

## Thomas Middleton's Symbolic Action

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**S**TUDENTS of Thomas Middleton have occasionally commented on the formal, ritualistic quality that scenes of his plays sometimes assume, but few, perhaps, have realized what an integral part of his dramatic construction and mode of conveyance is that movement or action which represents something—an idea, an attitude, a mental state, a relationship between people or ideas—beyond itself. Irving Ribner refers to this ritualistic movement that conveys multiple levels of meaning as a “conscious patterning of the action”;<sup>1</sup> our name for it is symbolic action.

Symbolic action is probably an inheritance from the morality plays and homiletic drama of the pre-Shakespearean theater, but, in order to accommodate the more complex and sophisticated themes and meanings that he wishes to portray, Middleton has embellished and developed it beyond the allegorical presentation of man struggling against his vices with the assistance of his virtues. He uses symbolic action, in general, to make concrete the abstract, to make physical the spiritual and literal the metaphorical. This action is in essence an extension of the idea of the microcosm; a moral truth, theme, or abstract idea is captured in an event, an action, a moment, just as the little world of the man, the court, the stage, or the village mirrors the great world and the universe.

Some of the means which Middleton employs to create symbolic action are chosen from conventional techniques and devices of Jacobean drama—disguises, madmen, masques, dances, rituals, and games, such as the games of chess for which *Women Beware Women* and *A Game at Chesse* are so well-known and the games of barlibreak that appear in the climaxes of *The*

*Changeling* and *The Honest Whore, Part I*. As another means, Middleton expands traditional farce comedy, the sometimes disparate element in Jacobean tragedy and tragi-comedy, beyond comic relief and low comic contrast in order to parody and expose tragic elements of his plays. His farce and his clowns are laughably funny. At the same time they are as grimly comic as the Dance of Death or Hogarth's engravings; they reveal the limitations of men and women as does that favorite Renaissance emblem, the skull bereft of the flesh which once softened and concealed its essential outline. The clowns' mockery of the motions of their social superiors exposes the ridiculous, pathetic, pretentious, horrific, and tragic condition of man, just as Livia's chess game mirrors the machinations of the deadly game of sex and power played by the corrupt society.

In addition to the familiar Elizabethan and Jacobean conventions of masques, madmen, disguises, farce comedy, and so forth, Middleton employe less common means—among them symbols, such as the finger, ring, and jewel of *The Changeling*, upon which he bases a series of metaphorical acts. He also uses motifs of physical imprisonment to emphasize spiritual captivity, and he sometimes establishes an allegorical personification in which a character may be a representative of virtue, morality, or God in order to underscore the moral bankruptcy and blasphemy of an oppressor or opponent. At other times Middleton will structure repeated and contrasting postures, such as the kneelings of Beatrice and De Flores or Ager and the Colonel's Sister, to emphasize the difference between characters' ideas, situations, and mental attitudes.

All of these devices are the artistic means to the general end mentioned above—to make concrete the abstract—and this aim itself can be explicated as a number of specific functions that symbolic action serves in Middleton's plays.<sup>2</sup> The most obvious of these uses is to administer fitting justice, fitting in the sense that the punishment, usually a violent death, is appropriate to the crime and indicates the particular sin or error that brought the character to his downfall. Thus, in *Women Beware Women*, the schemer Guardiano is caught in a trap of his own making; the cupids of a masque shoot Hippolito with poisoned arrows

representing his incestuous love; and Brancha deliberately kisses poison from her lover's lips. Roxena (in *Hengist*) is consumed by flames symbolic of the lust that led to her fall, and her suffering cannot be assuaged by either of her two lovers to whom she cries for relief. In another instance, the Duke of *The Revenger's Tragedy* kisses poison from the skull of a lady whom he had earlier killed for refusing to submit to his lust. A little more obscure are the death of the Wife in *The Second Maiden's Tragedy*, whose sin has been adultery and who dies by running on the swords of two men, and the death of Diaphanta (*The Changeling*) who is murdered because of the danger her lustful enjoyment of Alsermero presents to De Flores and Beatrice; she is shot by De Flores with a piece high-charged to scour the chimney. In these last two instances the somewhat far-fetched sexual symbolism almost obscures Middleton's exposition of poetic justice, but nevertheless the obvious intention of the playwright is to represent symbolically the purposeful, not accidental, justice by which the sinner is rewarded in kind.

