Deception in the comedies and tragicomedies of John Fletcher

Betty Jo Wilson

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Norman Sanders
Norman Sanders, Major Professor

We have read this dissertation and recommend its acceptance:

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Accepted for the Council:

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Vice Provost
and Dean of The Graduate School
DECEPTION IN THE COMEDIES AND TRAGICOMEDIES
OF JOHN FLETCHER

A Dissertation
Presented for the
Doctor of Philosophy
Degree
The University of Tennessee, Knoxville

Betty Jo Wilson
June 1987
ABSTRACT

John Fletcher was prolific, popular, and highly praised by his contemporaries, but has received little individual critical attention. Scholars usually focus on the whole of the Beaumont and Fletcher canon, but his thirteen independently written comedies and tragicomedies are also worthy of serious criticism. The present study was undertaken as a step in the reassessment of Fletcher and examines one of the prominent techniques found in all of his unaided plays: deception. Fletcher found deceit so important that in all but two of them it is central. He used well-known devices beloved by his audiences: disguise, deception with words, and tricks like feigned physical or mental illness, fake death, and false documents. He chiefly relied on disguise—the changing of one's identity by altering the outward appearance, or the alteration of one's character but not his identity. His ability to take a stock technique and convention and not only make it fit organically and thematically into his play but also use it in such a way that the actor is given enormous scope is what sets him apart as a dramatist.

Although the deceptions are frequently dismissed as no more than showy tricks, Fletcher's skill is such that he also makes them functional, integral to plot and often to theme. He employs deception to serve a range of dra-
matic purposes, chiefly to aid in plot construction, but also to comment on human follies and foibles, to reveal character, and to cure humours, among others. The dissertation discusses each play separately, finding the last of the tragicomedies—The Pilgrim, The Island Princess, and A Wife for a Month—to be the most successful and memorable.
# 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. COMEDIES</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Woman's Prize</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wit Without Money</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monsieur Thomas</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Wild Goose Chase</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rule a Wife and Have a Wife</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Chances</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III. TRAGICOMEDIES</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Mad Lover</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Loyal Subject</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Humorous Lieutenant</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Women Pleas'd</td>
<td>108</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Island Princess</td>
<td>122</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Pilgrim</td>
<td>140</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Wife for a Month</td>
<td>155</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV. CONCLUSION</td>
<td>169</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BIBLIOGRAPHY</td>
<td>192</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VITA</td>
<td>195</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

John Fletcher, whose name is usually coupled with that of Francis Beaumont, was a playwright much in demand in his day, his popularity surpassing that of Shakespeare, his plays performed until well in the eighteenth century. He had a hand in writing at least fifty plays, a tremendous output, usually working with a collaborator. Besides Beaumont, the list includes, among others, Shakespeare, Massinger, Shirley, Field and Rowley. Beaumont's name is on the title-page of the First Folio, published in 1647, although the actual number of plays the two produced together is small. It does, however, include the works most praised by critics. The Maid's Tragedy, Philaster, and A King and No King, plus Beaumont's comic masterpiece The Knight of the Burning Pestle. The canon includes representatives of all the popular genres, including farce, romantic comedy, tragicomedy, and tragedy, although Fletcher is most noted for his tragicomedies. Despite his many collaborators, Fletcher's was the guiding hand in the canon, for all the folio plays share certain distinguishing traits which are identified as his and are discussed at length by a number of scholars.
While opinions vary about the authorship of many of the plays, recent scholars like Cyrus Hoy agree that because of Fletcher's distinctive versification, diction, and repeated rhetorical devices, we may safely conclude that Fletcher alone wrote sixteen of them. These include The Faithful Shepherdess, Monsieur Thomas, The Woman's Prize, Bonduca, Valentinian, Wit Without Money, The Loyal Subject, The Mad Lover, The Humourous Lieutenant, Women Pleas'd, The Pilgrim, The Island Princess, The Wild-Goose Chase, A Wife for a Month, Rule a Wife and Have a Wife, and The Chances. These plays deserve more critical attention than they have received. Fletcher himself is long overdue for an assessment of his work, for there is no official biography or full treatment of his work as a whole. For a playwright who was so prolific, popular, and highly praised by his contemporaries as Fletcher was, this is a serious scholarly omission.

The reasons for this lack of attention are rather mixed. Part of the problem is that as Shakespeare's reputation rose, Fletcher's fell, until it was totally eclipsed by the nineteenth century, with the devastating comments of Victorian critics like Coleridge who worshiped Shakespeare and objected to what they perceived as Fletcher's prurience an decadence. There is no doubt that Fletcher's reputation has suffered by comparison with his most famous collaborator, but it is unfair to reduce him
to a nonentity because the one is so superior to the other. Twentieth-century critics have been preoccupied with Shakespeare, of course, and after him with Jonson and tragedians like Webster, Chapman and Ford. They have seldom concerned themselves with Fletcher's forte, tragicomedy. Few major studies have been done and even fewer detailed analyses of characters, themes and techniques. Eugene Waith's *The Pattern of Tragicomedy in Beaumont and Fletcher* (1952) is the best full-length critical work. He treats the whole canon, his main concern being to analyze Fletcher's rhetorical skills and the influence of the *Controversiae* of Seneca the Elder upon the style and substance of his tragicomedy. Waith includes a thorough survey of characteristics of a Fletcher play and gives illuminating analyses of many representative plays. Clifford Leech in his book *The John Fletcher Plays* (1962) has a more modest aim. He does not confine himself to plays written solely by Fletcher; instead he selects eleven plays which he considers typical and analyzes them. These include six of the independent Fletcher plays. His analyses are enlightening and provocative; he chooses *The Humourous Lieutenant* as Fletcher's best play. W. W. Appleton has a short book called *Beaumont and Fletcher* (1956) in which he attempts a synthesis of the two main schools of modern Fletcher criticism: one concentrating on rhetorical form, the other on theme and content. He dis-
cusses the relationships between tragicomedy and Jacobean society, one of his conclusions being that Fletcher is basically an entertainer who is forced to repeat his successes, which leads to a search for the sensational and the extreme to give new interest to familiar dramatic patterns. Again, he chooses plays from the whole canon to discuss, and, again, they are the most familiar ones like The Maid's Tragedy and Philaster.

Another recent provocative study is John Fletcher's Chastity Plays: Mirrors of Modesty (1973), by Nancy Cotton Pearse. This deals with a major long-held objection to the canon: its seeming emphasis on immorality. Pearse successfully shows that, far from being immoral, Fletcher was promoting chastity—in ways that his audience found acceptable, pleasing, and edifying. She does not discuss Fletcher's independent plays alone, but instead chooses representatives from the whole canon, thus following the prevailing tendency among the few critics who are interested in Fletcher.

In a 1970 study Fletcher Without Beaumont Mary Cone, concerned about the lack of critical attention given Fletcher as an independent writer, studies his sixteen unaided plays, exploring four aspects she thinks others have left incomplete: satire, plays-within-plays, characters and imagery. Her work is a beginning but more needs to be done.
There are, moreover, some articles or chapters in books which discuss and assess the whole canon. One of the best-known is that of Una Ellis-Fermor, who devotes a chapter to Beaumont and Fletcher in her fine study *The Jacobean Drama* (1947). She sees Beaumont and Fletcher as offering society a romantic escape from an anxious reality. She does, however, praise their "original use of old devices and the development of fresh ones," and notes in passing their "keen sense of the theatre" (213, 214).

Another is Philip Edwards' "The Danger Not the Death: The Art of John Fletcher" which discusses a basic tenet of tragicomedy: the characters may come close to death but nobody actually dies, not even the blackest villain.

More critical ink has been spent on parcelling out the respective shares of authorship than on discussing theme, content, form or anything else. Cyrus Hoy, whose work is mentioned above, is the latest in a long line. His conclusions are accepted by most, although since so many authors contributed to the canon there will probably never be a complete agreement as to division.

There is presently only one complete edition of the whole canon, the Cambridge edition of Arnold Glover and A. R. Waller, (10 Vols. 1905-12), although Fredson Bowers is general editor of an edition in progress which will be the standard when it is finished. All quotations in this study are from the Glover and Waller edition. As the
lines are unnumbered in these volumes, citations will consist of act, scene and page numbers.

Except for the work by Waith and Pearse, little has been done on other themes and techniques. It is the object of the present study to remedy this situation by exploring in depth Fletcher's use of a major dramatic device: deception. Such a study should reveal Fletcher at his best, exhibiting his ability as a master of stagecraft, and his skillful use of conventional materials and techniques in a variety of ingenious, satisfying ways. In its many shapes and forms, deception was beloved by Elizabethan and Jacobean dramatists and audiences, a fact attested to by the most cursory examination of the plays of the period, including Shakespeare's. Who can forget Rosalind, Portia, or Hamlet?

On the general topic of deception there have been some helpful studies, including V. O. Freeburg's *Disguise Plots in Elizabethan Drama: A Study in Stage Tradition* (1915), which discusses the most prevalent means of deceit. Surveying over four hundred plays, Freeburg divides disguise into five common types into which, by stretching a bit, he can fit all the examples he finds: the female page, probably the most common; the boy bride, although there are several other reasons for men disguising themselves as women; the rogue in multi-disguise; the spy in disguise; and the lover in disguise, which he dis-
tistinguishes from the boy bride on the grounds of their difference in motivation. Fletcher's plays are mentioned frequently, although Fletcher has no examples of the rogue or the spy.

John V. Curry's book *Deception in Elizabethan Comedy* (1955) covers a broader range, examining the devices of deception found in a survey of the same plays Freeburg used. In addition to disguise and falsification of identity with or without altering one's appearance, he includes other favorite forms of pretense and trickery such as lies, substitution, forged letters, and simulated physical or mental ailments. Furthermore, he devotes a chapter to the audience appeal of deception, discussing its dramatic values and comic effects. Curry finds its most obvious use in plot structure, moving the plot forward, causing complications, connecting the subplot to the main plot. "Virtuosity in trickery was deemed interesting for its own sake," he notes (146), particularly in comedies where the cleverness of such tricksters as Face, Mosca, Truewit, and Brainworm was much admired. It is therefore interesting that Fletcher did not create a Face or a Cocledemoy; he achieved his results in other ways, with other kinds of characters. Other functions of deceptive devices which Curry notes include the following: producing comic effects, preventing a tragic tone and atmosphere from building up—or easing the tensions if such an
atmosphere threatens, and the intellectual stimulation of watching irony of character and situation.

What is deception? In this study deception includes any devices or tricks used to deceive others in some way. Deceit provides definite dramatic values, as its popularity since Roman times bears witness. Its success with the Elizabethans resulted in much repetition of devices and situations and an increasing sophistication of audiences and dramatists who searched for ever more novel variations of the familiar. Much of Fletcher's work was written contemporaneously with Shakespeare and Jonson, both masters of pleasing their audiences. After Shakespeare's death in 1616 Fletcher continued to produce until his death in 1625. During that period wit and invention in the handling of already familiar conventions were highly prized. The commendatory verses in the Beaumont and Fletcher First Folio reveal Fletcher's contemporaries' high praise of both. They also laud his plays for their edifying qualities, something which comes as a surprise to the many critics since Dryden who have failed to find any redeeming moral purposes in them. It is not part of the scope of this study to discuss Fletcher's moral vision or lack of it. The question of the morality of duplicity is one he never raises. It is sufficient to note that characters in all of his dramatic genres do deceive: both good and bad characters, for all kinds of reasons, some benevolent,
some not. In a Fletcher play the deception nearly always succeeds if perpetrated by a sympathetic character, and it fails if carried out by an unsympathetic one.

Part of my purpose is to discuss the traditional devices of deception so familiar to Jacobean audiences and show to what abundant dramatic and theatrical uses Fletcher puts them. His ability to take a shopworn convention and not only make it fit organically into his play but also use it in such a theatrical way that the actor is given enormous scope is what sets him apart from so many others, such as his collaborators Shirley and Massinger. Fletcher's mastery of stagecraft is praised occasionally in most critical studies. In his *Pre-Restoration Stage Studies* (1927), William J. Lawrence mentions several plays in which the dramatist successfully uses sound effects, for example. But no one has considered in detail the essential theatricality of the plays which is Fletcher's greatest strength as a playwright and the consequent possibilities they offer the actor. Studying his use of deception will throw some light, at least indirectly, on this dramatic strength. Since Fletcher's plays are so infrequently performed in the twentieth century, such qualities are seldom noted. When they are performed, however, the possibilities are obvious. A recent performance of *The Two Noble Kinsmen* at the Swan in Stratford is a case in point. The actress playing the gaoler's daughter,
Imogen Stubbs, a part scholars generally agree was written by Fletcher, did so well in the role that she received rave reviews and has a now established reputation. A full inquiry into this fascinating subject, however, is outside the scope of the present study, which will concentrate on one particular aspect of Fletcher's theatricality: his use of deception.

Disguise is by its very nature the essence of theater, for actors put on costumes and makeup and pretend, for the space of two or three hours, to be someone else, speaking in another's voice, living another's life. Aware, of course, that the stage and the happenings on it are not real, the audience accepts Coleridge's "willing suspension of disbelief" for the duration of the drama. Once this initial impersonation is accepted, other forms of deception follow naturally, as necessary in drama as they are in life.

The chief devices Fletcher draws on include physical disguise, which entails a change of costume accompanied by such aids as makeup, wigs, beards, and patches. Disguises are chosen to conceal one's identity or to assume another identity altogether, for such varied purposes as protection, adventure, mischief or villainy. A more sophisticated kind of deception is practiced by those characters who adopt traits foreign to their natures. The deception is not a change of their identity, but of their personal-
ity; there is a discrepancy between their character and their behavior. The consequences can be as surprising and beneficial as complete disguise. Another large category of deception is dissimulation with words, which may include partial, misleading truths and outright lies.

Finally, there are the stock farcical tricks such as simulating physical or mental illness, generally as a strategem in the war between the sexes. Faking one's own death falls under this heading also, as do substitution (the bed trick) and forged documents or letters.

The following chapters describe and analyze the deceptions in Fletcher's independently written comedies and tragicomedies, focusing on their dramatic functions, in the belief that such analysis will shed light on one of his important dramatic techniques, especially illustrating how he used conventional materials in a very theatrical way. I have arbitrarily chosen not to discuss the Fletcher tragedies, Bonduca and Valentinian, and his first play, The Faithful Shepherdess, even though deception is prominent in all three. The Faithful Shepherdess is a pastoral romance with unique problems, the only one of its kind Fletcher wrote, and critics are unanimous in their dislike of the tragedies. Fletcher's metier is clearly comedy and romance, so I have concentrated on his most successful genres.
CHAPTER II

COMEDIES

The Woman's Prize

The Woman's Prize or The Tamer Tamed is one of the early Fletcher comedies. Its subtitle, the names of some of the characters, several allusions, and the initial situation recall the more famous The Taming of the Shrew.\(^1\) Here the setting is London and the situation is reversed, however, for Petruchio, a widower "famous for a woman-tamer," is himself tamed by his second wife, Maria. The humor derives from the extreme methods she uses, chiefly by refusing to live with him until he overcomes his humour—in the manner of the wife of Bath and Lysistrata.

There are two plots in this carefully constructed play. In the first there is a classic battle of the sexes between Maria and Petruchio. The first engagement occurs on their wedding night when Maria barricades herself in her room, along with her militantly feminist cousin Biancha and a whole band of "City and Country Wives."

\(^1\)Maxwell (20-45) points out that Fletcher's play is not really a continuation of Shakespeare's. The setting is altered and so are several of the characters. Waith (26, n. 7) adds that "there can be little doubt, however, that the initial situation is meant to recall Shakespeare."
Petruchio attempts to strike back, but all his efforts are doomed to failure. Unlike Shakespeare's play where the wooing of Bianca has no direct bearing on the taming of the shrewish Kate, Fletcher's subplot of the love story of Rowland and Livia is parallel to the main plot. Livia is Maria's sister, but her problem is a different one. Her father wants him to marry an older man, rich but repulsive, while she favors the young but impecunious Rowland. Both sisters are determined and resourceful, and just as Maria gains victory over her willful husband, so Livia successfully defeats her father and his choice of suitor, Morosus.

Both women use deception in their schemes to humble the men in their lives, including assuming a false character and the standard tricks of feigned illness and counterfeit documents. Petruchio, too, in his efforts to defeat Maria tries some cozenage: lying, faking illness, even faking his own death. Further, there are two other characters who act as intriguers, aiding the women in their particular efforts: Biancha, the feminist cousin of the sisters, and Tranio, friend of Petruchio and Rowland, not above profiting from the situation.

Structurally the ruses form the plot: they initiate the basic situation, provide complications, provoke humor, and are helpful in revealing character. Although they are of course designed mainly to contribute to the farcical humor, there is a more serious purpose behind Maria's ini-
tial pretense: she has the satirists aim of curing Petru-
chio's humour. The results seem to justify her methods.

Maria is one of Fletcher's engaging, assertive women
characters. As Leech notes, the dramatist liked to stage
a fight "between well-matched opponents" (53). Maria's
initial deception is the crucial one which determines the
course of the whole play, which opens on the wedding night
with various guests pitying her for the ordeal she must
undergo. Petruchio is called a "dragon" and his fierce
temper and harsh treatment of his first wife are recalled.
Maria, on the other hand, is gentle, noted for her
"modesty and tenderness of spirit." At the urging and
with the whole-hearted support of her cousin Biancha, the
new bride determines to adopt a completely different per-
sonality, and she does so for the best of personal and
dramatic reasons: to reform a husband who "must be made a
man, for yet he is a monster" (I.i.8). Like Pyniero in
the tragicomedy The Island Princess, who seemingly adopts
an evil nature to effect a cure on his uncle, like
Jonson's Asper, she deliberately assumes a nature contrary
to her own. Her sister marvels at her disobedient
behavior "which yet I cannot think Your own, it shews / so
distant from your sweetness" and notes the difficulty of
the task: "'Tis as easie with a Sive to scoop the Ocean,
as / To tame Petruchio" (I.ii.8-9). Maria is undaunted
and firmly resolved: "Farewel all poorer thoughts, but
spight and anger, / Till I have wrought a miracle",
(I.ii.7), "Till I have made him easie as a child, / and
tame as fear" (I.ii.9). She shows a proper sense of the
importance of the task, for she is striking a blow against
all imperious husbands: Biancha is sure she "wilt be
chronicled" (I.ii.10). Maria denounces timid wives,
recalling that other Petruchio's original metaphor; he
had tamed his shrew by fasting and watching, the approved
method for reclaiming a hawk. Feminist Maria declares
forcefully:

   Hark these tame hearted Eyasses, that no sooner
See the lure out, and hear their husband's hollo,
But cry like kites upon them: the free haggard
(Which is that woman that hath wing and knows it,
Spirit and plume) will make a hundred checks,
To show her freedom, sail in every air,
And look out every pleasure, not regarding
Lure nor quarry, till her pitch command
What she desires.

(I.ii.10).

Her methods include fasting and watching also, but of
quite different kinds.

Indeed she has wing, spirits, and plume and makes a
hundred checks, bewildering her husband, father, and other
townsmen with her most uncharacteristic, unwifely behav-
ior. First, instead of being the submissive wife he
expected, Maria makes stirring martial speeches, fortifies
her rooms, and gathers a large group of women from both
city and country who are all ready to fight if necessary.
The women are so fierce that they easily conquer the men,
and Maria negotiates a treaty with very favorable terms for herself and Livia.

Her protean changes are not over: successively she refuses her husband again, gives him cause to wonder if she is "light and easie" with her affections, indulges in mad behavior, pretends to be a spendthrift, plays a most humiliating trick on him, pretends to relent and treats him kindly for a little while, changes her mind again and is overjoyed first at his plans to leave the country and then at his supposed death. By the last indignity Petruchio is thoroughly humbled and her purpose achieved, and Maria decides to stop tormenting him.

