IDENTITY, DISGUISE AND SATIRE IN THREE
COMEDIES OF JOHN MARSTON

by

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This thesis investigates the use of the conventions of disguise and deception in three comedies of John Marston (1576-1634) — *What You Will*, *The Malcontent*, and *The Dutch Courtesan* — in order to examine his handling of a convention for thematic purposes.

The frequency of disguise in the theatre of the period may be explained by its appeal on more than one level. Its direct visual display of theatrical ingenuity was an immediate source of compelling interest for all spectators, whether in comedy or tragedy. On a more sophisticated level, the metaphysical implications of the discrepancy between appearance and reality were explored thematically by the more thoughtful of the public-theatre playwrights, as well as the satiric playwrights of the private theatres, both of course making full use of the purely theatrical possibilities. It is to this last category that Marston belongs.

The Introduction outlines the reasons for the choice of plays, explains the very wide meaning allowed to the term 'disguise,' and makes the distinction between 'anonymity,' the conventional type of disguise where a character makes a temporary change of identity by altering his physical appearance, and 'cosmetic disguise,' where identity is maintained, but the blemishes are hidden and goodness usurped by propaganda or adornment.

In the three central chapters, each devoted to one of
the three plays, an examination of the moral setting of the play is followed by discussion of characters who are not what they seem, in terms of the thematic relevance of the disguises they adopt.

Chapter V sets forth the conclusions which consideration of the plays has led to. Marston is a moralist concerned with the rejection of false systems of order in an ambiguous universe. In *The Malcontent*, the conventional order of kingship and obedience is shown defeating cynical manipulation of appearance. In *What You Will*, all approaches to reality except the most uncompromisingly objective are rejected as empty "opinion." *The Dutch Courtesan* achieves a balance between the two, advocating in the person of Freevill a good-humoured readiness to navigate the unpredictable waters of society as it is, relying on experience rather than on dogma. Through them all runs the hint of an order in which deception is an impossibility—either untamed nature or ordained discipline. Thus Marston, in his best work, takes his place among his contemporaries as a dramatist capable of using a convention as an element in a thematic unity.
A. A violent order is disorder; and
B. A great disorder is an order. These
Two things are one. (Pages of illustrations.)

—Wallace Stevens, "Connoisseur of Chaos"
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I.  INTRODUCTION</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II. WHAT YOU WILL</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III. THE MALCONTENT</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV. THE DUTCH COURTESAN</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V.  CONCLUSIONS</td>
<td>133</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BIBLIOGRAPHY</td>
<td>143</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

Disguise in literature is as old as deception itself, that is to say at least as old as the Fall. In the drama, when a play expresses conflict between reality and appearance, disguise presents the duplicity of the latter in visual terms, whether human, supernatural, or both. There can be a whiff of sulphur in the "practice" of one of the incarnations of the mediaeval Vice; or the presence of evil can be felt around the most human character as he attempts to distinguish between the appearance put up by a character and what he really is. The interest in the suspension of disbelief, furthered by the purely theatrical mechanisms of disguise, accounts for the popularity of the method as well as its didactic effectiveness. In addition, the literary irony of comedy in a disguise-play is enhanced by the theatrical metaphor which accompanies it—saying one thing and meaning another is matched by appearing as one person while really being someone else.

This thesis investigates stage disguise and deception generally in three comedies of John Marston (1576-1634).

Firstly, the themes of each play are identified and examples of their expression given; then those characters who are disguised in one way or another are analysed for (1) the personality beneath the disguise; (2) the motive
for and (3) the nature of the disguise; (4) the exposure and (5) what the disguise and exposure have revealed about the disguised personage and those deceived by him. Then, each chapter shows how the various disguises contribute to the theme of each play. In the final chapter, answers are sought to the questions, "What sort of themes does Marston express with his disguise-plots?" and "Does Marston differ from his contemporaries in the purpose or manner of his disguises?"

The three plays chosen are What You Will, first performed by the child actors of St. Paul's song school in 1601 or 1602;¹ The Malcontent (1602 or 1603), Marston's best-known play (it was also presumably his most successful, for after its performance by the Children of the Chapel at the Blackfriars it was taken over by the King's Men and performed with an Induction and other additions at the Globe in 1604); and The Dutch Courtesan (1605), another Blackfriars play (and Marston's only 'city' comedy written on his own). The Malcontent was chosen because it is one of the best examples of a renaissance 'duke in disguise' plot. The Dutch Courtesan was chosen because it offers an interesting and witty combination of two elements: a disguise-plot in which the

disguise of the protagonist, Malheureux, is spiritual rather than physical and unconscious rather than deliberately adopted; and a subplot involving a "witty city jester" whose protean changes of appearance exemplify how in the whole play the usual convention is reversed. Instead of the verities being abstract and eternal and the physical world imperfect shadows, the visible and tangible represent the real in all its variety, and the abstract (in this case religious dogma) stands for the delusions which must be cured before the subject is fit to live among his fellows.

Marston's other important disguise-plot play is The Fawn (1604). It presents many similarities to The Malcontent. In both, hypocrisy and affectation are revealed to a disguised duke who denounces them at the end. For this reason What You Will is discussed instead. Its mixture of extremely complex romantic-comedy plot and metaphysical debate is unique among Marston's plays and offers interesting variations on the theme of appearances. Its simple, even hackneyed theme of the reunion of a supposedly lost husband with his wife is complicated both by plot and by thematic elements which almost succeed in achieving firm dramatic coherence. The plot is an extremely ingenious version of the Amphitruo theme, in which the protagonist is not only challenged to his face by a double, but begins to have doubts about his own identity when those who should know him take him for an
impostor. In this way, and by the selection of a gallery of sycophantic and foppish minor characters, involvement of individual identity with opinion is thematically demonstrated, and so (as a corollary) is the need to limit oneself to the physical realities—"Stones, trees and beasts in love still firmer prove,/Then man," is the sententia pronounced in the final tableau. This could almost stand as motto to Marston's work as a whole if "love" is taken in its widest cosmic sense.

In this thesis, any and every form of deception or self-deception is treated summarily as 'disguise.' This seemed necessary where the theme of each play came under consideration, for often a device which is not disguise in the strict sense of a change of physical appearance to avoid recognition, makes the same contribution to the theme as the commonly understood form. In The Dutch Courtesan, for example, the same rigidity of mind is attacked by Freevill as he shams dead in order to expose Malheureux to the charms of Frances-china, as is broken down by the disguises with which Cocledemoy "wrings the withers" of the miserable Mulligrub.

It is in this wider sense, then, that the disguise in the three comedies is investigated. Certain general types are recognised, necessitating some explanation of the terms used to distinguish them. To begin with, the distinction should be drawn between 'anonymity' and 'cosmetic disguise.' In the first, the disguised character is not recognised by
those who might be expected to know him—in other words he exhibits disguise as generally understood of a physical, material kind. In the second, the original identity is retained but the faults hidden and good points added or improved for social reasons. These distinctions are made irrespective of the good or bad motives of the disguised character, whether he is plotter or victim, or whether he is even conscious of being in disguise or not. In theory, both types of disguise could be used for good or evil ends, but while, in the three plays discussed, anonymity is used in the service of ideals justified in the outcome as well as for evil ends, cosmetic disguise seems to be the prerogative of characters who are finally punished. Albano, while not changing his appearance nor affecting any more force of character than he possesses already, becomes a disguised character by reason of 'appearing' at all when he is supposed to have been drowned, and suffering a failure of recognition as effective as any concealment. Malheureux' disguise is likewise unconscious, but none the less must be stripped off just like a stolen cloak protecting the real Malheureux from the natural consequences of life.

By detailed analysis on such lines of one playwright's handling of disguise, some light can be thrown on the contemporary convention.
CHAPTER II

WHAT YOU WILL

What You Will was first performed in 1601 or 1602 by the Paul's Boys. It was probably the last of Marston's plays written for this company before he began his association with the Children of the Chapel in 1602 or 1603 with The Malcontent. It takes the form of an ingenious mistaken-identity plot loosely involving a collection of 'types' common in dramatic satire—Laverdure the fop, Lampatho Doria the envious railer, Simplicius Faber the gull, and others.

Albano, a powerful Venetian merchant, is thought to have been drowned at sea. His wife Celia, in choosing from among her many suitors, prefers elevation to the nobility to mercantile industry and chooses the dandified French knight Laverdure over the merchant Jacomo. The envious Jacomo attempts to wreck the match. He joins with Celia's brothers Andrea and Randolfo, whose petition to put a stop to the marriage has been rejected by the Duke, in disguising the perfumer Francisco Soranza as Albano. Laverdure's spry page Bidet watches the impostor being arrayed and the plot becomes common knowledge. Laverdure suggests that a disguised fiddler be set up as a second impostor to discredit the first, but does nothing about it. It is at this point
that Albano returns, to be denounced as an impostor by Laverdure and his friends and enthusiastically welcomed as utterly convincing by Jacomo and the two brothers, especially when he exhibits his distinctive infuriated stutter. Husband and impostor appear together at Celia's house, and so far from resolving the matter, as such confrontations usually do, Albano is taken for an impostor in accordance with Laverdure's suggestion, in spite of denials that he has put the plan into effect, and Albano remains unrecognised by his wife and her friends. The matter is finally resolved at court, when Albano displays a birthmark and offers to recount Celia's words on his last night in port. There is a subplot in which Bidet uses the schoolboy-turned-page Holofernes Pippo, disguised as a city widow, to deceive Simplicius Faber into expectations of a profitable marriage, separating the gull from his purse in the process. The main plot is further enlivened by the wit and raillery of Celia's household, where her sister Crispinella displays a sprightly cynicism, and Quadratus shows up Lampatho Doria, the ex-scholar who has forsaken the "crossed opinions" of books (II.257.28) for the dictates of fashion, as querulous and unimaginative.

Of the three plays considered in this thesis, What You Will is the least successful in putting across its didactic moral by the dramatic interplay of its characters. Theatre sense is abundantly present, however--the added twist
of having the long-lost husband taken for an impostor in
the presence of his impersonator is surely one of the most
ingenious in any play involving disguise. But the didacticism
of the play is carried largely by Quadratus, a cynical ob-
server with no function in the plot, whereas in The Dutch
Courtesan and The Malcontent characters like Malheureux
and Cocledemoy, Altofront and Maquerelle, maintain in their
actions, their functions in the plot, the thematic imagery
of their lines, a dialogue of opposing attitudes to the
conduct of human life. The reader is not immediately drawn
to look for this kind of dramatic debate in What You Will,
any more than he is in She Stoops To Conquer; but the
opinions expressed by Quadratus and the satirical nature of
the portraits of Laverdure, Simplicius Faber, and Lampatho
Doria can be seen as part of the opposition found in the
play between "opinion" (I.237.19)\(^1\) and "unbeleefe" (III.269.24).
On the one hand opinion, as in The Malcontent, rules a
frivolous world where all the old virtues of plain dealing
and constancy have disappeared; and on the other genial
cynicism, like that of Freevill, finds the practical realitës
of the everyday world a better basis than metaphysics for
moral decisions.

\(^1\)References to What You Will are to H. Harvey Wood, ed.,
The Plays of John Marston (Edinburgh & London: Oliver & Boyd,
1938), II, 227-295. In this text each act consists of a
single scene. Citations give act, page, and line number.
At Albano's first appearance on shore in Act III, Slip, his page, comments on the eagerness of widows for remarriage: "custome is a second nature" (III.262.37). Albano takes up this theme, amplifying it into a general loss of constancy:

one ten pound oddes
In promis'd joynture makes the hard palm'd sire
Inforse his daughters tender lippes to start
At the sharpe touch of some loath'd stubbed beard.
The first pure time, the golden age, is fled!
Heaven knowes I lie, tis now the age of gold,
For it all marreth and even virtues sold.
(III.263.19-25)

"Custome" in the shape of money seems to have replaced "sound affection" (III.263.12).

A motif given even greater weight than money in the play is that of clothes. Dress and ornamentation join money on the side of "opinion" against "unbeliefe". Albano's brothers remember the 'drowned' man for his clothes as much as anything else (I.241.24-28), and they suspect Celia of choosing among her suitors purely on the basis of dress (I.242.22-23). Laverdure's first thought when visitors are announced is for their clothing: "Ile not see him now on my soule, hee's in his old Perpetuana sute" (II.245.7-8)--and when he decides to let them in, his clothes must be displayed to the best advantage: "set my richest Gloves, Garters, Hatts, just in the way of their eyes" (II.245.21-22). To Quadratus, this "waving gallantry" (II.250.5) of Laverdure's is mere exuberance and not dissembling, and
so it earns his approval. Simplicius' courtship of the imaginary citizen's widow "Mistresse Perpetuana" (V.287.11) is another example of the way clothes signify frivolity in the play. According to Bidet, who is the mastermind behind the deception, Simplicius needs the alliance with this wholesome and hardwearing material in order to "redeeme his peach coloure satten sute from pawne" (III.272.34-35). Indeed his first and only thoughts in his few hours as a bridegroom are of a whole wardrobe of ostentation (V.285-286).

A third element in the "opinion" of What You Will is rhetoric. It is pursued in many places throughout the play, appearing first in the Induction where Philomuse evades Doricus' attempt to fit the play into a nomenclature:

DORICUS: Ist Commedy, Tragedy, Pastorall, Morall, Nocturnal or Historie?
PHYLOMUSE: Faith perfectly neither, but even What You Will.

(Ind.233.23-24).

Lampatho Doria's affected "protest"ing in Act II earns Quadratus' scorn:

Hee's a Hyena, and with Civitt scent
of perfum'd words, drawes to make a prey
For laughter of thy credit.

(II.247.10-12)

In fact, Lampatho stands for rhetoric, useless learning, and sycophancy in much the same way as Laverdure does for dressiness, only without that "Phantastickenesse" which
would make it harmless in Quadratus' eyes. Lampatho, therefore, comes in for a good deal of censure from him. His sonnet has to be soaked in wine before Quadratus can agree to its sweetness (IV.278.17-20); and when (after much prompting) he addresses his suit to Meletza, his Euphuistic floweryness arouses Quadratus' scorn again:

Gods my hearts object, what a plague is this!
"My soul's intraunc'd," ifut couldst not clip and Kisse? (IV.281.7-8)

Finally, when the quick-thinking Quadratus presents a play of his own to replace Lampatho's "morrall play" (V.290.28), rejected by the duke, its subject matter is the stale one abandoned already by Lampatho—namely, "an sit anima" (II.258.6) or "the soules eternity" (V.291.26). It is interrupted in no uncertain manner by the intrusion of a more practical problem—the distinction of the real Albano from the imitation, a problem which "Ulisses dog" (III.268.26) would be better equipped to solve. This creature seems to stand for the brute animal life mentioned several times in the play, and is brought into direct contrast with rhetoric in Simplicius' courtship earlier in the act, when it forms the actual subject matter of his abortive speech-making (V.288.7-9).

Money, clothes, and rhetoric, however, are only the constituent parts of the greater evil of "opinion", which dominates the Venice of the play as much as it does
the Genoese palace in *The Malcontent*. Quadratus is moved by Jacomo's lovesick state to complain at the very beginning of the action:

all that exists,  
*Takes valuation from opinion,*  
(I.237.18-19)

and after Albano has been twice taken for an impostor his ideas on the state of the world he has returned to take a similar turn:

*No, no! Ile believe nothing, no!*  
The disadvantage of all honest hearts  
*Is quick credulity, perfect state pollecy*  
Can crosse-bite even sence, the worlds turn'd Juggler,  
Castes mystes before our eyes. *Haygh passe re passe!*  
*Doth not Opinion stamp the currant passe,*  
*Of each mans valew, vertue, quality?*  
(III.269.12-16,20-21).

This theme is sounded again and again throughout the play. Lampatho Doria is made by Quadratus to see that books are a poor source of practical knowledge, and that what is required is a conniving worldly-wisdom:

*the ladder to account*  
*Is slie dissemblance, he that meanes to mount,*  
*Must lye all levell in the prospective*  
*Of eager sighted greatnesse: thou wouldst thrive,*  
*The Venice state is young, loose, and unknit,*  
*Can rellish naught, but lushious vanities.*  
*Goe fit his tooth, 0 glavering flatterie,*...  
(III.259.20-26)

The catch-phrase which gives the play its title is used on various occasions, sometimes with the deference of a suitor
or petitioner (as by Lampatho in IV.280.22,27 and Albano in V.292.13), sometimes in mockery (Albano in III.264.3), and sometimes in sardonic rage (Albano in IV.282.29-30, 238.10), to represent the submission to "opinion" which is one side of the play's theme.

It is Quadratus who represents the other side most forcibly by standing out against "opinion" in all its manifestations. Like Malevole, he refuses to flatter his prince:

I am fat and therefore faithfull, I will do that which few of thy subjects do, love thee; but I will never do, that which all they subjects do, flatter thee;

(V.290.31-33)

he rejects "opinion" in another way by scorning the use of stage-properties:

DUKE: Thou want'st a beard [to play Cato].
QUADRATUS: Tush a beard nere made Cato, though many mens Cato hang onely on their chin.

(V.291.20-22)

The positive side of Quadratus' opposition to "opinion" shows itself in an appreciation of those things, physical and spiritual, which man can enjoy as an individual rather than as part of a social structure governed by it. He expresses this attitude in his advice to the conventionally lovesick Jacomo:
Love onely hate, affect no higher
Then praise of heaven, wine, a fire.

(I.239.11-12)

Nor is he against harmless frivolity when found in an independent spirit. Though impatient of the "quotations/Of crossd oppinions" (II.257.27-28) of scholars and of the slavish "admiration and applause" (II.246.23) of Simplicius for Lampatho Doria, he is quick to defend the fop Laverdure's exuberance of dress against the envy of Lampatho:

Phantasticknesse,
That which the naturall Sophysters tearme
Phantusia incomplexa, is a function
Even of the bright immortal part of man.
It is the common passe, the sacred dore,
Unto the prive chamber of the soule:
That bar[?]d: nought passeth past the baser Court
Of outward scence: by it th'inamorate
Most lively thinkes he sees the absent beauties
Of his lov'd mistres.
By it we shape a new creation,
Of things as yet unborne, by it wee feede
Our ravenous memory, our intention feast:
Slid he thats not Pantasticall's a beast.

(II.250.14-27)

For Quadratus, only the tangible world can be used as a basis for actions: "naughtes knowne but by exterior sence" (II.252.31); mental activity should be harmless play rather than prescriptive moralizing.

The disguises in the play provide opportunity to observe the human animal as he makes the choice between conducting his life in "the baser Court/Of outward scence," in slavish obedience to "oppinion," and the "unbeleefe" which Albano apostrophises in act III:
O deere unbeleefe,
How wealthy dost thou make thy owners wit?
Thou traine of knowledge, what a priviledge
Thou giv'st to thy possessor: anchorst him,
From floting with the tide of vulger faith:
From being dam'd with multitudes[;]deere unbeleefe[!]
(III.269.24-29)

Some of the characters of What You Will, notably the
satiric targets Laverdure, Lampado Doria, and Simplicius
Faber, inhabit more or less contentedly a world in which
"opinion" is king; others, like Bidet, Laverdure's witty
page, exploit the tendency for appearances to be credited;
Quadratus and Meletza stand for the few truth-tellers in an
untrustworthy world. Albano, another truth-teller by
inclination, is the comically unwilling victim of that
"Opinion" which he, like Quadratus, despises (III.269.20);
he discovers how much the world is habituated to deception
by having his very palpable presence taken as evidence of
imposture. It is this character who will be discussed first.

The unintentional nature of Albano's disguise makes
it very different from 'anonymity' as strictly defined.
Instead of being a character who controls the action through
his disguise, he becomes a victim. Though the character
of Albano is the centre of the plot, his involvement with
the theme is exemplary rather than dynamic; he furnishes
evidence for the prevalence of imposture but does not
overcome it by characteristic action. This perhaps is the
main weakness of the play: the protagonist does not contain the theme in his own personality in the manner of Oedipus or Pentheus. It would make little difference to the outcome whether Albano's personality was attractive or repulsive, since he would be unrecognised just the same. Thematic relevance of a sort is provided by giving him the character of a plain dealer like Quadratus or Meletza, and by further implying opposition to a world "turn'd Juggler" by contrasting him with the luxury trades of a perfumer and a fiddler.

Albano is established, somewhat sketchily, as a capable, sanguine individual. "Thrice was he made,/In dangerous armes Venice providetore" (I.241.10-11). He scorned the "sullen habit/Of precise black" for merchants, and asserted his "jolly presence.../Round the Rialto" in clothes of some flamboyance (I.241.18-31). He also knows how to look after himself. The impostors feel that his escape will be readily believed because "'tis knowne he swome most strangely" (I.244.20)—a prediction which turns out truer than they know. Once his proof of identity has been finally accepted, his goodnatured forgiveness is forthright and immediate:

Shall I be brave, shall I be my selfe now?  
Love, give me thy love, brothers give me your breasts, French knight reach me thy hand, perfumer thy fist.  
Duke I invite thee, love I forgive thee: Frenchman 
I hug thee, Ile know all, Ile pardon all, and Ile laugh at all.  