The most important function of symbolic action—to communicate the theme through visual perception—is not as easily comprehended as the symbolic meting out of justice is. Middleton does not convey his themes primarily through this means, but through plot, language, structure and characterization. Yet more often than not he will underscore the theme by capturing it in actions which, whatever their immediate purpose, also figuratively recreate the overall meaning of the play. In *The Changeling*, for example, he uses disguises, allegorical personification, imprisonment, and madmen to emphasize that when a person permits his passion to rule his judgment, he transforms himself to a madman. When Antonio and Franciscus, and later Isabella, don the garb of madmen in order to further their lusts, they are showing in a literal way that Beatrice and De Flores have become madmen in pursuing theirs and that this transformation is the fate of all who put passion before reason. Similarly, the presence of the real madmen and the dramatic moment when Alsermero locks Beatrice and De Flores into a closet emphasize the madness of

passion and Beatrice's and De Flores' equivalence with those lunatics who must be confined because their violent lack of reason is a threat to the social order.

In *The Honest Whore, Part I*, which shares the chief theme of *The Changeling*, Middleton and Dekker use similar symbolic action to accentuate the theme. In the last act, Bellafront, like Antonio, Franciscus, and Isabella, disguises as a madman, emphasizing the transformation to lunatics of all the characters in the play who have permitted passion to rule them. Likewise, actual madmen, whose plights reflect those of characters who are only metaphorically mad, engage in farcical antics imitating the behaviour of the presumed sane.

In *The Changeling*, Middleton also stresses the subordinate position that passion, particularly sexual passion, should have to reason by personifying lust in De Flores and making him a servant to Beatrice and her father. De Flores' lowly position in the household is a deviation from Middleton's sources, in which De Flores is a gentleman garrisoned in the castle.<sup>3</sup> With De Flores as a servant personifying passion, however, the reversal of his servant-master relationship with Beatrice underscores that in yielding to her lust for Alsemero, employing De Flores to obtain him, and then submitting herself to De Flores, she has ceased to be master of her passions and has become their servant. The reversal of De Flores' and Beatrice's relationship, which stands for the inversion of the relative strengths of her passion and judgment, is itself emphasized through contrasting postures taken by De Flores and Beatrice in their conversations. Before the murder of Alonzo, De Flores kneels to Beatrice, begging to serve her; after the murder, she kneels to him, begging to be spared the consequences of the deed. Thus their alternate physical positions visually capture the reversal of their social positions and the upheaval of the hierarchy of Beatrice's (and other characters') rational control of themselves.

Middleton employs the master-servant inversion in the same way in *The Second Maiden's Tragedy* when the Wife submits to her passion for Votarius and becomes dependent on and obsequious to her servant, Leonella, who shares her secret.

Those who should control, reason and the mistress of the household, allow the upper hand to be gained by their subordinates, lust and the serving girl. *The Second Maiden's Tragedy* shares one further piece of symbolic action with the later play, for Anselmus locks himself into a cabinet in order to spy on his wife and her lover. In addition to its function in the plot, his durance represents what has also been shown through plot and language—that he is spiritually imprisoned by his suspicions and will remain so, just as he will remain locked up physically, until his doubts of his wife's chastity are confirmed or eased. In this case, the means of symbolic action is the same as that used in *The Changeling*, but the idea conveyed is not.