Petruchio also becomes an intriguer in his attempts to deal with this unexpected situation. At first he relies on his reputation and his appeals to Maria's sense of duty. Those failing, he tries the railing tirades which served him so well in the past, but Maria proves impervious to argument, emotional appeal, or bluster. Finally he resorts to trickery, but his ruses are those of a desperate man, so unsophisticated that Maria has no difficulty at all in penetrating them. His efforts are doomed to failure from the start because he has underestimated his opponent. While he behaves in a typically masculine fashion, his new bride does not respond in a typically feminine way. He cannot adjust to "masculine" behavior, to resourcefulness and resolution in one who
seemed so gentle and submissive. This reversal of roles is the basis of the humor in the play. It applies also in the subplot, where Livia proves her superiority over the men involved by being wittier and more resolute.

Petruchio's first trick is an old one: he pretends to be sick, hoping to gain sympathy from Maria. Fletcher produces an ingenious variation of this well-known routine, one which illustrates clearly which partner is superior. When Maria hears of this ploy she turns the advantage to herself and gives out that he has the plague and must be shunned by everyone, in spite of his vehement protests and his perfectly sound body. This is one of the best scenes in the play. There is much bustle and stage activity as Maria orders the servants to strip the walls of hangings and the cabinets of plates and other valuables, urging extreme haste because of the rapid progress of the disease. Petruchio is locked inside and keepers hired to ensure that he stays there. His protestations and arguments, even the displaying of a sound healthy arm, are rejected as the ravings of a dying man. In desperation he finally produces a gun and fires it, frightening off his keepers. Among other things, the jest shows Petruchio how serious his recalcitrant bride is and to what lengths she will go to humble him.

He is not ready to accept the inevitable, however, and he next tries lying about his purpose, telling her he
is going to travel, expecting her to repent and beg him to stay. To his surprise, Maria seizes the advantage again by complimenting him on an excellent decision, one which makes him look "a new man," a "man of excellence" (IV.iv.74). Warming to her subject she compares herself to Penelope: she, Maria, will honorably resist all temptations while he is being new-made. Thus he is now honor-bound to keep his word, even though he had no intention of doing so originally:

Fare thee well
Thou hast fool'd me out o' the Kingdom with a vengeance,
And thou canst fool me in again. (IV.iv.76)

Since Maria continues to respond in a manner opposite to his expectations, he makes a last-ditch attempt to force a sympathetic response from her: he fakes his own death. In another theatrical scene, his friend Sophocles announces that Petruchio has died of grief over his wife's mistreatment. He is brought onstage in a coffin, a piteous sight, and Maria, now wearing black, is summoned. But once again the trick backfires; instead of expressing grief and repenting her actions, she weeps only for his foolish life and is joyful that he died before they had children to whom he could have passed on his lamentable qualities. Unable to bear such sentiments, Petruchio leaps dramatically from the coffin--foiled again. Ironically, however, the trick does obtain the desired
result, for he is so chastened by this failure that Maria deems him properly tamed at last. She resumes her normal sweet, gentle nature, begs forgiveness, vows to be his servant, and dedicates her life to his pleasure. Petruchio is so happy he declares, "I am born again" (V.iv.89).

While the hero and heroine of the main plot both employ deception, in the subplot it is only the heroine Livia who finds pretense necessary to gain her will. Her motive is a common one: to promote marriage with the one she loves. And she uses familiar methods to attain her goal, feigned illness and false documents, plus some misleading of her lover Rowland about the strength of her affections. This is not another battle of the sexes, as is the primary plot, which almost features a real battle as well as many verbal skirmishes, much hyperbole and many allusions to mythological heroes and heroines. Livia's problem is how to avoid marrying her father's choice, the old but rich Moroso, and wed the poor youth Rowland whom she loves. She is more clever and more practical than Rowland, for when he urges elopement she insists such a course would be financially ruinous. With her promise that they will be together within three days, he agrees to wait.

The first deception is not intended to alarm Rowland but he seems to be rather unused to intrigue and is also
jealous and afraid that he will somehow lose his Livia in spite of her promise. She is talking to Moroso and Rowland overhears the conversation. As part of her plan she seems to encourage the old man and reject the young; since he lacks objectivity, Rowland is grievously offended and a wedge is driven between the young couple. This is certainly not Livia's intention, but the apparent conflict serves a functional purpose. It provides more complications, more tension, more sympathy for Rowland. It also allows yet another intriguer, Tranio, to pursue his own ends.

Tranio is a friend of both Petruchio and Rowland. When Rowland comes to him railing against women, having decided Livia is unfaithful, Tranio sees a way to help reunite the pair and make a large profit for himself. The courtier bets Rowland a hundred pounds that he will fall in love again soon, and it will be with Livia. Tranio conspires with Biancha to reunite the couple, wins this bet, after the false document trick described below and then contributes to the happy ending by arranging for a priest to marry them, unknown to her father. Since he is thus presented with a fait accompli, the parent removes his objection to their union.

Livia's successful ruse is devised with the help of yet another deceiver, her cousin Biancha, who was instrumental in initiating and carrying through Maria's revolt.
Here she shows a more romantic side of her nature, as she assists her other cousin in gaining her heart's desire. In order to do this Livia must deceive her father and her unwanted suitor and regain Rowland's good will. The plan involves two standard tricks, cleverly combined: feigned illness and false papers. This pretended illness scene is very different in tone and effect from the previous one. It is reported that Livia is critically ill and she asks her father, Moroso, and Rowland to witness a document which she says is repentance for her misconduct. (Among other things she likes to tweak Moroso's nose and box his ears.) Rowland is in a painful state of mind because he is now convinced that she really does love him but fears she is about to die. Livia pathetically recounts her sins and begs forgiveness, then asks the men to step outside a moment while she composes herself. She and Biancha make sure the room is darkened and when the men return they do not read what they are signing, having accepted her story completely. In full light, the tears still on his face, Rowland examines what he has signed and does a comic double-take: he is looking at a marriage contract. Thus with her tricks, and the help of Tranio and Biancha, Livia out foxes her father and Moroso and fulfills her promise to Rowland. There are thus two happy couples in the last scene, all because of the deceptions the women were clever and witty enough to use.
As an illustration of Fletcher's ability to vary conventional devices in ingenious ways, he employs the device of fake illness twice in this play, in both main plot and subplot. The deception is effective for both women, but the scenes are different in staging, tone, and effect and produce strikingly different results. Even though the trick is essentially the same one, the way it is handled reveals differences in the character and personalities of the sisters. Ordinarily a character usually a man, pretends to be suffering from a critical injury or fatal illness (usually love-sickness) in order to arouse the pity and sympathy of another and further his or her overall plan. Frequently his plan is to gain access to a lady's bedchamber, as is the case in *Monsieur Thomas* when Thomas falls from a ladder and proclaims to Mary that he has broken a leg, or the Duke of Medina in *Rule A Wife* who fakes a street fight and consequent injury because he wants to see Margarita. The ploy is most frequently found in such farces, but it can also be put to more serious use as in Jonson's *Volpone*.

Women seldom attempt to get into men's quarters, that particular scenario apparently not appealing to the Jacobians. If they counterfeit illness it is nearly always for the purpose of getting the man they want who is for some reason unavailable; usually it is reluctance on his part or, as here, because of the opposition of a parent.
Livia uses the device for this purpose, seeming to suffer so acutely that her audience is moved to tears and forgets the commonsense precaution of reading a document before signing it. The audience of course enjoys the sight of the men suffering in a real way since they know Livia's pain is false.

But Maria's strategem is wittier and more sophisticated as befits that miracle-worker, the man-tamer. She has no need to feign sickness herself; instead she takes her husband's pretense and uses it against him. He is much discomfited to find he does not have a simple, respectable love-melancholy; rather, Maria convinces the whole town he is dying of the plague. He is thus so contagious that everyone except the watch deserts him, his efforts to convince them he is sound and healthy providing much laughter. The more he protests, the more he is disbelieved. Finally in order to escape he resorts to violence, firing his gun. Although the scene is hilarious and meant to be so, it is also psychologically sound. It points out Maria's credibility and Petruchio's hotheadedness and the need for drastic measures to cure his humour.

Wit Without Money

Wit Without Money is a romantic comedy whose basic plot Fletcher took from Cervantes. Critics dismiss it as
a lesser effort, but it contains scenes of delightful farce and several satirical speeches which are sometimes noted (against widows and against an economic system based on individual ownership and responsibility, for example). The object of the plot is to bring together two unlikely couples in an interesting way; it does not hinge on deceivers or deception, but both are carefully integrated to advance the action and to add to the comedy.

Fletcher relies on verbal deception here to achieve his purposes and, as always, his variations of a conventional device are of interest. The characters engage in telling lies for both benevolent and mischievous purposes and in ambiguous repartee full of innuendo and deliberate misunderstandings.

The main characters are two brothers and two sisters. The men are Valentine and Francis; the former has given up his fortune and wasted most of his younger brother's, also in order to thumb his nose at society and live by his wits. While pursuing this agreeable occupation, scorning the pleas of tenants and family alike that he resume his responsibilities, he promises to promote the suits of three of his benefactors with the rich widow Lady Hartwel. She has an enchanting younger sister Isabella of whose fortune and matrimonial hopes she similarly has charge. In contrast to the impractical, now impecunious Valentine,
she very sensibly wants her sister to make a match with a wealthy suitor.

Valentine, a self-proclaimed despiser of widows and marriage, meets the lady while ostensibly aiding his three friends. His vitriolic scorn fails either to cow her or call forth a response in kind. Instead she eloquently defends herself and most unaccountably finds herself attracted to him. We have two stock characters here, the wealthy widow and the wild gallant.

Meanwhile the plight of the penniless scholar Francis has been observed by Isabella and she sends aid in the form of clothes and money. He is, however, so bashful and ashamed of his poverty that he will not court her boldly. They are more romantically conceived characters than the older, more forceful pair. They are the younger siblings whose future lies in the hands of the older and their plight makes them sympathetic characters. Valentine has not only wasted his own substance, he has also spent Francis' inheritance and is totally unrepentant. Lady Hartwel controls her sister's money and matrimonial prospects; furthermore, she is so imposing, beautiful, and wealthy that all the eligible men court her and ignore Isabella. Yet neither Francis nor Isabella is embittered. Isabella even compliments the widow:

I am as haste ordain'd me, a thing slubber'd, my sister is a goodly portly Lady, a woman of a presence, she spreads sattens, as the
King's ships do canvas everywhere, she may spare me a misen, and her bonnets, strike the main Petticoat, and yet outsail me, I am a carvel to her.

(I.i.153)

Thus the situation stands when Lovegood, Valentine's uncle, along with a merchant friend, who also wants the young man to fulfil his fiscal responsibilities, devise a way to bring the first couple together: by a judicious, outright lie. It is necessary to intervene, the uncle says, because "the women are too craftie, Valentine too coy, and Frank too bashful" (V.i.195). Hence, after ascertaining that indeed there is an attraction between the two, the men congratulate the bewildered widow on her "new knit marriage-band." Lovegood calls her his "fair niece" and thanks her: "'twas a noble and vertuous part to take a falling man to protection, and buoy him up again to all his glories," and the merchant adds, "You have wealth enough to give him gloss and outside, and he wit enough to give way to love a Lady." They add, even more outrageously, "'tis a full opinion you are with child, and great joy among the Gentlemen, your husband has bestirred himself fairly" (V.i.197). They even offer to name dates, length of encounters, and beds as proof.

The ruse has the desired effect, for poor Lady Hartwel rushes to confront Valentine, sleeping off the effects of too much sack, and accuses him of spreading this vile rumor. In the ensuing sparring match she
reveals she is now poor, having sold her vexatious lands, a fact which delights Valentine so much he decides to marry her, agreeing further to leave his "follies and fancies" and assume his estate and its responsibilities again. The uncle and the merchant are naturally pleased with this sudden decision since it means their deception was successful. So is the brother, who himself had no desire to live by his wits and felt the pinch of poverty keenly.

Isabella is, fittingly, saucier and more sprightly than her stately older sister. She indulges in a mischievous lie to get even with the widow for discouraging poor Francis' suit. She is also motivated by her sister's seeming hypocrisy, for on one hand the widow disapproves of Isabella's interest in the unwealthy Francis, but on the other she is so enamored of Valentine, equally poor and not nearly as meritorious, that she cancels a move to the country which she had originally planned as a means of separating the younger pair. Isabella's lie produces one of the hilarious scenes of the comedy--staged and acted properly it would be irresistible. She tells the three clownish suitors, Fountain, Harebrain, and Bellamore, originally companions of Valentine, not to be deterred by the widow's rudeness, advising them, "Let her not rest, for if you give her breath, she'll scorn and flout you."
The way to win her is to "be bold and prosper" (V.i.186).
The trio proceed to vex the widow exceedingly, entertaining the audience likewise. Following Isabella's advice they pursue the widow into the garden, invite themselves to dinner, and are threatening to spend the night when Valentine arrives and quickly scatters them with a scathing speech.

The lie serves the purpose of entertainment well, setting up the farcical pursuit scene, allowing the younger sister to triumph momentarily. It also allows Valentine a chance to make a typically Fletcherian declamation, and to display perhaps a more conventional firmness of character which he will need when he resumes the cares of his estate. Valentine is noted for his skill in the art of railing. His diatribe against widows earlier is particularly fine (II.i.157-9). Now he turns his fury against his former friends to aid the same widow he had so despised. Here is a sample of his style:

You shall stay till I talk with you, and not dine neither, but fastingly my fury ... till you return to what I found you, people betrai'd into the hands of Fencers, Challengers, Tooth-drawers Bills, and tedious Proclamations in meat-markets, with throngings to see Cutpurses ... .

(IV.v.194)

Isabella, clever maiden that she is, also engages in another kind of verbal deception. Since Francis is so hesitant to pursue his wooing, she helps him out by ingenious conversation, pretending to rebuff his shy advances while actually leading him to declare his commitment to
her. For example, she gives him a ring while loudly asserting (seconded by her maid) that it is really his which he dropped covertly to give her. She scolds him roundly:

I beseech you Sir, what could 'see (speak boldly, I speak truly, shame the Devil,) in my behavior of such easiness that you durst venture to do this?

(IV.i.191)

He is amazed and baffled, for she then sweeps out in a huff, recommending "as you grow older grow wiser if you can." Francis' servant is wiser than his master, for he immediately recognizes her purpose: "look up Sir, you cannot lose her if you would, how daintily she flies upon the Lure, and cunningly she makes her stops!" (IV.i.192)

Finally, after the night of drinking previously referred to, Francis has courage enough to intercept Isabella on her way to early morning prayers. At first she pretends to be angry, but her boldness soon surfaces:

Isa. Can I not go about my private meditations, An but such companions as you must ruffle me? you had best go with me Sir?

Fran. 'Twas my purpose.

Isa. Why what an impudence as this! you had best being so near the Church, provide a Priest, and persuade me to marry you.

Fran. It was my meaning, and such a husband, so loving and so careful, my youth, and all my fortunes shall arrive at ....

Isab. I was never abused thus, you had best give out too, that you found me willing, and say I doted on you?

Fran. That's known already, and no man living shall now carry you from me.

(V.i.202-203)
The servant hence concludes this merry exchange fittingly by inquiring, "God a mercy Sack, when would small Beer have done this?" Isabella's clever, bold repartee thus obtains the desired result—she is married to the man of her choice, and before her older sister. The two couples are united through the clever use of deception.

**Monsieur Thomas**

*Monsieur Thomas* is a mixed comedy with two parallel plots which differ radically in tone. The main plot is sophisticated, serious romance, with complications caused by the loyalty and honor of the lovers; while the subplot is a comic one, a battle of wits between the sexes, as the title character, Monsieur Thomas (so-called because he has just returned from years of travel and indulges in some of the traveller's affectations), attempts to win his Mary in spite of her disapproval of his methods. The two plots are skillfully connected and parallel each other as closely as any in Fletcher. Scenes of tragicomedy alternate with scenes of farce to provide variety and satire, for the comic scenes delightfully burlesque the romantic ones. Deception is used in both plots to bring about a satisfactory resolution to love's difficulties and to provide merry antics for the audience to enjoy. The subplot consists entirely of deceptions while in the main action
they provide dramatic suspense and tension and contribute to the happy ending.

In the serious romantic plot there is a love triangle from which no happy ending seems possible. The heroine Cellide is loved by her guardian Valentine, an older man who is also a returned traveller. Unfortunately she is also loved by Valentine's new companion, a young man called Francis, whom he has brought home and promised to make his partner in all he has—except Cellide.

The young woman advances the plot and provides a scene fraught with tension and poignancy by indulging in a deception beloved by Fletcher. Cellide is one of the modest and chaste young maidens who suddenly affect wantonness, using uncharacteristic behavior and language. In later plays Fletcher uses this device to help reform lechers, as Honora does in *The Loyal Subject*. Here the reason is quite different, for Cellide is not being pursued by a lecherous tyrant or rake. Both men involved are honorable and noble and each seeks an honorable solution to the dilemma.

When Francis meets his mentor's ward, he immediately falls in love with her, but as an honorable man he says nothing about his feelings; instead—since he thinks he cannot have her—he follows the only possible course and becomes deathly ill. Physicians are summoned; Valentine is worried. All Francis will say is that his grief comes
from loving a gentlewoman who loves another. When Valentine discovers the truth, his anxiety causes him to release Cellide from their engagement and urge her to visit the young man and relieve his distress. She becomes angry because she feels she is being used callously; hence, while promising to do her part to cure Francis, she also promises that neither man shall have her afterwards.

Cellide enters the sickroom, sweeping out the physicians before her, announcing she has come to comfort Francis:

> Will it please ye to taste a little of this Cordial- For this I think must cure ye

(III.i.122).

The cordial is, of course, herself, and when Francis realizes she is making wanton approaches, he is shocked and reminds her of her betrothal to Valentine. She dismisses that little fact, informing him she is there by the older man's command "and willingly I ratifie it" (III.i.123). She adds to his horror by her insulting comments on Valentine's age after Francis' affirmative reply to her question, "If I had never known that Gentleman/ Would you not willingly embrace my offer?" (123). The poor, sick man is bewildered:

> Ye are belyed; you are not Cellide, The modest, immaculate: who are ye: For I will know: what Devil, to do mischief Unto my vertuous friend hath shifted shapes With that unblemished beauty?

(III.i.124)
In Leech's words, "We are made to feel the shock and embarrassment of Francisco, a sick man who is offered what he has desired, but offered it in such a way as to kill his desire" (56). He repulses her uncharacteristic behavior so vehemently that she repents and reveals her pretense:

Till this minute
I scorn'd, and hated ye, and came to cozen ye;
Utter'd those things might draw a wonder on me,
To make ye mad.

(III.i.125)

Francisco's great respect for virtue, honor, and friendship (not his severe illness) causes her to change her feelings: "now truly, / Truly, and nobly I do love ye dearly," she tells him happily. For those same reasons, however, they must part: they must not violate her promise to Valentine. Both are so noble they see no solution to the dilemma, so Cellide enters a convent and Francis prepares to resume his travels. The scene is an emotionally taut one, and the audience is left in suspense, wondering at the fate of the lovers.

Despite the objections of some critics, Cellide's pretense is in keeping with her character, for even a modest young girl would feel betrayed and upset at what seemed like her betrothed's rejection. The ruse has an unexpected effect, as it does so often in Fletcher. Instead of putting both men in their place, she falls in love with the young man dying for love of her. Thus plot
complications arise and a range of emotions is produced which would not be affected otherwise. It is an interesting variation of a Fletcherian device often castigated by the critics.

To resolve this dilemma Fletcher calls on two devices, one of them a deception. Valentine's friend Michael, a stable character who serves as a norm for the others, uses uncharacteristically harsh measures to recall Francis from his abrupt departure. He takes officers to the waterfront and, to ensure his cooperation, accuses him of stealing some valuables belonging to Valentine. Francis does not protest; instead, to Michael's surprise, he confesses to stealing not only the valuables but also some other jewels and begs forgiveness. An element of suspense is introduced as Michael wonders if perhaps the arrest is justified. In the final scene all the principals are present, including Cellide, who is there because of a trick played by Tom (thus connecting the two plots in the final scene). All is resolved when Valentine and his sister Alice recognize Francis' jewels. They are indeed his own, given him by his father Valentine, who was separated from his young son during a naval battle in Sicily. There follows a joyous recognition scene, and Valentine is content to renounce his claims to Cellide and see the young couple united. Michael's lie thus contributes to the happy ending by ensuring the presence of the noble
Francis; furthermore it contributes to the denouement because there is mystery and a tinge of suspicion thrown on the young man about the origin of his jewels. Hence the emotional impact of the ending is enhanced when the explanation is finally made.

