutt, p. lxvi. I suggest that the comments are also intended to indict DeFlores' conduct and lack of discipline.

³⁰ Doob, 201.

³¹ Williams, p. xviii.

³² Holzknecht, p. 79.

³³ Helen Gardner states that Alsemero's function in V.i. is "not to interest us in himself, but to be a standard by which we see what has happened to Beatrice-Joanna." "The Tragedy of Damnation," Elizabethan Drama: Modern Essays

in Criticism, ed. by Ralph J. Kaufmann (New York: Oxford University Press, 1961), p. 330.

³⁴ For more on Beatrice as a deflated heroine and for similarities between her situation and Eve's relationship to the serpent, see Doob, 189, 193.

³⁵ Nauer, p. 77.

³⁶ Fredson Bowers, Elizabethan Revenge Tragedy (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1966), pp. 204-6. Bawcutt notes that in Reynolds' The Triumphs of God's Revenge Against...Murther, "morality is a purely external force, that waits for the characters to make a mistake and then strikes them down; in The Changeling it works through the characters, who are morally responsible for themselves..." Bawcutt, p. xxxii.

³⁷ George Williams states that the "unifying concept" of The Changeling is "transformation, or the condition of being a changeling." Williams, p. xiv. Henry Jacobs asserts: "Change is the basis of reality in the play. Indeed, change is one of the few constants in The Changeling." Jacobs, 652.

³⁸ Dorothy Farr states: "the absolute moral justice that DeFlores here projects is the more impressive for the harshness with which it is associated. It is a dominant element in the play." Farr, p. 55.

³⁹ See, for example, Bawcutt, pp. xxxix, xlii; Williams, pp. xiii-xiv.

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The final copies have been examined by the director of the dissertation and the signature which appears below verifies the fact that any necessary changes have been incorporated and that the dissertation is now given final approval by the Committee with reference to content and form.

The dissertation is therefore accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

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