Transformation is thematically significant in two Middleton plays in addition to *The Changeling* and *1 Honest Whore*. In one of these, *The Spanish Gipsy*, a number of characters are transformed by their misdeeds from their original identities to baser ones, and they remain alienated from their true selves until they have repented their sins.<sup>4</sup> The means Middleton uses to symbolize these transformations and losses of identity are among his most striking and, in addition, constitute more of the play than symbolic action does in any of his dramas but *A Game at Chesse*. Many characters represent their change in identity by assuming disguises; immediately after their misdeeds they adopt the costumes of gipsies and remain with the gipsy band until they have repented, reformed, and thereby regained their original identities. One character, Clara, loses her original innocent self because she has been raped. Her transformation is emphasized by a veil that her assaulter throws over her after she has been violated.<sup>5</sup> His subsequent inability to recognize her, even though his premeditated attack was motivated by her physical appearance, signifies her alteration as a result of his defilement. The loss of identity of the assaulter himself is symbolized by the inability of close friends to recognize him although they meet face to face.

An entire act of *The Spanish Gipsy* proceeds in nearly total darkness representing the moral confusion of the characters, and figures run around the stage unable to find whom they seek even upon confrontation. This action not only emphasizes the

transformations, but also indicates a secondary subject, the inability of people to penetrate the facades of others who wish to disguise their evil thoughts and feelings.

The rebirth to a better self, a self more in tune with the original innocence of man, is underlined by the ritual of Don John's induction into the gipsy band. His initiation is replete with Biblical echoes of losing oneself to find oneself; and in the manner of transformation of Saul of Tarsus and Simon Peter, Don John is given a new name to signify his new identity. The ritual stresses the importance of regeneration to the main theme; and in fact, the entire movement of the play becomes symbolic as character after character errs and then adopts a physical disguise to hide himself or a dissembling exterior to disguise his evil intentions, and then finally repents, is reborn to virtue, and resumes his first identity. The theme of the play—that ill-doing transforms one spiritually from his innocent self to another and that only repentance and rebirth can restore him—is transfigured into action.

The remaining play in which the subject of transformation is thematically important is *The Revenger's Tragedy*, where transformation appears as a gradual degradation of moral character.<sup>6</sup> The original identity of the protagonist, Vindice, is emphasized in the first scene of the play by the characters' positions on the stage. Vindice is stationed at a physical, representing a moral, distance from the wicked members of the court; he stands perhaps on the apron, intimately pointing them out to the audience as they pass in procession, and all the while execrating their corruption. The beginning of his degradation is accentuated by his adoption of a disguise—that of a court pander. His change of clothes and taking of a new name, Piato, signals the first alteration in his identity and his movement toward the depravity of the court. His further decline is illustrated when he kills Piato, the make-believe villain, and goes to court as himself, Vindice. The scene in which he murders his costume verbally emphasizes that he is killing himself, the moral man who pretended to be vicious in order to revenge vice, and the moment in which he stabs Piato shows that he has completed the spiritual destruction of himself. The ultimate

outcome of Vindice's moral decline is represented by his next donning of a disguise. He wears the costume of a court masquer, signalling that he is now identical to those whom he once condemned. He has moved from the moral distance symbolized in the first scene to complete equation with the evil members of the court. The symbolic uses of disguise mark his downward progress and accentuate what is also conveyed through plot and language.

Like *The Revenger's Tragedy*, *Women Beware Women* also climaxes in a masque which serves a function beyond the disposal of characters whose careers must be terminated in the interests of morality or justice. *Women Beware Women's* masque is a far more spectacular affair than the earlier one and far more ambitious in terms of its symbolic action. It is the means of dispensing poetically just punishments to wrongdoers, but in addition, it is a re-enactment of the events of the play, for the characters' roles in the masque reflect their actual situations. For example, in the masque as well as in her life preceding it, Isabella's love is begged by both Guardiano (representing the licit attentions of the Ward) and Hippolito (offering illicit lust). Isabella's appeal to June/Livia to decide between them recalls Livia's participation in the decisions both Isabella and Brancha made to follow their immoral loves rather than sanctioned ones. And Livia the bawd parading as a marriage goddess provides an appropriate emblem for a society which buys and sells its loves. Finally, the outcome of the masque shows how each person has willfully pursued his desires to his own destruction. Each character who attempts to use the masque as a cover for murder (as the Duke, Brancha, Fabritio, Hippolito, and Isabella have tried to use the holy institution of marriage to cloak illicit lust and greed) destroys himself, his physical death reflecting the spiritual one which has already occurred.