Both ruses thus contribute to uniting Cellide and Francis. Without her visit to his sickroom she would not have fallen in love with him, and without Michael’s false accusation, the truth about Francis’ parentage would have been delayed or never known at all. The last ruse is an especially clever way to untangle the complicated romance.

The comic subplot is largely made up of the tricks played by Tom in his pursuit of the lovely Mary who also enjoys a little mischief now and then. She wants to marry him but fears his wild reputation, which he shows no signs of correcting. He manages to alienate practically everyone, including an abbess and a convent full of nuns before the play’s end.

Tom uses the typical ruses of a charming, engaging rogue, including fake illness, disguise, and assumption of false personalities, to provide much broad comedy, bewildering his poor father, exasperating his servant and sister, and delighting the audience. All this is in a farcical, merry tone, totally unlike the serious elevated tone of the main romance. And yet, as Waith points out, both groups are from the same social milieu and speak the same
language, know the same manners. The subplot mocks every major event in the main plot, but in the end both couples come together.

First, to gain Mary's affection Tom fakes an injury which parallels Frank's real love-melancholy. Tom takes a fiddler and his man Launcelot and goes to Mary's house after everyone is asleep. They begin singing loud bawdy songs to the maids and Mary who appear "above."

 Appropriately, as Tom is climbing up the wall the Fiddler sings, "And climbing to promotion / He fall down suddenly." One of the maids "with a Devils vizard roaring, offers to kiss him, and he falls down," according to the stage directions. Mary rushes to his side when he cries piteously that his leg is hurt, but unfortunately he can't resist crowing too soon and she realizes she's been tricked. Being clever and fun-loving herself she doesn't simply upbraid him as one of the noble heroines like Honora or Celia would do; instead, she bids him find her lost scarf, and while he is searching, she enters the house and locks the door. Her parting sally is saucy and shows Tom he has a worthy opponent.

Being the merry scapegrace he is, Tom is undaunted by this failure and quickly devises another scheme: the classic "man who disguises himself to gain access to a lady." With her reluctant help, he disguises himself as his twin sister Dorothea. She helps Thomas into women's
clothing, but afterward sends her maid to warn Mary. The dressing scene must surely be amusing. Thomas urges his sister to be hasty: "Come quickly, quickly, paint me handsomely, / Take heed my nose be not in grain too," and "Out with this hair, Doll, handsomely" (IV.vi.153-4). A muffler completes his disguise. The girls twit him for still wearing his breeches and then laugh when he tries to curtsy and walk like a girl.

This get-up leads to various hilarious complications, starting with literally knocking down his father who is completely fooled by the disguise. Sebastian sees "Dorothy" out wandering too late and orders "her" to get to bed. Thomas demurs; Sebastian begins to use force, and is suddenly surprised to find himself lying on the ground from the "sound knock she gave me, / A plaguey Girl." He is pleased at this display of "mine own true spirit" (IV.vi.155), and plans to leave his daughter a thousand more pounds. His servant disabuses him of this happy thought, however: it was "one who spits fire as fast as the Devil sometimes, Sir, / And changes shapes as often; your Son Thomas" (155), for Launcelot noticed that Thomas was wearing boots under his "wenches cloaths." But Sebastian is not truly convinced; a little later he eavesdrops on "Dorothy" kissing the comic character Hylas, and approves heartily, making plans for their son to be his heir. Launce points out that the boots are still
there, but the old man dismisses him impatiently: "Hang Boots, Sir, / Why, they'll wear Breeches too" (V.ii.161).

Tom also suffers the attentions of Hylas, a comic character who falls in love too easily. After the debacle in Mary's bedroom, which will be recounted later, he is approached by Hylas, who naturally thinks he is following Mistress Doll, Sebastian's daughter. Tom does not enlighten him, seeing a chance for a merry trick. Hylas attempts to kiss one who walks "so late, sweet, so weak guarded"; he is a little put off because "her lips are monstrous rugged" but quickly reassures himself "that surely is but the sharpness of the weather" (V.ii.161). "Doll" insists upon marriage before accepting any more attentions and suggests they marry at midnight in a nearby chapel. Hylas claims another kiss, although "Methinks her mouth still / Is monstrous rough" (V.ii.163). The next day, after the supposed ceremony, Hylas comes to claim his bride, only this time he addresses the real Dorothy. She is understandably bewildered when he demands that she bring her money and jewels to his house: "Came ye out of Bedlam?" she asks (V.ii.168).

Furthermore, Tom enters a nunnery in his disguise, surely the most daring of his exploits. Valentine asks "Dorothy" to visit his ward Cellide (whom he wishes to marry) in the nunnery where she has secluded herself because she has fallen in love with Francis. Tom agrees
to plead with her to return and promises to have her out by daybreak. He creeps into the nunnery, causing commo-
tion among the nuns, who fear he is the devil in disguise or perhaps a ghost that cannot rest. He assures the
Abbess he is only the spirit of "a holy Fryer" and requests her to let Cellide out for one hour. If not, he threatens to "have among your Nuns again" (V.ii.166). The threat is so persuasive she immediately agrees. When Thomas and Cellide return to the others, Dorothy chides him: "You have made brave sport," but he is unabashed: "I'll make more if I live Wench" (V.ii.170). Finally all is resolved in the last scene. Tom's disguise does not win him his immediate goal, but it provides scope for more mischief and much humor, and eventually he wins the girl (without changing his ways, or even promising to).

Mary also enjoys playing tricks and proves it by using substitution, another stock comic device, to foil Thomas' original plan when he donned his sister's attire. Being forewarned, Mary's maid pretends to go along with Tom and invites "Mistress Dorothy" to enter Mary's bed-
room: "creep softly in, your company / will warm her well" (IV.ii.157). Tom is, of course, only too glad to oblige. Unknown to him, the bed now holds a "black-moore" and Mary and Dorothy, eavesdropping, laugh heartily as Tom speaks endearments to this stranger and promises her many delights. He finally discovers his mistake when he passes
the candle close to her face. Roaring "the Devil, Devil, O the Devil," he makes a hasty exit. Mary has won another round.

Tom adopts yet another pose in his attempts to conquer Mary: that he is a repentent creature, totally reformed. He visits the sickroom of Francis and tries to cheer him up with a glass of sack. Although Francis warns him "all this forc'd foolery will never do it" (III.i.131), in yet another eavesdropping scene he and Hylas conceal themselves while Mary and Alice come in to comfort the sick man. Shortly afterward they hear a disembodied voice speaking in mournful tones:

My life has been so lewd, my loose condition,
Which I repent too late, so lamentable,
That anything but curses light upon me,
Exorbitant in all my wayes;

I have a vertuous Sister, but I scorn'd her,
A Mistress too, a noble Gentlewoman,
For goodness all out-going.

(III.i.132)

He dissembles so well that he has Mary weeping and Francis marveling in an aside, "How exactly / This cunning young Thief playes his part!" The deceiver spoils the effect and loses the girl again, however, when he can't resist whispering too loudly to his confederate about how well the ruse is going. Mary and Alice leave abruptly and Francis points out that "In your own noose she halter'd ye" (III.i.133).
Not content with tricking Mary, Tom has another pretense going, this one against his father Sebastian, one of the comic humour characters. In an inversion of the usual parental expectations, Sebastian wants his son to be a dissolute rake, so Thomas determines to disappoint him. When Dorothea tells him Mary refuses to see him; she advises him to "Put on the shape of order and humanity / Or you must marry Malkyn the May Lady" (II.ii.109), but Tom is not convinced. He expresses himself in a revealing soliloquy (which contains a reminder of Hamlet):

And no access without I mend my manners?  
All my designs in Limbo? I will have her, 
Yes, I will have her, though the Devil roar, 
I am resolv'd that, if she live above ground, 
I'le not be bob'd i' th' nose with every bobtail:  
I will be civil, now I think better, 
Exceeding civil, wondrous finely carried: 
And yet be mad upon occasion, 
And stark mad too, and save my land: my Father, 
I'le have my will of him, how e're my wenches goes.  
(II.ii.111)

Accordingly whenever Tom meets his father, he pretends to be sober, civil, and upright, but, perversely, whenever he meets Mary he is just the opposite.

Sebastian prides himself on being a youthful rogue, and when travel seems to have made Tom too tame he threatens to marry again to get a new heir. The scenes where he shows his displeasure with Launcelot, the merry servant who accompanied Tom on his travels, and Tom, who pretends to be so refined, are hilarious. In one scene, for example, another echo of Hamlet, Tom enters reading a book,
noting "What sweet costum dwells here!" Sebastian comments bitterly, "Spoil'd forever" (II.ii.112). Finally, in exasperation, Sebastian gives Tom money—"a civil summe / for a young civil man" and sends for four of the maids to choose a mother for his new heir. Before he chooses, however, he wants to make sure Tom has not enjoyed their favors, "for fear we confound our Genealogies" (IV.ii.147), he explains. To Sebastian's delight Tom unblushingly confesses to having enjoyed not only all of these but also every neighbor his father can name, including one who was only twelve when he left on his travels. Through this final deception Tom is totally restored to his father's good graces.

Tom is a protean character, constantly shifting poses. One is never sure exactly what his character is—although the question is largely irrelevant, since he is the stuff of farce. It is clear why he tries to deceive Mary, of course, and his perversity leads him to bedevil his irascible old father. The scenes between the two are so entertaining that probably no audience would stop to wonder. Functionally Tom is present to contrast his pursuit of his heart's desire with the sentimental romance of the more noble characters. As usual in Fletcherian comedy both kinds of love are satirized.
The Wild Goose Chase

The Wild Goose Chase is another lighthearted comedy, one which some critics see as a predecessor of the Restoration comedy of manners. It is a classic example of the battle of the sexes as three couples skirmish back and forth, furnishing general merriment in the main plot. The rogues in Mirabel, the wild goose of the title, is engaged to Oriana, but is not interested in hearing wedding bells. He has just returned home to France from several years of traveling and is so averse to the idea of marriage that he declares forcefully, "Tye me to one smock? Make my travels fruitless? I'll be hang'd first" (I.ii.322). Oriana refuses to accept the rejection and the war is on. The main plot is thus devoted to Oriana's pursuit of the elusive Mirabel. She is neither shy nor averse to scheming. All Oriana's ruses involve disguises; outward change of costume, identity, or mental condition, as she tries one strategem after another to bring her reluctant suitor to heel. As he mockingly evades every trap, the audience is torn between sympathy for the rejected maiden and joy at Mirabel's success.

In the parallel secondary plot Mirabel's friends and fellow travellers Pinac and Belleur pursue two accomplished sisters Lillia-Bianca and Rosalura. The situation is the reverse of the main plot. Instead of a woman chas-
ing a man and looking foolish every time her tricks are discovered, the men fill the traditional role of pursuer but are led a merry dance by the women, who abuse and trick them, leaving them open to scorn. In contrast to Oriana, their main strategy is reversal of character, deception which uses no physical disguise. Eventually of course all the couples end up together but not before many deceptions have been employed and much laughter has ensued. As befits the contrasting plots, even though Mirabel is finally caught he is still the victor, and--though the sisters condescend to accept the men they wanted all along--they are clearly superior in wit and resources.

Inasmuch as the farce relies on tricks for its humor, practically every scene involves deception being planned or executed. There are two chief intriguers: Mirabel, who schemes to regain the lost honour of his comrades; and Lugier, the tutor to Lillia-Bianca and Rosalura.

Lugier is the one who actually plans the schemes of all three women and is even the main character in one of them. His role is doubtless a plum comic one, for he is a pompous fussbudget, always hovering around giving senten-
tious advice to the girls, encouraging and promoting romance and marriage, but totally uninterested in the sub-
ject for himself. He is evidently both skilled in in-
trigue and indefatigable, for when one ruse fails he has
"other Irons heating," and his methods are eventually successful, making good his Act V boast: "I will strike / three blows with one stone home" (V.i.i.361).

To aid Oriana he relies on physical disguise, arranging for both her and her brother De Gard to impersonate others and also disguising himself, twice posing as the merchant Leverdure. Realizing that Mirabel will be most impressed by wealth and position, not character, he has De Gard assume the elaborate attire of a nobleman, and informs Mirabel there is a noble Savoyard, nephew to the king, who seeks Oriana's hand. The plan seems to work, for Mirabel's jealousy is aroused. The woman whose love he treats so carelessly seems to be desired by a rich nobleman, a match she can hardly refuse. He is rethinking his position when, unfortunately, a disgruntled servant discloses the ruse. Mirabel begins to laugh:

now I remember Him.
All the whole cast on's face, though 'twere umber'd,
And masked with patches . . . how he strutted,
And what a load of Lord he clapt upon him!
(III.i.i.359)

These lines mention two of the favorite contemporary aids to disguise: umber and patches. The umber darkened De Gard's face so he would have a believable Italian complexion, and the patches provided a further alteration. The scene is one of many comic delights in the play, with two completely disguised players behaving in a manner contrary to their usual ways, trying to trap Mirabel, who is being
his normal scapegrace self. When the "Savoy lord" and attendants re-enter, Mirabel sings a taunting song and exits laughing. De Gard still wants to have a duel, but Oriana begs him to wait. It is worth noting that Mirabel does not himself discover the deceptions; they are pointed out to him by a servant who had been rudely treated by Lugier, so the failure of the device can perhaps be viewed as an example of poetic justice. Even though the scholar schemes for the right side, promoting marriage, he is not without flaws which occasionally need pointing out.

The first disguise having failed, and indeed all appeals to Mirabel's honor receiving similar negative results, Oriana plots a stratagem of her own. It is designed to elicit guilt for his lack of emotional commitment and also appeal to the tender emotions of pity and sympathy. In short, she pretends to be mad. Since love-melancholy was regarded as an acceptable illness in the seventeenth century, she would naturally feel hopeful of success. The way is prepared when Lugier comments on her sad distraction, and then the sisters, who are also deceived, try to prepare Mirabel for the drastic changes in Oriana's health brought on by his cold rejection. They lament their friend's condition: she is grown senseless and will die of unrequited love, they cry. Illustrating these cries visually, Oriana is brought in on a bed
exhibiting her pitiful state. In a lengthy scene with echoes of Ophelia, Oriana speaks disjointedly, and sings a sad ballad of a girl who lost her lover. When she even fails to recognize him, Mirabel is moved to repentance, declaring if she were well he would certainly marry her. Oriana's joy at hearing this speech, since it seems her objective is gained, causes her to lose all caution. She sends the others away and assures Mirabel she is not insane. But she faces humiliation once again, for he is angered at the trick and taunts her in front of her friends and family: she was only "mad for marriage," he says. A more experienced schemer, or one less in love, would have kept up the pretense longer, until her objective was secured. Oriana learns valuable lessons from this experience, however, which she puts to good use later. Among other things she learns that she cannot rely on an appeal to the softer emotions and she must control her own feelings. From this point onwards she relies on the schemes of Lugier, who devises the ultimately successful plan.

His final trick for Oriana is similar to the previous one, only this time he directs Oriana to assume a rich disguise. She pretends to be a wealthy Italian lady whose brother has died and left a rich inheritance for Mirabel, the only stipulation being that he must marry her to obtain the treasure. Her costume, jewels, and elegant
carriage impress (and deceive) everyone, especially Mirabel. He announces, in front of witnesses, his willingness to marry the lady immediately. When she reveals her identity he accepts the inevitable, and gives in gracefully, agreeing to honor his word, although he is heard to comment ruefully, "What a world's this, nothing but craft and cozenage!" (V.vi.389) But as he is a practiced deceiver himself no one pays any attention. He does insist that Oriana keep wearing her fine new clothes, however, underlining the point that he is most interested in outward appearances.

As we have seen, in the main action Oriana determinedly pursues Mirabel, who proves adapt at escaping whatever snares she sets, always making her look foolish. In the secondary plot the situations are reversed, for the two sisters Lillia-Bianca and Rosalura are pursued by their suitors Pinac and Belleur, and they succeed in making the men look ridiculous. Their chief device is reversal of character, behavior urged upon them by their tutor Lugier. In other Fletcher plays this device is often used for the serious purpose of curing an evil humour like lust, but here the device is a comic one and gives much scope to the actors for such things as entertaining stage business, exaggerated gestures, and expressions of surprise. The two scenes which depict this reversal are undoubtedly the most hilarious ones in the play.
When the two couples meet, shortly after the men return from their travels, each man is attracted to his opposite: the bashful Belleur is drawn to the lively, outspoken Rosalura, while the practiced ladies' man Pinac is enamored of the demure, serious Lillia-Bianca. However, when each man comes calling (separately) he gets a disconcerting surprise. Each girl behaves in a manner directly opposite to her true personality, to the discomfiture of the men and the delight of the audience.

Lillia-Bianca, whom Mirabel calls a "starch'd piece of austerity," is reportedly so learned that she "knows who was Adam's schoolmaster and who taught Eve to spin" (II.i.336), and further is so grave she faints if she sees someone laugh. Imagine Pinac's surprise when this grave intellectual calls for music and begins to merrily dance and sing. She even dares him to tell the world she is a hypocrite, a "mask in a forc'd and borrow'd shape," for she knows he will not be believed.

In the following scene Rosalura is courted by the bashful Belleur, who is attracted by the reports of her plain-spoken, free behavior. To his dismay he finds she is not the merry gentlewoman he expects, but is instead a bookish moralist.

Both men are bewildered and quite naturally feel themselves cozened. Indeed, throughout the rest of the play Belleur engages in a kind of choric comment on
women's inconstancy, unreliability and his own aversion to matrimony. For example, in Act V when all the men decide to travel again to escape the "dangerous Bay of Matrimony," as Mirabel calls it, Belleur asks plaintively:

Is there ne're a Land
That ye have read, or heard of . . .
A happy Kingdom where there are no Women?.
Nor have been ever? . . . .
For thither would I travel; where 'tis Felony
To confess he had a Mother: a Mistris Treason.
(V.i.377)

The girls take counsel and scold Lugier for advising them to act so hypocritically—behavior which, instead of producing husbands, frightens them off. "We follow'd your directions," Lillia-Bianca notes,

we did rarely,
We were Stately, Coy, Demure, Careless, Light, Giddy
And play'd at all points: This you swore would carry.
(III.i.347)

They decide to take matters in their own hands: "We may live Maids else til the moon drops milstones" (III.i.347). Both plan to behave naturally and thus re-attract their suitors, but as matters work out, neither actually does so. Lugier wins their good opinion again when he helps Lillia-Bianca foil a trick set up by Mirabel, and he thus directs both girls in humbling the men once more.

Mirabel is both deceived and deceiver, enjoying evading Oriana's snares and engineering schemes of his own to aid his fellow travelers. After being so abused by the sisters who seemingly changed personalities overnight,
Belleur and Pinac would prefer to avoid women altogether. But Mirabel persuades each of them to revenge himself in what seems to be an appropriate way. To arouse the jealousy of Lillia-Bianca, whom Mirabel dubs "Lady Learning," he employs a courtesan, Mariana, to pose as a travelled English lady much interested in Pinac. The charade is acted before Lillia-Bianca and it seems to be working well, so well that it is continued in the next act, where Pinac and Mariana pretend they are about to wed. Lillia-Bianca approaches with a willow garland, assuring Pinac of her repentance and desire for his happiness. Further, she tells him what a good wife she would have been in happier circumstances. Pinac is moved by this gracious speech and offers to reject the Englishwoman and marry her immediately. She scorns his proposal: "'Tis honour enough for me I have unmask'd ye" (IV.i.364). Lugier has apprised her of the trick, and she taunts her suitor with her knowledge that his companion is nothing but an English whore dressed in fine clothes. Thus Lillia-Bianca wins round two of her combat with Pinac. The whore-in-disguise ploy is a familiar one but fitting in the circumstances, for Pinac is known as a wencher.