(V.293.34-38)
Albano's only physical defect is that he "stuttes when he is vehemently mov'd" (I.244.16), and this (as well as enriching the confusion by a convincing detail) is a good fault which tends to emphasise his impatient and energetic nature; it contrasts with the rhetoric and sophistry of a world given over to "lushious vanities" (II.259.25).

Albano's disguise is not one of anonymity for the purpose of observation or harmless mischief, but involves being innocently mistaken for another; what is more, the mistake arises not as a result of a chance resemblance (as of brothers) but from the duplicity of others—the similarity of Francisco to Albano has been artificially enhanced (I.244.8-18, III.260.24-261.2). If there were no deception by the misguided zeal of Andrea and Randolfo, Albano would have been immediately recognisable. He embodies the lesson that deception, like beauty, is in the eye of the beholder, and this is part of the condemnation of "opinion" which is the didactic theme of the play.

Albano is successively mistaken for two different people. First, he is taken for the disguised perfumer Francisco Soranza and is mocked by the intended victims of the deception (who have been forewarned by the eavesdropping page Bidet), and congratulated by the would-be deceivers. Later, he appears with Francisco, once at Celia's house and once at court, and the fact that he is not, at any rate, Francisco, becomes apparent. At Celia's it is assumed, following a chance
remark of Laverdure's: "wert not a pleasing jest for me
to cloath/Another rascall like Albano...?" (IV.280.15-16),
that he is a fiddler hired to discountenance the earlier
impersonation by making it look as if the real Albano is
back; at court, Francisco's inability to browbeat the real
Albano any longer (V.292.9-10) combines with Laverdure's
confession (V.293.4-6) and Albano's proof of his identity
(V.293.11-22) to reveal the truth at last. The birthmark
and private conversation by which he establishes it are
common devices of the contemporary stage. What is more
important is the effect of the mistaken identity on himself
and on the various plotters. At first Albano is merely
puzzled: "What perfumer? what Iacomo?" (III.266.36). After
the encounter with Simplicius Faber, who raises his hopes:
"Some body knowes me yet " (III.267.18), only to dash them
with "I know you are Francisco Soranza the Perfumer"
(III.267.21-22), puzzlement turns to fury as he begins to
stutter:

Francisco Soranza and perfumer and mus-cat, and
gutter maister hay, hay, hay, go, go, gods f, f, f,
fut; Ile to the Duke and Ile so ti, ti, ti ticle them.
(III.267.33-35)

Albano is so shaken that he feels he is not himself:

ALBANO:...boy who am I?
SLIP: My Lord Albano.
ALBANO: By this breast you lie:...
I am a Perfumer, I, Thinkst thou my bloud,
My brothers know not right Albano yet?
Away tis faithlesse, if Albano name
Were liable to scence, that I could tast or touch
Or see, or feele it, it might tice beleefe,
But since tis voice, and ayre, come to the Muscat boy, Francisco, that's my name.

(III.269.6-8,30-36)

He has learnt how one's name—even identity—is not part
of the trustworthy corporeal world but is at the mercy of
capricious "opinion." At Celia's house Albano is in a
rage almost at once as Francisco infuriatingly mimics every­
thing he says:

ALBANO: Celia open, open Celia, I would enter, open Celia!
FRANCISCO: Celia, open, open Celia, I would enter open Celia!
ALBANO: What Celia let in thys husband Albano, what Celia?
FRANCISCO: What Celia let in thy husband Albano, what Celia?
ALBANO: Uds f, f, f, fut let Albano enter.
FRANCISCO: Uds f, f, f, fut let Albano enter.

(IV. 281.11-16)

and in this scene again there is a moment when Albano is
let to believe that someone is prepared to acknowledge the
return of this particular Ulysses:

IACOMO: No sir pray you pardon us, we confesse you
are not Francisco nor a Perfumer, but even--
ALBANO: But even Albano.
IACOMO: But even a fiddler, a miniken tickler, a pum, pum.

(IV.282.20-23)

and the redoubtable Albano again becomes pathetically
unsure that he is himself:
...I pray you use my wife well, good faith shee was a kinde soule and an honest woman once, I was her husband and was call'd Albano before I was drown'd, but now after my resurrection I am I know not what indeede brothers, and indeede sisters and in deed wife I am: What You Will.

(IV.283.5-10)

By the time Albano arrives at court to vindicate himself, he has become so conditioned by these tantalising near-recognition that Laverdure's confession, coming as it does at a point when the Duke seems convinced that Albano is a fiddler in counterdisguise, only makes him suspicious:

LAVERDURE: Worthy sir pardon, and permit me first to confess your selfe, your deputation dead hath made my love live, to offend you.
ALBANO: I, mock on, skoffe on, flout on, do, do, do.
LAVERDURE: Troth sir in serious--

(V.293.4-8)

It is significant that at this point he resorts to the physical characteristic of the "mark" and remembered physical intimacy (V.293.11-22), loosely paralleling Quadratus' dual themes of "exterior sence" and "Phantasticknesse" respectively, rather than believing Laverdure's assurances, which have the sound of precious courtly rhetoric.

The cycle which Albano has gone through seems to have added to his professed distaste for dissimulation a practical knowledge of how much one's identity depends on opinion; this preference of practical knowledge over dogma and book-learning being in line with the theme of the play as expressed by Quadratus. Implicit, though not expressed, in Albano's
mind is a more indulgent view of human deception, a certain
awe at the need most people seem to have for it, and (perhaps)
an increased respect for Quadratus' rigid restriction of
knowledge to what can be directly experienced. The kind of
"unbeliefe" advocated by Quadratus, that is cynicism about
all but palpable impressions, is what would have enabled
Albano to be recognised: "Ulisses dog/Had quicker scence
then my dul Countrimen,/Why none had knowne me" (III.268.26-28).

Laverdure, Jacomo, Andrea, and Randolfo, for their part,
are made to realise their own susceptibility to deception,
rhetoric, and show. Albano unwittingly serves them in the
same way Malevole serves Bilioso in The Malcontent, encouraging
deception to reveal itself.

Albano's kinsmen Andrea and Randolfo join with Celia's
disappointed suitor Jacomo as initiators of the whole mistaken-
identity situation. In the part of the plot concerned with
the wanderer's return, they are misguided rather than evil,
meriting ridicule rather than punishment. In an attempt
to frighten Laverdure into calling off his marriage to Celia,
the three pay Francisco, who bears a resemblance to Albano,
to impersonate the supposedly drowned husband. Their motives
may seem to be in harmony with Albano's but they are not
justified by the conclusion of the play as his are; their
hypocrisy, envy and fraud prevent this. It is a pity that
their envious motives--of Laverdure by Jacomo and of Celia
by the brothers—are not sufficiently well developed to make them convincing as targets. Just as Albano is concerned about his patrimony:

Now were I dead,  
Me thinkes I see a huff-cap swaggering sir  
Pawning my plate, my jewells, morgage--Nay,  
Selling out right the purchase of my browes,  
Whilst my poore fatherlesse leane totterd sonne,  
My gentries reliques, my houses onely prop,  
Is saw'd asunder, lyes forlorne, all bleake,  
Unto the griefes of sharpe Necessities,  
(III.263.29-36)

so his brothers show concern for the family fortune:

My Riotous sir  
Beginnes to crack Gestes on his Ladies front,  
Touches her new stampt gentry, takes a glut,  
Keepes oute, abandons home, and spends and spends  
Till stock be melted, then sir takes up heere,  
Takes up there, till no where ought is left.  
(I.242.32-37)

Albano's significant stutter is echoed by a laudable distaste on the plotters' part for courtly speech and titles; and his distaste for show for its own sake by their hate of the conspicuous consumption which goes with courtliness:

IACOMO:... now and then...  
The troupe of I beseech and protest!  
And beleev it sweete, is mix'd with two or three Hopefull, well stockt, neat clothed Cytizens....  
RANDOLFO: Then must my pretty peate be Fan'd and Coach'd.  
IACOMO: Muffd Mask'd and Ladied, with ["] my more then most sweete Madam. ["]  
(I.242.8-11,28-30)

The only differentiation between the efforts of Albano to regain Celia and those of the plotters on his behalf is
the use by the latter of deception in an attempt to manipulate "opinion," and it is this, we must assume, which accounts for their failure. Differences in their characters seem very slight in the play as read today, but three hundred and fifty years ago conventions of costume and gesture would probably have reinforced them. There are signs that they are meant to be characterised by the kind of envious straighthness found in the self-righteous merchants of City Comedy (Jacomo's description of the merchants' clothes as "precise black" [I.241.19] may be a clue to the disposition, religious and social, of the plotters). This background would make Jacomo look more like Malvolio than the conventional "amorist of the wailing hair-tearing kind" seen by Caputi.² First met with as he desperately tries to resuscitate a suit already "out-stripped" (I.239.20), he presents a picture of the incongruous citizen lover, very unsure of his role:

0 God!
That I were but a Poet now't expresse my thoughts,
Or a Musitian but to sing my thoughts,
Or anything but what I am.
(I.240.9-12)

The plotters' gossipy description of Albano's sartorial details seems to have a certain envy in it, as if Albano had broken free from conventions they themselves were still subject to:

IACOMO: 0 I shall nerere forget how he went cloath'd
He would maintaine't a base ill us'd fashion
To bind a Marchant to the sullen habit
Of precise black, cheefly in Venice state
Where Marchants guilt the top.
And therefore should you have him passe the bridge...
RANDOLFO: In a black bever felt, ash-colour plains,
A Florentine cloth of silver Jerkin, sleeves
White satten cut on tinsell, then long stocke,←
IACOMO: French paines imbroder'd, Gold-smithes worke, 0 God!
(I.241.16-21,24-28)

The brothers are quick to condemn what they see as the
Frenchified wastrel habits of Laverdure, and in so doing
they inadvertently reveal their idea of a suitable second
husband for Celia: one of the minority of "hopefull, well
stockt, neat clothed Cytizens" among the suitors they
imagine. They are set apart from the magnanimous Albano, who is
only temporarily reduced to stuttering indignation and even
self-doubt (hardly surprising in the circumstances), by their
"precise" narrowmindedness and envy, expressed in an ostensibly
noble concern to guard the family name and fortune from the
"rout of erased fortunes whose crakt states/Gape to be
sodderd up by the rich masse/Of the deceased[is] labores"
(I.242.6-8)—a phenomenon of some frequency in Jacobean
times. Their 'disguise' is then a cosmetic, or hypocritical,
one, and, as one would expect, is doomed to failure both
by its motivation and by the physical dissembling used to
further it.

Francisco Soranza, perfumer of the "signe of the Mus-cat"
(III.267.24-25), is the frivolous, 'cosmetic' agent of the misguided family zeal of Adriano, Randolfo, and Jacomo. He, above all, hinders Albano's return, standing for "opinion" both in his daily occupation and in his function in this particular story. It is his physical and verbal pairing with Albano in the third and fifth acts which makes the whole point of Albano's comic predicament; where truth and falsehood are indistinguishable (or even perhaps when the similarities are not very close), it is inevitable that falsehood will triumph so long as "opinion" recognises it, while discredited truth protests in vain.

The scene which opens Act III, where the three plotters clothe Francisco like Albano while the concealed Bidet watches, reveals the brothers' hypocrisy in action. "Apparail's growne a God" (III.260.13) says Jacomo as the acolytes array the image in "hatte and feather,...doublet and band,...cloake and staffe" (III.260.s.d.), thinking to combat it with further dressing-up. Francisco himself echoes this distaste for the success of appearances:

What! I know a number
By the sole warrant of a Lapy-beard,
A raine beate plume, and good chop filling oth,
With an odde French shrugge, and by the Lord or so,
Ha leapt into sweete Captaine with such ease,
As you would-- ... (III.261.2-7)

The earnestness of the plotters is belied by their willingness to go beyond anonymity for observation purposes into theft of another's identity. Francisco is a tool in this
theft, to a large extent not responsible for the morality of his actions. The shock to Albano's self-possession is paralleled by some uncertainty in Francisco's mind of his identity, jocular though he may be:

FRANCISCO: For God-sake remember to take speciall markes of me, or you will nere be able to know me.
ANDREA: Why man?
FRANCISCO: Why good faith I scarce know my selfe already me thinks I should remember to forget my selfe, now I am so shining brave.

(III.260.1-6)

Francisco would presumably be wearing the "Florentine cloth of silver Jerkin" mentioned by Randolfo at I.241.25 as a distinctive part of Albano's attire, and in this way, as so often in What You Will, dramatic points are made more by the physical juxtapositions and comparisons of what is on stage than by the language which backs them up. In this instance, "I scarce know my selfe" spoken by Francisco is less explicit a statement about the arbitrary nature of identity than the comparison between his way of wearing fine clothes, and Albano's confident self-assertion in the same finery. The presumptuous Francisco is all nervous excitement. After his discomfiture, when Jacomo gives up the deceit with "Last hopes; all knowne!" (IV.281.33), Francisco is forced to continue the deception, being opposed (as everyone except Albano thinks) only to a fiddler. Thus Francisco is again the expression of the error and duplicity of others--of the frivolity of Celia and her entourage, who all too readily
believe that Laverdure has carried out his deception (in spite of his denials); and of the over-eagerness of the brothers to "support the jest" once discovered (IV.282.1). Poor Albano is as always the innocent victim.

Francisco makes one more attempt to fulfill his agreement. Anticipating Albano's arrival at court, he enters with "My leidge, my royall leidge, heare, heare my sute" (V.292.5), but he is immediately recognised by Quadratus' eye of "unbeleefe" and denounced. When the Duke picks the wrong Albano, Francisco has to admit the truth:

DUKE: Is not this Albano our some times Courtier? 
FRANCISCO: No troth but Francisco your alwaies perfumer. (V.292.9-10)

In the almost entirely frivolous household of Celia, where attention is next to be directed, Lampatho Doria stands out as one of the more undesirable of the hangers-on loosely associated with Laverdure. He is brought by Quadratus on a visit to Laverdure in Act II, and at once falls into a most extravagantly affected anxiety to make Laverdure's acquaintance:

LAMPATHO: Sir I protest I not onely take distinct notice of your deere rarities of exterior presence, but also I protest I am most vehemently inamor'd, and very passionately doate on your inward adornments and habilites of spirite, I protest I shall be proud to doe you most obseuous vassalage, (II.246.13-17)
displaying an apparent ability to distinguish between appearance and reality which he does not actually possess. Quadratus' denunciation of these "mouldy customes of hoary eld" (II.246.25) is accompanied by the suspicion that Lampatho "drawes to make a prey/For laughter of thy credit" (II.247.11-12). Sure enough, Lampatho reveals his true nature as he makes the proposition in an aside to Quadratus:

Quadratus, harke, harke, a most compleat phantasma, a most ridiculous humor, pree-thee shoote him through and through with a jest, make him lye by the lee, thou Basilisco of witte.

(II.247.34-37)

Quadratus finds the envy thus revealed more insupportable than Lampatho's earlier sycophancy; he denounces the "envy-starved Curre" (II.248.28) to the imperturbable Laverdure and precipitates in Lampatho the rage of the impostor whose mask has been snatched off:

So Phoebus warme my braine, Ile rime thee dead, Looke for the Satyre, if all the sower juice Of a tart braine can sowse thy estimate, Ile pickle thee.

(II.248.18-21)

The scholar's life which Lampatho has renounced for his role of social butterfly is one in which intellectual excitement and independence have turned to quarrelsomeness and loneliness. He wants to exchange "lamp-oyle, watch Candles, Rug-gownes & small juice, Thin commons, foure a clock rising" (IV.278.32-34) and "crossed oppinions boute the soule of man" (II.257.28) for aping Laverdure's "Silver
hose" and "Prim-rose Sattin Doublet" (II.247.23-24), for "protest"-ing and his "Muse" (IV.278.21), and for an attempt to enter the dazzling world of riches and wit presented to him in the person of Meletza. But it is made quite clear in the successive unmaskings of Lampatho by Quadratus that these activities are mere rituals designed to conceal the absence of genuine human affection. Lampatho is not really interested in Meletza, or in emulating Laverdure in finery. The failure of his suit to the one and the ease with which he can be persuaded to leave the "fopperies" of the other (II.251.23) show this. For instance, he is willing to assume whatever identity Meletza pleases:

MELETZA: How would it please you I should respect yee.
LAMPATHO: As any thing, What You Will, as nothing. (IV.280.21-22)

Lampatho is prepared to accept social appearance as being identical with the real thing. His studies have taught him no more than "I know, I know naught, but I naught do know" (II.258.30). Now, too late, he rushes to the other extreme and enviously attempts to join in the fun he feels he has been missing when his studies and his temperament both make him unfit for it, and it is this unfitness of Lampatho for normal social intercourse that Quadratus demonstrates. Lampatho's attempt to "make a prey" of Laverdure is foiled by Quadratus before it can begin; he is warned off his fashionable railing by Quadratus' mock encouragement ("Hang
on thy toungs end, come on pree-thee doe," III.266.10); his extravagant protestations of love to Meletza, which he pours out when diffidence does not seem to work, are dismissed as soon as he goes "past scence" (IV.280.37, 281.1), and his play at court is rejected by the Duke as of too serious subject matter and old-fashioned style: "The itch on Temperance your morrall play!" (V.290.28). All these successive failures suggest the main theme of the play as a whole: the failure of system and artifice to reflect reality, chiefly in rhetoric (the courtship scene, the play, the railing, the sonnet, the flattery), but also in dressiness ("Tis hell to runne in common base of men," Quadratus tells him at II.250.39), and in money too (Meletza's dowry of "Ten thousand Duckets," V.294.28, also IV.281.9). Lampatho is the chief satiric target of What You Will, and shares with his fellows a tendency to finish the play in much the same state of mind as he began it.

Meletza, the object of Lampatho Doria's affections, is the only member of Celia's entourage to come close to sharing Quadratus' opinions, but at the same time she is very much of her own world: whether taking stock of her suitors while airily playing shuttlecock ("just thus do I use my servants," IV.276.1) or playing cat-and-mouse with the absurd Lampatho, she appears (from what little we see of her) to be one whose distaste for affectation and show
derive less from stoical self-sufficiency than from boredom with the gilded life she leads, mixed with anxiety at her fate in the marriage market—she vows

never to marry till I mean to be a fool, a slave, starch cambric ruffes, and make candles.

(IV.275.27-28)

Though adept in the ways of the world, she does however affect to despise them. The way she introduces the subject of Laverdure's knighthood is scarcely respectful:

Why he is not a plain fool, nor fair, nor fat, nor rich, rich fool. But he is a knight, his honor will give the passado in the presence to-morrow night, I hope he will deserve,

(IV.274.12-15)

and she stresses repeatedly the estrangement of riches and honesty, for example: "if he be poor I assure my soul he is chaste and honest" (IV.280.10-11).

Though perhaps not as attractive a character as she might be, Meletza has the kind of cynicism which ideally suits her to administer a rebuke to the flowery nothings of the "inky scholar" (IV.281.3) Lampatho. In her preference of Quadratus' rough-and-ready appreciation of the world over abstraction and idealism she aligns herself against "opinion" and on the side of "unbeliefe."

The two groups of Albano and his sympathisers on one side, and the worldly and frivolous but realistic circle of Celia on the other, meet (as is customary) before the
local representative of divine power—the Venetian Duke. As we would expect in a play where stage presence and positioning often carries the theme rather than explicit statement, the Duke's nature is revealed initially more by his actions than by his words:

Enter the Duke coppled with a Lady, two cooples more with them, the men having tobacco pipes in their hands, the woemen sitt, they daunce a round. The Petition is delivered up by Randolfo, the Duke lightes his tobacco pipe with it and goes out dauncing. 

(I.244.s.d.)

He too is in a sort of disguise. Like the impostor Francisco, he is an inappropriate person to occupy his robes. Like Francisco, his preoccupation with the outward trappings of his court—in this case, the entertainment—conceals the lack of fitness for the role he plays.

Still these same bauling pipes, sound softer straines, Slumber our scence, tut these are vulgar straines, Cannot your trembling wiers throw a chaine Of powerfull rapture bout our mazed scence? Why is our chaire thus cushion'd tapistry? Whys is our bed tired with wanton sportes? Why are we cloath'd in glistring attiers, If common bloudes can heare, can feele, Can sit as soft, lie as lascivious, Stut all as rich as the greatest Potentate? Soule, and you cannot feast my thristing eares With aught but what the lip of common berth can tast, Take all away: your labours idly wast. 

(V.290.11-23)

The Duke's concern is with keeping himself above his subjects rather than considering their needs. This rather fine
speech epitomises the Duke's weary and perverse dilletantism. Presumably his deliberately casual destruction of the brothers' petition is a clue as to why he has thus 'disguised' himself--to enjoy the exercise of arbitrary power. No exposure of the Duke takes place at the end of the play because the world still wags the same way, and the Duke represents the world as far as the play is concerned. He sums up the preoccupation with frivolity and "opinion" that Albano discovers: for Albano the truth is effectively obscured by the now-you-see-it-now-you-don't manipulation of the world "turn'd Juggler." The Duke's quest for entertainment even leads him into a failure to observe the ordained succession of light and darkness, which an Elizabethan audience would have found blasphemous:3

[The Cornets sound a flourish.

Harke! Lorenzo Celso the loose Venice Duke,
Is going to bed, tis now a forward morne
Fore he take rest. O strange transformed sight,
When princes make night day, the day there night,
(I.243.28-31)

grumbles Jacomo.