As an adjunct to understanding the theme, symbolic action often serves to strip away characters' pretensions and expose the underlying truth about their motives or actions. The discrepancy between appearance and reality is absent from few of Middleton's plays; moreover, his subtle delineation of characters' psychology, particularly the sophisticated ratio-

nalizations by which they justify their sins, is often so persuasive to a modern reader that it obscures the usually moral theme that he is trying to convey. Therefore his use of symbolic action to separate appearance from reality and to expose characters' casuistry is important in clarifying the theme. For instance, in *A Fair Quarrel*, Middleton is portraying Captain Ager's adherence to a set of false values, the code of honor or duelling code, and contrasting his erroneous, temporal beliefs with eternal truths. He captures the weakness of Ager's beliefs in the action of a duel, in which he opposes the sight of Ager inflicting apparently mortal wounds upon his opponent to the sound of Ager's seconds trying to identify the types of thrusts being used in the slaying. The counterpoint of sight and sound bares the falsity of Ager's code and exposes it as an inflated rhetoric for murder.

*Women Beware Women* provides two examples of symbolic actions stripping appearance from reality in the Ward's famous inspection of Isabella and in his dance with her. Although Hippolito has given impassioned speeches bewailing his love for his niece, Middleton's attitude toward incest is not the sympathetic exploitation of John Ford; however much Hippolito may rationalize his overwhelming love for Isabella, Middleton conveys that it is an immoral lust, and the Ward's unconcealed carnality serves to reveal it as such. In the dance scene, the Ward initially refuses to dance with Isabella, claiming he doesn't want to be the first to do so. Hippolito takes his place and performs with her, and then the Ward does an awkward imitation of Hippolito's movements. The coupling in the dance is a metaphor for sexual coupling; the order of the dance is a repetition of the order of Isabella's mating; and the Ward's gross animality only an imitation of Hippolito's lust, however embroidered Hippolito's may be by passionate words.

The Ward's inspection of Isabella—his examination of her lips, hair, teeth, and gait—exposes the not very well concealed commercialism of a society which looks upon women as it does upon horses, as stock to be bought and sold, providing one gets full value for his money when buying (which the Ward and Livia hope to) and sufficient recompense when selling (as Fabritio

wishes to and Leantio regrets that he hasn't). The Ward's putting his prospective bride through her paces illustrates both the lust and the greed that pervade the other characters regardless of their pretences.<sup>7</sup>

Another function which symbolic actions sometimes serve is to show that which cannot be shown. The event may be impossible to depict because it is too obscene or because it is too abstract. That Roderigo casts dishonor on Clara is a generality that cannot be portrayed visually; it may be related in the abstraction of words, but it cannot be imparted concretely except by a figurative act such as his throwing a veil over her. In order to illustrate the abstract concept that a person has become so headstrong and willful that he defies not only man, but God as well, Middleton again resorts to metaphor and establishes a God surrogate. The offender's blasphemy is then portrayed against the surrogate in specific, physical acts with figurative meaning. A suggestion of Middleton's thinking on the human representatives of God appears in a passage from his pamphlet, *The Peacemaker*:

And as the body of every true Christian is said to be the Temple of the Holy Ghost (I. Cor. iii. 16), what does the accursed manslayer, but in the blood of his brother destroys the Temple, as the blasphemer wounds the Lord of the Temple?<sup>8</sup>

Thus in expository prose Middleton can state (with the aid of figurative language) that a Christian's body contains the Holy Ghost and that a wrong against the person is a wrong against the Holy Spirit, but in drama he must establish the person as a representative of God in even more indirect ways than in metaphorical prose. In *Women Beware Women*, the Cardinal, both by his ecclesiastical position and by his speeches on the dictates of morality and religion, is created the representative of God; and when the Duke and Brancha spurn the Cardinal and his warning that they are defiling the holy sacrament of marriage, they are exhibiting the ultimate willfulness, the defiance of God and the mocking of His sacrament. In *Hengist*, Middleton relies in part on conventional political and religious

theories to establish Constantius and Castiza as deputies of God: he is a legitimate king, God's agent on earth, and she has taken vows in a religious order and therefore has figuratively become the bride of Christ. In addition, these two are exalted by their dedication to religion, their virtuous behaviour, and their submissive acceptance of the will of God. Vortiger both murders God, when he assassinates Constantius, and rapes His bride, when he forces Castiza from the cloister to marry him and again when, pretending to be a stranger, he sexually assaults her. Thus these acts, horrible in themselves as examples of man's inhumanity to man, acquire additional horror as a portrayal of the depraved usurper's blasphemous affronts to God.