A parallel scene follows the outwitting of Pinac, in which Belleur is also humbled. Urged on by Mirabel, the normally shy, retiring Belleur decides to chastise the normally outspoken Rosalura in kind by harsh lecturing.
She listens meekly, seemingly overcome with remorse. At the conclusion of his strongest speech, however, after he adjures her to cry, cry, "cry seriously, as if thou hadst lost thy monkey" (IV.ii.368), a satirical comment in itself, Lillia-Bianca and four other women enter laughing and abuse him until he promises to "be laugh'd at, and endure it patiently" and to "fear ye/ and honour ye, and anything" (IV.ii.369). The scene is especially comic because he tries to be something he is not—a gruff blusterer—and ends up in submission to the women, his usual position.

By Act V the girls are tired of dissembling, it being obvious that they are superior in the contest with the men. Their constant poses and shifting characters provide much comedy and counterpoint the Mirabel-Mariana battles nicely. When the wild goose is finally caught, the other couples manage a truce and a triple wedding is planned, as befits a comedy.

Rule a Wife and Have a Wife

Set in Spain, Rule A Wife and Have a Wife is one more lighthearted battle of the sexes. It is almost perfectly constructed, the subplot being in direct contrast with the main plot. In the primary plot the humble soldier Leon tricks the willful Margarita into marriage and eventually
tames her. In the subplot, her former maid Estifania
accomplishes the same thing with Perez, the Spanish cap-
tain. There is a humorous contrast which depends on the
inversion of sex roles. The two who are deceived,
Margarita and Perez, are sublimely overconfident, thinking
they can cleverly manage the other sex. Both are sure
they have found the perfect dupe, but instead both wind up
being duped—to their bewilderment and the delight of the
audience.

After the weddings they discover their mistakes, in
parallel and consecutive scenes (III.iv and III.v). Finally, also in consecutive scenes (V.iii and V.iv), they
submit to their fates and their spouses. Thus the main
plot hero and the subplot heroine are successful
deceivers. Both misrepresent themselves to their prospec-
tive mates and both outwit them when the deceptions are
revealed. Deception is thus central to plot and theme;
the deceptions not only constitute the plot but are the
means by which character change produces happy marriages
for all. Both plots illustrate the superiority of an
individual of whichever sex who has intelligence and wit.
For Fletcher cleverness and wit are not limited to one
sex. He usually, as he does here, gives equal time to
both sexes. The victory of a man in one plot and a woman
in the other adds to the comedy and demonstrates again
Fletcher's gift for pleasing his audience.
Besides the main characters there are other deceivers who contribute to the fun and the more serious purpose of reforming the heroine Margarita. One of these is the maid Altea. When her young, high-spirited mistress announces her decision to marry a fool in order to live wantonly but respectably, Altea suggests the humble soldier Leon. He will, she promises, be

A husband of an easy faith, a fool,
Made by his wealth, and moulded to her pleasure,
One though he see himself become a monster,
Shall hold the door, and entertain the maker.

(II.i.182)

Altea thus becomes the first agent of deception, for she swears this humble soldier is a pliable fool.

The wedding is duly solemnized and Margarita plans festivities to celebrate her new freedom. Observing these preparations her new husband makes some bold and surprising remarks which briefly disturb her: "I see not what I expect to see," she says (III.i.196), but Altea persuades her to overlook these. Margarita replies:

The next rebellion I'le be rid of him
I'le have no mad Rascals I tye to me . . .
Come in and see all handsome. . . .

(III.i.196)

Altea's reply is revealing if Margarita were not so self-centered: "I hope to see you so too, I have wrought ill else." Her role as deceiver is not fully revealed to characters or audience until the last act, when her relationship with Leon is acknowledged; she has provided a
wealthy wife for her own brother. Leon tells the now-chastened Margarita that Altea is

my best sister
For she prov'd so, wench,
When she deceived you with a loving husband.

(V.i.230)

This revelation is a pleasant surprise, an example of the double deception Fletcher sometimes uses, to fool both audience and characters. Altea's motives are benevolent and understandable. Her actions initiate the main plot and pave the way for Margarita's reform.

Leon, the supposed gull willing to be cuckolded meekly at any time, is the hero and chief deceiver of the main plot. He practices a more sophisticated kind of disguise than altering his costume, voice, and gestures. He is one of the characters who adopt traits foreign to their nature: the concealment is not their identity but a discrepancy between their character and their behavior. The device has obvious comic possibilities though Fletcher employs it for more serious purposes also. Both aims are evident in Leon. He is touted as the perfect choice for the lady Margarita, who wants the respectable cover marriage provides; he seems to be a gentle soldier, malleable, cowardly, and foolish enough to be indifferent if he is cuckolded. Margarita is unpleasantly surprised, therefore, when, shortly after the wedding, her meek husband complains vehemently when he finds the house full of
objectionable guests. His mild manner discarded, he claims his rightful place as her husband, guardian of her honor. Margarita is so amazed she declares, "I will be divorced immediately." But Leon continues:

    You shall not
    You shall not have so much will to be wicked.
    I am more tender of your honour, Lady,
    And of your Age, you took me for a shadow;
    You took me to gloss over you discredit,
    To be your Fool, you had thought you had found a
    Coxcomb. . . .
    Only I will be known to be your Lord now.

(III.i.204)

Further, he announces to one and all,

    I cast my Cloud off, and appear my self,
    The master of this little piece of mischief,

(III.i.205)

clearly revealing his planned subterfuge.

    His soldier friend Juan notes wonderingly: "Is not this my Alferes? He looks another thing. Are miracles afoot again?" His companion concurs: "Is this the Fellow / That had the patience to become a Fool . . . ? / I much admire the man, I am astonisht" (III.i.203). And a little later when Margarita is convinced of her mistake and ruing her choice, Perez comments admiringly, "Sure they dare fight with fire that conquer women" (III.i.206). The audience is delighted at the surprising character change; seeing a milquetoast turn into a man is highly satisfying. Leon takes charge of his wayward wife and his household and deals masterfully with both throughout the remainder of the play. His tactics result in a reformed wife, a
reformed noble suitor, the Duke of Medina, and the come-uppance of a less noble suitor, the clown, Cacafogo.

The subplot also displays a couple engaged in deception. Estifania and Perez are linked to the main plot because she is a maid to Margarita; and he is a fellow soldier with Leon. The plots intersect at Margarita's city house, for it is here that Estifania launches her biggest masquerade and here that Leon discards his assumed character. The situation is reversed in this plot because here it is the woman who emerges victorious in the simultaneous deceptions. She is even more clever than Leon, for she has more than one scheme going at the same time and she uses her ingenuity to extricate herself when her plans seem to backfire.

Estifania and Perez are both deceivers, each motivated by greed, each looking for a wealthy mate. Both pretend a wealth and station they do not possess and both are suitably cozened. Estifania pretends to be mistress of Margarita's house and the handsome soldier-adventurer Perez pretends to be rich. They marry and are living in the fine house when unfortunately Margarita and her entourage return unexpectedly. Undaunted, Estifania tells her gullible mate it is Margarita who is posing as mistress of the place in order to catch the young man with her. She suggests they cooperate by removing to humble lodgings for a few days. A few mornings later Perez
awakes in his shabby room to find himself alone, robbed of his "treasure." He learns his wife has similarly tricked many others and realizes his mistake: "Am I trickt now? Caught in mine own nooze?" (202) But this revelation is quickly forgotten when he meets her on the street carrying a small casket. She displays her ability to deceive again, takes the offensive by heaping scorn on his worthless "dowry" and saves herself from injury by persuading him she was only looking out for his interests. The poor fellow wants to believe so much that once again he accepts the lie that the fine house is hers, returns there and makes a fool of himself by claiming "his" property.

In the meantime Estifania turns her talents to a really profitable deception: finding a more gullible fool than her husband, none other than the "stav'd usurer's son" Cacafogo. He pays a thousand ducats for the casket of worthless jewels when she assures him they will aid him in his pursuit of the lovely Margarita. Like other successful deceivers she knows her gull's weaknesses and appeals to them. In Perez's case it is greed, but in Cacafogo's it is lust.

At the end, however, she capitulates, gives the money to Perez, and promises to be a faithful wife (perhaps the greatest deception of all). Leon generously offers the pair a home - though they have done nothing to deserve it.
Each seems to get the mate he deserves, and by then, wants.

Fletcher's skill in using this central device of misrepresentation is evident. Leon and Estifania are the winners in their particular battles, using similar schemes of deception. It is worth noting, however, that Leon assumes a false personality—an inner disguise—whereas Estifania falsifies her external identity. Further, the deceptions point in opposite directions; Leon pretends to be worse than he really is and Estifania pretends to be much better. The primary plot is fittingly more serious than the subplot and the issues there more important. Margarita needs a real change of character, not just a pretended one, for she deserves the life of promiscuity she has planned for herself, but Leon does not deserve the life of cuckoldry she has in mind for him. Perez, however, needs to make no elaborate changes; he has only to accustom himself to the loss of an imaginary fortune, and accept the fact that he has been properly cozened.

There is still another deceiver who operates in the main plot. The Duke of Medina employs some well-known tricks in his pursuit of Margarita. He is part of her social set, looking forward to enjoying her company once she is safely married. But after Leon's turnaround, when such dallying is no longer possible, he takes other measures. First he tries to discourage Leon from fulfilling
his husbandly role by falsely assigning him to an overseas regiment. Leon neatly foils that plan—and Margarita's wishes—by packing up all his household goods and preparing to take his wife along. Seeing that his objective will not be gained, the Duke rescinds his order and admits the deception. At this point Leon becomes really angry at Margarita's attitude and makes an impassioned speech which finally changes her attitude, and she agrees to cooperate with him. Together they devise methods to dampen the ardor of her most persistent suitors, the Duke and Cacafogo.

Undaunted by his first failure the Duke tries another common ruse, fake illness. He pretends to be injured in a scuffle outside Margarita's house, hoping to be carried to her bedroom to recover. He is duly brought inside and ministered to, but does not succeed in seducing the lady. Instead he is subjected to something completely unexpected. Unknown to him the fool Cacafogo has come along earlier, also hoping to see Margarita. He is put into the wine cellar below Margarita's bedchamber, where he whiles away the time drinking and making strange noises. Margarita goes in to see the Duke, but his addresses are interrupted by the weird sounds from below. She tells him it is the devil:

he will come to fetch ye,
A very spirit, for he spoke underground,
And spoke to you just as you would have snatcht me,
You are a wicked man, and this haunts ye . . . .
(V.i.230)

Medina is subjected to a lecture on the evils of pursuing married women, and frightened not only by the "devil" below, but by assurances that the husband will also demand his life. When he pleads for mercy, she suggests various unpleasant possibilities such as jumping into a nearby well, or perhaps being let down from a garret window on a rotten rope. These possibilities are too much for the nobleman and he vows to reform. The scene is broad farce and also ironic since it ends with the reformation of the Duke, the very opposite of his intentions.

The humbling of Cacafogo serves more than a farcical purpose. He is the principal link between both lines of action, and his gullibility contributes to the reconciliation of each couple. It is his money which soothes the copper Captain's disappointment, and his antics which enable Margarita to outwit and transform the lustful duke. As Richard Levin points out, his very foolishness helps to raise the dupes--Margarita and Perez--on the scale of wit. In addition, "his mercenary approach to love functions to mitigate by comparison the financial motives of both couples and evidence the credibility of the emotional attachments in the resolution" (88).

Fletcher handles the deceptions particularly well in this play. The plotting is skillfully constructed to dis-
play a full range of deceptive devices, from those assumed for benevolent purposes—like the pretension of a false character—to those assumed for more self-serving or dishonorable aims—like the pretension of wealth and station, lies uttered to obtain money and escape injury, and standard comic devices like fake injury. The deceit provides comedy, farce, and such dramatically effective scenes as the one where Leon reveals his true character to the astonished dinner guests. The deceptions laudably result in the reformation of the two members of the nobility, Margarita and the Duke, and the at least partial reformation of those of humbler station in the subplot, Estifania and Perez. On the venial side, Leon gains a wealthy loving wife, and Estifania and Perez gain a thousand ducats and a home.

The Chances

The Chances is one of Fletcher's most popular plays, based on a play by Cervantes. Set in Bologna, this romantic comedy is a lighthearted romp of mistaken identity and farcical mixups. Two young Spanish gallants, Don John and Don Frederick, find themselves in an adventure which is thrust upon them, becoming involved with Constantia, a noble lady in distress. This involvement leads to various adventures and comic complications including preventing
serious injury in a duel. The main plot thus concerns the difficulties of the young lovers who are separated by the opposition of the lady's brother and the efforts of the two gallants to aid this worthy couple. The plot does not however turn upon deception, nor are the characters outstandingly devious. The only deceivers are the lovers themselves who have managed to get together long enough to produce a baby. Fletcher's interest in deception is still present, however, ingeniously and entertainingly displayed in the whole last act, where his concern is to attack gently contemporary Jacobean beliefs in witchcraft by candid exposure of the illusionists' methods and thus puncture, laughingly, their credibility.

The confusion and consternation at the end of Act IV provide the perfect situation to lead into Fletcher's satire. After preventing the duel the dons persuade the contending parties to reach an understanding and allow the parents to get married. However this happy resolution is delayed because when all the men reach the lodging house where Constantia and her baby are staying they find that mother, baby, and their comical landlady Gillian have all disappeared.

While out looking for the missing ones, the men mistake a whore with the same name for their Constantia and, in a farcical scene, have her arrested. Meanwhile, Antonio, the choleric, combative kinsman of Petrucchio,
charges his servant to find a conjuror, for this ironically-named Constantia is his mistress who has absconded with his money, jewels, and (young) fiddler. The other men also decide, separately, to consult a conjuror, all choosing one Vecchio, a "teacher of Latine and Musick, and a reputed Wizard."

On the way, Don John expresses mocking skepticism:

They say he can raise Devils,  
Can he make 'em  
Tell truth too, when he has rais'd 'em? for believe it,  
These Devils are lyingest Rascals.  
(V.i.233-34)

The more credulous Frederick is sure the wizard can compel them with spells. John's response is well-known:

dost thou think  
The Devil such an Asse as people make him?  
Such a poor coxcomb? such a penny foot-post?  
(V.i.234)

Thus three separate sets of people converge on the dwelling of Vecchio to "do rare tricks" (IV.ii.22). And rare tricks he does, to the alternate delight or consternation of his audience, depending on the degree of credulity or the degree of involvement with the spirits summoned up. All want to know the whereabouts of Constantia and the baby: the Duke of Ferrara and her brother Petrucchio, plus Dons John and Frederick who, in addition, want to locate their landlady who has made fools of them in front of these important people by disappearing with her valuable charges.
The first and most obvious function of including the conjurors and his deceptions is to entertain; romantic fools, skeptics, the general public—all enjoy a delightful frisson upon seeing the apparitions so skillfully conjured up by Vecchio. The audience always knows his productions are only tricks, though the stage audience is unaware he is a real showman and student of human nature, a careful observer and listener putting these skills to good use in his conjuring. He knows what pleases people and gives them what they want, even though it is only an illusion or a deception. For example, in scene one the Duke and Petrucchio are surprised when the wizard greets them with their proper titles, knowing the object of their visit. But the audience sees how he does it; while standing on his balcony he simply overhears their conversation as they approach.

In addition to using his eyes and ears, Vecchio is well-prepared to fulfill his clients' wishes. When the customers appear he promises to prepare ceremonies to satisfy them, and he delivers faithfully, knowing that the credulous and the gullible, not to mention the ordinary citizen, are impressed by elaborate ceremony and ritual.

Costume is vital to the effect; hence, after seeing to his guests' comfort, he disappears briefly, reappearing "in his habiliments"—doubtless colorful wizard's robes reminiscent of Prospero's fabulous costume—long, flowing
cloak covered with brilliants, a wand or staff, and a peaked hat. He heightens the effect by enjoining his audience to keep still and silent in order not to frighten the weak, insubstantial apparitions. Further trappings include soft music and special lyrics to invoke the spirits. A lovely lyric, for example, conjures up Constantia, but Gillian, the garrulous landlady, is summoned by a vulgar ditty.

A second function of the deceptive illusions is to satirize contemporary belief in witchcraft and conjuring. The very fact that the educated, adventurous young gallants and the members of the nobility consult a conjuror as their first step toward locating the missing persons is itself significant showing how pervasive such beliefs were. Further, the characteristics and behavior of spirits, both benign and devilish, were obviously well-known for Fletcher to mock them so successfully. Among other things they can be summoned by the right incantations, and they have supernatural powers, revealing the whereabouts of lost things and lost people.

Don John's familiarity with and skepticism of the conventions is illustrated and the whole tissue of such beliefs is made ludicrous when old Antonio rushes in also seeking Vecchio's services, hoping to find his missing whore. Since the dons know his name and mission, they quickly inform Vecchio. The pair also know where the
whore is (in jail) and offer to help Vecchio cozen his irascible visitor. This offer underlines Fletcher's point—all these illusions, spirits, special knowledge, are simply tricks which, viewed properly, are hilarious. John, who has poured scorn on the conjuror from the beginning even while viewing the apparitions, is especially helpful:

If he come
To have a devil show'd him, by all means
Let me be he, I can roar rarely.

(V.iii.242)

He also notes that stage devils generally "fart fire" when one ties squibs to their tails, but he doesn't offer to go that far in his impersonation. Vecchio pushes him inside to choose an appropriate costume, of which he has many, the audience having already seen at least four apparitions, of all different sizes. Thus when Antonio actually enters, the wizard already knows, seemingly magically, his name and wish and is prepared to grant it. John reenters "like a Spirit" appropriately apparelled and answers the choleric old man's questions flippantly, exacerbating his anger to the point that he draws his dagger to attack "the devil's pate." At this tense moment the others enter laughing and explain the joke to the now bewildered Antonio.

Fletcher shows just how foolish and laughable these conventions and beliefs are, for Vecchio's much vaunted
powers are nothing more than common sense, with an overlay of sumptuous trappings calculated to impress the credulous. Vecchio apologizes for the deceptions he practiced on such august company but explains that there is such a call for his services he doesn't like to disappoint anyone. The "apparitions" are only neighborhood children whom he instructs in grammar and music and then borrows when necessary for his conjuring. His powers of locating hidden things come from careful listening and observation. In short, his deceptions are harmless and his purpose laudable:

My end is mirth
And pleasing, if I can, all parties

(V.iii.241)

he sums up, a statement which might apply to all of Fletcher's work.

Finally, Vecchio's deception serves the functional purpose of winding up the plot: it reunites the Duke with Constantia and their son, and reconciles all, including the saucy landlady and the dons (as it turns out, Vecchio is her relative and she set up the whole charade "to torture your donships for a day or two."). This serious business concluded, the play ends on a farcical note with the thought of Antonio's having his faithless whore whipped, although Petrucchio counsels moderation.
The Mad Lover is appropriately set in Paphos, the city favored by the love goddess herself. It concerns the activities of various lovers, all extremists in some way. The title character is Memnon, another bluff and loyal soldier, who—as the title suggests—goes mad from love. The play satirizes the universal foolishness of lovers, particularly heroic ones. Fletcher makes their adventures half-comic, half-serious and in Waith's words, "achieves a beautifully articulated piece of fooling with the material of romance and tragedy" (142).

Memnon is not only the title character but the protagonist as well. It is his condition which provokes most of the action of both plots, so it is worthwhile describing him in some detail. In his first appearance he reveals the vainglory of a soldier, for he praises his achievements on the battlefield in overblown language and expresses contempt for the soft life at court. He appears ridiculous because he is a rough soldier unacquainted with the niceties of court behavior, and the ladies jest at his expense. Soon he becomes another comic figure—the blunt
soldier in love, for when he sees the Princess Calis he falls to his knees, struck dumb with admiration and love, never having seen such a lovely, refined lady before. The court is much amused. This extreme behavior is followed by an even stranger gesture: he offers Calis his heart. But Memnon is not speaking metaphorically. When the princess understandably refuses such an abrupt proposal, he decides to literally send her his heart, in a golden goblet. His speech praising suicide is both mock-heroic and poignant.