Significantly, the Duke's power, such as it is, is in abeyance during most of the action. He retires as Andrea and Jacomo's plot gets under way and rouses himself in

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3 See the discussion on the similar effect of Faustus' attempt to halt the progress of the night in F.P.Wilson, Elizabethan and Jacobean (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1945) p.14.
the evening:

Seace the Duke approacheth tis almost night,
For the Dukes up, now begins his day.
(V.290.8-9)

He appears in Act V, ostentatiously attended by "as many Pages with Torches as you can" (V.290.s.d.), in search of entertainment; any justice he dispenses seems to be accidental and arbitrary, and very much subordinated to his never-ending quest for pleasure. When the principals have identified the real Albano in spite of the Duke's readiness to believe that both are impostors, he accepts the decision and the subsequent espousals with considerable indifference: "'Tis well, 'tis well, how shall we spend this night?" (V.294.32).

Stoical (yet convivial) acceptance of the world as it is, embodied in all its irresponsibility, frivolity, and imperturbable selfishness in the Duke, is represented by Quadratus; the Duke, like the world, with which the brothers' meddling and Albano's old-fashioned forthrightness both fail to cope, is unjudged.

Quadratus represents, as has been mentioned, that quality of "unbeleefe" called on unsuccessfully by Albano to save him from the credulity of others. Quadratus, as befits a thinking man, has his own word for it: "Antypathy,/
A native hate unto the curse of man, bare-pated servitude" (II.249.5-6). Presumably Quadratus means servitude to "opinion," represented in this speech by the satire of Lampatho to which Quadratus is expressing his "antipathy."

Consonant with his "antipathy" to all the manifestations of "opinion," Quadratus is strongly in favour of relying on the tangible and reliable evidence of his senses. The word "scence" crops up again and again in his discourse and in the play as a whole. Sense left uncluttered by the impedimenta of "opinion" will almost invariably enable truth to be recognised as unerringly as a dog recognises his master's scent whatever he may be wearing, just as Argus recognised Ulysses when he returned to his kingdom disguised as a beggar.

In a set-piece early on in the play, Quadratus maintains that "naughtes knowne but by exterior sence," and often in the play the animals who live by it are called upon to furnish exempla. Albano wishes for "Ullisses dog" to give him the welcome so far denied him. Lampatho, as he comes under Quadratus' influence, renounces the scholarly world in a memorable anecdote of canine common-sense:

Nay marke list, Delight,
Delight my spaniell slept, whilst I bausd leaves,
Tossd ore the dunces, por'd on the old print
Of titled wordes, and still my spaniell slept.
Whilst I wasted lampolle, bated my flesh,
Shrunk up my veines, and still my spaniel slept.
And still I held converse with Zabarell, Aquinas, Scotus, and the musty sawe Of antick Donate, still my spaniell slept: Still went on went [sic] I, first an sit anima, Then and it were mortall, O hold! hold! At that they are at braine buffets fell by the eares, A maine pell mell togither--still my spaniell slept. Then whether twere Corporeall, Local, fixt, Extraduce, but whether't had free will Or no, ho! Philosophers Stood banding factions all so strongly propt, I staggerd, knew not which was firmer part. But thought, quoted, reade, observ'd and pried, Stufft noting bookes, and still my spaniell slept. At length he wakt and yawned, and by yon sky, For aught I know he knew as much as I. (II.257.33-258.18)

Lampatho, in this scene, even goes so far as to put "manly beastes" (II.257.10) above man. He envies the ox and horse their lack of regret for the past or anxiety for the future. Quadratus' defence of "phantasticknesse" puts this speech in its proper light; Lampatho, going to extremes as usual, prefers animals to man only because he himself lacks the "phantasticknesse" which Quadratus recognises as man's glory. Not all beasts can hope for the blissful state eulogised by Lampatho, however; twice in What You Will creatures contaminated by contact with Prattling, self-opinionated man are mentioned. Lampatho compares Simpliciustus to a parrot taught human speech:

Ile make a parrat now, As good a man as hee in foureteen nights. I never heard him vent a sillable Of his owne creating since I knew the use Of eyes and eares; (II.257.15-19)
and the poor "fore-horse" is cited as a paradigm of human snobbery in "the common sence of fashion" by Jacomo:

Me thinkes now, in the common sence of fashion,  
Thou shouldst grow proud, and like a fore-horse, view 
None but before-hand gallants, as for sides 
And those that ranke in equall file with thee, 
Studdy a faint salute, give a strange eye, 
But as to those in rere-ward O be blind, 
The world wants eyes, it cannot sée behind.  
(III.261.9-15)

As the representative of the point of view which the author wishes to justify in the play, Quadratus assists at the climactic moments in the education of the various satiric victims, such as Simplicius Faber, Andrea, Randolfo, and Jacomo. He follows with sympathy and approval the collapse into incoherence of Albano's headstrong attempt to outface the world's duplicity; and the largest part of his action in the play is spent on the re-education of Lampatho Doria, as we have seen.

Quadratus' initial diagnosis of the state of the world: "all that exsists, /Takes valuation from oppinion" (I.237.18-19), is expanded as he descants on Jacomo's unseemly lovesickness:

IACOMO: O Love!  
QUADRATUS: Love? hang love, 
It is the abject out-cast of the world, 
Hate all things, hate the world, thy seife, all men, 
Hate knowledge, strive not to be over-wise, 
"It drew distruction into Paradise."
Hate Honor, Vertue, they are baites 
That tice mens hopes to sadder fates; 
Hate beautie, every ballad-monger 
Can cry his idle foppish humor.
Hate riches, wealthes a flattering Jacke,
Adors to face, mewes hind thy backe.
He that is poore is firmly sped,
He never shall be flattered,
All things are error, durt and nothing,
Or pant with want or gorg'd to lothing.

(I.238.33-239.10).

Quadratus comes to grips during the play's action with all these expressions of "opinion" in Lampatho and others. "Love," the extravagant and metaphysical esteem of the sonneteers, is ridiculed in Jacomo and dunked in wine in front of Lampatho. "Knowledge," a mere catalogue of "crossd oppinions" is dismissed with the yawn of Delight the spaniel, and shown in all its hollowness in Lampatho's protestations. "Honor" and "vertue," like Cassio's "reputation," are shown to be untrustworthy in themselves and very susceptible to tampering. "Beautie" in the shape of Holofernes Pippo leads Simplicius Faber to an expensive gulling by his "prity page" (II.257.32) and is most strongly expressed in the affected finery of Lampatho and Simplicius as opposed to Laverdure's exuberance. As for "riches," the most common expression of the world's good opinion, they delude Simplicius, fail to achieve Jacomo's wishes, postpone Albano's homecoming because of his brothers' over-zealous stewardship, and elude Lampatho.

All these manifestations of "opinion" are forms of cosmetic disguise—flesh on the skull to hide the uncomfortable truth and put a good face on mortality, and all of
them are revealed by or in the presence of the "square chub" (IV.277.9) Quadratus.

The sub-plot involving Simplicius Faber, Holofernes Pippo, and Bidet, presents a moral exactly parallel to that of the main plot, but with little direct connection with it. Pippo and Bidet are provided with circumstantial links to the main plot by their connections with the pedant who is to perform the marriage and the would-be groom respectively, but Simplicius is introduced merely as Lampatho's hanger-on. Apart from this rather tenuous connection with the main plot (a connection, in fact, a good deal less so than in many plays of the period), the sub-plot exhibits the didactic themes of the play (money, clothes, and rhetoric) very neatly. Avarice, innocent of guile though it is, is what sends Simplicius in search of a "Cytizens wife" (III.272.35) to shore up his squandered fortune. Rhetoric is present in the schoolroom, where we may assume future sonneteers are being made, and in the Euphuistic "copy of phrase" (V.288.1) with which Simplicius confounds his chances. Simplicius' world revolves round clothes, and in the sub-plot we are treated to the spectacle of him parting with hat and rapier to Bidet in order to marry a "Mistresse Perpetuana" (V.287.11) whose money will enable him to redeem his "blush-colour Satten sute from pawn" (V.287.29-30).
The themes of the sub-plot are not only similar but parallel to those of the main plot. The court of "Bosphoros Carmelidon Honorificacuminos Bydet" (III.273.12), with all its mock pomp, takes place in the absence of ducal authority (Lorenzo Celso, we remember, is resting between revels), and presumably at Paul's the analogy would be reinforced by Bidet's sitting in the ducal chair of state. Simplicius, like Albano, thinks himself home and dry only to come up against the duplicity of Venice, a parallel which makes Albano's innocence more apparent. Also, the motif of the down-at-heels dandy saving his wardrobe by a judicious city marriage is presented by both Laverdure and Simplicius.

Simplicius' disguise is as transparent as himself. He is the country gull who wishes to have the status in money, title and appearance of a man-about-town. What makes the character so hilarious is the extent to which he is convinced he has succeeded. He is very proud of his ability to see through to the reality in his appraisal of Lampatho:

_Mousieur Laverdure_, do you see that Gentleman? hee goes but in black Sattin as you see, but by Hellicon hee hath a cloth of Tissue wit,

(II.246.4-6)

and shows similar self-satisfaction when he confronts Albano:

_O God Sir, you lye as open to my understanding as a Curtizan,... I ha paide for my knowing of men_
and women too in my dayes, I know you are Francisco Soranza the Perfumer.

(III.267.17-23)

This capacity for being wrong while congratulating himself on being right is especially obvious in the first scene of Act V, surely one of the funniest scenes in English comedy. Simplicius enters decrying Quadratus' failure to see the advantages of his course of action: "Ha, ha, ha, God boy good Sinior, what a foole 'tis! ha, ha, what an Asse 'tis!" (V.287.1-2). This sagacity, however, is exposed when Bidet tells Simplicius the reason why he may have to speculate in order to accumulate:

You may go in beaten pretious Stones every day, marry I must acquaint you with some observances which you must persue most religiously, she has a foole, a naturall foole waights on her, that is indeed her pander; to him at the first you must be bounteous, what-so-ere hee craves, bee it your Hatte, Cloake, Rapier, Purse, or such trifle, giv't, giv't, the night will pay all: and to draw all suspect, from persuing her love for base gaine sake.

(V.287.19-26)

Simplicius answers with a pathetic attempt at knowing hypocrisy followed by a statement of what is really on his mind:

Giv't? by this light, Ile giv't, wart--gaine? I care not for her Chaine of Pearle, onely her love; gaine? the first thing her bounty shal fetch is my blush-colour Satten sute from pawn: gaine?

(V.287.27-30)

The working-over that he gets from Bidet strips Simplicius
of all the furniture of "opinion" which has invested his body and mind. Rhetoric is the first to go; his "variety of discourse" fails him as soon as he has to come face to face with the formidable 'lady':

SIMPLICIUS: I shall so ravish her with my court-ship, I have such variety of discourse, such coppy of phrase to begin, as this; sweete Lady Ulisses Dog after his Maisters ten yeares travell, I shall so ticle her, or thus, Pure beauty there is a stone--
SLIP: Two stones man.
SIMPLICIUS: Called--'tis no matter what; I ha the eloquence, I am not to seeke I warrant you.

The Cornet is winded, Enter Pippo, Bydet. Pippo attired like a Merchants wife, and Bydet like a Foose.

Sweete Lady Ulisses dog, there's a stone called--0 Lord what shall I say?
SLIP: Is all your eloquence come to this?
(V.287.36-288.8)

Wealth and finery are removed at one stroke by Bidet (V.288.14-22). His Fool's costume would no doubt appear emblematic to an Elizabethan audience. As Simplicius exits, he laments with a sniff the lean time he must endure before the next instalment of his income: "I may go starve till Midsomer quarter" (V.289.32), and a reflective spectator might remember that the cause of this destitution has been Pippo's pretty face. It is not very likely that Simplicius will change his ways, however. As Lampatho says, "he's perfect blest,/Because a perfect beast" (II.257.19-20).

Bidet, Laverdure's page, is one of those Vice-figures whose ready wit and capacity for disguise constituted for Renaissance dramatists an expression of the untrustworthiness
of appearances, and allowed folly, unimaginative rectitude, and hypocrisy to be punished. For such a character, any and all devices and disguises can be used when there is a fool to be gulled, a poker-faced precisian to be ridiculed, or a hypocrite to be caught adulterating the wine. Any lumpkin who does not know how to look after his money deserves to lose it: "fortunes are ordain'd for fooles, as fooles are for fortune, to play with all not to use" (III.272.9-11).

Accordingly Bidet can adopt at will and without a qualm either facet of his nature; the real-life rogue or the mock-monarch, creature of "opinion":

As I am Bosphoros Carmelidon Honorificacuminos
Bydet I am imperious: honor sparckles in mine eyes;
but as I am Crack I will convey crosbite and cheat
upon Simplicius.  

(III.273.11-14)

Not only does Bidet have a dual role, he also celebrates this duality in ambiguity and irony; his kingdom has all the titles and trappings of the court it mimics, but the things they refer to offer a comic contrast to the ideal. False dice and a "pantofle" (III.270.s.d.) are adopted as an emblem with all the flourish of heraldry. Bidet's proclamation concludes with a revealing example of the roguery which can ironically manipulate appearances for its own ends:

Honorificacuminos Bidet Emperor of Crackes, Prince of Pages, Marques of Mumchance, and sole regent over
a bale of false dice, to all his under Ministers health, Crownes, Sack, Tobacco, and stockings uncrakt above the shooe.

(III.270.6-9)

Caught between Bidet and Simplicius in this microcosm of guile feeding on stupidity is Holofernes Pippo. He is the instrument of deception in the subplot in the manner of Francisco in the main plot. He has no guile; he is as stupid as Simplicius himself. In fact, though he exchanges the ambivalence of rhetoric for the vacuity of adornment ("Ha, ha, has tought me a fine dagger, and a Hatte and a Feather, I can say As in presenti now," II.259.15-16), he garbles the messages on which he is sent as well as the Latin mnemonics from Lily's Grammar he was supposed to have memorised in school (II.259.11-14 & 255.7-14). His punishment is, like his guilt, half-way between those of Simplicius and Bidet; where Simplicius is gulled by both pages and cheated of all he has, and Bidet emerges confessed, unpunished, and considerably richer, Holofernes' only punishment is to return to school. The fact that he is redeemable is shown by the significant excuse Bidet finds for commandeering Pippo's share of the loot—Pippo admits to the possession of "square Dice" (V.289.3).

Though resembling at times debate rather than drama, What You Will's theme, the distinction between appearance and reality, is aptly worked out by extremely amusing characters in a highly ingenious plot.
CHAPTER III

THE MALCONTENT

The Malcontent was first performed by the Children of the Queen's Revels at Blackfriars, in 1602 or 1603, and subsequently in an augmented version by the King's Men at the Globe in 1604, the year of publication of all three quartos. The last of these is the only one containing the "INDUCTION" and "additions" mentioned on its title page (p.7). We shall probably never know whether the former was an addition or a replacement for a Blackfriars Induction - as it stands its role seems to be simply to explain the change of company. The additions are generally accepted to be by Marston.

Before the action of the play begins, Florentine hegemony has been extended to Genoa by overthrowing duke Giovanni Altofrom and installing the weak Pietro as

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1 This is the conjecture of Anthony Caputi in John Marston, Satirist (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell U.P., 1961), p.266, and M.L.Wine in his edition of The Malcontent (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1964), p.xvi. It accounts for the transfer between companies by suggesting that the play was a Blackfriars success before the plague of May 1603-April 1604 and was used by the King's Men as part of their reopening repertoire. An early date of c.1600 has been argued by Stoll ("The Date of The Malcontent: A Rejoinder," RES, XI [1935], 42-50), and recently supported by G. Cross ("The Date of The Malcontent once more," PQ, XXXIX [1960], 104-113).

2 References to The Malcontent are to the edition of M.L.Wine. This edition gives the fuller Globe text.
duke, monitored by his duchess Aurelia, "daughter of the Florentine" (I.iv.19). The play opens in the "lascivious palace" of Genoa, as Pietro hears of his wife's infidelity with Mendoza, a party to the original usurpation. This news is brought by the disaffected but tolerated "Malevole," a disguise adopted by Altofront to enable him to remain at court and await a propitious time to return to power.

By the time the ineffectual duke can be spurred to revenge, a misunderstanding causes Aurelia to transfer her favours to Ferneze. The slighted Mendoza pretends to aid the duke in exposing the duchess and killing Ferneze; his real aim is to win the duchess' favour by seeming to protect her lover, then to murder the duke, who has foolishly made him his heir, and finally to banish Aurelia and reign supreme. Pietro believes Mendoza, "Malevole" is discredited and the first stage of Mendoza's plan put into effect. While word of Aurelia's dishonour is sent to Florence, Mendoza attempts to take his plans further by suborning the supposed Malcontent to eliminate Pietro. This enables Altofront, while remaining in disguise, to win the duke over to his side by revealing the murder plot. He arranges for Pietro to testify in disguise to his own death, whereupon Mendoza moves on to his next stage, the banishment of Aurelia. Here again he is thwarted by his supposed tool "Malevole". Mendoza's
statecraft has arranged for the "malcontent" and the "hermit" (Pietro) to poison one another, but this plan also evaporates when the two disguised dukes confer. Pietro sees the now-penitent Aurelia being led on to banishment, and this, together with Florence' demand for the reinstatement of Altofront (kept secret from the rest of the court), affords Altofront an opportunity of persuading Pietro to abdicate his usurped throne. He then reveals himself to Pietro and enlists his aid, adding him to his nucleus of two followers: Celso, who has remained loyal from the previous regime, and Ferneze, who has survived Mendoza's sword and been concealed by "Malevole". Mendoza meanwhile proceeds with the last step of his plot, still unaware that Altofront has consistently delved one yard below his mines. He proposes a dynastic marriage with Altofront's duchess Maria, and appoints "Malevole" as his go-between. Altofront's satisfaction at seeing his duchess demonstrate her constancy is outweighed by having to watch in disguise her sufferings at the thought of enforced marriage. Mendoza is allowed a moment of triumph when he is deceived into thinking that Malevole has been poisoned, and prepares to reign securely. In the final masque which Mendoza imposes on the court to celebrate his accession as Pietro's heir, the four avengers appear as bygone Genoese dukes, and reveal themselves in a fine coup de théâtre. Mendoza is deposed, Altofront reunited with Maria, and punishments
or admonitions dealt out to the more offensive coutiers.

Throughout *The Malcontent*, a tone of nervous comedy is maintained, not only by the embellishments of satiric wit, bawdry, and perhaps in performance even an element of slapstick, but also by the fact that Mendoza's Machiavellian activities are secretly sabotaged by Malevole in step with his activation of them, and that the real issue depends not so much on Altofront and Mendoza as on the decision of the Florentine duke, whose power, represented throughout the play by Aurelia, has been shaken by her exposure. Adultery in high places is condoned only so long as it is concealed; Pietro's rule would be weakened by the loss of public confidence following the event, and the "great duke" (IV.v.78) would presumably rather have to come to terms with an independent Altofront than rely on an unstable Pietro.

The theme of the play is the overthrow of the bad rule of Pietro and Mendoza. Their usurpations are a form of disguise; they try to pass themselves off as dukes when by reason of evil or incompetence they are not fit for the task. In addition, the court of Genoa is shown as a place where appearances and opinion count for more than reality and actual moral worth. This overthrow is achieved by the rightful duke's adopting a disguise which will win the confidence of Mendoza and thus enable Altofront to
mitigate the worst effects of his treachery, treading water until the right is again apparent to his people and to Florence.

The conflict in The Malcontent is neither one of mere domestic intrigue nor of political didacticism; it is an absorbing (and extremely funny) tragicomedy of the overthrow of corrupt and usurped power and its replacement by disinterested, God-ordained rule. The sphere of this moral lesson is indicated by the spectrum of interests of the characters; they go from Mendoza, primarily concerned with political intrigue, to Maquerelle, whose role is almost purely domestic, with Bilioso and others involved in both public and private activities. These are knitted together in the plot in such a way as to leave no doubt that social stability is seen as dependent on private as well as political integrity.