In these instances, an event cannot be shown without symbolic action because it is too abstract; in others, an act cannot be staged because it would be too offensive to an audience not jaded by X-rated movies and twentieth-century advertising. Middleton's audience might be accustomed to *hearing* the extremes of imaginative obscenity, but Middleton had need to turn to symbolic action to convey overt sexual activity. In *The Changeling*, the virginity test serves this function of showing what cannot be modestly portrayed. Alsemero's possession of a cabinet of drugs that can prove or disprove virginity is symbolic of his presumed ability to detect virginity in bed—an accomplishment that is crucial to Beatrice's successful dissembling of her unchastity and her part in the murder. When she finds the cabinet open, Beatrice uses Diaphanta to discover the symptoms exhibited by a virgin, which she later parades for Alsemero, just as she uses Diaphanta to display the attributes of a virgin in Alsemero's bed. Thus, with the device of the virginity test, Middleton is able to portray metaphorically Diaphanta's offering of an unbroken maidenhead on Alsemero's wedding night.

In *Women Beware Women*, the conclusion of Livia's and the Mother's game of chess is used to impart the sexual activities of the Duke and Brancha after they have left the stage. The climax of their game is suggested by Livia's comments on the ending of hers. She reflects, "The game's ev'n at the best now; you may see

Widow / How all things draw to an end. . . . Has not my Duke bestir'd himself?" And the Mother agrees, apparently as she resigns the game, "Yes faith Madam; h'as done me all the mischief in this Game" (II.ii.480-87).<sup>9</sup> The moves on the chess board which this dialogue accompanies are intended to duplicate the victory and submission taking place off stage.

*The Second Maiden's Tragedy* provides a final, particularly grisly example of this use of symbolic action. When the Tyrant learns that the Lady has killed herself rather than submit to his lust, he hastens to her tomb (possibly the effigy tomb appropriate to her rank) and proceeds to hack into it with an ax in order to take the corpse back to his lodgings. His ghoulish violation of the Lady's tomb suggests the intended defilement of her body, which is too ghastly to be depicted although the corpse is later revealed sitting in the Tyrant's quarters.

The next function of symbolic action—to show a change or to contrast two ideas, states of mind, or situations—has already been mentioned in the alternative kneelings of De Flores and Beatrice, which underline the change in their relationship and its thematic significance. A similar use of kneeling postures appears in *A Fair Quarrel*, with its object to contrast Ager's values with a more Christian code of conduct. Ager kneels to his mother in reverence and joy at hearing her confirmation of her chastity because it will give him the needed cause for making a second attempt on the Colonel's life. When Lady Ager exits, the Colonel's sister enters and kneels to Ager in peace and forgiveness and begs him to accept the Colonel's wealth and love in her person. The identical positions of Ager and the Colonel's sister emphasize the difference in their values. After Ager's reformation, another repeated motion indicates his change: earlier both Ager and the Colonel had employed their friends as seconds to deliver challenges to each other. Now these seconds shuttle back and forth between the two carrying gifts of love.

In *The Revenger's Tragedy*, the traditional skull which Vindice, as a malcontent and embittered idealist, has in his possession reveals his decline through his change of attitude

toward the skull's living form, Gloriana. Early in the play, Vindice addresses the skull with reverence and adoration of Gloriana's virtue. Later he dresses this remnant of Gloriana as a prostitute, paints its face, and takes it to court to participate in a murder. The change in the character which Vindice projects onto the inanimate skull, from idol and emblem of virtue to whore and conspirator, measures Vindice's transformation and decline.