There are two plots, both involving the pursuit of Princess Calis, sister of the King of Paphos. In the first plot Memnon's activities and those of the friends who want to cure him of his humour are recounted and in the second we see the machinations of another soldier, Syphax, as he pursues Calis in a very different way. Still a third lover presents himself in Act III, Memnon's brother Polydor. The complications resulting from this romantic tangle form a plot concerned with the follies of romance.

Deceptions are the key to the complications of both plots, integral to plot and theme, even providing poetic justice. There are fake deaths, false documents, impersonations, role-playing, and intrigues galore. In fact, there are several deceivers—everyone except Memnon and Calis indulges in some form of pretense.
The biggest deceiver of all is Polydor. When he sees the pitiful condition of his once noble brother, he tries one strategem after another to cure him. All his schemes are undertaken for the sole purpose of helping Memnon, but they all fail ironically as we shall see. The first trick is an interesting variation of the fake death device: the heart trick (the false report of Memnon's death). It is a most theatrical, dramatic spectacle, for Polydor arranges a solemn funeral processional, complete with appropriately dark mourning garments and mournful dirges. He presents an elaborate golden cup to Calis which, he says, contains his brother's heart, falsely telling her Memnon has perished for love of her. The ruse totally fails. Instead of having the desired effect of curing her humour of disdain, it produces an unexpected result: the princess pays no attention to the news of the general's death, but instead falls in love with the bearer of the news. Polydor is so honorable that he rejects her and refuses to press his advantage over his brother, even when the king gives his consent. Nobly, he asks to be banished, for Memnon has threatened to kill himself if he cannot have Calis. The king is thus in a dilemma, caught between his general and his sister, for Calis threatens suicide if she cannot have Polydor.

Undaunted by his first failure, Polydor tries another ancient trick—sending false documents:
Give out the Spartans are in arms; and terrible;
And let some letters to that end be feign'd too
And sent to you, some Posts too, to the General;
And let me work . . . .

(III.i.44)

he says to his friends. The letters to the King are designed to keep Memnon from committing suicide, for if his country needs him he will surely respond.

While waiting on the results of this plan, Polydor arranges yet another diversion for Memnon. He thinks the general is merely attracted to the idea of love and will be satisfied with someone else, so he brings in a whore as a substitute for the princess. This is a variation of a stock disguise trick: courtesans who impersonate noble ladies. Polydor engages the services of Cloe, a "camp baggage," who impersonates the princess on two separate occasions, as part of two different schemes. The soldiers dress Cloe (who is well-known to their company) in rich apparel and try to pass her off as the princess in the hope that Memnon will forget about offering Calis his heart. The strategem fails laughably, however, because—unlike a real princess—Cloe stinks "like a poyson'd Rat behind a hanging" or a "rotten cabbage," Memnon declares (II.i.57). There is sly satire here as well, on the polite fiction that princesses must always look beautiful and smell beautiful too. Polydor's objective is partially realized anyway, for the general laughs so heartily he is thoroughly diverted.
Fourth, as a final solution, Polydor can see no way out of the dilemma except to die himself, so he arranges a second sham death. He loves Calis and she loves him, but his loyalty to his brother overrides any selfishness, and he is determined not to be outdone in honor. The King approves their match, but after the threatened invasion he tries to persuade his sister, for the sake of the country, to choose the general. While she is pondering, a second death march is heard, a second solemn procession marches slowly onstage, made even more mournful this time because a coffin is borne on containing Polydor's body. He thinks Calis will have to choose his brother now, but he doesn't count on Memnon's reaction. Instead of claiming his heart's desire, the general is so overwhelmed at this evidence of his brother's love that he prepares to join him in death. At this Polydor rises dramatically from his coffin, claims Calis, then begs her to marry his brother. Memnon solves the problem by taking up his arms again and returning to the wars, the milieu where he is most at home, thus displaying his innate nobility and dignity.

This scene is the climactic one and theatrically effective thanks to the trick. The setting is the court with courtiers and soldiers splendidly costumed. The mood is somber since all are unhappy about the general's madness and are apprehensive about the threatened attack. The appearance of a second funeral procession is shocking
and unexpected and sounds the note of tragedy necessary for the genre. Having seen the general's death averted, the audience is unprepared for the death of Polydor. There has been no preparation for the event and the tension and suspense are great. The relief when Polydor rises from the dead is correspondingly enormous and satisfying. Romantic and noble expectations are satisfied when Memnon blesses the young couple and decides to don his armor again. The scene is ironic too, for again Polydor's scheme turns out the opposite of what he planned.

As master deceiver, Polydor adopts several roles: loyal brother, comic satirist (using tricks to cure Calis of her humour of disdain and Memnon of his madness), and romantic lover—at which he is ultimately, and ironically the most successful. His deceptions are all devised to aid his brother by saving his life and advancing his suit with the princess. It is ironic that his own romance is the one which is furthered no matter what the trick or its intent.

Chilax, a "merry soldier" who has served many years with Memnon, is chief deceiver after Polydor. He is primarily part of the subplot but is the link between both lines of action. He is a kind of norm to judge all the romantic loves by, for where the nobility are all extremists, falling instantly and passionately in love, threatening suicide if they can't immediately have the objects
of their affections, Chilax is much more level-headed and realistic. He employs Cloe for a second time to substitute for the princess in a counterplot against the machinations of Syphax, still another mad lover of Calis.

Syphax is unworthy because he is of lower station and because he uses underhanded methods to attain his goal, while Polydor has the highest of motives for his tricks.

Syphax comes to his sister Cleanthe, servant to Calis, for help and because he threatens suicide she agrees, bribing the priestess of Venus to tell the princess she will love the first man she sees as she emerges from the temple. Naturally her brother will be that man. Chilax overhears this plan and devises one of his own. He approaches Cloe and obtains her help by promising her a husband, her old lover Syphax. Once again she costumes herself in royal finery. To ensure success Cloe remains silent when she emerges from the temple, handing her impatient lover a paper which states she will marry him but the ceremony must be secret and they must be quiet until it is over. Even though the instructions are unusual and it is even more unusual that the "princess" is unattended, Syphax happily agrees. The scene which follows is hilarious, full of dramatic irony, as the audience is in on the trick, but the new husband is not. Afterward when the king arrives, Syphax begs his pardon for marrying his sovereign's daughter without permission. The ruler is not even mildly up-
set; he simply unveils the bride to her astonished and dismayed husband. Cloe hastens to point out the justice of the trick:

With who else should ye marry, speak your conscience, 
Will ye transgress the law of Arms, that law
Rewards the Soldier with his own Sins?
(V.i.69)

Thus this deception is successful, proving Chilax's skill as an intriguer. At one stroke he removes one suitor from the race and provides poetic justice in the process.

Chilax also disguises himself in an emergency and plays an interesting role which proves he is adept at extricating himself from embarrassing situations. He is an old friend of the priestess who runs a lucrative business as an oracle of Venus in the temple. She invites him to visit her since he is between wars and they resume their intimacy; however, their tryst in the temple is interrupted by the arrival of the princess and her attendant come to pay devotion to the goddess and ask for her guidance and blessing, Calis' affairs of the heart being in disarray. Thinking quickly, the priestess gives Chilax a priestly robe and shows him into the oracle room. He is so afraid of getting caught in the sacred temple that the scene is a comic delight. It also demonstrates skillful dramatic composition because the scenes of Chilax trying to protect himself are juxtaposed with the serious scenes
of the Princess performing her devotion. There is an impressive visit from the goddess herself, accompanied by thunder and music, who prophesies that Calis will enjoy "a dead love." The appearance of Venus is a great surprise to Chilax, and he complains mightily of the great blow he sustained when the thunder sounded: "O 'twas a plaguey thump charg'd with a vengeance" (V.i.62). He is further startled by the sudden entry of Memnon and others, and frightened when the "Dog-mad" Memnon draws his sword. But fortunately, in his madness the general mistakes Chilax in his white robe for the ghost of a slain enemy. Chilax capitalizes on this mistake:

Chilax: Stay Memnon, I am a Spirit, and thou canst not hurt me. . . .
'Tis true, that I was slain in field, but foully,
By multitudes, not manhood: therefore mark me,
I do appear again to quit mine honour,
And on thee single.

Memnon: I accept the challenge. Where?
Chilax: On the Stygian Banks.
Memnon: When?
Chilax: Four days hence.
Memnon: Go noble Ghost, I will attend.

(V.i.63)

One of the company recognizes Chilax and notes, "Ye have sav'd your throat, and handsomely." When everyone leaves Chilax mops his brow and exclaims:

How have I 'scap'd this morning! by what miracle! Sure I am ordained for some brave end.

(V.i.64)
His impersonation of a spirit is thus gloriously successful. It calms Memnon and saves Chilax and the priestess from discovery.

As we have seen there are several intriguers stirring up the romantic brew, all using deceptions of various kinds. In the subplot it is Cleanthe who employs lies and bribes to further her brother's romance. As noted before, she approaches the priestess and plies her with gold to ensure her cooperation; then in her position as attendant on the princess she advises Calis to go to the temple and inquire the will of Venus regarding her choice of husband. When that is sure she returns to the priestess with even more bribes and asks her to tell Calis that she should marry the first man she sees as she leaves the temple. These plans go awry naturally because the cause is unworthy; it is even worse because she tries to tamper with sacred matters.

Fletcher uses the secondary plot to comment on the main story. Both show us the extremes to which love can drive those caught up in its emotion. All fall instantly in love at first sight—Memnon, Syphax, Polydor, and Calis. All threaten suicide if they don't attain their heart's desire, but this is obviously impossible since all three men want the same girl.

Memnon and Syphax choose the wrong ways: deceit and madness do not win the princess. Polydor ironically wins
her, almost against his wishes and in spite of all the tricks he uses. And Memnon, who engages in no deceit—he's instead painfully literal and honest—renounces the girl and leaves with his dignity intact.

The Loyal Subject

The Loyal Subject is one of Fletcher's best known and most frequently commented on tragicomedies. As in A Wife for a Month the dramatist edges closer to tragedy than he normally does. The setting is Mosco, the court of the Duke of Moscovia, so again there are splendid court scenes, soldiers in armor and battle array, and such exciting scenes as soldiers carrying torches and threatening to attack the palace. The favorite Fletcher-ian themes of the triumph of chastity over lust, the triumph of nobility over the most adverse circumstances, and the triumph of honor over all are prominent—revealed in the story of General Archas, the title character. Archas is a model hero: stoic, reverent, brave, humble, an excellent soldier and leader of men. The main plot tells his story: having served his country long and faithfully he resigns his post with the accession of the new duke who carries a longstanding grudge against him. An enemy attack necessitates his taking up arms again, but, though he wins a great victory, the duke and his evil counselor Boroskie
exact a terrible punishment. Before all is resolved the
general endures torture and undergoes a severe trial of
his loyalty.

The play demonstrates the incredible qualities of the
loyal subject whose honor is tested severely. He never
wavers but unflinchingly follows the honorable code. All
the members of his family also display honor and have
their honor tested though not as severely. Further, each
engages in some form of deception which contributes to
plot complications or its resolution. All represent vari-
atations on the theme of demonstrated honor. All illustrate
also Fletcher's ability to ring changes on familiar de-
vices with theatrical success.

Since Archas is such a model hero he is above the use
of deception of any kind, for any reason. The lesser fig-
ures around him, however, are not. Those who engage in
deceptions of various kinds include his brother, his
younger son, his daughter, and the Duke's advisor. Their
motives are mixed, running the gamut of the usual aims:
from aiding a love affair to protecting one's own inter-
est, to plotting villainy for its own sake. The results
are mixed as well, illustrating again how Fletcher employs
deception for a range of purposes, usually more benevolent
than malign ones. The devices employed include disguise,
assuming false identity or assuming a false character, and
deception with words—half-truths, omissions, insinuations, and lies.

Chief deceiver and plot complicator is the villain Boroskie. He is jealous of Archas and fans the quarrel between the Duke and the general, then happily steps in as the new commander. He soon reveals his mettle and engages in his first deception, feigning illness in order to escape leading troops into battle. In this national crisis General Archas is urged to take up arms again and again performs brilliantly, further fanning Boroskie's jealousy.

Primarily, the evil counselor cleverly uses words to deceive his ruler. In the manner of Iago he plays upon the Duke's old grudge against his faithful general and suggests that Archas is not the loyal subject he seems to be. The Duke is a flawed character whose unlovely side predominates during most of the play. Boroskie's insinuations reinforce his own grudges and the uncertainties and fears of a new ruler who needs to have the support of the army. Also the Duke is willing to listen because Boroskie is an old friend who had brought him up.

To illustrate Boroskie's method here is how he begins his insinuations against General Archas:

Sir, what I utter will be thought but envy
Though I intend, high heaven knows, but your honor
When vain and empty people shall proclaim so
Good Sir excuse me.

The Duke is hooked:
Do you fear me for your Enemy?
Speak on your duty.

(II.i.97)

The counselor accuses Archas of ambition and advises the prince to ignore the general when he comes home and refuse him and his soldiers the honor they deserve. His reasoning is that then Archas' honor will be ten times greater and the soldiers will love the duke as the source of their money: "'tis the bounty / They follow with their lives and not bravery." Thus he suggests the soldiers are not loyal to their noble leader but instead are motivated solely by greed. He further suggests, having insured the complete attention of his hearer, that Archas is dispensing money to try to win their loyalty away from the Duke (a completely unfounded accusation) but, again in the manner of Iago and Othello, once the initial suspicion is stirred up, wilder and more preposterous suggestions will be unquestioningly received.

Denying the troops the honor due them promotes the obvious result of fomenting unrest among them. Boroskie seizes this opportunity to declare Archas is behind the threatened mutiny which results when the Duke follows his counselor's advice, insults the General and his troops, and exiles him. Boroskie further blackens Archas' character by outright lying to the Duke, accusing the general of using a secret state treasure to incite rebellion. Then at a banquet supposedly held to honor General Archas,
the cloak of death is placed on his shoulders, and Boroskie censures him severely (for breaking his solemn vow not to use his armor again—a move which saved the nation from being overrun by the Tartars—and has him imprisoned.

The counselor's evil deceptions finally backfire when he usurps his authority and has the brave old soldier tortured to make him admit he is guilty of sedition. Even in this condition Archas staggers out to halt a revolt led by his son Theodore, demonstrating again his loyalty in the most extreme, adverse circumstances. Even the Duke is shocked at this brutality and turns on his advisor at last.

The lies of Boroskie serve the purpose of ensuring the general's extreme suffering—they provide the setting for his honor to be tried and proved to the utmost. They reveal the devious, clever character of the Duke's advisor, and, finally, they are overcome by the goodness of the main character, providing a satisfactory ending for a plot where the protagonist almost meets his death and certainly is in considerable danger, thus giving tension, suspense, and excitement to the dramatic experience.

Different forms of deception with words are used by other principal characters: Honora and Viola, daughters of the general; Theodore, his son; Putskie, his brother; and his younger son, Young Archas. These deceptions all
also pertain to the theme of chastity--one of Fletcher's themes being to show the power and desirability of chastity. This can be done most effectively when virtue is endangered and triumphs over all adversities. The principal theme is honor: the men demonstrate honor through extreme loyalty and courage, and the women demonstrate their honor by proving their chastity, resisting court temptations.

The poor girls are caught up in a web of political intrigue over which they have no control, becoming pawns in the struggle between the Duke and their father. Their behavior is therefore all the more admirable. After Boroskie has accused the general of hiding state treasure, the Duke visits his country home. Not satisfied with what he sees, he insists on seeing what is behind a locked door. The general reluctantly opens, it revealing great treasures which the Duke's father had entrusted to Archas to be used only in an emergency. Even this new treasure doesn't satisfy the Duke and he demands further tribute--the presence of the general's daughters at court. Thus Honora and Viola--names symbolic of their character--find themselves at a corrupt court, charged with keeping both their father's and their own honor. In their father's charge to them before they leave for court he notes: "The Courte is Vertue's School, at least it should be" (III.ii.118) and "Great things through greatest hazards
are atchiev'd still/ and then they shine, then goodness has his glory . . . ." Honora's response is appropriate:

You have made me half a Souldier . . . Sir, like you, We both affect great dangers now, and the World shall see All glory lies not in Mans Victory. (III.ii.119)

Oddly enough the first dissimulations they encounter are from their brothers. Most unexpectedly, their first chastity test comes from Theodore and Young Archas. When Theodore brings his sisters to court he suddenly and inexplicably assumes a false character— that of a cynical courtier—and introduces them as accomplished courtesans. He is so crude and direct that two lecherous gentlemen ("flesh-flies") of the court are frightened away. The girls are handed over to Boroskie and two scenes later they meet their other brother, Young Archas, who, unknown to them, is disguised as a lady of the court, Alinda, and is a servant of Olympia, the Duke's sister. He too talks out of character to the girls, and behaves as a typical court lady when he instructs them on how to behave themselves:

Alinda: Ye are ignorant, yet, let time work; you must learn too, To lie handsomely in your bed a amornings, neatly drest In a most curious Wastcoat . . . you must learn to rhime too, And riddle neatly . . . .

Honora: Have ye schools for all those mysteries?
Alinda: O yes, And several homes prefix'd to study in.

(III.vi.133)
He is relieved when they reject this advice soundly and leaves them cryptic but reassuring poems, advising them to remain virtuous.

The girls' greatest temptation and occasion for their assuming a false character, comes in the big chastity trial scene where they are tempted by the Duke. We have already seen him wooing Alinda and being gracefully repulsed, so his lecherous character is established. Now he attempts to entice the two virtuous country maidens with a practiced flattery. Viola is shy and modest, unable to cope aggressively. Honora offers to die rather than let her sister suffer any wrong, an answer which elicits admiration from the Duke—she is "another Arches" he says (IV.ii.142)—but no cessation of his addresses. Instead he is even more attracted to her:

'I'll deal with you then,
For here's the honor to be won: sit down sweet . . . .
(IV.i.142)

Honora then changes tactics and affects wantonness. It is this change of character which so often piques the critics who charge her with immodesty. She kisses and embraces the duke, calls him the handsomest man she ever looked on, and urges her retiring sister to do likewise. But the duke, instead of being overjoyed at such a relatively easy conquest is shocked:

Fie Honora!
Wanton Honora! is this the modesty,
The noble chastity, your on-set, shew'd me,
At first charge beaten back? Away. (IV.iii.143)

This surprising reaction is explained by Pearse as resting in the "assumption implicit in the double standard and in the convention of pretended wantonness, namely, that men seek to corrupt innocent women but are then shocked by corrupt women" (207). Honora's relief is great, for she praises his virtue, thinking he too was only pretending to be wanton. Her actions have the desirable result of beginning the duke's reform: "Thou hast done a cure upon me counsel could not," he says. Although he is by no means cured yet, however, but the possibility is there and by her cleverness Honora emerges with her and Viola's virtue intact.

The next important type of deception in the play is actual disguise assumed to change one's identity. Two members of the general's family who disguise are Archas' brother and his younger son. We first meet the brother Putskie serving as a soldier recently arrived in Moscow. The general's soldier son Theodore is explaining Archas' recent misfortunes. No one knows of Putskie's relationship with the general, and throughout the play he supports his cause faithfully. At the end he explains to the startled court that he is really Briskie, brother to Archas, who disguised himself and the general's son and came to court to protect their interests.
The son is revealed to be masquerading as the lovely Alinda, servant to the Duke's sister Olympia, who had won her friendship and confidence. Young Archas is thus disguised as a girl (a favorite Elizabethan ploy) throughout the play and neither the audience nor characters knows of his real identity. The deception is thus two-fold, deceiving both characters and audience. The uncle explains that the disguise was initially for the young man's protection; however, young Archas uses his position as confidant of Olympia to aid his father and his sisters. He makes a lovely girl by all accounts, winning the love of his mistress, the amorous attentions of the Duke, and the envy of Olympia's other maids. His deception serves several purposes, among them a retroactively comic one, for the duke finds Alinda "wondrous handsom" and offers her jewelry and other enticements. With the revelation that Alinda is really a man the audience will remember the duke's behavior with a measure of amusement.