The struggle for the Genoa dukedom is carried on against a cosmic background which enters the play as an underlying assumption rather than a motivating force. None the less, Altofront alludes to it at important moments in the play, and it must be taken as firmly setting the tone. At his moment of triumph over Mendoza, Altofront describes the qualifications of a good ruler and thereby the standards whose ultimate triumph has been the subject of the play: "birth doth ne'er enroll/A man 'mong monarchs, but a
glorious soul" (V.vi.130-131). Here Altofront's legal claim to the dukedom, the fact that, as he hints in disguise to Mendoza, he "may be the son of some duke" (III.iii.63-64), and which in worldly eyes constitutes his best claim, is dismissed in favour of the moral virtue of a "glorious soul." When in one of several reflective moments the high-minded duke finds that Ferneze has unexpectedly survived Mendoza's attack, the true Altofront shows through the frantic disguise:

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Thy shame more than thy wounds do grieve me far;
Thy wounds but leave upon thy flesh some scar,
But fame ne'er heals, still rankles worse and worse;
Such is of uncontrolled lust the curse.
(II.v.144-147)
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Here, as in all his speeches when the mask is off, Altofront represents a viewpoint which lowers merely physical, mortal values and sets up spiritual, eternal ones. His disguise consists of an intensification of this distrust of the transitory world to a point where it becomes a humour to be treated with amused tolerance, but the assumptions "Malevole" makes are no less those of Altofront:

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Here is a pander jewel'd; there is a fellow in shift of satin this day that could not shift a shirt t'other night.
(I.iii.50-52)
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The closeness of the cosmic viewpoints of "Malevole" and Altofront account for the difficulty of assigning the
utterances of "Malevole" to one or the other. Schoenbaum unequivocally saw "Malevole" as "Marston's spokesman" by reason of his satirical speeches, and attributed the rather frantic railing to what he saw as the "distressed spirit" of the author. This view is made difficult to accept by the fact that it is not "Malevole" who is vindicated by the end of the play, but Altofront. To call the character 'Altofront/Malevole' creates more problems in theories of personality than it solves in dramatic coherence, and so it seems logical to turn to the other alternative, that of attributing Marston's viewpoint to Altofront (if anyone), and regarding "Malevole" as a disguise adopted by him to precipitate the cycle of exposure and reformation. The relationship of the two attitudes is well seen in "Malevole's" use of the theme of contempt for the world to persuade Pietro to abdicate:

"Come, be not confounded; thou art but in danger to lose a dukedom. Think this: this earth is the only grave and Golgotha wherein all things that live must rot; 'tis but the draught wherein the heavenly bodies discharge their corruption; the very muck hill on which the sublunary orbs cast their excrements. Man is the slime of this dung pit, and princes are the governors of these men; for, for our souls, they are as free as emperors, all of one piece; there

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4Ibid., p.1078.
goes but a pair of shears betwixt an emperor and the son of a bagpiper—only the dyeing, dressing, pressing, glossing makes the difference. Now what art thou like to lose?

A jailer's office to keep men in bonds, Whilst toil and treason all life's good confounds. (IV.v.105-118)

The language may be, as J.D. Peter points out, the railing of a Malcontent in the mediaeval tradition of "Complaint," but the ideas are consistent with the contempt for the mortal world declared by the undisguised Altofront at the end. The knowledge that the authority of rulers extends only over the "slime" of a Ptolemaic "dung-pit" is part of the recognition of the inability of unaided mortal nature to achieve glory. Elsewhere, Altofront, in propria persona, stresses the necessity of humility and submission to the divine will as the only way for a prince: "no disastrous chance can ever move him/That leaveth nothing but a God above him" (V.iv.88-89); and in the last scene he again distinguishes good from bad rule in terms of their relation to the divine order:

Yet thus much let the great ones still conceive: When they observe not heaven's impos'd conditions, They are no kings, but forfeit their commissions. (V.vi.142-144)

The cosmic framework within which the play takes place includes, in addition to God as source of the divine order,

and the rulers who maintain that order in the temporal world, those at the base of the pyramid who are ruled by it.

The levelling remarks made by Altofront in his disguise as "Malevole" are what one would expect of a melancholy, disaffected Malcontent, but they also fit in with the character of Altofront as it is revealed at various points in the play. Altofront thinks a "glorious soul" is more important than mere "birth," and "Malevole," in reply to Mendoza's epithet "baseborn" (I.v.5), gives an intensified, 'antic' version of the less positive, 'Complaint' element of the idea: "we are all the sons of heaven, though a tripe-wife were our mother" (I.v.6-7); later, he repeats the idea when he reminds Pietro that we are all cut from the same cloth and "only the dyeing, dressing, pressing, glossing makes the difference." The possession of a "glorious soul" gives a prince the obligation to "keep men in bonds"—a function looked on by the good ruler as protective rather than restrictive. In The Malcontent the people are represented as a "beast with many heads" (III.iii.4), too ignorant to know what is good for them. Their fortunes are affected by the outcome of the plot—indeed the only real physical hardship in the play is that suffered by the victims of Bilioso's rackrenting—and though they are not represented on stage they are the
good ruler's *raison d'être*. Altofront recalls how his just rule began to be considered too austere:

...the crowd,
Still lickerous of untried novelties,
Impatient with severer government,
Made strong with Florence, banish'd Altofront.  
(I.iv.14-17).

and at the conclusion of the play he reiterates how they prefer "outward shows" over their rulers' "virtues" (V.vi.140,141). Celso recounts how this led them into a situation they realised too late was far from ideal:

Though thorough great men's envy, most men's malice,  
Their much intemperate heat hath banish'd you,  
Yet now they find envy and malice ne'er  
Produce faint reformation.  
(III.iii.6-9)

What they had done in fact was to lay themselves open to exploitation by such as the stupid and greedy Bilioso, or rather by such of their own number with sufficient cunning to raise themselves to positions of control over the Biliosos. In the third act Bianca, who has "for the most part of [her] lifetime been a country body" (III.1.77-78), advises her old husband how to recoup the expenses of his embassage to Florence:

you have the lease of two manors come out  
next Christmas; you may lay your tenants on the greater rack for it.  
(III.1.36-38)

Towards the end of the play, Altofront's moment arrives
as soon as his support includes the people as well as "the great Leader of the just," the captain of the citadel, and the courtiers he has assembled around him (V.iv.85-87). His speech is immediately followed by the masque at which the people's prayers are answered by the unmasking of their unjustly banished duke. The moral of the story is again made plain: the good ruler has the consent of the whole order, down through the temporal and military power to the masses, and not, as the usurpers have, the support merely of a "faction" (II.v.80).

The play's conflict takes place, however, not between supernatural agencies nor among the duke's subjects, but in the court. Altofront offers enlightened justice in humble submission to the divine will and to the vicissitudes of Fortune, with no repetition of the "suspectless" (I.iv.14) peace of mind which cost him the dukedom before the beginning of the action. Mendoza, on the other hand, denies justice and attempts to circumvent Fortune in an impious and self-willed exercise of power. Altofront "leaveth nothing but a God above him" (V.iv.89); the implication is that Mendoza allows something to come between--perhaps a wilful projection of himself. In fact it is of the type of audacious, even impious, self-enhancement outlined earlier that his disguise consists. Altofront submits to Providence, bides his time, and is rewarded:
Who doubts of Providence,
That sees this change? A hearty faith to all!
He needs must rise who can no lower fall:
For still impetuous vicissitude
Touseth the world; then let no maze intrude
Upon your spirits. Wonder not I rise,
For who can sink that close can temporize?

(IV.v.136-142);

Mendoza attempts to bring Fortune's wheel to a standstill
by brute force:

I'll trust no man; he that by tricks get wreaths
Keeps them with steel; no man securely breathes
Out of deserved ranks; the crowd will mutter, "Poo!
Who cannot bear with spite, he cannot rule.

(V.iv.74-77)

The contrast in the Genoese court between those who
are fit to rule and those who are not extends from state-
craft into private life. Allofrent is opposed to Mendoza
not only as an exemplary ruler but as an exemplary
husband, and Maria is confronted directly with Maquerelle
for a few very tense moments in Act V. Aurelia is
important in both spheres; she is an unfaithful wife as
well as the source of Florentine political power, and
action in one role affects her in the other: she is
courted because powerful, but her adulterous intrigues
are the cause of Florence's disowning her at the news of
her dishonour. Biancha, as Maquerelle's star pupil, is
not only the most obviously unfaithful wife (her husband
being old, rich, and stupid), but also the brains behind
Bilioso's political activities:
BIANCHA: See the use of flattery; I did ever counsel you to flatter greatness, and you have profited well....

BILIOSO: Thou art ever my politician.

(III.i.45-50)

Competition for advancement in public and adultery in private life in the Genoa palace results in the adoption of 'cosmetic' disguise. After twelve months of Pietro's lax rule the situation has reached a stage where it is no longer possible to distinguish truth from illusion. The natural untrustworthiness of a world of mutability and mortality is made worse by attempts to manipulate further these already misleading appearances, and this results in an atmosphere of moral weightlessness in which it is often hard to tell which way is up. A case in point is the scene in which Ferneze buys an instantly fabricated eyewitness account from Maquerelle to help his suit to Aurelia. Maquerelle is so secure in the unassailable effectiveness of appearances at court that she dares call her own bluff. As Ferneze "privately feeds Maquerelle's hands with jewels during this speech" (I.vi.8-9), she responds with a string of ironies and ambiguities which pretends to disown the truth that her words are bought while calling attention to it, maintains an appearance of moral virtue which all present know to be fictitious, and imperturbably reveals to us the truth about herself, blandly assuming that we, like the
court, share her moral viewpoint:

To speak feelingly, more, more richly in solid sense than worthless words, give me those jewels of your ears to receive my enforced duty....
(I.vi.5-7)

"feelingly" (the "feeling" being in the palm of the hand), "richly," and "jewels" all draw attention to the transaction between her and Ferneze, while making, for Aurelia's amusement, a conventional denial of frivolity ("more... solid sense than worthless words"). From our point of view, however, Maquerelle's words as we watch her "put up" (I.vi.7-8) Ferneze's bribes and respond with a stream of slander, give us the impression of a pathetic old woman who will do anything for money and not the nimble-witted intriguer she thinks she is. "More richly in solid sense than worthless words" is intended to express to Aurelia, with conscious irony, a mock preference of meaningful language over rhetoric; what it really shows us is that Maquerelle's idea of "sense" is something "rich" and "solid"—that she does in fact prefer cash to any language at all. This, the first speech that Maquerelle makes, puts us in a moral vacuum of bewildering double irony that would not be out of place beside Swift's A Tale of a Tub.
The deities of this world are change and decay rather than a god of stability and order. Maquerelle sets the tone with some advice to her charges:

But, for your beauty, let it be your saint; bequeath two hours to it every morning in your closet, (II.iv.35-37)

and the activities of the whole court are concerned with whatever is mortal and mutable. A revealing exchange between Malevole and Bilioso shows how words and things too are dissociated from their real uses and pressed with no sense of fitness into the service of whatever flattery or bribery is most advantageous:

MALEVOLE:...What though I call'd thee old ox, egregious wittol, broken-bellied coward, rotten mummy? Yet, since I am in favour -

BILIOSO: Words, of course, terms of disport. His grace presents you by me a chain, as his grateful remembrance for - I am ignorant for what; marry, ye may impart.

(I.iv.57-63)

Under Mendoza, Maquerelle, and Bilioso, the whole court is engaged in attempts to manipulate appearances for selfish ends with no reference to moral absolutes. "Honesty is but an art to seem so" is Maquerelle's repeated slogan (II.iv.24 and V.iii.12), and her "arts" to simulate honesty are indeed formidable. She invented "woolen shoes for fear of creaking for the visitant" (I.viii.38-39), and the palace is virtually soundproofed with "villainous curtains,...oil'd hinges, and all the tongue-tied lascivious witnesses of
great creatures' wantonness" (I.vii.39-41). Maquerelle
provides a thumbnail sketch of herself usurping the
functions of Fortune:

I have two court dogs, the most fawning curs,
the one called Watch, th'other Catch. Now I, like
Lady Fortune, sometimes love this dog, sometimes raise
that dog, sometimes favor Watch, most commonly fancy
Catch.

(V.ii.45-49).

Maquerelle also tries to forecast events by astrology if
she cannot control them by weighting Fortune's wheel. Her
astrology is a perversion of Altofront's "God above
him:

court any woman in the right sign, you shall
not miss....when the sign is in Pisces, a fish-
monger's wife is very sociable; in Cancer, a Precis-
ian's wife is very flexible; in Capricorn, a
merchant's wife hardly holds out; in Libra, a
lawyer's wife is very tractable, especially if her
husband be at the term.

(V.ii.62-67)

The successful courtier, according to Mendoza, needs
to be in control of mutability in a different way; if he
cannot play at "Lady Fortune" himself, and so much submit
himself to her caprices, then he needs to be a chimâera of
assorted qualities in order to cope with all the political
and amorous intrigues he may meet:

He that attempts a princess' lawless love
Must have broad hands, close heart, with Argus' eyes,
And back of Hercules, or else he dies.

(II.v.6-8)
A good deal of the comedy of *The Malcontent* derives from the fact that many of these attempts to influence Fortune or to protect oneself against its uncertainties misfire. Malevole undermines Mendoza's plans while pretending to carry them out; Bilioso, while accommodating himself to Malevole's status in the court in accordance with his policy of "flatter the greatest and oppress the least" (IV.v.102), still has to endure Malevole's reminders of remarks which he made before he changed his mind. An adulterous courtier may be deceived even in his embraces, and the affair may have unforeseen consequences: "The fool grasps clouds, and shall beget centaurs" (II.1.4). Malevole tortures the hapless Pietro with the possibility of even worse consequences:

Mark! Mendoza of his wife begets perchance a daughter; Mendoza dies; his son marries this daughter. Say you? Nay, 'tis frequent, not only probable, but no question often acted whilst ignorance, fearless ignorance, clasps his own seed.

(I.iii.131-135)

There is ample reminder in *The Malcontent* of the impiety of attempting to circumvent providence in such ways, but perhaps the most significant is the failure of Mendoza's ducal token in Act IV. The point is driven home by physical action, the prominent transfer of the ring as an object of potency, and especially by the remark of "Malevole", acting as go-between, on his return. The latter is delivered
in his jocular railing style, but his use of the double meaning of "virtue" ('power' as well as 'virtue') conceals Altofront's cry of triumph from behind the disguise: "Your devil ship's ring has no virtue" (IV.iii.108).

The play echoes with interjections of horror and amazement at the activities of the court. "World-tricks" (IV.v.122), "cross-capers" (IV.iv.13), contribute to a composite impression of worldly intrigue furthered by the manipulation of appearances. "I do descry cross-points; honesty and courtship straddle as far asunder as a true Frenchman's legs" (II.v.135-137), says Malevole. He is echoed by Passarello, who also lives in and by the court, but maintains a self-deprecating detachment, refusing to let the more absurd behaviour pass unmocked, but powerless to put things right:

Nay, I shall talk when my tongue is a-going once; 'tis like a citizen on horseback, evermore in a false gallop.

(I.viii.29-31)

"Malevole" offers, as is his wont, a fantastical version of Altofront's feelings, telling the truth in such a way as to avoid trouble:

PIETRO:...I hear thou never sleep'st.
MALEVOLE: 0, no, but dream the most fantastical!
O heaven! O fubbery, fubbery!
PIETRO: Dream! what dream'st?
MALEVOLE: Why methinks I see that signior pawn his footcloth, that mettreza her plate; this madam
takes physic that t'other monsieur may minister to her....Here a Paris supports that Helen; there's a lady Guinevere bears up that Sir Lancelot, Dreams, dreams, visions, fantasies, chimeras, imaginations, tricks, conceits!

(I.iii.44-55)

This speech is part of the performance "Malevole" gives in the first act. It shows how closely he associates intrigue, deception, and disguise with the material objects of the transitory world, and illicit sex with both. The association among these ideas is reinforced as a thematic unity throughout the play until at the end we can easily imagine "those antique painted drabs,... Flattery, Pride, and Venery" (I.iii.24-26) being banished alongside their human embodiments Mendoza and Maquerelle, and taking with them their transitory impedimenta of deception - cosmetics, jewellery, "oil'd hinges," aphrodisiacs, almanacs and all.

The Malcontent is not concerned with appearance in quite the same fundamental way as The Dutch Courtesan. In that play, the action consists of teaching Malheureux to distrust appearances; in this, the theme is reinstatement of justice. The fact that the corruption maintains itself largely by the maintenance of appearances is its central but by no means sole feature. It maintains itself also by force and the threat of force. Mendoza's proposal to keep Aurelia under surveillance has a police-state sound:
I honour you, shall know her soul, you mine;
Then naught shall she contrive in vengeance
(As women are most thoughtful in revenge)
Of her Ferneze, but you shall sooner know't
Than she can think't.

(I.vii.64-68)

The symbols of his arbitrary power are the "halberds" called
for by the stage directions at Aurelia's banishment in
IV.v; and Mendoza's denunciation of Maria is chilling in
spite of our foreknowledge of Mendoza's failure:

Thou obstinate, thou shalt die.--Captain, that lady's life
Is forfeited to justice. We have examined her,
And we do find she hath empoisoned
The reverend hermit; therefore, we command
Severest custody....A tyrant's peace is blood.

(V.vi.32-37)

Mendoza even embodies his statecraft in a sinister little
lyric:

Who would fear that may destroy?
Death hath no teeth or tongue;
And he that's great, to him are slaves
Shame, murder, fame, and wrong.

(V.iv.43-46)

But the theme of appearances is pursued more strongly
in The Malcontent than the theme of injustice to which it
is linked in the person of Mendoza; and it is here that
the various disguises have their function. Next to be
considered are the types of disguise used by the good and
bad characters in the play, and to what extent the opposing
forces make use of different types of disguise.
In The Malcontent, the formal characteristics of a disguise provide no reliable indication of the moral status of the character using it. To see a change of name or appearance as the mark of an intriguing avenger casts the net too wide, for such a distinction would add to Altofront Pietro and Mendoza, who usurp the title of duke, and Maquerelle, whose professional concern with face-painting is an important thematic element in the play. Inconsistencies of this kind force us to look elsewhere for the distinguishing characteristics. The pattern becomes clearer if, instead of looking on the physical nature of disguise as an index of good or evil, we deduce moral status from motivation, and then see the forms of disguise in which it is expressed. When Altofront, with the pure motive of restoring rule by the rightful monarch, becomes "Malevole," he makes use of anonymity, a retreat from who you really are, an evasion of recognition in which the old self ceases to exist in order to further the ideological and didactic ends of the play. For this the prerequisite is sufficient physical disguise to obliterate all recognisable features of appearance, gesture, or speech which might betray the user. The cosmetic disguise used by Mendoza or Maquerelle involves the opposite: opinion, a promotion of yourself into someone you really are not, a spurious improvement on the old self in a more favourable light. For this purpose the only changes which need to be made are those which can
increase the prestige of the individual without obscuring his identity. In some cases cosmetics may be sufficient, in others a spurious improvement in sartorial appearance. "You must come in fashion" (V.v.14), Maquerelle tells her charges. Most frequently, however, it is in the field of the spoken word that such disguise will operate, from an attempt at 'refeened' speech like that made so disastrously by Gertrude in *Eastward Ho* to the unashamed flattery of Bilioso. The hypocritical situation in the Genoese court, where, as Altofront puts it, "the black act of sin itself [is] not sham'd/To be term'd courtship" (V.vi.135-136), is one in which Maquerelle and her charges live continuously, and terms like "honour," "maidenhead," "grace," are continually on their lips. It is on the basic distinction of motive that the moral traffic of *The Malcontent* depends; the individual ways of expressing that motive in disguise follow from it.

What we may notice as a general tendency is for the characters whom the ethic of the play justifies either to remain as they are, innocent of verbal or visual dissemblance, or to change their appearance and utterance completely in order to achieve concealment. Maria and the captain of the citadel, for instance, demonstrate a rock-like loyalty throughout their brief appearances in the play, and scorn the use of the slightest deception. Passarello, too, can be relied on to provide an unbiased
view of the court in the manner of the fool who is no fool. These three maintain their integrity either as a protest or as a satiric comment on the régime. But for those like Altofront and his three co-avengers in the final masque, who must descend into the thick of things and put matters to rights, total protective disguise is necessary. Altofront has done this as "Malevole" for the entire action; Celso, who for the greater part of the drama has like Maria and the captain refused all compromise at some danger to himself, joins him in the final masque, and so do the two apostates from the corrupt world of the court, Pietro and Ferneze.

The forces of evil, of whom Mendoza, Maquerelle, and Pietro and Ferneze before their conversion are the chief, seem in most cases to exhibit mainly the second type of disguise, that manipulation of opinion designated 'cosmetic.' Pietro is a weak (and almost certainly henpecked) man passing himself off as a duke; Mendoza's disguise consists in having himself thought of as "honest" (II.v.59); and Maquerelle presides over the maintenance of appearances with a battery of techniques of which "painting" (II.iv.48) concerned with augmenting a recognisable personality, is only one part. When cosmetic disguise of this kind is compared with the changes of appearance undergone by Altofront, made to achieve a temporary evasion of recognition, the seeming ambivalence of physical disguise ceases to
obscure the distinction.

A brief examination of the characters in three groups—first, Mendoza and his courtiers, employing cosmetic disguise; then those like Aurelia, Pietro and Ferneze who progress from this to join the third group; and finally the third group, Altofront and Celso, who employ anonymity to expose and reform the first—may help to show how the play's didacticism is expressed in the characters and the disguises they adopt.

Mendoza, as has been noted, represents an impious attempt to impose human will on Fortune in the most fundamental way—usurpation of the throne. His action is not only the expression of his 'disguise'—attempting to become something he is not—but also the reason why he is unfit for rule. Like that of Milton's Satan, Mendoza's doomed rebellion indicates a state of mind which is of itself a disqualification from a place in the divine order.