The final use of symbolic action that we will consider is to suggest the struggle between the forces of good and evil in the universe. This function relies on the assistance of language more than any other, but Middleton had a wealth of suggestive phrases and conventional diction from morality plays with which to alert his audience to the imaginative leap being made. The game of chess between the Mother, who is assigned to guard Brancha's virtue, and Livia, who wishes to assault it, can be interpreted on several levels, the ultimate of which is the cosmic struggle between virtue and vice. The allegorical battle is suggested by Livia's contrast between her black king and the Mother's "white King: Simplicity it self, your Saintish King there." The Mother, in response, personifies Livia's man and her strategy as "Subtilty." After Brancha has succumbed to the Duke's enticements, Livia jests, with an obvious *double entendre* on the action above, "Did not I say my Duke would fetch you over (Widow)?" and then goes on to expand the significance of the victory over Brancha to a triumph for the black forces of the universe as well: "And my black King makes all the haste he can too." The Mother concedes that "we may meet with him in time yet" (II.ii.355-59, 456-59). The struggles between the Duke and Brancha, between the moral and immoral sides of Brancha's nature, between Livia and the Mother over Brancha, and between the white men and the black on the chess board are suggested to be representative of the great battle between good and evil in the universe in which Saintliness and his companions wage war against Subtilty and his cohorts. In the world of *Women Beware Women*, at least, the white forces are routed and the black king wins the day.

Middleton again uses the game of chess as a symbol of the combat between the forces of righteousness and iniquity in his last play, *A Game at Chesse*, where the technique of symbolic action has ceased to be a dramatic device used for a limited purpose and has become the play. On the most literal level, the play is a chess game with the White House ranged against the Black, in which moves and countermoves result in the capture of various pieces and the final victory of the White House. The game is, on its second level, a thinly disguised allegory of the contest between the Church of England and Spanish Catholicism over the control of England, with some chessmen representing well-known English and Spanish political figures.<sup>10</sup> The main plot tells the story of the White Knight's (Prince Charles') and the White Duke's (Duke of Buckingham's) trip to visit the domain of the Black House (Spain), the attempts of the Black Knight to ensnare them, and their victory over the black side. The bulk of the play, however, follows the adventures of subplot figures, primarily the Black Bishop's pawn's attempts to ravish the White Queen's pawn, but also the Black Knight's tricks on the Fat Bishop, the Black Knight's subversion of the White King's pawn, and the Black Knight's pawn's plans to kill the White Bishop's pawn, whom he had previously castrated. These individual contests, in addition to the oft mentioned desire of the Black King to violate the White Queen, parallel the main plot bout between the White Knight and the Black Knight, and all allegorically represent the struggle between England and Spanish Catholicism. The central action of the subplot, the attempted violation of the White Queen's pawn by trickery and by force, provides the chief metaphor of the play, symbolizing the Spanish threat to England.<sup>11</sup> Perhaps the importance of the predominance of subplot characters in the play is the symbolic indication they give that the battle against Spain and the Church of Rome is not one of political leaders only, but one in which every Englishman, every pawn, must do his share to guard against the wiles of Spanish iniquity.

Finally, on a third level, the game of chess is a morality play, a battle between virtue and vice.<sup>12</sup> The game is early identified as

"the best Game that ere Christian lost," the stakes being the combatant's soul (I.i.14); and the frequently mentioned goal of the Black House, the grand or absolute monarchy, is easily identified as Satan's presumed desire for universal dominion. In addition, the chess pieces are sometimes apostrophized by oxymoronic names reminiscent of the later moralities, such as Nice Iniquitie, Strickt Luxury, Holie Whoredom, Marble Fronted Impudence, Monster Holiness, and Holie Derision, names which also reflect Middleton's concern with the deceptive appearance of good which evil often assumes. The White Queen's pawn reinforces both the morality play ancestry of *A Game at Chesse* and Middleton's preoccupation with appearance and reality when she lectures her assailant, a Jesuit, on the discrepancy between his garments (his outside appearance) and his inner nature. Unlike Faustus, she wants Vices to be shown as Vices and the Devil to appear, not like a Jesuit, but in his own loathsome shape (V.ii.16-36). Her appeal to the audience to be alert for deceptive appearances stresses, as does the predominance of the subplot over the main, the importance of pawns to the game, and in addition, it identifies the game on stage as that being played in the real world. Her further equation of the battle that she and the Black Bishop's pawn are waging to the conventional stage strife between one in the "Deuills part" and he "that carries up the goodnes of the playe" reiterates that the chess game represents the morality play's combat between the forces of good and evil. This time virtue is ascendant, and at the play's conclusion, the black pieces are sent yowling and fighting into the bag of Hell.