Young Archas both promotes his father's cause and aids the country, for when the threat of Tartars is imminent, Alinda urges Olympia to persuade General Archas to take up his arms again, the new general Boroskie having suddenly become "ill" at the news. It is truly a national emergency, for the soldiers threaten mutiny and refuse to fight without their general. Olympia gets him to court where the duke and Alinda add their successful pleas and
the Tartars are dispatched shortly. Later when the general has been disgraced and exiled, in one of the duke's seduction attempts, Alinda urges Archas' worth and virtue, at least planting the right seeds, which eventually bear fruit.

Another job he performs is to warn his sisters to shun courtly evils in the chastity test noted above. Their spirited reply reassures him about their honor and he leaves them satisfied of their ability to resist courtly corruption.

Finally, the disguise has romantic consequences, for mistress and servant are devoted to each other from the beginning. Olympia becomes incensed when she witnesses the scene with the duke described above and misinterprets what she sees. Thinking her maid has fallen from the path of virtue, she dismisses Alinda on the spot. The parting distresses both; thus when a young man who looks like her beloved maid shows up at court Olympias is surprised and delighted. She admits her feelings are more than simple affection and is overjoyed at the change in gender. The way is paved for one of the marriages which are de rigueur in a romance. The audience is further pleased because both are sympathetic characters.

Alinda/Archas' deception is benevolent, not designed to expose villainy nor trick anyone for gain. His disguise is assumed mainly for protection against the malevo-
lence of the duke and it serves its purpose well: neither
his father, brother nor sisters recognize him and it fur-
nishes a pleasant plot surprise at the end.

There are parallels between the two plots: the main
plot is concerned with the trials and humiliations of the
loyal general at the hands of the evil Boroskie and the
reformation of the duke accomplished through the decep-
tions of Honora and Alinda, while in the subplot
Alinda/Archas' plight parallels the general's because he
is loyal to his mistress Olympia and is also wrongly ac-
cused and exiled through the machinations of an envious
servant. There is a love story in both plots also and a
triple wedding planned at the end for Olympia and Archas,
the now-reformed Duke and the virtuous Honora, and Viola
and the honest counselor Burris.

**The Humourous Lieutenant**

*The Humourous Lieutenant* is one of Fletcher's best
chastity dramas in the opinions of Leech, Waith, and
Pearse. All see the center of the play as the conflict
between the virtuous heroine Celia and the corrupt pagan
court of Antigonus, successor to Alexander the Great.

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1Leech and Pearse both have excellent analyses of
this play. I am particularly indebted to Pearse (222-27)
for some of my discussion.
There are two plots, one romantic and one farcical. The main plot is a series of tests which put obstacles in the way of the hero and heroine, thus allowing them to demonstrate their essential nobility and worthiness. The larger theme is honor, as it so frequently is in Fletcher: courage for Prince Demetrius and chastity for Celia, the captured princess. The subplot burlesques the love and valor conflicts of the main story, for the title character is the antithesis of an honorable lover and warrior. He generates the humor of the play, much as does the lovesick soldier in The Mad Lover, but in him unchastity leads to bravery. When the pangs of venereal disease are on him the lieutenant fights gallantly, but when he is well his fundamental cowardly nature reasserts itself.

Fletcher makes deception integral to this plot so concerned with demonstrations of personal honor. The familiar devices of lies, disguise, tricks, even a magic potion are all employed, for laudable, villainous, or comic purposes. They initiate complications, provide suspense and tension, reveal character and contribute to the humor. Further, deception is instrumental in revealing theme, for without the machinations of the villain the heroine would not have the opportunity to display her virtuous character. Even more importantly, the comic subplot and its deceptions parallel and comment on the main plot, making
even the most farcical scenes thematically important as well as popular with the audience.

All the ruses of the main plot are planned and most of them executed by the villain, King Antigonus, whose chief vice is lechery. It is noteworthy that as a villain he is not totally blackhearted as are the kings in *The Island Princess* and *A Wife for a Month*. He possesses some redeeming features as ruler and father which serve to make him more humanly credible and thus capable of redemption. All his tricks set up circumstances which put Celia in the position of defending her honor and are thus intertwined with the theme of chastity and its trial.

Antigonus first begins luring Celia to court with lies and temptations from the protective custody which the Prince has imposed on his prisoner. His original motive is sound: to protect his son. He notices the attention the Prince pays the unknown girl and fears she is merely after his money and position. While his son is away in battle the king determines to "have her try'd to th' test: I know / She must be some crack't coyn, not fit his traf-fique . . ." (III.i.312). But the Prince well knows how corrupt the court is and has carefully kept his beloved from its temptations. Antigonus enlists the aid of the court bawd Leucippe to ensure—by threats—the cooperation of Celia's governess. He then sends the girl a beautiful gown, tantalizing her by not revealing the sender. It is
a clever device, for Celia immediately assumes it is from her lover; and it appeals to her natural feminine vanity, for she has been shabbily dressed since her capture. Her instincts warn her that the gift may be a trick, "staires to catch kites" (III.ii.313), but when the governess obeys orders and tells her the gown is from the Prince her suspicions are lulled. When the governess goes further and says Demetrius expects her at court, Celia is surprised but is both courageous enough and curious enough to go.

The King watches "from above" her arrival at his court where Celia's misgivings are quickly confirmed. She is separated from her governess and greeted by Leucippe and other panders and ladies of the court: "I could laugh now / To see how finely I am cozen'd" (II.iv.321), she tells herself. Though inexperienced, she sees them clearly for what they are:

this is the old viper, and all these little ones Creep every night into her belly . . . . (III.iv.321)

Leucippe is possibly the most interesting character in the play and the most corrupt. While the King has no qualms about indulging in deceptions, he does realize his actions are below the standards upheld by men like the prince. But to Leucippe providing luscious young girls for the sport of courtiers is simply a business, and in her major scene we see her as the harried business woman,
running her business efficiently, riffling through her carefully kept files of every available female within a hundred miles, boasting of her ability to obtain the most happily married, most virtuous women if she so desires. This scene comes in Act II before Celia's dramatic entrance in Act III, and in the meantime we have seen Leucippe corrupt the governess who is paid by Demetrius to protect Celia, so Leucippe's character is firmly established in the audience's mind.

Antigonus admires Celia's spirit so much he completely forgets his original motive for getting her to court and decides to woo her for himself. Finding her impervious to the usual court flatteries and amusements, he tries deceit again: two disguises and a malicious lie. These devices reveal character and are designed to display his villainy and lechery—to satisfy which he is willing to ruin his son's happiness and Celia's unstained reputation. Thematically the seduction scenes allow Celia to defend her chastity passionately and persuasively, thus demonstrating her worthiness in the field of honor as Demetrius demonstrates his honor on the battlefield.

Disguise is the first ploy Antigonus chooses, adopting the appearance of a servant and bringing rich jewels to tempt her. Since she knows what he looks like, a successful disguise would need to be complete, involving perhaps the use of make-up and wig as well as changing from
royal splendor to something lesser. The king is not clever enough to realize the necessity for this, nor does he realize the extraordinary perspicuity and character of the woman he seeks to seduce. He is still under the delusion that—like most women in his kingdom—she can be bought. He is soon undeceived, though undeterred. His choice of a disguise to conceal his royal identity and aid in his seduction fails utterly and gives Celia the chance to display her wit and tactical skills in response to a threatening situation. Her complete mastery of the situation is evident from the first as she turns from mockery of the courtiers' flattery to noticing the new but familiar figure, whom she recognizes immediately. She enjoys a battle of wits in a dangerous situation, as we have already seen, so she decides to play along in this little drama. Instead of gratefully accepting the gift she disconcerts him by pretending to think the jewels are for sale. When he assures her they are hers she replies again in an unexpected way, again forcing the initiative on him:

Cel. I'le never look a horse i' th' mouth that's given:
    I thank ye sir: I'le send one to reward ye.
Ant. Do you never ask who sent 'em?
Cel. Never I:
    nor never care, if it be an honest end.
    That end's the full reward, and thanks but slubber it.
    If it be ill, I will not urge the acquaintance.
Realizing her cleverness, the counterfeit servant decides to be direct and announces the gifts are from the king, but Celia only calls him a thief and a liar:

Cel. wouldst thou make me believe
He has nothing to do with things of these worths,
But wantonly to fling 'em? he's an old man,
A good old man they say too: I dare swear
Full many a year ago he left these gambols:
Here, take your trinket.
Ant. Sure I do not lye, lady.
Cel. I know thou lyest extreamly, damnably.
Thou hast a lying face.
Ant. I was never thus ratled.

(IV.i.334)

This last speech shows the king's dual role: he is both actor and audience. It also reveals the limitations of his disguise. He had intended that his altered appearance would be an advantage in his seduction, but instead it becomes an advantage to Celia, for she can speak candidly to the disguised king about himself and he can say nothing without revealing his secret.

Celia keeps up the fiction of talking about the king instead of to him, firmly rejecting what is being offered: her chance to be the "king's whore." She also accuses her listener again: "Could the King find no shape to shift his pander into, / But reverend Age? and one so like himself too?" (IV.i.335). Even though Antigonus is now aware of the failure of his disguise, the two keep up the pretense a little longer. Celia goes on to imagine her visi-
tor is a broken-down soldier pandering for his monarch and castigates him soundly:

Canst thou forget thou wert begot in honour?
A free companion for a King? a souldier?
Canst thou forget this, and decline so wretchedly
To eat the Bread of Bawdry, of base Bawdry.
(IV.i.336)

At this final calumny the king reveals his identity, since it is obvious that Celia knows it already. She scornfully returns the jewels, saying she is her "own Disposer":

let them give them lustres
That have dark lives and Souls: wear 'em your self, Sir,
You'l seem a Devil else.

The king's regard for her is increased and he makes an honorable proposal, but she adamantly refuses the one who has the power of life and death over her and speaks the unvarnished truth:

I cannot love ye;
Without the breach of faith I cannot hear ye;
Ye hang upon my love, like frosts on Lilies:
I can dye, but I cannot love: you are answer'd.
(IV.i.336)

This is the first major chastity test and Celia passes it with honors.

This failure only inflames the King's ardor, but before he plots his next move, Prince Demetrius returns home victorious from the war. Antigonus reacts by another deception, telling him cruel lies designed to impugn the virtue of the heroine, kill Demetrius' feeling for her, and provide yet another opportunity to satisfy his lust.
Structurally the lies put another obstacle in the path of the lovers, since they ensure that there will be vast misunderstandings when they finally meet again. The King tells the prince his beloved was a devil, a harlot, a witch, and is now dead, having perished a confessed traitor, he says, who "purpos'd my Empires overthrow and drew thee to thy ruine" (IV.ii.339). The vicious untruths accomplish his purposes for a time since the prince is heartbroken and withdraws to grieve in private.

When Celia refuses even offers of marriage, all his ruses proving futile, the King tries another ancient trick: he enlists the aid of a magician. In a spectacular incantation scene the magician conjures up a magic love potion guaranteed to make Celia fall madly in love with her sovereign. This trick is a last resort, for consulting the supernatural is an admission of his own human inadequacies and illustrates the extent of his obsession. The scene is undoubtedly a crowd pleaser, too, for the magician would be colorfully dressed and the props and actions impressive. His songs add music to the dramatic spectacle and are also germane to the theme of love versus lust or honorable love versus dishonorable. As the magician stirs the concoction in his bowl, he sings a song to invoke the shades who are the "helps of looser love," commanding them to distill all their
fires, heats, longings, tears,  
That she may know, that has all power defied,  
Loved is a power that will not be denied.

The reply has several mythological allusions.

Here's the powder of the Moon,  
With which she caught Endymion;  
The powerful tears that Venus cryed,  
When the boy Adonis dyed.  
Here's Medea's charm, with which  
Jasons heart she did bewitch . . . .  
(IV.iii.342-3)

It is obvious from the lyrics that lust is being called for, not virtuous affection. It is also obvious to the seasoned spectator (or reader) that this trick will be doomed to failure like the others, for Celia is such a model of virtue that she can resist even the wiles of the devil.

Fletcher does not subject her to this insult, however; the trick goes comically awry when the humourous lieutenant accidentally drinks the potion and begins shortly thereafter to dote violently and farcically on his monarch. Unaware of the misdirection and supremely confident of success, the old king indulges in yet another pretense and visits Celia all "curl'd and perfum'd" like a young dandy. She is lonely for Demetrius, wondering why she is confined to her quarters, "as they mew mad folks / No company but afflictions." Catching sight of the king, she calls him

This royal Devil again! strange, how he haunts me!  
How like a poysen'd potion his eyes fright me!  
Has made himself handsome too.
The contrast between the king and his son is pointed. As he approaches, she can only laugh at his appearance:

I smell him
He looks on's legs too, sure he will cut a caper;
God-a-mercy, dear December.

(IV.v.350)

The dramatic irony is cause for amusement too, especially the disappointed look he must have when she does not react as expected. The foolishness of the old dressing and acting like the young, a common theme of comedy, is used effectively here to demonstrate visually the dramatic contrast between corruption and virtue central to the play.

The trick fails of its desired object; instead it produces the opposite. The maid lectures him so severely on the vanity of lust and his own unseemly behavior that Antigonus finds himself repenting, and by the end of the scene he is praising her virtue and determined to reunite the young couple he has so cruelly kept apart.

This is a key scene, the most important one of the play if one agrees with Pearse that Fletcher is most concerned with illustrating the honor (chastity) of his heroine. Waith has pointed out Fletcher's love of presenting argumentation. Celia uses this art of persuasion to just advantage, and she does it quite naturally, moreso than some of his other heroines. To twentieth-century audiences the king's conversion seems rather sudden, but as Philip Edwards notes, in these plays "the belief that elo-
quence could change man's behavior often makes swift alterations possible" (171). They also provide evidence of the age's belief in the transforming power of chastity.

Celia enters (like Hamlet) with a book, which she informs him is a "short Treatise called 'The Vanity of Lust'" and proceeds to insult him in the area he is most concerned with, by suggesting he is impotent. This book says, she reads,

that an Old Mans loose desire
Is like the Glow-worms light,
the apes so wonder'd at;
Which when they gather'd sticks, and laid upon't
And blew and blew, turn'd tail, and went out presently.

(IV.v.350-1)

She appeals to his better nature:

Be as your Emblem is, a glorious Lamp
Set on the top of all, to light all perfectly;
Be as your office is, a god-like Justice,
Into all shedding equally your vertues.

(IV.v.351)

And she asks what glory or honor her defeat could be to him:

Nay, say you had your Will, say you had ravish'd me
Perform'd your lust, what had you Purchas'd by it?
What Honour won? do you know who dwells above,
And what they have prepared for men turn'd Devils?
Did you never hear their thunder?

(IV.v.351-2)

Antigonus is moved to repentance: "Lust, how I hate thee now! and love this sweetness!" He even offers her, a poor captive, the position of Queen of the land, but she refuses graciously, saying she is a queen already, crowned
by Demetrius' love. The scene ends with her kneeling before her now-worthy sovereign who verbalizes their reconciliation:

Vertue commands the Stars: rise more than Vertue; Your present comfort shall be now my business. (IV.v.352)

All his tricks and ruses thus result in ultimate defeat; his disguises cannot conceal his identity or character from Celia, nor his lies drive a permanent wedge in the young couple's relationship. Ironically, instead of his deceptions robbing Celia of honor, they merely endow her with it, and he is the one who is changed.

Fletcher skillfully balances scenes between the corrupt court and the more honorable battlefield and between the main plot and the subplot whose deceptions also comment on theme. The best example of such juxtaposition occurs after the main chastity trial described above. It has been noted that the lieutenant mistakenly drinks the love potion intended for Celia, resulting in the King's comic disappointment and subsequent reformation. This serious pivotal scene is immediately followed by a farcical scene in which the luckless lieutenant is shown behaving the way Antigonus wanted the girl to behave. He dotes on his monarch, making impassioned speeches of love. The gentlemen are much concerned as well as amused for he seems to have lost his wits. A few scenes later some of his wild antics are reported to the king:
Ha's bought up all that e're he found was like ye,
Or anything you have lov'd, that he could purchase;
Old horses, that your Grace has ridden blind and foundr'd
Dogs, rotten hawks, and which is more than all this,
Has worn your Grace's Gauntlet in his Bonnet.

(V.ii.363)

Such behavior is more appropriate for farce than romance, and it is more fitting that he, as a humorous character, loses dignity rather than the heroine. It is also satiric comment on the exaggerated behavior of lovers, though in this play it is only Demetrius who over-reacts: first in the matter of his honor and then in his grief over what he thinks Celia has become, his loss of trust and faith in her goodness. This ridiculous behavior of the lieutenant repeats comically for us the similar capers of the king, and if the soldier also be dressed foppishly (in a lower-class, gaudy way) the comparison and the satire could be even more pointed. The folly of trying to obtain love by pretense or deception is clear.

Earlier, in Act III, there is another skillful juxtaposition of scenes illustrating how the subplot comments on the romantic plot. The tricks in getting Celia to court have been noted. The scene following is the key one for the humourous lieutenant; he becomes the victim of a trick designed to restore his bravery. It is a comic inversion of what happens to Celia, because he is cozened to bestow honor (valor) on him while Celia is deceived to rob her of honor (chastity). There is another difference too;
as befits a comedy, the trick works on the lieutenant but not on the heroine. The lieutenant is the antithesis of Demetrius, the noble lover and warrior, who is courageous because he is honorable. The lieutenant is a comic foil to the prince for in him it is unchastity, not honor, which leads to bravery on the battlefield. Also, unlike the prince, who fights to gain honor, the lieutenant fights only to relieve the pain of Cupid's disease, and when he is "well-peppered" he very sensibly quits. Hence after the first battle the lieutenant becomes cowardly for his disease is relieved, and no inducements offered by his commander, the old soldier Leontius, can persuade him to fight again. He merely replies:

I am well now
And take some pleasure in my life, methinks now,
It shews as mad a thing to me to see you scuffle,
And kill one another foolishly for honour,
As 'twas to you, to see me play the coxcomb.

(III.iii.317)

Seeing his obduracy, Leontius and the prince plan a trick "for this Rascal, This rogue, that health and strong heart makes a coward" (V.v.323). Since he is so commendably courageous when ill, the obvious solution is to convince him the disease has returned. In the hilarious scene that follows this is exactly what happens. All comment on how ill he looks, and the poor credulous fellow begins to suffer greatly especially when two physicians add their sad prognoses. He revives after imbibing some
wine and, hearing the sound of drums, runs eagerly to the fray.

The illusion of courage is so powerful that the soldier almost singlehandedly captures the three enemy kings. An enemy reports the news:

There is one desperate fellow, with the Devil in him (He never durst do this else) has broke into us, And here he bangs ye two or three before him, There five or six; ventures upon whole Companies. (III.vi.327-8)

He charges alone and no man follows or attacks him because "Their wonder yet has staid 'em." The enemy kings become the prisoners of the now brave lieutenant and he is covered with glory again, thanks to the trick devised by Leontius. The irony is that chastity really wins this time, for while he was valorous because he was unchaste in the first battle, he only thought he was unchaste in the second and the results were the same. Thus the power of chastity is shown in both plots.

The lieutenant never deceives anyone intentionally. The soldiers assume he is brave because he performs brave, reckless acts. He performs them again when he is self-deceived. Perhaps these actions are a comment on the favorite theatrical appearance versus reality theme.

Demetrius, the noble hero, never engages in deception at all. He has no need to deceive to prove his valor; that is accomplished on the battlefield when his father gives him command for the first time. He is
greatly distressed when he loses the first battle, but is encouraged to try again, and he and the lieutenant contribute to the great victory. Celia, on the other hand, is certainly conceived as a virtuous character, but such a passive quality is difficult to demonstrate—hence the importance of the scenes with the lustful king where she can be aggressively chaste. Yet Celia is more than just a mouthpiece for chastity; she is spirited and mischievous, enjoying witty repartee with the courtiers she scorns at court, for example. One of them is so piqued he complains:

She studies to undo the court, to plant here
The Enemy to our Age, Chastity;
She is the first, that e're bauk'd a close Arbour,
And the sweet contents within: She hates curl'd heads too,
And setting up of beards she swears is Idolatry.