Mendoza's masks of honesty, justice, sexual fidelity, and loyalty, which he maintains by that most efficient of 'cosmetic' disguises, propaganda delivered with an air of authority, conceal a nature which belies them all. Occasionally the real crafty ambition, oppression, lecherousness, or betrayal show in a soliloquy or in an action whose true nature is known to the audience. He counters
the indignant Pietro's accusations with a touching show of mock-innocence: "here's my bare heart to thee" (I.vii.6); and when Aurelia suspects him of infidelity to herself his performance reaches bravura proportions:

O God, O God! How we dull honest souls,  
Heavy-brain'd men, are swallowed in the bogs  
Of a deceitful ground, whilst nimble bloods,  
Light-jointed spirits, pent, cut good men's throats  
And scape! Alas, I am too honest for this age,  
Too full of phlegm and heavy steadiness;  
Stood still whilst this slave cast a noose about me.  
(II.v.59-65)

The reality is revealed by his smug self-congratulation after he has won Aurelia's confidence: "O Heaven!/I see God made honest fools to maintain crafty knaves" (II.v.97-98); and later on in the play he congratulates himself on the success of his confidence trick:

Now is my treachery secure, nor can we fall.  
Mischief that prospers, men do virtue call.  
(V.iv.72-73)

Mendoza's acts of 'justice' need no soliloquy or other unguarded moment to reveal their true nature. His arrest of Maria and his proposal to spy on the dishonoured Aurelia are both acts of oppression justified as being in the interests of keeping the peace.

Mendoza professes, as part of his cosmetic disguise, a defence of conventional sexual morality. His punishment of Aurelia is an act of disloyalty and oppression disguised as one of moral cleansing:
70

Woman of shame,
We banish thee forever...nor permit.
On death, unto the body any ornament.
(IV.iii.58-61)

The reference to "ornament" is especially significant; it strengthens the thematic links in the play between ornamentation and immorality. When Mendoza wishes to give Pietro the impression that he is acting in the interests of public morality in exposing Aurelia and Ferneze, it is again the cosmetic apparatus of the court that he singles out for pretended condemnation:

Heard! I hate all women for't: sweet sheets, wax lights, antique bedposts, cambric smocks, villainous curtains, arras pictures, oil'd hinges, and all the tongue-tied lascivious witnesses of great creatures' wantonness!
(I.vii.38-41)

This list, a citation of things misused by man to conceal the evil and give a false appearance of the good, is one of the most memorable in the play in its comic elevation of inanimate objects to the status of mute characters ("tongue-tied lascivious witnesses"). It also unites the physical and the moral in an almost surreal way ("villainous curtains").

What makes Mendoza's condemnation of the physical world ironic as well as comic is the fact that he himself stays in power by manipulations of this kind in both public
and private spheres. It was Mendoza who "made/The cursed match link'd Genoa with Florence" (I.iv.35-36) and the profession of diplomacy has been shown up in the character of Bilioso to be a matter of sartorial and other appearances. In the private sphere Mendoza is well acquainted with "sweet sheets,...oil'd hinges" and the rest. His obvious lechery is shown in his soliloquy on the way to his assignation with Aurelia:

0, how full of ravishing attraction is your pretty, petulant, languishing, lasciviously composed countenance! these amorous smiles, those soul-warming sparkling glances, ardent as those flames that sing'd the world by heedless Phaeton! In body how delicate, in soul how witty, in discourse how pregnant, in life how wary, in favours how judicious, in day how sociable, and in night how— O pleasure unutterable!
(I.v.40-47)

When Mendoza finds himself summarily dismissed without reason he goes to the other extreme, railing against women in a second, contrasted, parody of Hamlet:

rash in asking, desperate in working, impatient in suffering, extreme in desiring, slaves unto appetite, mistresses in dissembling, only constant in unconstancy, only perfect in counterfeiting,...
(I.vi.85-88)

Here we have railing which seems a genuine counterpart to that of "Malevole". Mendoza is in fact vacillating here between two kinds of evil. Similarity with Malevole in any respect does not imply any kinship with good; "Malevole"
is not a character but a disguise, and what distinguishes Altofront from both of them is marital stability in an earthly relationship dependent on heavenly guidance. Mendoza displays two evil extremes; either a disloyal and adulterous relationship motivated by lust and ambition, or, if this is denied him, contemptuous dismissal in the manner of Malevole.

Malevole calls Mendoza "inhuman" (II.v.133), and his inhumanity is most clearly shown in his disloyalty to those whose alliance he has used. Even before the play begins, he has engineered the deposition of his prince by an alliance with the Florentine super-power. His next move is to betray the bed of the new duke as a step towards usurping his throne. The duchess, whose support he has enlisted, is betrayed in her turn as soon as her usefulness is at an end. "Malevole" and the "hermit", sole witnesses to Pietro's supposed death, are independently ordered to poison one another. As he arranges this, Mendoza utters a maxim of realpolitik, one of many which reveal the extent of his alienation from the divinely-inspired social order which Altofront represents:

One stick burns t'other; steel cuts steel alone.
'Tis good trust few; but, O, 'tis best trust none.
(IV.iii.136-137)

The ducal "we" which Mendoza had used somewhat prematurely
in conversation with Malevole while laying plans for the usurpation in the third act, and publicly at the announcement of Pietro's death in Act IV, is removed like the painted smile of a clown as Altofront reveals himself:

ALL: Duke Altofront! Duke Altofront!
MENDOZA:
Are we surpris'd? What strange delusions mock Our senses? Do I dream? or have I dreamt This two days' space? Where am I? (V.vi.111-114)

In this way cosmetic disguise assumed as an impious act of will is routed by integrity concealed for the purpose in temporary anonymity.

The private aspect of disguise in the court is presided over by Maquerelle. She herself goes through a cycle of disguise, exposure, and punishment. To begin with, her real personality is maimed like Mendoza's in that it knows nothing of satisfactory human relationships. Where Mendoza sacrifices them to power, Maquerelle makes them the means of gratifying her avarice. She covers up her avarice and fleshmongering with a smokescreen of references to the attributes she wishes others to think she possesses, swearing "upon my honour" (II.iv.5), "by my fidelity" (IV. 1.56-57), "o' my conscience" (V.iii.62), and even "by my maidenhead" (V.v.24). This last reveals how nobody, not even Maquerelle herself, can take her absurd
pretence seriously. It follows immediately upon a brilliant speech uniting the ideas of fashion and immorality in a string of leering double-entendres:

And, by my troth, beauties, why do you not put you into the fashion? This is a stale cut; you must come in fashion. Look ye, you must be all felt, felt and feather, a felt upon your bare hair. Look ye, these tiring things are justly out of request now. And, do ye hear, you must wear falling bands, you must come into the falling fashion; there is such a deal o' pinning these ruffs, when the fine clean fall is worth all; and again, if you should chance to take a nap in the afternoon, your falling band requires no poting stick to recover his form. Believe me, no fashion to the falling, I say.

(V.v.13-22)

In fact, in spite of being judged along with Mendoza in the final scene, Maquerelle could be said to have no wilfully-assumed disguise on her own part at all. The "honour" which she professes is a legal fiction adopted by everyone at court, paid continual lip-service, but believed in by nobody. A line like "when I heard [Mendoza] wronged your precious sweetness, I was enforced to take deep offense" (I.vi.10-11), where the question is one of infidelity to Mendoza's mistress and not his wife, invokes a factitious concept of decency in just the same way as a movie gangster's euphemistic references to what is 'healthy' or 'smart' behaviour on the part of his victims. Maquerelle's defence of Aurelia is dramatically ironic when we remember that the virtue Maquerelle is
defending is that of adulterous relationship, and this reminds us of what in fact seem to be unsophisticated, undisguised motives on Maquerelle's part. Exposure is hardly relevant in a case where the offender is not conscious of having adopted a pose in the first place.

Maquerelle is motivated simply and solely by avarice. When we first see her she is busily slandering Mendoza in response to Ferneze's lavish bribes, taking toll from Ferneze's lust in a scene full of irony:

MAQUERELLE: Visit her chamber, but conditionally: You shall not offend her bed, by this diamond!
FERNEZE: By this diamond.
MAQUERELLE: Nor tarry any longer than you please, by this ruby!
FERNEZE: By this ruby.
MAQUERELLE: And that the door shall not creak.
FERNEZE: And that the door shall not creak.
MAQUERELLE: Nay, but swear.
FERNEZE: By this purse.
MAQUERELLE: Go to, I'll keep your oaths for you. Remember, visit.

(I.vi.53-62)

She will only part with the recipe for her aphrodisiac posset in exchange for more jewellery, demanded of course in an indirect way:

EMILIA:...The composure, the receipt, how is't?
MAQUERELLE: 'Tis a pretty pearl; [puts it on] by this pearl (how does't with me?) thus it is;...

(II.iv.6-7)

Her living is made from what she can sell: aphrodisiacs, slanders, cosmetics, opportunity for others to indulge
in adultery, and one or two very ingenious inventions for concealing it ("woolen shoes" and "oil'd hinges", for example). Her resentment of Maria's virtue is not the snarling rage or studied indifference of one whose deception has been discovered, but the righteous indignation of one whose livelihood is being threatened:

She was a cold creature ever; she hated monkeys, fools, jesters, and gentlemen ushers extremely; she had the vile trick on't, not only to be truly modestly honourable in her own conscience, but she would avoid the least wanton carriage that might incur suspect, as, God bless me, she had almost brought bed-pressing out of fashion. I could scarce get a fine for the lease of a lady's favor once in a fortnight.

(V. ii. 80-87)

Maquerelle is not so much a cunning intriguer concealing her own activities with an appearance of virtue (though like everyone else she nods fairly often in the direction of "honor"), as the instrument and indeed the embodiment of the deceptions practised by others. Malevole personifies her as "that great bawd, Opportunity" (III. ii. 44). Exposure is not relevant nor reform possible in the case of a character who is only meeting a palpable demand and is not conscious of any personal deception beyond what seems to be conventionally required. Maquerelle's banishment at the end of the play is symbolic; her departure removes the means of deception at the moment when Altofront's reinstatement puts an end to the need for it. Any
reformation will take place not in her but in her clients Bianca and Emilia. Maquerelle has only been acting on behalf of her clients and could be said to be merely the expression of their lusts and their dissembling. Her services are available to anyone who will pay for them— including presumably even the forces of right, although as has been pointed out above, Maquerelle's talents, are for cosmetic concealment and enhancement rather than anonymity for the purpose of observation.

As befits a character described in terms of an attempt to manipulate Fortune and at the same time to benefit from its chances, Maquerelle's nature is linked with themes of appearance and change. According to her, an improvement in an ugly courtier's appearance would more than make up for his lack of heroic qualities:

I think he could hardly draw Ulysses' bow; but, by my fidelity, were his nose narrower, his eyes broader, his hands thinner, his lips thicker, his legs bigger, his feet lesser, his hair blacker, and his teeth whiter, he were a tolerable sweet youth, i'faith.

(IV.1.56-60)

Her counsel of variety in bedfellows: "use your servants as you do your smocks; have many, use one, and change often, for that's most sweet and courtlike" (IV.1.49-51), is not only an attempt to keep up the demand for her "inventions"; it shows Maquerelle acting as a kind of
surrogate Fortune. Any attempt to fix the wheel is, of course, absurd; her immersion in a world of shifting appearances only emphasises her beast-like condition, as noted by "Malevole:" "Ha, thou art a melodious Maquerelle, thou picture of a woman and substance of a beast!" (V.ii.8-9). In the closing scene she is banished to her proper sphere of the "suburbs" (V.vi.156). Her exit from her position of being able to profit from the cosmetic needs of others is accomplished in a grotesque and pathetic image: she knows that people like herself are in danger of being "spited at and thrust to the walls like apricocks" (V.vi.147).

Bilioso, on his own, does not amount to much. He boasts of great physical strength which, he claims, enables him to carry "a lady up and down at arms' end in a platter" and "eat stew'd broth as it comes seething off the fire" (V.i.4-5,13). This vaingloriousness is a complement to his stupidity, and is even unfounded, as Malevole notes: his "strength consist[s] in his breath" (I.iv.45). He is, indeed, so stupid that it cannot be concealed; when his wife Biancha attributes her wit to having been a courtier "thrice two months," Bilioso counters ruefully:

So have I this twenty year, and yet there was a gentleman usher call'd me coxcomb t'other day, and to my face too.

(III.i.81-82)
He wants to dress his fool in velvet like a gentleman. This leaves him no alternative but to have his velvet embroidered to "differ from the fool somewhat" (III.1.66). To the audience, the most noticeable difference between Biliosso and his fool is that Passarello is much more intelligent. The only useful thing that Biliosso knows is the use of flattery to gain power, and this he has learnt from Biancha. Passarello has a shrewd analysis of the situation: "what a natural fool is he that would be a pair of bodies to a woman's petticoat, to be truss'd and pointed to them!" (III.i.139-140).

Biliosso's technique does not consist of flattery alone. He makes the occasional attempt to influence what others think of him when he feels this might be advantageous. He muses on how to make an impression as ambassador:

I'll spit frowns about me, have a strong perfume in my jerkin, let my beard grow to make me look terrible, salute no man beneath the fourth button; and 'twill do excellent.

(III.i.105-108)

Most of the time, however, he says what he thinks people want to hear, and in the case of the Florentine decision to reinstate Malevole, suppresses what he knows will bring down the régime from which he benefits. In nearly all cases, his stupidity prevents him from being convincing. He affects to despise outward show in his choice of clothes for the embassage:
but what was intended to convey that honesty shines through appearance, only serves to remind the audience that Bilioso can dissemble without sartorial aid.

Bilioso, like Maquerelle and Mendoza, is incorrigible because stupid. Maquerelle is incapable of seeing human relations other than as a source of revenue; Mendoza and Bilioso only see them as a source of power and advancement. Because he is incorrigible, exposure is of no value. Three times he is forced by the social barometer to reverse his attitude to Malevole, and each time Malevole taunts him and even leads him on in his faithlessness. Bilioso's first appearance is in search of the malcontent who has unaccountably become the duke's favourite. Malevole immediately encourages him in his fawning:

BILIOSO: I can tell you strange news, but I am sure you know them already: the Duke speaks much good of you.
MALEVOLE: Go to, then; and shall you and I now enter into a strict friendship?
BILIOSO: Second one another?
MALEVOLE: Yes.
BILIOSO: Do one another good offices?
MALEVOLE: Just.

(I.i.v.50-57)

The conversation continues with Malevole initiating the change to "thee" and "thou" (I.i.v.57 63). Later, when Pietro's confidence is transferred from Malevole to
Mendoza, Biliosso spurns Malevole, who in turn reminds him of his earlier fulsome offers of "a mutual-friendly-reciprocal-perpetual kind of steady-unanimous-heartily-leagued" alliance (II.iii.28-29). Biliosso is caught out again when Malevole comes back into favour as Mendoza's accomplice, and this time Malevole's reminders of his earlier remarks are pushed to their logical conclusion as Malevole leads Biliosso on to an outright statement of his policy:

BILIOSO: Malevole -
MALEVOLE: "Hence, ye gross-jaw'd, pleasantly - out, go!"
BILIOSO: Nay, sweet Malevole, since my return I hear you are become the thing I always prophesied would be - an advanced virtue, a worthily-employed faithfulness, a man o'grace, dear friend. Come; what! "Si quoties peccant homines" —if as often as courtiers play the knaves, honest men should be angry—why, look ye, we must colloque sometimes, forswear sometimes.
MALEVOLE: Be damn'd sometimes.
BILIOSO: Right! "Nemo omnibus horis sapit": No man can be honest at all hours; necessity often depraves virtue.
MALEVOLE: I will commend thee to the duke.
BILIOSO: Do let us be friends, man.
MALEVOLE: And knaves, man.
BILIOSO: Right! Let us prosper and purchase; our lordships shall live, and our knavery be forgotten.
MALEVOLE: He that by any ways gets riches, his means never shames him.
BILIOSO: True.
MALEVOLE: For impudence and faithlessness are the main stays to greatness.
BILIOSO: By the lord, thou art a profound lad. (V.iii.68-90)

In the face of such entrenched reliance on "knavery," "means," "impudence," and "faithlessness," the only method
is to change the circumstances which enable or force people to think in this way. Whether Bilioso's maxim "I had rather stand with wrong than fall with right" (IV.v.90) is an example of calculated cunning or of stupidity makes no difference; when Altofront's reinstatement brings back a reign of plain-dealing, flattery will no longer be the currency of the court and Bilioso can be dismissed with a mixture of contempt and indulgence: "Thou art a perfect old knave" (V.vi.158).

Pietro and Aurelia form with Ferneze a transitional group, whose conversion is matched by a change in the kind of disguise they employ. Before the brawl at Aurelia's bedroom door in the second act, the first of these, Ferneze, is an ambitious and lustful young man, mercenary enough, but by no means without a certain trace of heroism:

His love is liveless: that for love fears breath,
The worst that's due to sin, O, would 'twere death!
(I.vi.49-50)

The moment or two that Ferneze spends on Mendoza's sword-point establish him as Mendoza's opponent in three ways: first, Mendoza is revealed to Ferneze as his betrayer; then the shock of Ferneze's punishment combines with Malevole's exhortation to produce self-knowledge and reformation; and finally Mendoza's failure to despatch his victim
preserves Ferneze to put into effect his righteous revenge, 
exchanging the cosmetic disguise of chastity purchased 
from Maquerelle for the anonymous disguise of the final 
masque, where integrity, temporarily disguised, is able to 
intervene in a hypocritical world.

Pietro, though weak and a usurper, has several good 
points which make him redeemable. He describes himself to 
Mendoza as "a most plain-breasted man" (I.vii.30), and it 
is his distaste for flattery which makes him appreciate 
Malevole:

I like him; faith, he gives good intelligence 
to my spirit, makes me understand those weaknesses 
which others' flattery palliates. 
(I.ii.26-28)

He is also anxious to keep bloodshed to a minimum at Ferneze's 
capture in the second act. But it is made quite plain that 
in the case of a usurping duke these are merely weaknesses. 
Mendoza has grasped the principle that "a tyrant's peace 
is blood" (V.vi.37); Pietro has neither right not might 
on his side, and the play shows his dukedom usurped with 
temporary success by one and then reclaimed by the other. 
Like Altofront, Pietro wants "those old instruments of state,/ 
Dissemblance and suspect" (I.iv.9-10), but in a hypo- 
critical court "policy" is sure to be expected of him. 
Mendoza and Aurelia plot to do away with Pietro "before 
he casts a plot" (II.v.75). From Altofront's point of view,
no matter what Pietro's redeeming features may be, the usurper cannot be allowed to remain in peace so long as he remains in power. "Tut, a pitiful surgeon makes a dangerous sore," "Malevole" tells him. "I'll tent thee to the ground....I am vowed to be thy affliction...because you are a usurping duke" (IV.v.64-65, 71-72, 74).

Aurelia's exposure removes Pietro's main support—that of Florence. The loss of his honour and with it his political power leaves him a duke in name only. When he goes hunting in the third act he is suffering a loss of illusions which is very far from courtly cynicism:

O, would I ne'er had known
My own dishonour! Good God, that men should
Desire to search out that which, being found, kills all
Their joy of life! To taste the tree of knowledge,
And then be driven from out paradise!
(III.i.13-18)

"Malevole" trips over the melancholy duke as he dozes on the hunt, and wonders with double meaning "that fools should stumble upon greatness" (III.v.3-4). Mendoza's plot is revealed, but not Altofront's identity. From this scene (III.v.) until the end of the fourth act Pietro remains in an anomalous disguise—he is hidden so that recognition is completely impossible, and his motive is the morally good one of the exposure of Mendoza; but underneath the disguise he still believes himself to be duke. Altofront seems to be at pains not to reveal himself until
Pietro has been forced to realise the full depth of courtly duplicity and the hopelessness of his case. This state of affairs is brought about when Mendoza's plan to have the two witnesses of Pietro's 'death' poison one another is revealed, Aurelia is banished, and the command to reinstate Altofront is brought from Florence. Not until Pietro has been thus induced to "renounce forever regency" (IV.v.119) does Altofront reveal himself and Pietro take his place as one of the protectively disguised masquers bringing order back to a world of appearances and opinion.

Two of the characters of The Malcontent remain in protective disguise for the entire action—Altofront and Passarello.

'Disguise' is perhaps the wrong word for Passarello, since he makes no use of anonymity and mocks the world's "loose vanities" (I.viii.53) without restraint. But as a fool he can tell the truth with impunity and have access both to high politics and backstairs gossip in much the same way as "Malevole." In fact his irresponsibility and self-deprecation constitute a disguise-like anonymity in that he has no personality which can be attacked or held answerable for his actions. In this he is on the side of truth; at any rate he shows no mercy on the follies of the Genoese court. The "knightly complements" of a
carpet-knight, he observes, consist of "jingling of his gilt spurs, advancing his bush-colored beard and taking tobacco" (I.viii.27-29). Maquerelle's inventions for concealing adultery are complemented by the "painting" (V.1.23) which enhances the daytime appearance of ladies like "Madam Floria," whose toilette Passarello describes in suitably wordly terms:

I found her repairing her face today. The red upon the white showed as if her cheeks should have been served in for two dishes of barberries in stewed broth, and the flesh to them a woodcock.

(III.1.133-136)

Passarello includes Bilioso among his targets. In joking with his master, he despairs of ever becoming a "rich knave, for I can flatter no man" (V.1.50), and the rebuke is of course lost on that rich, knavish flatterer.