*A Game at Chesse*, then, is symbolic action taken to an extreme in which the metaphoric meaning is all-important and the literal meaning secondary. It is a logical conclusion to the development of symbolic action in Middleton's plays. His use of visual metaphors grows from early plays in which they are scattered and isolated summaries of the plot and theme, through a middle stage in which they appear with increased frequency and additional functions, to a climax in his last four plays—*Women Beware Women* and *The Changeling*, where few actions have only a literal meaning and symbolic action weaves

in and out of the plot, enriching almost every scene; *The Spanish Gipsy*, where the entire action is a metaphor for the theme, the characters enacting physically what they are undergoing spiritually; and finally, *A Game at Chesse*, where the method, the metaphor, has become the play.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup>*Jacobean Tragedy* (London: Methuen, 1962), p. 139.

<sup>2</sup>In this paper we are considering only his tragedies, tragicomedies, *Hengist, King of Kent*, and *A Game at Chesse*. Like most who study Middleton's works, we consider his collaborations with Rowley to be primarily Middleton's in conception, and like many scholars, we consider him to be the author of *The Revenger's Tragedy* and *The Second Maiden's Tragedy*.

<sup>3</sup>See N. W. Bawcutt's edition of *The Changeling* (London: Methuen, 1970), Appendix A, pp. 122-23.

<sup>4</sup>See our study, "*The Spanish Gipsy*," *Humanities Association Review*, 25, No. 3 (1974), 211-24.

<sup>5</sup>The same symbol of transformation appears in Middleton's early work, *Father Hubbard's Tales or The Ant and the Nightingale*. The nightingale tells of her appearance before she was raped and transformed: "For I was once, though now a feather'd veil / Cover my wronged body, queen-like clad" (A. H. Bullen, ed., *The Works of Thomas Middleton* [1885; rpt. New York: AMS Press, 1964], 8, 59).

<sup>6</sup>See our study, "Morality and Inevitability in *The Revenger's Tragedy*," *JEGP*, LXXI (1972), 36-46.

<sup>7</sup>Recently we were amused to discover a descendant of the Ward's inspection in the Sunday comics of a large newspaper. The father in the cartoon is a Viking; having watched a matchmaker examine his daughter's gait, teeth, and the soles of her feet, he asks, "Say, what business were you in before this?" Although the setting is long ago and far away, the cartoonist evidently felt that his audience would see the humor and perhaps feel that the situation is not so far removed from modern practices.

<sup>8</sup>Bullen, 8, 341.

<sup>9</sup>Charles Barber, ed., *Women Beware Women* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1969). All references to *Women Beware Women* are to this text.

<sup>10</sup>R. C. Bald gives a complete historical background of the play in his edition of *A Game at Chesse* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1929), pp. 1-14. All references to the play are to this text.

<sup>11</sup>In his excellent paper, "Theme and Structure in Middleton's 'A Game at Chesse,'" Rousset Sargent points out that "the sub-plot becomes a metaphor for the main plot because in the former the metaphoric terms are taken literally. The Jesuit's desire to deflower the White Queen's Pawn is a metaphoric way of showing Spain's desire to take England by force" (*MLR*, 66 [1971], 721-30).

<sup>12</sup>Possibly the first to mention the relationship between *A Game at Chesse* and the morality tradition was M. C. Bradbrook, *English Dramatic Form* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1965), pp. 46-47.