(IV.i.332)

Her love of fun also prompts her to tease her fiancé, indulging in a minor deception which unwittingly fosters a quarrel between the pair. She misleads Demetrius in their first conversation after the king's reformation, a little ploy which nearly separates her permanently from her prince. Unaware of the calumny Antigonus has told Demetrius, she is unprepared for his gloomy reception of her—alive but not, as he thinks, the gentle, virtuous maiden he left behind. She realizes his jealousy, does not understand the gravity of it, and for sport decides, "I must now play the knave with him, though I dye for't, /
'Tis in my nature" (IV.viii.356). And she lets him think the worst. The plot backfires when he believes her and angrily denounces her and her whole sex. Her reply is memorable, surpassing his best rhetoric, including these passionate lines:

    I am above your hate, as far above it . . .
    As the pure Stars are from the muddy meteors,
    Cry when you know your folly; how I howl and curse then,
    Beat that unmanly breast, that holds a false heart
    When ye shall come to know, whom ye have flung from ye.

(IV.vii.358)

This little deception functions to humanize Celia, further separate the lovers, create suspense, and delay the happy ending until Act V when all is resolved.

Secondly, Celia conceals her identity throughout, an example of deceptions of both characters and audience. There are hints throughout that she is not the poor captive she is portrayed to be, but no one knows for sure until Seleucus, one of the enemy kings who sues for peace after the exploits of the prince and the lieutenant, recognizes Celia as his lost daughter. Her true name is revealed as Enanthe, her true station royal, but her noble character has been evident throughout. Concealment of her identity is not a major plot device, but it contributes to the happy ending to know that the heroine whose only defenses in a corrupt world are her wit and her honor is truly a princess, equal in station as she is in honor to
her prince. It reinforces the contemporary belief that those of royal birth, even if that birth was unknown, would naturally display exemplary traits of honor and virtue. The revelation reunites father and daughter and enhances the reconciliations of Demetrius and Celia/Enanthe and the four enemy kings, who will all now fight under the valiant Prince Demetrius.

The two plots are joined in the end; peace comes to the kingdom with the efforts of the humourous lieutenant and the prince bringing peace with honor. Likewise peace is restored in the royal family with the conversion of King Antigonus from lechery to chastity and reconciliation among father, son, and future daughter-in-law assumed.

**Women Pleas'd**

*Women Pleas'd* is one of the weaker tragicomedies critically speaking, although, as Waith notes (156), it contains the usual Fletcherian characteristics of intricate plot, improbable hypothesis, and protean characters. There are two clearly separated plots, linked somewhat unsatisfactorily in Act V. Both are related to the main theme of the play that women should have the "maistrye," or "Give 'em their sovereign Wills, and pleas'd they are." The primary plot is a romantic one which relates the troubles of a young couple who face unusual obstacles to their
union. It is based largely on the Wife of Bath's tale, for the hero must answer the question: What is it that women really want? The second is a farcical tale with stock characters like the grasping usurer and the hungry knave providing much merriment. Both heroines eventually get their way, demonstrating feminine superiority on different levels.

Deception is used freely in both plots, providing plot complications, revealing character, generating suspense and hilarity, even engineering the dramatic climax: without the heroine's deceit there would be no happy ending. There are disguises, lies, character changes, tricks played on husbands and lovers, mothers, and suitors. In sum, the deceptions are integral to theme and plot: neither would be possible without them.

Disguise—altering of identity with change of clothes and other aids (makeup, wigs, voice)—is especially prominent in Women Pleas'd. Both hero and heroine of the main plot completely change their identities, although for different reasons, which reveal their differing natures and circumstances. Silvio is the handsome young lover who adopts a disguise when he is forced to flee the kingdom by the imperious Duchess of Florence. She wishes to discourage his attentions to her only daughter, Belvidere, who is so desirable that the Duke of Milan and forty horsemen have recently tried to kidnap her. After that unfortunate
episode, the Duchess locks her daughter up in the Citadel and publishes an edict barring any man from visiting her on penalty of death. Silvio disobeys the injunction, wheedling his way in by appealing to his relationship with her guardian, Rhodope, his gullible aunt. This lady succumbs to his charms, lets him in, and the lovers are discovered embracing. His deceit results in capture, but fortunately the death penalty is commuted to banishment for one year. At the end of that time he must correctly answer the old question: What is it that women really want? or his head is forfeit. He assumes various disguises in his wanderings as he seeks diligently for the answer.

What labour and what travel have I run through
And through what Cities to absolve this Riddle
Diviners, Dreamers, School-men, deep Magicians,
All have I try'd . . .

(IV.i.279)

he says after months of wandering.

One of the disguises he tries is that of a farmer's servant, thinking perhaps the innocent wit and wisdom of the country people will "undo this knotty question" (IV.i.279). Before this happy event, he finds himself, still posing as a common man, volunteering for the army in place of the cowardly farmer's son. When he is outfitted for battle, carrying old and rusty arms, Belvidere comes to him unrecognizably, disguised as an old hag, and inspires him to fight heroically. Silvio delivers the enemy
commander himself to the Duchess, who is so pleased that she makes the "stranger knight" a general and her counselor. However, when he reveals his true identity, probably by casting off armor and helmet, she is enraged. But he claims her promise: "You have past your Princely word," he reminds her (V.i.298), and then correctly answers the riddle from the paper the still-disguised Belvidere slips him. The Duchess capitulates, and Silvio is allowed to keep his head and the hand of the now beauteous once more Belvidere. His disguises serve as protection from the wrath of the vindictive Duchess, who places a price on his head when her daughter disappears shortly after Silvio's exile. Secondly, he proves that nobility will reveal itself in outstanding feats even when disguised as a commoner, for he wins victory and glory for himself even in his shabby borrowed armor. Furthermore, he wins his heart's desire by deceiving his future mother-in-law as to his real identity.

Belvidere, Silvio's beloved, also chooses to conceal her identity, after his banishment, and adopts two separate disguises. She first follows him to the farm where he is working disguised as a servant and observes his activities while she is dressed as a country wench. He does not see her but she is satisfied he is faring well. Later she dresses as an old hag and appears to Silvio, who has now volunteered for the army being raised to fight the
disappointed suitor, the Duke of Sienna. The change in her appearance is enormous. As the eligible daughter of the Duchess of Florence she naturally wears rich apparel in Acts I and II. It is a measure of her devotion to her lover that she leaves her privileged position and disappears from court, following him, risking the awesome displeasure of her domineering mother. Why she chooses to deceive her lover is another question, related to her love of mischief and adventure. While Silvio is pondering his unlucky fate, he hears a sweet enamoring song and Belvidere enters "deformed," according to the stage directions, the meaning of which is clarified later when she is referred to as an "old hag" and a "witch." Her appearance is so repulsive that Silvio never suspects her true identity. This old ugly woman seems wise and powerful and so inspires him that he goes forth to perform great feats, capturing the duke himself singlehandedly. The hag appears to him again after the battle, urging him not to fear the riddle he must soon answer for she will be nearby. In return for her services she craves only a "poor Boon," a favor he readily promises.

Unfortunately for Silvio, the boon turns out to be marriage to her, demanded after she has secretly slipped him the answer to the riddle, thus saving his life. When he asks for the hand of Belvidere, the Duchess sadly tells him her daughter has been gone for months and everyone
thought she was with him. In this moment of despair the witch returns and claims her boon, marriage. The young man is naturally reluctant to contract such an undesirable union, but he cannot renege on his promise—and the Duchess is delighted. Belvidere's torture of her lover is not over yet. She allows him to be mocked and teased on the wedding day for marrying such an old and unlovely person. There is a masque with music and dancing; then Belvidere finally appears as herself, to the surprise of the whole court, who at first think she is simply impersonating the princess. She asks Silvio to choose between Belvidere young and beautiful, or old and faithful. He is bewildered and replies, "I know not what to say. Into thy Sovereign will I put my answer" (V.iii.309). This is the correct response and Belvidere finally ends his misery. Her mother forgives them both and even proposes to the rejected suitor herself so the play ends on a merry note. Belvidere's disguise enables her to escape her mother's domination, serve and counsel her banished lover, test his honorable character, and indulge in adventure and mischief. Her change of identity further reveals her character: her courage, resourcefulness, and spirit. Finally it contributes to a theatrical denouement.

Two other characters also adopt disguises, one with comic results and one to bind the two plots together (although rather improbably). In Act I Silvio forcibly
discourages the advances of his friend Claudio toward Belvidere when he discovers the latter advancing toward her quarters with a ladder. One night a little later, Silvio sees a figure climbing a ladder toward her window and, mistaking it for his rival, he shoots. Thinking he has killed a man, and a friend at that, the nobleman flees without investigating. However, it is not Claudio at all; it is his merry servant Soto dressed in his master's clothes, attempting to do some wooing for him. Soto is completely unhurt and the scene with Claudio is a hilarious one as he tries to convince his master he is bleeding to death. Subsequently Claudio appears dressed as a merchant to see how his "incensed friend carries my murther" (II.iv.252). He learns Silvio is to be arraigned before the Duchess and wonders if it is for his supposed death, but

Be it what it will, I will be there and see it,
And if my help will bring him off, he has it.
(II.iv.254)

He attends the hearing where Silvio is found guilty and banished, and is moved by the strong declarations of love between Silvio and the princess, but sees no way to aid them. Instead, he retains his merchant's habit, takes the name of Rugio, and appears in the subplot as a wooer of Isabella, wife of the usurer Lopez. His first disguise seems extraneous somehow. In fact one wonders how honorable he was if he could let a friend believe he has com-
mitted murder. It does serve the purpose of linking the two plots together, for the audience has already seen and identified him in Act I and can then recognize him in Act II where he changes his name and pursues Isabella.

Rugio and Isabella's attempts to get together are always frustrated by the unexpected return of Lopez or the attentions of another would-be lover, Bartello. Eventually Lopez gives Isabella control of her fortune, and she offers to let him overhear her next interview with Claudio, to prove she has not been unfaithful. They engage in a battle of wits, the upshot of which is that in an aside Rugio says, "I must use a Players shift," removes his disguise, and reveals himself as her brother Claudio who was only conducting an elaborate chastity test. Since she clearly passed the test, Claudio resumes good relationships with Isabella, Lopez, and Silvio, and all are invited to the royal wedding.

In the comic subplot Isabella, the clever young wife of the usurer Lopez, doesn't need to conceal or change her identity. Instead she indulges in several tricks which reveal her ability at intrigue and her dexterity at emerging from potentially harmful situations unscathed. Her husband is that familiar stock character the jealous miser, and she toys with the idea of an affair with a younger, more handsome man. She leads Claudio, disguised as Rugio the merchant, to think she welcomes his advances,
but their attempts at privacy are always interrupted (as in the bed trick noted below). Isabella has another problem too—how to discourage the unwelcome attentions, the "drivel ing dotage," of Captain Bartello, an old acquaintance of her husband's. Like Honora in *The Loyal Subject*, she pretends to change her moral attitude and welcome his advances. In reality, she has laid a plot to expose him as a lecher in front of his wife, and to humiliate him in front of his friends. Lopez brings Bartello's wife while her husband is dallying with Isabella. The old captain looks desperately for an escape, wishing he were a cat and could run into a hole. Isabella suggests the chimney, and he hastily climbs up, using the shoulder of a convenient servant. Isabella leaves and Lopez and Rhodope pretend to dally with each other to Bartello's discomfiture. Hearing that a battle is imminent, Lopez fears for his jewels and orders two available chimney sweeps to climb the chimney and remove them for him. The two boys of course discover Bartello, and he crawls down shamefacedly, covered in soot. His wife forgives him, since all he did was talk to Isabella, and they all go to dine together at the castle.

The plotting is weak here, for in the early scenes Isabella appears genuinely anxious for the affair with Rugio, plotting eagerly with Lopez's hungry knave servant Penurio. However, her tricks finally result in her husband's giving her control of her fortune and that power
seems more important than dalliance by the last act, for she lays a trap for Rugio. When he comes calling she has her husband overhear the scene, which ends up with a stinging rebuke to Rugio for attempting the virtue of a respectable married woman. She has good reason: Rugio goes so far as to offer to marry her after having her husband killed. At this point Lopez enters and threatens him with the law. Rugio springs a completely unprepared-for surprise:

Claudio: Pray stay awhile, Sir, I must use a Players shift, do you know me now lady?
Lopez: Your brother Claudio sure.
Isabella: Oh me, 'tis he Sir, Oh my best brother.
Claudio: My best sister now too, I have tryed ye, found ye so, and now I love ye,
Love ye so truly nobly.

(V.ii.306)

Claudio throws aside his merchant's habit in the middle of his sentence, although one would not think it would be so concealing a disguise. This device is obviously contrived and difficult to accept, but functionally it has the merit of linking the secondary with the main plot and restoring Claudio back to the noble gentleman, friend of Silvio, that he was in Act I. He urges Lopez to "be no more fool'd with jealousie," to which the usurer assents, and Isabella vows to take him now "new Natur'd" and "never have a false thought tempt my virtue" (V.ii.306). Their mutual deceptions thus issue in a happy ending. And Is-
abella, having gotten her sovereign will, is now a model wife, reinforcing the theme.

Isabella displays other talents in the field of deception as well, including substitution, another stock comic device which Fletcher employs twice in these plays, once in *Monsieur Thomas* and once here. The scenes would be highly entertaining to Jacobean audiences, though probably offensive today. Isabella retires one night in happy expectation of a visit from Rugio. Fearing she might be asleep and miss his coming, she attaches a string to her finger leading to the door. Lopez comes home unexpectedly and finds the incriminating evidence. He is exceedingly angry at his wife's infidelity and feels he must punish her severely. Isabella is, however, quick-thinking and while he is working up his rage to a violent pitch she induces her maid to take her place in bed. Isabella tiptoes out, carrying away the candle. Thus when Lopez storms in to beat her it is dark and he doesn't notice the different woman. After clawing her face and leaving it bloody, he rushes out to bring others to view his handiwork and proclaim her shame. In the meantime Isabella returns to her bed; thus the witnesses see an unmarked face and wonder what the fuss was about. Lopez is mystified but accepts her glib explanation, though he is still suspicious. Her strategem succeeds since her husband is gulled and she is spared his retribution.
The heroines of both plots in Women Pleas'd dissemble for love's sake. In Act II Isabella entertains Claudio-Rugio for the first time. Their meeting is interrupted by the untimely arrival of "captain courageous yonder of the Castle," old Bartello. In time-honored fashion, to prevent discovery, she invites her first visitor to step behind a curtain. While Bartello is pressing his unwanted affections, the maid announces that the master is coming. Caught with two compromising suitors, Isabella quickly devises a clever plan to remove both of them safely and still retain her husband's good will. To account plausibly for the presence of strange men in the house she tells Bartello to draw his sword and rush angrily down the stairs

As if you had persu'd some foe up hither
And grumble to yourself extreamly, terribly,
But not a word to him, and so pass by him.

(II.vi.262)

Bartello follows instructions admirably, brushing the bewildered Lopez on his way. Isabella explains that the soldier has followed a young gentleman furiously with sword drawn and would have slain him if she had not hidden the poor fellow. At this Claudio steps out from behind the hanging and thanks his benefactor graciously. Lopez assures him he is safe now and escorts him to the door, although noting aside that "This fellow must not stay
here, he is too handsome." Isabella's cleverness thus saves the three from Lopez's wrath--until the next time.

Belvidere, heroine of the main plot, also dissembles, tricking her mother so she can help her banished lover Silvio. After his departure the Duchess tries to make her daughter see the advantages of marrying the Duke of Sienna and the total undesirability of marriage to Silvio. After some thought (offstage) Belvidere sends her keeper Rhodope (the same lady who was deceived by Silvio) to inform the duchess that she is "now what you would have her, / What the State wishes her" (III.i.263). She dutifully condemns Silvio's love--indeed, she cannot endure to hear his name--and she humbly accepts the duke. The duchess is fooled, graciously pardons her, and summons her presence. Belvidere fools the Duke also who has come to court to claim the Duchess' "Royal promise, / The beauteous Belvidere in marriage" (III.i.265). She welcomes him charmingly:

Your Grace is fairly welcome,  
And what in modesty a blushing maid may 
Wish to a Gentleman of your great goodness; 
But wishes are too poor a pay for Princes.  

(III.i.265)

Belvidere's behavior and speech are so pleasing that her mother begs her to ask for a boon. The princess is a model of dissimulation, saying everything her mother wants to hear. For example:
With what eies could I look upon that poor, that cours thing,  
That wretched thing call'd Sylvio?

and

I must ever bless your care, your wisdom,  
That led me from this labyrinth of folly . . . .  
(III.i.266)

As if it were a mere trifle, she asks for the answer to the riddle Silvio must find within one year, pretending that it may be too easily solved, leaving the two women open to scorn and laughter. Even worse—she might have to follow through with the reward promised for the correct answer: marriage. The duchess is convinced of her sincerity and agrees to give her both riddle and answer; Belvidere puts them to use in the last act to save Silvio's life and attain her desire (which was marriage all along).

It is clear that the heroines of both plots are superior to their men. They are resourceful, clever, daring, quick-witted, and adaptable. Each attains her heart's desire through the use of deception. When nobility fails and her lover is banished, Belvidere dissembles, follows him, and inspires him to perform such heroic deeds that he is reinstated in her mother's graces and allowed to marry her. Isabella cozens the jealous miser Lopez out of his humour by her many tricks and affectation of wanton behavior, and achieves financial independence, which turns out to be her main goal. All their machinations reinforce the
primary theme that women desire their own way and will use any means to get it.

The Island Princess

The Island Princess is one of Fletcher's mature and most popular tragicomedies, first performed 1619-20, and adapted and performed until well into the eighteenth century. It is a theatrical play with many audience-pleasing features: the setting--the Spice Islands of India--is remote and exotic, and most of the scenes are at the splendid court of the King of Tidore. There are exciting scenes aplenty, a town on fire, a duel, a princess in chains. There are love, honor, duty, villainy, bravery, jealousy, revenge, daring, all the favorite themes of drama (and life).

What part does deception play in a plot devoted to illustrating the nobility of the romantic hero? Even in such an unlikely place it is important. Deception does not provide the initial impetus to the action but does contribute thereafter to the complications, moves the story forward, reveals character, comments on theme and--in the final unmasking scene--contributes to a dramatic, satisfying ending.

Fletcher's chief means of deception are disguises, intended either to conceal an identity or to assume an--
other; they can be physical, with a change of costume and other visual aids if necessary; or verbal, a change of character which does not depend on any outer change. Both kinds of disguises are employed in this play. The two most stereotyped personalities in *The Island Princess*, the noble Portuguese Armusia and the villainous Governor of Ternata, both indulge in costume change for different motives and with a variety of results. Pyniero, another Portuguese soldier, known for his witty comments, assumes a verbal change of character and helps prevent a murder. All of these examples illustrate Fletcher's skill and ingenuity in using standard devices to achieve his dramatic purposes. Further, they are not simply theatrical devices but are integral to theme and plot, a point most critics have ignored.

The noble hero Armusia is the first character to don a disguise. There is a colorful scene in Act I where several wealthy, royal suitors appear at court seeking the hand of the princess Quisara. To halt their squabbling and postpone making a choice, she sets them all the task of rescuing her brother who is languishing in prison on a nearby island, promising to marry the one who is successful. While all the suitors are pondering ways and means or displaying reluctance to face the dangers involved, Armusia, although newly arrived in Tidore and unacquainted with the royal family, immediately devises a bold scheme
to attempt the king's release. He grabs merchants' habits for all his men and formulates a plan for their use while sailing to the island. Upon landing on Ternata, the would-be merchants rent a storage building next to the prison, plant explosives, and in the predictable confusion following the fire "break open a doore," pluck the king from his dungeon and sail safely away.