Malevole speaks with approval of Passarello's criticisms:

O world most vile, when thy loose vanities,
Taught by this fool, do make the fool seem wise!
(I.viii.53-54)

but Altofront has principles which prevent his sharing Passarello's knowledgable acceptance of the ways of the court, in which he takes an adept's pride: "knights and clowns and knaves and all share me; the court cannot possibly be without me" (I.viii.58-60). When malcontent
confronts fool in the fifth act, Passarello joins Malevole in pledging Altofront. Malevole, however, refuses to join Passarello's pledge to Maquerelle, and Passarello remonstrates:

Not pledge Madam Maquerelle! Why, then, will I spew up your lord again with this fool's finger. (V.ii.28-29)

whereupon Malevole complies. If it means anything at all, this punctilious foolery can only be a hint that some compromise with appearances is necessary for the tuler, just as some submission to authority is for the irresponsible critic. Altofront knows this and tempers his justice at the end of the play; the lives of Maquerelle and Mendoza are spared and Bilioso, apparently, is even allowed to stay on at court. Passarello, for his part, compromises when necessary as cheerfully as his master Bilioso, though with wry self-deprecation:

PASSARELLO: ... I'll drink to the health of Madam Maquerelle.
MALEVOLE: Why, thou wast wont to rail upon her.
PASSARELLO: Ay, but since I borrow'd money of her, I'll drink to her health now, as gentlemen visit brokers, or as knights send venison to the city, either to take up more money or to procure longer forbearance.

(V.ii.15-20)
"Why, man, we are all philosophical monarchs/Or natural fools," says Altofront in conference with Celso (I.iv.32-33). If Passarello is a good example of the second, Altofront is surely the first. As a renaissance "philosophical monarch," he embodies the idea of rule in accordance with the divine will, and the play recounts his re-establishment of this will in the temporal world by the use of its own deceptive nature—in disguise as "Malevole." Even at the beginning of the action Altofront is well aware that the weakness which has cost him his throne is a high-mindedness which fails to take human frailty into account.

I wanted those old instruments of state, Dissemblance and suspect. I could not time it, Celso; My throne stood like a point in middest of a circle, To all of equal nearness; bore with none; Reign'd all alike; so slept in fearless virtue, Suspectless, too suspectless.  
(I.iv.9-14)

"Malevole" is already established in the Genoese court when the action begins; Altofront has adapted himself to "dissemblance and suspect," and is using them for his own righteous purposes. Rather than reduce Altofront's stature by having him learn this lesson painfully over five acts, Marston shows him waiting with dignity behind his frantic disguise for the moment when "we may once unmask our brows" (III.ii.53).

That "Malevole" is not the real Altofront may easily be seen. Pietro tells us that "Malevole's"
highest delight is to procure others' vexation, and therein he thinks he truly serves heaven; for 'tis his position, whosoever in this earth can be contented is a slave and damn'd; therefore does he afflict all in that to which they are most affected.

(I.11.20-24)

This cannot be the Altofront whose noble maxims ring with ideas of order and obedience: "no disastrous chance can ever move him/ That leaveth nothing but a heaven above him" (V.iv.88-89), or "When they observe not heaven's impos'd conditions, / They are no kings, but forfeit their commissions" (V.vi.143-144).

"Malevole" is as it were an expression of Altofront's new-found need to meet the shifty and sordid world on its own terms in order to reinstate his own righteous rule. The "discord" which is "very manna" to Malcontents (I.iv.38) benefits Altofront because it enables him to ride out the storm until he can regain his throne; but he endures it, as he endures his disguise, with considerable impatience. Altofront shows signs of finding the "Malveole" pose a strain to keep up. He breaks off a bout of raillery with Maquerelle to turn aside and express the feelings aroused by the sight of Maria's steadfastness under oppression:

O God, how loathsome this toying is to me!
That a duke should be forc'd to fool it! Well, "Stultorum plena sunt omnia": better play the fool lord than be the fool lord.

(V.iii.41-44)

He sustains himself with the knowledge that "time will come/
When wonder of thy error will strike dumb/Thy bezzl'd sense," as he allows himself the satisfaction of telling the court once (II.iii.14-16), and with the impetus of his original plan:

   Hope, hope, that never forsak' st the wretched' st man,  
   Yet bidd' st me live and lurk in this disguise!   
   (I.iv.29-30)

His disguise puts into practice his plan of fostering "discord," which "to malcontents is very manna" (I.iv.38), so that his natural superiority will allow him to rise to the top over the ruin of those who like Mendoza exploit "honest fools to maintain crafty knaves" (II.v.98). Part of this plan is to cause Pietro as much uneasiness as possible:

   The heart's disquiet is revenge most deep:  
   He that gets blood, the life of flesh but spills,  
   But he that breaks heart's peace, the dear soul kills.  
   (I.iii.155-157)

The "free speech" (I.iii.160) which the disguise allows him is also the bait to entice Mendoza into acts of "policy" which will ultimately bring him down:

   O, my disguise fools him most powerfully!  
   For that I seem a desperate malcontent,  
   He fain would clasp with me,  
   (III.iii.32-34)

and the unholy alliance takes the form of Altofront allowing Mendoza enough rope to hang himself by appearing to help
his plans, letting him reveal the next move, and sabotaging that while continuing the appearance of co-operation. Altofront's final step in this process is to offer Mendoza a box supposed to contain a deadly vapour—one of the army of things which march with a life of their own through the play. True to type, Mendoza uses it on "Malevole," thinking he has disposed of the last witness of his crimes. In a moment of stupendous theatricality, "Malevole" comes back to life after Mendoza's gloating exit. In the same moment he demonstrates the basis of Mendoza's power in a few words of ironic triumph: "poison'd with an empty box!" (V.iv.83). The feeble trickery of the box would remind the audience of the other stage properties which have been associated with Mendoza's regime during the action—the halberds, the "virtue"-less ring, and the sword with which he wounds Ferneze, and sum them all up as manifestations of the same impious emptiness.

The effect on Mendoza of "Malevole's" return from the dead is delayed for the final masque. The moment of revelation is used by Altofront to preside over the play's resolution and by Marston to make a further comment on the nature of theatrical illusion. The four stages of the unmasking of Malevole/Altofront/Burbage, all occurring within the last few moments of the play, seem to be designed as a kind of disguise cadenza by the soloist. As the "Genoan duke" (V.vi.55) un masks at the climax of the dance,
Mendoza calls "Malevole!" (V.vi.108) in recognition of the figure who "environ" him and "bends his pistol on him" (V.vi.108 s.d.). Then, Altofront corrects him with "No!" (V.vi.109) as he removes the second layer of disguise, perhaps turning a cloak inside out, or displaying a ducal ring which has not lost its "virtue." Finally, after the judgment of Mendoza, Maquerelle, and Bilioso, duke becomes actor as Burbage steps forward with:

And as for me, I here assume my right,
To which I hope all is pleased. To all, good night.
(V.vi.161-162)
CHAPTER IV
THE DUTCH COURTESAN

The Dutch Courtesan, a Blackfriars play performed and published in 1605, concerns, as the Fabulae Argumentum prefixed to it tells us, "the difference betwixt the love of a courtesan and a wife." Malheureux, a self-professed "man of snow" (II.1.82), accompanies his newly-betrothed friend Freevill on a last visit to the dutch courtesan Franceschina. His restraint is not proof against Franceschina's unexpected beauty, wit, and accomplishment, and he falls passionately in love with her. The slighted Franceschina, for her part, plans to revenge herself on Freevill and Beatrice and succeeds in making the infatuated Malheureux agree to kill his friend as the price of her favours. He is to bring Franceschina Beatrice's ring from the dead man's finger as token. Malheureux cools down sufficiently to confess the plot to Freevill, however, and the two friends conceive a plan to outwit Franceschina. They decide to stage a duel in such a way that Freevill will be presumed dead; then he is to lend the ring to Malheureux and go

1John Marston, The Dutch Courtesan, ed. M. L. Wine (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1965), p.3. All references to The Dutch Courtesan are to this edition.
into hiding at an agreed rendezvous until Franceschina has kept her side of the bargain. Unfortunately for Malheureux, neither the Dutch Courtesan nor her one-time lover act according to plan. While Freevill disguises himself as a roisterer in order to supervise his friend's initiation, Franceschina sends the expectant Malheureux away "to eat a caudle of cock-stones" (IV.iii.31) as she makes off for Beatrice's home, picking up the disguised Freevill for escort. She denounces Freevill as unfaithful, showing as proof Beatrice's ring, and offers to bring Freevill's mourning father where he can overhear Malheureux confess to the murder. Freevill allows events to bring Malheureux to the gallows' foot before intervening to end with a single revelation Malheureux' danger, Franceschina's career, and his own uneasiness at the misery of the constant Beatrice. The subplot concerns the cheating of the hypocritical vintner Mulligrub by Cocledemoy, and there is a good deal of witty dialogue between Beatrice's sister Crispinella and her admirers.

The many disguises in The Dutch Courtesan can perhaps best be considered as falling into the two main categories of anonymity and cosmetic disguise. Disappearances into anonymity are achieved by the conventional means of Renaissance drama—Cocledemoy and Freevill, for instance, both disguise themselves with changes of accent and of clothing, while retaining at all times their own personalities
and motives. Cocledemoy's disguises involve the additional use of characteristic properties such as barber's tools and a pedlar's tray or basket. A further convention, not involving any disguise in the physical sense, is the common one utilized by Freevill of planting the story of his own death as the prelude to his return in disguise. In general it will be seen that in The Dutch Courtesan such changes are made in accordance with aims which in terms of the play's ethos would be found good.

Cosmetic disguises range from self-delusion, as in the case of Malheureux, through a cynical rationalisation amounting to hypocrisy, as with the Mulligrubs, to consciousness of a thoroughgoing evil nature, as in the case of Franceschina. There is a tendency for disguises of this kind to be made the subject of exposure, censure, and reform.

Both types of disguise vary in their means, purposes, and effects, and can perhaps be most usefully surveyed through their exponents.

In the main plot only one character, Freevill, makes use of anonymity. His character remains fairly stable throughout the play; the audience's interest is centred on the reform of Malheureux. It may be of value to see what kind of person Freevill is before we proceed to the nature and purpose of his disguise.
Previous criticism has concentrated on making him occupy one or other end of a simple moral scale, with a rake at one end and an ideal natural man at the other. Theodore Spencer in 1934 saw him as "the cynical man of pleasure, who finding no standards in a corrupt and degrading world, seeks only a selfish satisfaction." This view was still held in 1957, when John J. O'Connor found Marston's obsession with "moral propriety" had made him "resort to the expedient of having Freevill --of all people--teach Malheureux a lesson." A further attempt to fit the play into a moral pattern at the expense of the characters' dramatic coherence was made by Harry Keylishian in 1967, when eagerness to see The Dutch Courtesan as an answer to the "oversimplified, oversentimental presentation of human nature" of Dekker's The Honest Whore (Pt. I.) made Freevill into "a licentious young man."^}

The reformed nature of Freevill was pointed out by Robert K. Presson in 1956^ and Gustav Cross in 1960. Freevill

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4"Dekker's Whore and Marston's Courtezan," ELN, IV (1967), 266.


is from the play's outset completely committed to Beatrice, "whose chaste eyes ... Have gag'd [his] soul to her enjoyings" (II.i.3-5) and who makes him see his previous adventures as "weak underbranches/Of base affections and unfruitful heats" (I.ii.6-7). As for Francheschina, Freevill says "I lov'd her with my heart until my soul showed me the imperfection of my body, and placed my affection on a lawful love, my modest Beatrice" (I.ii.89-92). But even though reformed, Freevill is no plaster saint. Such success as he enjoys in overcoming his human frailty is based on a first-hand knowledge and a cool evaluation of that frailty. He doubts the efficacy of Malheureux' abstinence not because he is a kind of forerunner of a Restoration rakehell, but because his own regular life is the result of a decision based on practical experience. The worldly wisdom of his remark, "He that is wise pants on a private breast" (II.i.37) should be contrasted with the innocent Malheureux' horror at the unsuspected power of his own passions:

Now, shame forsake me, whither am I fallen!
A creature of a public use!
(II.i.83-84)

where in the same scene we are given the difference between the two friends in a nutshell--Freevill secure in his choice of a "private" partner and Malheureux bewildered in his loss of self-control in a relationship with a "public" one.
The plot of Freevill's disguise has a kind of overture. The episode of Freevill's eavesdropping in I.ii is almost a 40-line disguise-plot play (without physical disguise), with supposed absence, observation, the return to confront the victim with his faults, and the final sententia, "He that 'gainst Nature would seem wise is worst" (I.ii.161). In the remainder of the play Freevill is to present this very theme in a more dangerous version of the same cycle of events: disappearance to help Malheureux' story with Franceschina, followed by a return, this time in disguise, to take part in the action, followed by eventual exposure and censure in the final scene of the play.

Freevill's purpose in this scene has no doubt been dictated by the argument between himself and Malheureux in the first scene of the play on the subject of Franceschina. Freevill had put the question "Since, then, beauty, love, and woman are good, how can the love of a woman's beauty be bad?" (I.i.133-134), and expressed his intention to make Malheureux "repent" (I.i.139). The scene concluded with Malheureux' grudging and self-righteous

Well, I'll go to make her loathe the shame she's in.
The sight of vice augments the hate of sin.
(I.i.152-153)

which Freevill echoed with the sceptical comment "Very fine, perdy!" (I.i.155). It follows that the purpose behind
Freevill's eavesdropping, where he makes an exit and then re-enters and "seems to overhear Malheureux" (I.ii.123), is the common one of observation on the victim's true nature. This is an example of anonymity being achieved by supposed absence rather than a change of clothing. Revelation is a simple matter of stepping out from his hiding place and showing that he has been eavesdropping by repeating the victim's words. Freevill chooses to demonstrate in compressed form Malheureux' progression from rectitude: "the sight of vice augments the hate of sin" (I.i.153 & 154, I.ii.149), through conflict: "Oh, that to love should be or shame or sin!" (I.ii.136, 153) to a recklessness which far exceeds Freevill's earlier incontinence: "Let colder eld the strong'st objections move" (I.ii.142, 155) and "No love's without some lust, no life without some love" (I.ii.143, 157). This repetition is the equivalent of a visual casting-off of disguise when the victim is given to understand that his true nature has been overheard by his censurer. The verbal demonstration of Malheureux' inconsistency makes his plight clear to him, but effects no cure. "I do malign my creation that I am subject to passion," he tells Freevill later as he warns him of Franceschina's intentions, "I must enjoy her " (III.i.241-242). It is this failure of mere verbal demonstration of Malheureux' faults that prompts Freevill to initiate the full disguise plot. He hatches the plot to "make show of falling out"
(III.1.245), allow himself to be thought dead, give his ring to Malheureux, all in order to allow Malheureux access to Francheschina. But as they part, Freevill says:

Virtue, let sleep thy passions;
What old times held as crimes are now but fashions,

and it seems that what began as a mere device to accommodate his friend's importunate lust is being affected by resentment at the growing follies of the age. When the time to enact the deception arrives, in IV.1., Freevill's purpose of merely helping out his friend has become more openly didactic: "I'll by thy friend,/But not thy vice's" (IV.1.32-33).

With the new purpose of reform added to that of aid, Freevill's method changes accordingly. Where mere disappearance was all that was necessary before, he now has to adopt a specific disguise for a specific purpose. "Close I'll withdraw," he apostrophises the departed Malheureux, "And leave thee with two friends--a whore and knave" (IV.ii.37-39). The "knave" is Freevill himself disguised as Don Dubon, Franceschina's pander. His disguise presumably consists of a change of cloak or hat, and undoubtedly of accent, since he is now a "stranger," bearing a French name. His behaviour is described by Mary Faugh at IV.iii.36-37: "He swears valiantly, kicks a bawd right virtuously, and protests with an empty pocket right desperately." This disguise enables Freevill to watch the intrigue closely, a
necessary precaution since it is his intention to let Malheureux sink into "the wildest of dangers" (IV.ii.35), and he will have to be on hand to save him.

Freevill's disguise as a "stranger" seems to have been adopted simply to get him within eavesdropping distance of the interview between Franceschina and Malheureux. When he is hired by Mary Faugh to squire Franceschina an unforeseen opportunity presents itself for a closeness to the action. It is impossible to tell how soon Freevill learns of Franceschina's schemes. He is "beneath" while Franceschina is raging and could quite conceivably overhear her say

"Now ick sall revange! Hay, begar! me sall tartar de whole generation! Mine brain vork it. Freevill is dead; Malheureux sall hang; and mine rival, Beatrice, ick sall make run mad." (IV.iii.28-30)

But whether he learns of this under Franceschina's window a few seconds before he is hired, or whether he only finds out the extent of Franceschina's viciousness during the interview at Sir Hubert Subboys' in the next scene, the fact is that he is caught in a situation of his own devising. To remain in disguise means that he has to watch Franceschina's torture of Beatrice at first hand; to reveal himself means losing the chance of teaching Malheureux his lesson. His resolve is sufficiently shaken by Beatrice's pathetic "Freevill is more than dead; he is unkind" (IV.iv.71) to make him decide "I will go and reveal myself"
(IV.iv.78); but he decides to persevere in his primary purpose. He manages to accustom himself to his role of jealous lover—a very common theme in disguise-plot plays—by the hope that "grief endears love" (IV.iv.79). Freevill reveals himself to Beatrice as soon as he can, remorseful for the "indiscreet trials" (V.ii.44) he has subjected her to, and confessing, "Only I presum'd to try your faith too much,/For which I most am grieved" (V.ii.56-57). A measure of comfort for his conscience is provided by the thought that "it is much joy to think on sorrows past" (V.ii.65). The necessity for remaining in disguise so long is dictated by the lesson Freevill wants to teach Malheureux. To force him from "the truer danger" (V.iii.43) of utter loss through his infatuation with "this damnation" (V.iii.40), it is necessary to allow Franceschina to pursue her plan to the point of fruition, where only it can be exposed. "I wrought the feigned," explains Freevill in the last scene,

suffering this fair devil
In shape of woman to make good her plot;  
And, knowing that the hook was deeply fast,  
I gave her line at will till, with her own vain strivings,  
See here she's tired.  
(V.iii.44-48)

At the moment of revelation, Freevill's echo of Malheureux' last "Farewell!" (V.iii.32) is significant, for by the removal of his disguise he is disposing at one stroke not only of Franceschina, but also of the old Malheureux who
was helpless in the trap his lust had led him into. Freevill himself, as well as Franceschina and Malheureux, has learnt a lesson about the dangers of intrigue and the power of constancy from "these strange disguisings" (V.ii.63).

The sub-plot, just like the main plot, has one character who retains his personality while undergoing name-disguise. It is in the character of Cocledemoy that the emphasis on the physical, external aspects of name-disguise is most strong. Cocledemoy goes through no less than five disguises in the course of the play, all involving the use of distinguishing stage-properties, all (except perhaps the "French pedlar" of III.11) with appropriate changes of costume, and two of them involving disguised speech.

Cocledemoy appears in so many metamorphoses that his basic character (one is almost tempted to say 'if any') is hard to establish. In appearance he is "a thick, elderly, stub-bearded fellow" (II.iii.101).

Freevill describes Cocledemoy as "that man of much money, some wit, but less honesty, cogging Cocledemoy" (I.i.10-11). In all likelihood he is a professional thief who means business but is gifted with a ready wit, a sense of humour, and a remarkable talent for mimicry. Indeed, his justification for relieving Mulligrub of his property.

In V.ii.126-136 Tysefew's snobbery is revealed by his refusal to be seen in the company of the disguised Freevill.
to wring the withers of my gouty, barm'd, spigot-frigging jumbler of elements, Mulligrub, I hold it as lawful as sheep-shearing, taking eggs from hens, caudles from asses, or butter'd shrimps from horses-- they make no use of them, were not provided for them,

(III.i.i.37-42)

is substantially the same as that of another incorrigible thief, Gay's Filch: "Where is the injury in taking from another, what he hath not the heart to make use of?"  

In this statement of purpose Cocledemoy reveals a fundamental difference between his intentions and Freevill's. Where everything Freevill does is subordinated to the primary purpose of making Malheureux see sense, Cocledemoy's disguises do not involve the successive testing, exposure, punishment and reform of his victims. Cocledemoy goes straight to the point, treats his dupes as already judged, and proceeds to enrich himself and administer punishment at the same time.

Cocledemoy's first disguise is that of a barber. Claiming to "have an odd jest to trim Master Mulligrub for a wager... nothing, faith, but a jest," he bribes Holifernes Reinscure to lend him his barber's equipment, puts on a false beard and his barber's apron and, for fear his "scurvy tongue" will discover him, changes his accent to that of a "Northern barber" (II.i.203). When he

eventually appears at the Mulligrubs', his original name of Gudgeon has become "Andrew Shark" (II.iii.16). He blinds Mulligrub with lather and gets away with the fifteen pounds set aside for replacing the nest of goblets Cocledemoy had stolen before the play began. In III.ii he appears in another change of costume and of accent, and carrying camphor and soap as a "French pedlar" (III.ii, first stage direction). In this disguise he overhears the arrangements made to deliver the standing cup which Mulligrub has bought from Burnish the goldsmith. His third disguise is to pass himself off to Mrs. Mulligrub as Master Burnish's messenger. His plan is to relieve Mistress Mulligrub of the cup by pretending that Mulligrub intended to have it engraved. He invents an occasion to display the cup—a dinner-party with Burnish—and in order to give credence to this story, he has brought a jowl of salmon. But his most spectacular deception is the "token" he offers the suspicious Mistress Mulligrub: "the same token that he [Mulligrub] was dry-shaved this morning." (III.iii.38-39). Cocledemoy's audacity in vouching for one disguise by reference to another is one of the peaks of his formidable ingenuity. This episode makes him richer by fifteen pounds' worth of silver cup for which he has already had the money, and by means of a well-timed return and a change of place for the fictitious dinner-party, he manages to reclaim his capital outlay, the jowl of salmon, too.
Even when Cocledemoy, appearing for once in his regular clothes, is recognised and pursued by Mulligrub, he makes an unintentional transfer of clothing work in his favour. In escaping from Mulligrub's grasp, Cocledemoy has left his cloak in Mulligrub's hands. If a knave is in a tight corner where he is unable to appear honest, at least he can make his accuser look like a knave. Cocledemoy, challenged by the watch, imputes a disguise to Mulligrub, claiming to have been robbed of his cloak by "a false knave in the habit of a vintner" (IV.v.24-25). Of course, Mulligrub is caught red-handed with Cocledemoy's cloak, and is put in the stocks, where he is visited by Cocledemoy in the guise of a Bellman (IV.v.). In return for Mulligrub's purse, Cocledemoy promises to clear Mulligrub with the watch, and proceeds to inform them that Mulligrub is a "strong thief" (IV.v.105). Mulligrub is committed to Newgate, and the stage is set for Cocledemoy's fifth and final disguise. Exchanging his Bellman's cloak and lantern for a Sergeant's buff jerkin and halberd, he extracts confession and forgiveness from Mulligrub before revealing himself in answer to Mulligrub's plea: "If he would come forth he might save me, for he only knows the why and the wherefore" (V.iii.120-121).

It is noticeable that every one of Cocledemoy's tricks involves his self-revelation, leaving the spluttering Mulligrub to await the next trick, and indeed this succession of independent comic scenes is one way of ensuring
Cocledemoy's relative harmlessness, and of keeping his antics in the realm of comedy. The cumulative movement of the Freevill-Malheureux disguise plot, where the disguise has to be maintained to the scaffold's foot before the slip-knot holding the whole play together can be unravelled, makes Cocledemoy's antics seem petty by comparison. Yet the sub-plot also has a certain rise in intensity. Mulligrub's financial losses grow greater and greater, and his final lesson, like Malheureux', is learnt at the point of death.

The result of Cocledemoy's series of disguises on Mulligrub is twofold. "I confess, I confess, and I forgive as I would be forgiven!" says Mulligrub (V.iii.113). The "sins and iniquities" to which he is confessing are catalogued by Cocledemoy:

You have been a broacher of profane vessels; you have made us drink of the juice of the whore of Babylon. ...You ha' brought in Popish wines, Spanish wines, French wines, tam Marti quam Mercurio, both muscadine and malmsey, to the subversion, staggering, and sometimes overthrow of many a good Christian. You ha' been a great jumbler. (V.iii.103-110)

—in other words, Mulligrub has been guilty of hypocrisy in religion, sex, and business. He has been a puritan selling "Popish wines," a family man providing aphrodisiac stimulants for the "overthrow of many a good Christian" and a trader who has been a "great jumbler."
The amnesty extracted by Cocledemoy shows the same repetition of the victim's words that characterised the Freevill-Malheureux exchange in I.ii. Cocledemoy lets Mulligrub know that he has overheard his threats at IV.v.11-14, that Cocledemoy should be "hang'd in lousy linen" (V.iii.124) and that Mulligrub would "piss on his grave" (V.iii.125).

Cocledemoy's treatment of Mistress Mulligrub is closer to the way Freevill induces self-realisation in Malheureux than it is to the series of punishments of Mulligrub. Cocledemoy uses his disguise of a constable to trap her into an 'arrangement' in the last act:

COCLEDEMOY: ... I pray you hear me in private. I am a widower, and you are almost a widow; shall I be welcome to your houses, to your tables, and your other things?
MISTRESS MULLIGRUB: I have a piece of mutton and a featherbed for you at all times.
(V.iii.89-94)

and then reveals himself, to her frustration and discomfiture: "I could weep, too, but God knows for what!" (V.iii.146).

The comic harmlessness of Cocledemoy is further maintained by his avoiding punishment by prudent restitution of all that he has stolen. Knaves are punished at the conclusion of a comedy, so Cocledemoy declares himself

no knave; for, observe, honest Cocledemoy restores whatsoever he has got, to make you
He gains further comic immunity from punishment by joining in the general merriment begun by Sir Hubert with "Why then, all's well!" (V.iii.144) and bidding himself "most heartily welcome to your merry nuptials and wanton jigga-joggies" (V.iii.152-154), where we may be sure that his wit will enliven the proceedings considerably.

Cocledemoy, who seems to be incapable of telling the truth, embodies that deceptiveness of appearances which is the downfall and frustration of those who rely on rigid theoretical systems to live by, like Malheureux with his untried virtue.

As the scourge of the Mulligrubs' pretentious hypocrisy and systematic dishonesty Cocledemoy not only appears in a flickering array of disguises, like a character in an animated cartoon who pops up impossibly around every corner to trick his victim, but he also brings with him a sense of physical objects in a state of flux. Nothing, it seems, associated with him can remain the same for long. A nest of goblets, stolen just before the action of the play begins, are expected to be "hammered out well enough" to prevent recognition (I.i.5-6). Immediately after his theft of the goblet in III.iii., he attempts to exchange it for Franceschina's favours, using a canting nonsense language where no disguise is even necessary (IV.iii.10-13). He uses
two names where one would do for the shaving of Mulligrub in II.i. and iii., and while "dry-shaving" him regales him not with imaginary backstairs court gossip, as one would expect, but with imaginary

serpents, which no sooner were beheld but they turn'd to mastiffs, which howl'd; those mastiffs instantly turn'd to cocks, which crowed; those cocks in a moment were chang'd to bears, which roar'd; which bears are at this hour to be yet seen in Paris Garden, living upon nothing but toasted cheese and green onions.

(II.iii.47-52)

It seems that the character of Cocledemoy is designed to provide a farcical parallel to the slightly more serious preoccupation of the main plot—the testing of ideals by their ability to withstand the misleading appearances of the physical world.

The Malheureux who proclaims with relief at the conclusion of the action, "I am myself" (V.iii.61) is not the same as the Malheureux who first adopts his disguise. The effect of Freevill's intrigue on Malheureux is not one of revealing the hypocrisy of a deliberately-adopted pose, but rather of making him find a basis for personality in the sordid and dangerous real world. From the beginning to the end of the play Malheureux' seriousness is apparent, and this can be assumed to be a reliable guide to his nature. Although at the beginning of the play we see him drinking companionably enough with Freevill, Tysefew, and Caqueteur,
and joining in the good-natured mockery of Mulligrub:

Advance thy snout; do not suffer thy sorrowful nose to drop on thy Spanish leather jerkin, most hardly-honest Mulligrub.

(I.1.2-3)

it is left to Malheureux to ask the prosaic question, "How was the plate lost?" (I.1.9), and it is he who, preacher-like, gives the company a gratuitous reminder of hell-fire: "Let him have day till then [the last day], and he will wink with both his eyes" (I.1.24-25). The character is established as a rather humourless one who can go through the motions of jocular repartee, but fails to conceal the seriousness beneath the surface. As he himself confesses (II.1.107-108): "A kind of flat ungracious modesty,/An insufficient dullness, stains my 'haviour." When he announces his intention of acting as Freevill's watchdog it is hard not to dismiss the element of levity in his chiding:

Not so, trust me, I must bring my friend home: I dare not give you up to your own company; I fear the warmth of wine and youth will draw you to some common house of lascivious entertainment,

(I.1.55-58)

and what remains is misunderstanding and fear, which is built up in the ensuing dialogue until it reaches the horrified incredulity with which Malheureux finally brings himself to utter Freevill's proposed destination: "Not to
a courtesan?" (I.1.78). When in the next scene Malheureux is brought face to face with Franceschina, it becomes apparent that he has never seen an attractive courtesan before, so inconsistent is the reality with his preconceived ideas:

FREEVILL: See, sir, this is she.
MALHEUREUX: This?
FREEVILL: This.
MALHEUREUX: A courtesan?
(I.11.74-77)

The purely theoretical and untried nature of Malheureux' ideas on what a courtesan is like is an example of the absence in his professed ideals of any grounding in everyday reality; and both the inexperience and the unquestioning reliance on strictness are shown in II.1. as being connected with a certain stupidity. Freevill tries to explain to the already infatuated Malheureux that

Incontinence will force a continence;
Heat wasteth heat, light defaceth light;
Nothing is spoiled but by his proper might,
(II.1.120-122)

but realises at once that paradox is not likely to appeal to the prejudiced Malheureux: "This is something too weighty for thy floor" (II.1.123) Malheureux' contact with Franceschina shows two things about him; that he has animal passions like Freevill, and that the rectitude with which he attempts to restrain them is based on ignorance of life. His upright disguise gives him the self-esteem
to exist in society, but based as it is on the denial of the versatility, improvisation, and free will shown by his friend, it cuts him off from 'real' life and he needs to be taught what it is like.

The disguise which he puts up is that of an apparent moral stability which protects him from the world and at the same time attempts to conceal his lack of knowledge of it. The sermon which Malheureux delivers to Freevill during the discussion which leads to his first meeting with Franceschina is a case in point:

Dear my lov'd friend, let me be full with you. Know, sir, the strongest argument that speaks Against the soul’d eternity is lust, That wise man's folly and the fool's wisdom: But to grow wild in loose lasciviousness, Given up to heat and sensual appetite, Nay, to expose your health and strength and name, Your precious time, and with that time the hope Of due preferment, advantageous means Of any worthy end, to the stale use, The common bosom, of a money-creature, One that sells human flesh, a mangonist! (I.i.80-91)

where no argument is presented, except in terms of clichés--lust is a reminder of mortality, lust is folly, lust is a waste of time which could be more profitably spent; where no knowledge of the world is presented, and where the power of invective replaces the power of persuasion: "... a money-creature, /One that sells human flesh, a mangonist!" That Malheureux is not even conscious that his strictness is a façade at all is shown by his confidence that Franceschina's
wickedness will be so obvious to the senses that the meeting can only strengthen his resistance and even increase the chances of her conversion:

Well, I'll go to make her loathe the shame she's in. The sight of vice augments the hate of sin. (I.i.152-153)

and he is quite sure, even after he, a "man of snow" (II.1.82), has fallen in love with a strumpet, that he can restrain himself from sin: "I would but embrace her, hear her speak, and at the most but kiss her" (II.1.102-103).

Malheureux' confidence in the efficacy of his defences is based on an assumption which the play is concerned to deny; that things are what they seem. Malheureux "never saw a sweet face vicious" (I.ii.132) before he met Franceschina; and in the scene where she sets him on to murder Freevill he again naively lets his attitude to her depend on her beauty: "he saw thee not that left thee" (II.ii.106).

Malheureux is brought to the point at the end of the play where he can say "I am myself" (V.iii.61), by three stages. In the first, Freevill deliberately places him in a situation which his theoretical morality has not prepared him for—meeting a courtesan who makes an impression on him not of venality and corruption, but of wit, beauty and accomplishment, and this destroys his defence against the world of brute desire. In the second, Malheureux is consciously trapped in his own lust, and during this stage
Freevill offers temporary easement, while laying plans for the third stage, that is, the forming of Malheureux' character by exposure to the furthest and most deadly effects that lust can have on a personality unfortified by Freevill's type of common sense.

Malheureux' self-sufficiency cracks as soon as Freevill confronts him with Franceschina. His moral strictness becomes a cause for regret rather than a source of strength: "Oh, that to love should be or shame or sin!" (I.ii.136). Later, Freevill reminds the infatuated Malheureux that a sense of impregnable virtue is bound to precede a lapse: "consider man furnished with omnipotence, and you overthrow him" (III.1.238-239).

Malheureux's imprisonment in a lust which he consciously knows to be morally debilitating—"sin of cold blood," as he calls it (II.ii.221)—follows on the collapse of his defence against the real world. He describes Franceschina in terms not inappropriate to his own lack of self-confidence: "I find a mind courageously vicious may put on a desperate security, but can never be blessed with a firm enjoying and self-satisfaction" (III.1.215-217), and he is conscious of the loss of what he had thought was a stable personality; he answers Freevill's query "You ha' vowed my death?" with "My lust, not I, before my reason would" (III.1.233-234), and when about to put Freevill's plan into practice he declares: "I am not now myself, no man" (IV.ii.29).
By joining forces with Freevill in the pretended quarrel (for which the masque in IV.i. is an appropriate background) and in the loan of the ring, Malheureux abandons himself completely to a world of appearances where his lack of experience and loss of sustaining rectitude leave him totally unable to look after himself. Offered an apparently foolproof deception which will enable him to enjoy Franceschina without having to kill Freevill, he in reality remains a slave to Franceschina's outward beauty and the victim of the further deception by which Freevill works his benevolent plot on him. Not until Malheureux has been brought to realize how dangerous involvement on a purely animal level with Franceschina can be, does he learn that neither "cold blood" on one hand nor "inborn heat" like that of the birds (II.i.73) on the other are appropriate in the everyday world, and comes to realise what Freevill knew at the beginning of the play: "not he that's passionless, but he 'bove passion's wise" (II.ii.223), and "philosophy and nature are all one" (II.i.114).

Malheureux could be said to reverse the usual pattern of subjects of observation in disguise in that instead of being a worldly wise figure putting on a hypocritical appearance of innocence, he is an innocent disguising himself with a mask of knowledge. What is more, the discoveries in the play are made principally by the subject and not the disguised observer, and the discoveries Malheureux makes are about himself.
Franceschina's revengefulness is the direct result of Freevill casting her off. When she hears of it in II.ii. she rages "with her hair loose, chafing" (first stage-direction), and is immediately planning revenge:

Ick sall be reveng'd! Do ten thousand hell damn me, ick sall have the rogue troat cut; and his love, and his friend, and all his affinity sall smart, sall die, sall hang! Now legion of devil seize him! De gran' pest, St. Anthony's fire, and de hot Neapolitan poc rot him!

(II.ii.41-45)

Her disguise is put into operation at once; immediately following her impassioned vow of revenge, Freevill enters with Malheureux and is greeted with:

O mine seet, dear'est, kindest, mine loving! 
O mine tousand, ten tousand, delicated, petty seetart! Ah, mine aderlievest affection!

(II.ii.47-49)

Her affectionate and charming appearance seems to be effective, for not only is Freevill temporarily kept in ignorance of her intentions, but Malheureux is completely captivated by it. When Franceschina is alone with Malheureux she puts on a special act of the true-hearted but abandoned mistress, whose finer feelings have been abused:

FRANCESCHINA: ... Fait, me no more can love.
MALHEUREUX: No matter; let me enjoy your bed.
FRANCESCHINA: 0 vile man, vat do you tink on me? Do you take me to be a beast, a creature that for sense only will entertain love, and not only for love, love? 0 brutish abomination!

(II.ii.124-128)
Malheureux was merely acting on the worldly advice of Freevill, who had told him the general truth about courtesans: "they sell but only flesh, no jot affection; so that even in the enjoying, *Absentem marmoremque putes*" (II.1.137-139). The effect on him of Franceschina's appeal is to make him immediately repeat his pledge: "I am your vowed servant" (II.11.139), and agree to kill Freevill. Later she is able to dupe him again as he waits for her to "perfume my feet, mak-a mine body so delicate for his arm" (IV.iii.25) while in reality she is on her mission to the Subboys.

Once Freevill has learned of the plot, he continues his plan to make a man of Malheureux by allowing Franceschina's influence over him to prevail until she has succeeded in bringing him almost to his death, thus teaching him the fatal consequences of not being "'bove passion." The unmasking of Franceschina has already been described in the discussion of Freevill's disguise. The play ends with her consignment to "severest prison" and "the extremest whip and jail" (V.iii.55,59).

Franceschina's cosmetic disguise shows much more integrity of motive than that of Malheureux. She is far from showing a similar self-doubt; while the play shows Malheureux progressing from "I am no whit myself" (II.11.97) to "I am myself" (V.iii.61), Franceschina's self-confidence is so bound up with the success of her schemes that when
all is lost at the end of the play she can only say "me ha' lost my will" (V.iii.58).

Of the minor characters in the main plot, Caqueteur and Tysefew, not much needs to be said beyond the fact that they too are involved in disguises in one way or another. Caqueteur, described in the Dramatis Personae as "a prattling gull," borrows a diamond ring from Tysefew to aid his unsuccessful courtship of Crispinella. Tysefew forewarns the company, and Caqueteur's evasions and attempts to brazen out the imposture are broken down to reveal his real ineffectual nature. "Sir, I'll no more of your service," Crispinella tells him, "You are a child; I'll give you to my nurse" (III.i.186-187). The byplay with the rings furnishes a romantic-comedy parallel to the main plot, repeating the theme of appearances on a less serious level.

Tysefew, "a blunt gallant" in the Dramatis Personae, is a much more suitable mate for Crispinella than Caqueteur. He matches her broad speaking by railing at her in a full-blooded manner: "you proud ape, you" (IV.1.21), and "what a tart monkey is this!" (IV.1.39). But towards the end of the play he finds that the disguised Freevill is to be their guide to the executions, and his bluff forthrightness and zesty injunctions to "live by the quick" (V.ii.78) at once give way to a rather tetchy selfrighteousness: "Zounds, I am no companion for panders!" (V.ii.128). Beatrice
and Crispinella, who know that Freevill is "quick" and in fact standing beside them, echo Tysefew's earlier words and rebuke him for falling short of his own precepts: "turn not a man of time, to make all ill/Whose goodness you conceive not" (V.ii.134-135). So the irony is a double one; as well as the expected dramatic irony of the disguised Freevill being ambiguously referred to, there is the revelation of Tysefew's hypocrisy, using the same means that Freevill does with Malheureux and Cocledemoy with Mulligrub: repetition of the victim's professed ideals to show how he is falling short of them. At Freevill's unmasking we assume (for want of any explicit confession) that Tysefew is reformed; at all events he wins Crispinella in the last scene.

Tysefew provides an echo or two of the satirists of Comicall Satyre whose passion for truth-telling is revealed as mere envy, but whatever may have suggested the character to Marston, the incident of his hypocrisy being revealed by Freevill's disguise links his character with the theme of the play.

It is to be expected that a comic subplot containing so lively a character as Cocledemoy for its disguised hero would be equally happy in the hypocrites who are the object of his attentions. The Mulligrubs are perfect foils for Cocledemoy; sitting down to the salmon with which Cocledemoy has baited his trap for Misstress Mulligrub, her husband
is in ecstasies at his own cleverness:

The messenger hath mistaken the house; let's eat it up quickly before it be inquir'd for.... Oh, when a man feeds at other men's cost! (III.iii.71-75)

and Mistress Mulligrub, for her part, offers her account of the events (bringing her husband closer and closer to apoplexy) as evidence of her astute management of the affair, denying Mulligrub's previous doubt of her reliability with: "nay, and I bear not a brain!" (III.iii.92-93).

There is not much doubt about the character of the Mulligrubs. Mulligrub himself is addressed as "my good host Shark" in the opening speech of the play (I.i.1), and his wife reassures him after Cocledemoy's theft of the cup that replacement is only a matter of time: ",'tis but a week's cutting in the term" (II.iii.106-107). Mulligrub's "sins of the cellar" (I.1.40), enumerated by Cocledemoy as he gets Mulligrub to confess in the last scene, have already been quoted.

In addition, Mistress Mulligrub is revealed as a woman whose morals are not all they might be. In the argument following Cocledemoy's theft of the cup, she threatens Mulligrub: "I'll make an ox of you" (III.iii.143) and the mischievous Cocledemoy amuses himself by telling Mulligrub "I knew your wife before she was married" (IV.v.88-89). In fact she is not above accepting from some of her "very knightly and courtly" customers "a piece of flesh when time
of year serves" (III.iii.22-24); and she offers little resistance to Cocledemoy's proposal at the foot of Mulligrub's scaffold.

Their motive is a simple one. "All things with me shall seem honest that can be profitable" says Mulligrub (III.iii.57-58) and the pair apply themselves "with a vengeance" (II.iii.13) to systematic false scoring, "cutting," and "spigot-frigging." To a certain extent their need to make a living (and the considerable losses they suffer during the action) makes it necessary for them to pare close to the rind, and perhaps even allows them to believe in their own piety and honesty; but Mistress Mulligrub at least has a moment of radical self-doubt:

Truth, husband, surely heaven is not pleas'd with our vocation. We do wink at the sins of our people, our wines are Protestants, and --I speak it to my grief and to the burden of my conscience--we fry our fish with salt butter.

(II.iii.7-11)

The front they try to present to the world is one of that type of piety, reverence for education, and respect for the rewards of hard work associated with the Puritans. They are tenuously connected with the Dutch sect of the Family of Love, but whatever the truth about those no doubt serious people, it is plain that the Blackfriars audience expected fun to be made of them along the lines suggested by their name. Both partners use the language of the 'saints,' especially with strangers and their own servants:
"sincerely" (III.iii.42), "profane," "ungodly," "methodically" (III.iii.47-55), "synagogue" (III.iii.150) are examples. They both have pretensions to be thought better than they are. Mulligrub, while being 'shaved' by Cocledemoy, asks after "all my good lords and all my good ladies, and all the rest of my acquaintance" (II.iii.33-34), and later he confides in his 'barber': "I shall be one of the Common Council shortly" (II.iii.77-78)--a piece of bluster which Cocledemoy repeats twice at his expense (III.ii.45 and IV.v.83). Mistress Mulligrub shows every satisfaction with her education: "Thus 'tis to have good education and to be brought up in a tavern" (III.iii.16-17); and she makes quite sure her servants hear her reminiscing on her upbringing: "I was a gentlewoman by my sister's side" (III.iii.52-53).

The reference to the tavern furnishes an example of how the Mulligrubs give themselves away. No subterfuge or intrigue is needed to expose them; everybody in the play knows what they are, and it is questionable whether their pretence works even on strangers. In the midst of an attempt to prepare her house for the expected visit of the Burnishes, Mistress Mulligrub calls for gentility from her servants and at the same time shows her own bringing up with a term not at all genteel:

Spready, spread handsomely! --Lord, these boys do things arsy-varsity!-- You show your bringing up!

(III.iii.50-52)
Suspicions are cast on the propriety of the Family of Love as Mistress Mulligrub muses aloud (presumably for the servants' benefit) on the sources of her vocabulary:

Methodically! I wonder where I got that word. Oh! Sir Aminadab Ruth bade me kiss him methodically! I had it somewhere, and I had it indeed.

III.iii.53-56)

Mulligrub's piety is belied by his superstition. His first thought after being robbed of the nest of goblets is to consult "some wise man" (I.i.?), and after losing the cup with which he had replaced them (at twice the normal outlay), his cry is:

I am haunted with evil spirits! Hear me; do hear me! If I have not my goblet again, heaven! I'll to the devil; I'll to a conjuror. Look to my house! I'll raise all the wise men i' the street.

(III.iii.101-104)

Since the Mulligrubs are continuously unmasking themselves, no dramatic revelation by the disguised observer is necessary to expose their hypocrisy, and since they are incorrigible, it is unlikely that they would in this way be shamed into reform. For these reasons the continuous punishment-and-revelation cycle to which Cocledemoy subjects them is particularly appropriate. With each successive realisation Mulligrub becomes progressively more frantic: "Do not make me mad" he says as he begins to understand that he has lost the cup (III.iii.96); but after Cocledemoy has caused him to be put in the stocks on suspicion of having stolen his
cloak, Mulligrub begins in earnest to fear for his reason: "Zounds, shall I run mad, lose my wits!" (IV.v.60-61) and, like Malheureux, can only be reclaimed by being allowed to come within a hair's-breadth of execution. Disaster is averted by the appearance of the real Cocledemoy in answer to Mulligrub's heartfelt "if he would come forth he might save me, for he only knows the why and the wherefore" (V.iii.120-121), but the same appearance destroys his wife's hopes that Cocledemoy will "look to [her] payment" (V.iii.98). The action of the sub-plot has served not so much to reveal as to celebrate the fact that the Mulligrubs are eminently satirisable citizens: Mulligrub as a cheat and possibly a cuckold, and Mistress Mulligrub as pretentious and lascivious.

Although Cocledemoy's trick with the jowl of salmon allows Mulligrub to display his rapacity in III.iii., his rapacity is not made the direct cause of the cup's loss; Cocledemoy has only used it as a stage-property to lend plausibility to the story he tells Mistress Mulligrub. This episode fits the general pattern of the tricks Cocledemoy plays on the Mulligrubs--it is a question of simple punishment, not revelation. Though not testing the Mulligrubs, Cocledemoy's tricks glance at their appetites and pretentions and assault their "methodical" hypocrisy and systematic "cutting" with a kind of undisciplined and chaotic comic truth.
The Dutch Courtesan is a play which shares with most satiric theatre of the Renaissance a preoccupation with the discrepancy between the ideal and the actual. The tale of the duke touring his kingdom in disguise in order to see if the ideals which he embodies are followed in practice during his supposed absence is an example of this preoccupation. In The Dutch Courtesan, however, Marston changes this deductive approach to an inductive one. The aim now is not so much to apply discipline to the unrestrained physical world, as to see what discipline (if any) survives it best.

Since it is the ideals themselves which are questioned in the play rather than whether or not the tested characters live up to them, there is a corresponding emphasis in certain of the characters on the beliefs they profess rather than the lives they lead. Malheureux, for instance, is not a professed innocent, whose actual depravity must be revealed, but an innocent wearing a mask of knowledge; and it is his claims to knowledge which are tried and found wanting in the play rather than his ability to live up to the beliefs he professes. It is the dogma which is being tested, not the person. It is another distinguishing feature of the play that here the innocent is being put to the test by the man about town, and not the other way round. Again, the test consists not of the feigned removal of restraint, but a thrusting of the subject into the real world against which he had thought himself to be proof.
The play applies the actual to the ideal by means of the opposition of its two main groups of characters. In the first group Freevill furnishes an example of one who has learnt that only experience of nature can provide the stability to withstand its potentially dangerous mutability and to put it to the most satisfactory use. Paradoxically, the outward disguises adopted by Freevill and Cocledemoy serve to emphasise their inward wholeness, and the theme of the play is carried on by their assault on the second group, whose outward harmony with the world covers souls which have yet to learn a proper balance between dogma and nature, Malheureux and the Mulligrubs being ruled by the first and Franceschina by the second.

Presiding over this opposition and furnishing a kind of implied choric comment on it is Beatrice, Freevill's "betrothed dearest" (II.1.3). In pledging herself to Freevill (II.1.10-27) she discards "a mistress' compliment, / Forced discourses, or nice art of wit," and concludes:

Oh, let not my secure simplicity
Breed your dislike, as one quite void of skill;
'Tis grace enough in us not to be ill.
I can some good, and, faith, I mean no hurt;
Do not, then, sweet, wrong sober ignorance.

She inspires the same kind of honesty in Freevill, who becomes her champion in the everyday world; although he parts with her ring and "tries [her] faith too much" (V.11.56),
he can still report "nor ever hath my love been false to you" (V.ii.55).

Crispinella, for whom "virtue is a free, pleasant, buxom quality" (III.i.48), stands beside Beatrice as the scourge of pretence, rebuking not only the particular transgressions of Tysefew in V.ii. and Caqueteur in III.i., but also speaking out with considerable boldness against sexual hypocrisy:

Let's ne'er be ashamed to speak what we be not asham'd to think. I dare as boldly speak venery as think venery....You shall have an hypocritical vestal virgin speak that with close teeth publicly which she will receive with open mouth privately. (III.i.25-27, 32-34)

Her distrust of marriage is based on the deceptive nature of men:

A husband generally is a careless, domineering thing that grows like coral, which as long as it is under water is soft and tender, but as soon as it has got his branch above the waves is presently hard, stiff, not to be bowed but burst; so when your husband is a suitor and under your choice Lord, how supple he is, how obsequious, how at your service, sweet lady! Once married, got up his head above, a stiff, crooked, knobby, inflexible, tyrannous creature he grows; then they turn like water, more you would embrace, the less you hold. (III.i.69-78)

She herself indulges in the mild deception of chopines and a high wig, but beyond that is content to abstain from dictating to nature:

What I made or can mend myself I may blush at; but what nature put upon me, let her be ashamed for me, I ha' nothing to do with it, (III.i.115-117)
and eventually achieves a successful compromise in the no man's land between dogma and nature in a marriage with Tysefew.

The assault of polymorphous actuality on rigid idealism is carried on mainly by the subjection of Malheureux to the deceptive appearances of Franceschina and of Mulligrub to those of Cocledemoy. But the idea of disguise is so central to the play's theme that no simple division between those on the side of truth with Freevill and Cocledemoy and those on the side of the deceived with Malheureux and the Mullgrubs can be made in every case. Thus Caqueteur's attempt to pass himself off as the owner of an opulent diamond ring is betrayed by Tysefew, who in turn is shown up as a snob by Freevill's disguise. On several occasions characters are made by intrigue to appear as something they are not; Cocledemoy makes Mulligrub look like a disguised thief; Franceschina makes Malheureux look like a man who would murder to satisfy his lust and Freevill look unfaithful.

The business of the play is carried on amid a welter of change and flux of which Cocledemoy's antics are only part. Clothes and accessories change hands in bewildering profusion, making it more difficult to recognise either the things themselves or their owners. The ring given to Freevill by Beatrice is the most important, but the subplot involves
transfers of goblets, a silver cup, a cloak, a head of salmon, Malheureux' purse (to Cocledemoy in the guise of "the poor"), not to mention Mulligrub's "jumbling of elements". Even the appearance of a diamond ring (Caqueteur's borrowing of it from Tysefew parallels Malheureux' loan of Freevill's for a similar purpose) evokes comments on the prevalence of counterfeits:

CAQUETEUR: Is it a right stone? It shows well by candlelight.
TYSEFEW: So do many things that are counterfeit, but I assure you this is a right diamond.
(I.i.44-46)

It is significant that virtually the only stage-property characteristic of its owner which remains the property of that owner is the death's-head ring of Mary Faugh (I.i.51)—a potent warning against reckless abandonment to fleshly pursuits.

Another contribution to the atmosphere of flux generated in the play is made by the echoes used to jog characters out of attitudes of complacency or hypocrisy. Freevill scornfully echoes Malheureux' expression of resolve before they visit Franceschina, and his attempts at self-justification after he has fallen in love with her. Cocledemoy echoes Mulligrub's pretentious remarks while shaving him and later uses his humiliated victim's earlier threats to extract an amnesty from him, making sure that nothing has been forgotten.

As Franceschina is being led off in the last scene, Freevill turns to Malheureux and asks: "Frolic, how is it, sir?"
alluding to her idiosyncratic version of the song she sings at II.ii.54-60.

Change seems to intrude even into the casual conversation of the characters of *The Dutch Courtesan*. Cocledemoy, disguised as a barber, chats about the formidable changes of an imaginary monster; Tysefew hopes to find in Crispinella a mate who can be "silent in my house, modest at my table, and wanton in my bed" (IV.i.77-78); and Cocledemoy's dictum on how our identity depends on what we are taken for rather than what we think we are is expressed in a series of comic metamorphoses:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{a beggar when he is lousing of himself looks like a philosopher, a hard-bound philosopher when he is on the stool looks like a tyrant, and a wise man when he is in his belly-act looks like a fool.} \\
\text{(I.ii.68-71)}
\end{align*}
\]

"Silver without alloy/Is all too eager to be wrought for use" says Freevill (IV.ii.42-43), and proves it by transplanting Malheureux from the realm of abstraction to the deceptions and dangers of the streets. In a witty parallel to the main plot, the ever-practical Cocledemoy shows the literal truth of the metaphor by stealing Mulligrub's silverware, symbol of his ill-gotten financial success and hypocritical purity, and then transmuting it into the currency of the same world. In both cases the exposure of the victim is involved with the transition from the ideal to the actual, and is expressed either
by stage-properties or by imagery. This coherence of intrigue and imagery within a theme intimately connected with disguise is what makes The Dutch Courtesan such a fine comedy.
CHAPTER V
CONCLUSIONS

As has been shown, the theme of *What You Will* is the victory of true, unforced desires over the network of spurious desires which rule daily life. Most of the people in the play act in accordance with the thoughts or supposed thoughts of others. Quadratus, and perhaps Meletza, are the only ones to stand out against this and insist on genuine individualism. The victory at the end of the play triumphs in Quadratus' robust cynicism:

> Gulpe Rhenish Wine my liedge, let our paunch rent,  
> Suck merry Gellyes, preview but not prevent  
> No mortall can the miseries of life,  
> (V.294.33-35)

but it is a ritualised dramatic victory, a piece of sympathetic magic that leaves us unconvinced that the world is going to be changed by the stubbornness of Quadratus and the few of his kind.

Reckless devotion to dress, ornamentation, and riches in the service of "oppinion" appears in the character of Simplicius Faber. Lampatho Doria presents all the vices of the play in one unpleasant personage. Not only does he ape the fine clothes of Laverdure so that "theile say/  
*Lampatho* sutes him-selfe in such a hose" (II.247.28-29), he also woos Meletza as a prize rather than as a person,
and does so first with sophisticated indifference and then with fulsome praise, both from the schoolroom rather than the heart. The brothers Andrea and Randolfo and the disappointed suitor Iacomo act out of concern for Albano's fortune and reputation in such a way that their own subterfuge prevents them recognising him when he does appear. All these disguises conceal a lack of personality, of heart, of the kind of guileless "unbeleefe" which prevented Ulysses' dog Argus from being deceived by a beggar's disguise. The non-welcome given Albano is equated with an engrossing concern with the things of the social world, and opposed to Quadratus' Olympian detachment from what his fellow-man thinks. His limiting of himself to "praise of Heaven, wine, a fire" (I.239.12) is the expression of one who considers the human animal sub specie aeternitatis.

In The Malcontent, the same eternal viewpoint is embodied in a more conventional form—that of rule. Altofront is the monarch with the "glorious soul" (V.vi.131) who "leaveth nothing but a God above him" (V.iv.89) and so finds his enforced sojourn in the shifty temporal world irksome to the point of insomnia: "the malcontent, that 'gainst his fate/Repines and quarrels, alas, he's goodman tell-clock!" (III.i.11.12). Altofront re-establishes himself on his throne by returning to court (in disguise for the sake of personal safety) where he can destroy the
existing régime by two methods at the same time: first, by stirring up confusion in the court so that its structure of mutually sustaining opinion falls, leaving only the upright Altofront in power; and second, by the practice of stool-pigeonry. He widens the distrust between Pietro and Aurelia in order to weaken the usurper's power; he leads Mendoza on to ever darker acts of policy, neutralizing their effectiveness as he does so; and he builds up a case against the impure elements in the court by vying with Bilioso in flattery and joking with Maquerelle. As well as filling this practical function in the intrigue of the play, Altofront's disguise as "Malevole" affords the dramatist the opportunity of voicing acid-tongued disapproval of vice and hypocrisy as as he demonstrates how they defeat themselves.

The physical materials of everyday life have an ambivalence of function. They may be in themselves good or evil. Further, they can be used for good or evil purposes. In *The Malcontent*, the difficulty of choosing between the two is made worse when evil motives deliberately make instruments of evil out of things conventionally accepted as innocent. Dress, furniture, and whole systems of behaviour become "the tongue-tied lascivious witnesses of great creatures' wantonness" (I.vii.40-41). Mendoza's and Maquerelle's perversion of the physical world into their disguises of justice and purity are made by Altofront's
disguised activities to reveal their self-defeating wilfulness. The equilibrium in which an edifice of deception and intrigue can sustain itself will dissolve into fragments the moment someone announces that the emperor has no clothes. "Malevole" has done this with such success throughout the action that Mendoza is not "defensed" (V.vi.125) at the end and Altofront's takeover is effected by acclamation rather than by force of arms.

The Malcontent represents in cohesive form the triumph of truth over duplicity in the political sphere.

The truth presented in The Dutch Courtesan, in contrast to this, is in the personal spheres of sexual relations and religious hypocrisy. What is more, the emphasis is altered so that what is presented is not so much the triumph of truth over duplicity as the triumph of the ambivalent material world over the illusory truth of mere dogma.

The disguise of Malheureux is just as much a deliberately-assumed façade as any change of physical appearance could be. The difference is that the façade is assumed not to deceive but to clarify. Malheureux, so far from consciously assuming a disguise, believes that his "modest continence" (II.i.118) matches the world on which he superimposes it. Freevill, much like Rochester seventy-five years later, regards "reason" as "an ignis fatuus in the
mind"¹ and proceeds to demonstrate that Malheureux' spots before the eyes do not fit the real world by exposing him to it for the first time. Franceschina embodies both animal lust and human deception. Malheureux sees in her the same unrestrained "inborn heat" (II.1.73) that he sees in the natural world and is led by both to regret the "politic restraints" (II.1.70) of the society whose morals he strives to uphold. Her affectionate behaviour towards Malheureux disguises her mercenary and loveless nature; she is only using Malheureux as an instrument for the murder of Freevill, the source of steady income who has abandoned her for the insipidity of legitimate love. In a dialogue whose main topic is love as a commodity, Franceschina raves to her bawd: "Mine body must turn Turk for twopence" (II.1.40).

Experience of the real world is shown as the only basis for moral decisions, just as it is in What You Will; and just as in that play, the world of nature is shown as the only life devoid of affectation or opinion. The nightingales of Act II, however, figure only briefly; the area of the natural world to which The Dutch Courtesan directs our attention is man himself, natural man, not "furnished with omnipotency" (III.1.239), a term Freevill

uses to predict Malheureux' inevitable "overthrow." The message of this play, "philosophy and nature are all one" (II.i.114) is the same "γνώθι σεαυτόν" that descended to Juvenal from heaven, and it is articulated by the exposure to deceptive reality of the strait-laced Malheureux and the hypocritical Mulligrub.

The three plays discussed, especially The Malcontent and The Dutch Courtesan, bring together themes and disguises well suited to one another. Previously, Marston had tended to use disguise as a plot device in plays whose main theme was not dramaturgically connected with it. In Antonio and Mellida (1599), for example, the lovers are united in spite of the tyrant Piero, this happy conclusion being brought about by the hero's shamming dead, but the court corruption is not thematically shown as being maintained by cosmetic disguise, nor does the hero's disguise allow the villain to incriminate himself as in The Malcontent. In the sequel to Antonio and Mellida, Antonio's Revenge (1600 or 1601), the concluding masque in which the disguised revengers gloat over the vanquished oppressor is the culmination of a pot-pourri of every kind of deception, used by both sides. There is plenty of foolishness in Jacke Drum's Entertainment (1600) but the deception in it

cures humours and punishes inconstancy in a way which has only token thematic connection with the deceptions which separate and reunite the lovers.

It is in the later plays that coherence between disguise and theme is mainly found, not only in the three plays discussed, but also in The Fawn (c.1604). In it Duke Hercules, in protective disguise, experiences and exposes flattery, while the justifiable deception of Dulcimel defeats the blustering opposition of her wordy father to her lover. Sophonisba (1606), too, pursues its themes of love and violence with deception and intrigue on both sides, most memorably in the spectacular impersonation of the heroine by the enchantress Erictho, teaching the lustful Syphax that it is not "within the grasp of Heaven or Hell/To enforce love" (V.i.7-8).

In the variety of his handling of disguise, Marston exhibits all the faults and all the glories of the tradition he worked in. As mere elaboration of melodramatic plot, the deceptions of Jacke Drum's Entertainment invite comparison with those of The Shoemakers' Holiday (1599). Antonio's Revenge attempts the same outcry against a world of dissemblance and intrigue as The Revenger's Tragedy (1606). But in the plays of 1601 to 1605 Marston achieves a balance between didacticism and entertainment in which

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some of the debilitating obsessions to which mankind is prone, expressed for the most part in cosmetic disguises, are set against a natural world in which deception is impossible. In *What You Will*, the envy of Lampatho is made to look petty by the imperturbable stoicism of Quadratus; the natural order represented by Altofront is threatened by the self-interested manipulation of Mendoza and Maquerelle in *The Malcontent*; and the dogma and flattery of Malheureux and the Urbino court are the respective targets of *The Dutch Courtesan* and *The Fawn*. All these vices—envy, self-interest, dogma, and flattery—make their victims unfit for the complicated welter of small and great decisions which make up daily life. In a situation where the problem and the criteria for its solution are both ever-changing, what is needed is flexibility and equilibrium rather than *idées fixes*. Only a stoicism which takes into account the palpable realities of nature and the way man can misinterpret and abuse them, is capable of achieving this equilibrium. Quadratus and Freevill embody it; Altofront and Hercules learn it. The natural background of all the plays, with which the protagonists make their peace and from which the fools and villains are alienated, outcrops in the nightingales of *The Dutch Courtesan*, in the "genital...heats" (V.i.5-6).^4

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apostrophised by Hercules in The Fawn, in the "God" which the good ruler keeps "above him" in The Malcontent (V.i.v.89), and in the "stones [with the customary double-entendre], Trees and beasts" of What You Will (V.294.24).

Marston and his contemporaries wrote in an age when the theatre was in transition between the 'ideas on wheels' of the Moralities and the empty ingenuities of the Comedy of Manners, and this perhaps accounts for the greatness of its drama. Themes of cosmic importance, especially the battle between stable truth and shifty falsehood, were articulated through believable characters with superlative poetry and humour. In comedy and satire, human intrigue and falsehood were assessed from the point of view of eternity, revealing their pettiness and futility in spite of their prevalence. This viewpoint is expressed at its most pessimistic by Vendice:

that eternall eye
That sees through flesh and all.
(I.iii.65-66)5

In Marston's satiric comedies, however, the infinite world and the natural world (which will both continue to exist long after man's mortal vision has ceased to regard them),

more good-humouredly overcome pettish human efforts to achieve spurious and finite power, wealth, wit, wisdom, and beauty.
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