The disguise in this case is not to conceal individual identities, for no one on the island knows Armusia or his followers. The flowing garments merely serve to conceal the fact that the men are foreign soldiers and thus allay the suspicion of the governor's men on the alert for potential rescuers. The ploy further shows us Armusia's quick thinking, cleverness, and reckless courage, all qualities of a dashing romantic hero. And, perhaps as important, the rescue engenders a spectacular, exciting scene: the burning of the town, with attendant comic exchanges among the townspeople scurrying to and fro, lamenting losses and laughing at each others' predicaments.

The rescue with its accompanying disguise motif provides an exciting opening to Act II, and it leads directly to the disguise adopted by the villain of the play, the inflexibly evil governor of Ternata, who had imprisoned the King of Tidore and then displayed colossal impudence by joining Quisara's suitors. His prisoner gone, the gov-
error realizes too late he has been the victim of "a trick, a dam'd one." The very public nature of Armusia's success arouses the Governor's sense of shame:

all the world will laugh at this and scorne me Count me a heavy sleeping fool, a coward. . .

and stimulates his decision to revenge his humiliation:

I will not rest; no mirth shall dwell upon me Wine touch my mouth, nor any thing refresh me Till I be wholly quit of this dishonor. . . .

(II.i.118)

The plan he formulates leads him in Act IV to the court of Tidore arrayed in the gorgeous barbaric costume of a "Moor-priest" complete with false beard and wig. Unlike Armusia's disguise, the Governor's is elaborate in order to produce the complete change of appearance and identity necessary because he is well known to the principals.

His choice is a brilliant one, for, as a respected spiritual leader, he is free to work his mischief in a particularly damnable way. He can achieve his revenge, humble his enemy in a seemingly virtuous, thoroughly satisfying way, and even gain the gratitude of the king. And since his disguise seems impenetrable, no hint of Ternata's association with the project should ever be known.

His purposes in the disguise are to revenge himself on his rival, promote enmity between the Portuguese and the islanders, and in the process marry Quisara to gain control of her island as well. Revenge, greed, and passion are all involved; but equally strong as a motivating
force is a concept of honor which demands removal of the blot on it put there by Armusia's successful deception. Obviously Fletcher is contrasting the villain's employment of disguise for evil personal ends with the hero's use of the same device for more gallant altruistic and romantic purposes. But it is the former which becomes the central dramatic device of the final scenes. The governor's priestly disguise also contributes a visual demonstration of classic stage hypocrisy in that the identity chosen—a respected, devout, and universally recognized wise man whose advice is accepted by king and commoner automatically—is clearly at odds with his real character and intentions, and thus constitutes a kind of irony in action.

As the first step in his campaign to discredit Armusia, the respected priest warns the devout King of Tidore to "beware these Portuguese . . . these smooth-fac'd strangers" (IV.i.142), for they may try to undermine the islanders' pagan faith. The ruse is both subtle and clever. It puts pressure on the noble King whose fine qualities have already been displayed while suffering under false imprisonment. There he was willing to endure starvation rather than agree to the marriage of his sister to Ternata. Naturally he is grateful for his sudden rescue and presses Armusia's suit to a strongly reluctant Quisara. Her promise to marry her brother's rescuer now appears rash inasmuch as she expected another (Ruy Dias)
to fulfill the task. It is a struggle for her brother to believe his valiant rescuer is a promoter of religious dissension and he wavers, unwilling to disbelieve either a spiritual advisor or a brave soldier, torn between his religious duty and his humanity.

The priestly role serves another, thematic purpose as well, for it allows Fletcher to link the main theme of honor with a religious theme, one which assumes a large share of the plot twists of the final acts. Relations between islanders and Portuguese are friendly, but the false priest sees clearly that he can foment trouble by creating a sham religious issue. He sets up a scene which will completely discredit his rival and turn the king against him. The conflict is effective because Armusia is not just a romantic hero; he is also a Christian hero and the competition between paganism and Christianity naturally offers great dramatic possibilities. First, it allows Armusia to display another virtue: religious constancy, so that to his previously revealed resourcefulness and love for the princess there is now added piety.

In the tradition of romantic lovers Armusia comes to beg Quisara to set him another task so he can prove his love. Previously, the false cleric had advised Quisara what to do in such a situation, and, knowing of the meeting, he and the king watch the interchange unobserved. Thus Quisara unhesitatingly asks for "the utmost trial" of
her lover's constancy: to change his religion. The request gives Armusia the chance to make a ringing, rhetorical oration (a Fletcherian hallmark) in defense of Christianity. Like the king, he too is faced with a dilemma which develops because of the governor's deception and must choose between his love and his religion. He unhesitatingly chooses constancy as the greater proof of honor. Indeed, his passionate denunciation of the pagan gods leads him to reject her also:

Get from me, I despise ye, and know woman,  
That for all this trap you have laid to catch my life in,  
To catch my immortal life, I hate and curse ye,  
Contemn your Deities, spurn at your powers,  
And where I meet your Mahumet gods, I'll swing 'em Thus o'er my head, and kick 'em into puddles. . . .

(IV.i.156)

The king cannot ignore such blasphemy and has Armusia bound and imprisoned; temporarily the false cleric achieves his desired result. However, the revelation of another of Armusia's admirable traits has an unexpected result. The princess so admires his stand that she completely falls in love: "Oh how I love this man, how truly honor him" (IV.i.157), she declares as he is being led away. Further, the next scene is made even more poignant and tense because she is moved to convert to his religion and joins him in awaiting death. She is a "Virgin won by your fair constancy, / And glorying that she is won so, will dye by ye" (V.i.163). The two are brought on stage,
both with hands bound, both prepared to suffer death rather than renounce their faith—a sight so pitiful that even Ternata feels some regret. It seems that the fate of the lovers can only be a tragic one.

Meanwhile, the political situation has deteriorated rapidly as well. The remaining Portuguese, incensed at Armusia's capture, attack the city, and there is another scene of destruction. Townspeople rush madly to and fro once again, complaining that rocks and horses fly in the air and "heads flie like footballs" everywhere. The scenes are comic relief, but they also are the direct result of the governor's villainy. The first mayhem occurs on his own island where Armusia and his men come disguised to rescue the King of Tidore; the second occurs on Tidore itself after the governor has assumed his priestly disguise and fomented trouble between the Portuguese and the islanders.

The governor feels conflicting emotions at the sight of his hated rival and the one he hoped to marry about to suffer torture and death. He is amazed at her entrance into nobility and to the King's query, "What shall be done now?" can only reply, "They must dye both / And suddenly. This woman makes me weary of my mischief," and adds, "Wou'd I were safe at home agen" (V.i.163).

The disguise has worked too well; the assumed identity of priest, which is in such marked contrast to his
real nature, thus ironically produces the result which it
tends naturally towards. The priestly role produces a re-
ality at odds with the purpose of its original assumption:
false piety in the governor engenders genuine piety in the
princess. It is the fact of the disguise, too, or rather
the piercing of it, that Fletcher uses to produce a spec-
tacular denouement and provide a happy ending in both the
romantic and political spheres. The lives of the hero and
heroine, not to mention those of the Portuguese and lesser
mortals, are in great danger. (The island princes command
the Portuguese to cease firing or they will cut off Armus-
ia's head.)

The unmasking scene is brilliantly arranged for maxi-
mum dramatic effect. On one side of the stage are Ruy
Dias and the Portuguese soldiers who have come to the cas-
tle hoping its defenders will soon be frightened enough to
return their comrade. Above, in the center, are the King,
the native princes, and the pitifully bound and chained
figures of Armusia and Quisara. On the other side are
Pyniero and his band who have discovered the priest's vil-
lainy and entered the castle by a secret tunnel. They
suddenly appear dragging the false priest, exhibiting him
in the humble position of a captive.

The King is much surprised and inquires as to how he
came to be taken. Pyniero replies using imagery that
metaphorically degrades the captive: "A terrier I; I
earthd him and then snapt him." The captain dares the King to "begin this bloody matter," --cutting off Pyniero's head--but if he does the priest will also be beheaded. At this point Pyniero raises his sword and evidently grasps his prisoner's hair, preparing to strike. As he does so the false beard and wig come off, disclosing the priest's true identity to the astonished company.

The actual removal of the trappings of his disguise is an effective theatrical device which not only allows characters and audience to see laid bare the source of the evil but also enables the unmasking action to achieve effectively the solution of the island's and lovers' difficulties. The lines of Ruy Dias make clear the connection between theme and disguise: "Why what a wretch / Art thou to work this mischief? / To assume this holy shape to ruine honor, / Honor and chastity" (V.169) The deception is thus integral to the whole play: by its use the villain sets in motion events which could have ended tragically--a requirement for a tragicomedy. It also simultaneously sets off the circumstances in which the leading characters can achieve nobility or assert the heroic qualities they already possessed: Armusia to demonstrate religious fervor and constancy in the face of certain death, Quisara to mend her pagan ways, she and Ruy Dias to be refined into honorable creatures, and Pyniero to practice initiative, bravery and quick action.
We have noted the central position of deception in the main plot; in the subordinate plot deception also plays a vital role. Fletcher carefully uses an inverse deception which counterpoints the disguise ploy of the primary action. His skill is such that he takes variations of the same device, disguise, and uses them to show complete opposites. Thus in the main plot disguise reveals both the ingenuity and bravery of the hero and the treachery and deceit of the villain. In the subplot the merry soldier Pyniero assumes, not a false name or face, but a false character. His purpose is an honorable one: to cure the evil humour of his uncle Ruy Dias, the Portuguese originally favored by Quisara. Thus disguise is employed for a third purpose: it reveals the honor of the nephew.

Pyniero first appears as a witty satirist, commenting on the follies and foibles of others, particularly the squabbling suitors and his lovesick uncle. For example, he notes laughingly that Ruy Dias has often chastised him for "abominable leachery" but calls the same behavior in himself merely "honorable courtship." Pyniero is clearly used by Fletcher to give a different perspective on the highly romantic, idealistic views of love and honor displayed by his other characters. To illustrate the difference, in discussing the pagan princess he says,
She is a Princess and must be fair,  
That's the prerogative of being Royal: 
Let her want eyes and nose, she must be beauteous... 
And people must believe it, they are damn'd else.  
(I.i.93)

Subsequently he takes on a more important role as he seeks to prevent a crime and a family disgrace. His pretense does not involve a change of costume or identity such as that of Armusia and the Governor of Ternata; instead he disguises his character and dissembles, assuming, in Waith's phrase, a "satyr's depravity" (78) in order to accomplish the serious aim of purging his uncle of an evil humour.

Dramatically the necessity for the deception is sound. It is more interesting to have two main characters who display human weaknesses and flaws than it is to have them uniformly virtuous, as Fletcher sometimes does in his tragicomedies. Ruy Dias is a brave soldier, but he does not start out as a wholly admirable person. Unlike Armusia who unhesitatingly chooses the heroic, honorable course of action in every situation, Ruy Dias displays cowardice, unholy jealousy, and unrighteous anger before he is finally redeemed.

After Armusia's upstaging of the other suitors by rescuing Quisara's brother just as Ruy Dias, stung by her criticism of his delay, is deciding to undertake the dangerous mission, the older man understandably becomes jealous and miserable. The princess is unhappy also because
she has rashly promised to marry the man who engineers the rescue, thinking it would be the man of her choice, Ruy Dias. He counsels her to "despair not, something shall be done yet,/And suddenly, and wisely" (II.i.124). Ruy Dias' melancholy leads to a murderous plan when he attempts to enlist his nephew to help him totally eliminate his rival. His speech is carefully calculated to appeal to his sense of gratitude, family loyalty, and duty, reminding Pyniero he has loved and cared for him like a father. After this impressive beginning, the uncle presses on to the main point: his hatred for Armusia, "that new thing, that stranger / That flag stuck up to rob me of mine honor" (II.i.125). Then comes the clincher; he appeals to self-interest:

And if he rise and blaze, farewell my fortune;
And when that set, where's thy advancement, Cosin?
That were a friend, that were a noble kinsman,
That would consider these; that man were grateful;
And he that durst do something here, durst love me.

(III.i.126)

Pyniero cannot pretend he does not understand; he sees clearly that his uncle is so blinded by envy and anger that he has deceived himself into thinking murder is an honorable course of action. When Ruy Dias proves impervious to rational argument, for his pride and self-worth are at stake, Pyniero decides to dissemble:

I'll see what may be done then, you shall know
You have a kinsman, but no villain Uncle . . .
I love and honor virtue . . . .
Before taking any action he says he must consult Quisara to see if she concurs, and Ruy Dias gives his nephew a letter for her. When they part Pyniero soliloquizes:

And to what scurvy things this love converts us!
What stinking things, and how sweetly they become us!
Murther's a moral virtue with these Lovers . . . .

A man may be mad, drunk, covetous, proud, envious, a liar, even a cutpurse, but

when I am a Lover, Lord have mercy,
These are poor pelting sins or rather plagues,
Love and Ambition drove the devils Coach.

(III.i.127)

While he is referring here to the secondary plot, the speech is also clearly a commentary on the main action. The villain Ternata is certainly converted to a "stinking thing" motivated by love and ambition. Pyniero is dismayed to find that Quisara too is quite unlike the conventional virtuous heroine; the pagan princess is quite willing to see Armusia dead.

When he visits her Pyniero adds another face to his dissimulation, that of courtly lover. The princess is wild and despairing: "Is there no remedy, no hopes can help me? / No wit to set me free?" (III.i.130) She reads the letter, asks if he understands its contents, then wonders if he loves his uncle enough to undertake such a deed. Pyniero assumes the pose of a gallant courtier (a figure he has previously mocked) and declares he will do it for her sake if she desires. The lady does and is
treated to a long flattering speech, the gist of which is that he will be commanded by her will, her pleasure, and "the fair aspects of those eyes," concluding with this hyperbole,

This, or any thing;
Your brothers death, mine Uncles, any mans,
No state stands secure, if you frown on it.

(III.i.132)

Quisara is totally convinced and leaves expectantly. Thus Pyniero successfully deceives both his uncle and the princess. To the former he appears the perfect relative and to the latter he seems the perfect courtier. Both assume he is capable of the same villainy as they are. He accepts this dishonor temporarily in order to prevent some unscrupulous person from accepting the task. Speaking as himself again Pyniero states his dilemma:

I must pretend still, bear 'em both in hopes,
For fear some bloody slave thrust in indeed
Fashion'd and flesh'd, to what they wish . . .
what dishonor
Follow this fatal shaft, if shot, let time tell,
I can but only fear, and strive to cross it.

(III.i.132)

His problem reveals character traits of all three, particularly the fallibility of Ruy Dias and Quisara, providing a situation which brings out their worst qualities but which eventually allows them to be redeemed. When they do renounce this evil plan, their character change is more striking because of the extremes to which the pair were willing to resort. The situation also allows Pyniero to
shine. Where previously he has been the "merry captain" trading quips with maidservants and fellow soldiers, now he takes an active role in support of honor, the play's main theme.

While Pyniero is seeking ways to thwart his uncle's dishonorable plan with no shame accruing to either man, Armusia's courtly lover qualities do the job for him. The noble Portuguese gains the princess' regard by refusing to be jealous of his rival, Ruy Dias, who surprises him in her bedchamber where he has appeared to plead his case personally (and honorably). The fiery Ruy Dias is sternly rebuked for his jealousy and rash behavior which are such a contrast to Armusia's gracious calm reaction. He leaves quietly, trusting Quisara to behave honorably in the awkward situation. Her rejection brings Ruy Dias to his senses and he shortly tells his nephew,

Indeed, I am right glad ye were not greedy,
And sudden in performing what I will'd you,
Upon the person of Armusia,
I was afraid, for I well knew your valour,
And love to me.

(IV.i.143)

He now abhors the thought but sees some good from the evil that had afflicted him:

I have tried your honesty, and find proof,
A constancy that will not be corrupted,
And I much honor it.

(IV.i.144)
He now plans to redeem his tarnished honor by the "right and straight way," namely duelling. Pyniero is so thankful that he is ready to fight openly, like a gentleman again, that he takes the challenge to Armusia himself and arranges the perfect place, right under the princess' windows: "I am glad to see this mans conversion / I was afraid fair honor hath been bedrid" (IV.i.145). When Armusia defeats Ruy Dias in another action-filled scene, but spares his life at Quisara's request, the uncle's conversion is complete. Pyniero rejoices that his deception helped achieve restoration of the family honor. "You teach well, nephew," says Ruy Dias, "Now to be honourable even with this gentleman / Shall be my business and my ends his" (IV.i.152). The merry captain is further cheered when Quisara approaches him (before the duel) and desires him "to attempt no further / Against the person of the noble stranger" (IV.i.141). She is ashamed of her share in the plot: "I have considered, and it will shew ugly,/ Carried at best, a most unheard of cruelty" (IV.i.146). She has changed her mind about Armusia's desirability as a suitor after the bedchamber scene where his courteous behavior contrasts so greatly with the impulsive rage of Ruy Dias. The younger man's good qualities begin to influence her own thoughts.

Pyniero is suitably rewarded, for it is he who is given the honor of unmasking the treacherous governor.
The one who feigns evil but is really honorable unmasks the one who feigns good but is really evil—bringing the play to its happy conclusion.

Deception in *The Island Princess* thus is clearly functional, important for providing various plot twists, exciting scenes, suspense and tension, and revealing character, both good and bad; but it is also integral in presenting the theme. Far from simply being sensational theatrical devices, the disguises Fletcher uses make the discrepancy between appearance and reality startlingly visual and physical, connecting it with the theme of honor which runs throughout. Honor wears many faces; for example, the outwardly pious appearance of the false priest contrasts markedly with the reality of unrelieved villainy underneath, so that what appears most honorable is actually most pernicious. By contrast, Pyniero's verbal dissembling appears evil on the surface since he leads his uncle and the princess to believe he will murder his friend at their command, but the reality beneath is a man of honor and a loyal friend and nephew with the best interests of all parties at heart. In each case appearance belies reality.
The Pilgrim

The Pilgrim is one of Fletcher's last plays, called a comedy in the Folio, a romantic comedy by Waith; but it is more like tragicomedy, for the tone is mixed, and the main plot is fraught with danger and sadness. The setting is Spain and there are elements of pastoral and romance.

Deception fuels the plot almost entirely, chiefly disguise. There are more disguises in this play than in any other Fletcher work. All of the major characters assume disguises at one time or another, and the women assume four each, producing a bewildering parade of costume changes. During the course of the play nearly all of the usual reasons for disguise are seen, including protection, spying, and the structural aims of moving the plot forward, providing complications, revealing and concealing character, and contributing to scenes of suspense and merriment. In the main plot a pair of lovers, Alinda and Pedro, are separated by the opposition of her tyrannical father, Alphonso, whose choice is the formerly noble outlaw Roderigo. In the manner of As You like It, each flees to the forest where they encounter such perils as imminent capture by outlaws, incarceration in a madhouse, and pursuit by various enemies. In the comical subplot the heroine is Juletta, witty servant to Alinda. She follows her
mistress to the forest to offer assistance, and in the process is instrumental in the humbling of Alinda's overly choleric father. The plot is thus concerned with the uniting of the lovers and with the reformation of the two villains: the tyrannical parent and the dangerous outlaw.

Four separate locations are used to accomplish this double purpose. The two locations which frame the tale, Alphonso's home and the Temple in Segovia, are places of at least potential sanctuary. In the home and in the church deception should not be necessary. The other sites, where most of the story takes place, are more troublesome: the forest and the madhouse. These are places of danger, fear, complications, and confusion—where everything is not as it seems. It is here that disguises are adopted and discarded with rapidity, in accordance with changing conditions and circumstances. The forest is not the peaceful refuge and contrast to corrupt court life that it is in *As You Like It*; but, paradoxically, it does have restorative properties. It becomes for the outlaw Roderigo a "Court of Reformation" (V.iv.224), and for Alphonso the madhouse becomes the cure for his tyrannical humor.

The noble hero Pedro, like Silvio in *Women Pleas'd*, adopts a disguise as a way of dealing with adverse circumstances. For unexplained reasons, he and his family have become enemies of both Alphonso and Roderigo. Some time
before the play opens, he leaves the court, dons a pilgrim's habit and beard and joins a band of others with like intentions. The group stops at Alinda's house on their travels for her blessing and dispensing of alms. She belatedly realizes that the handsome pilgrim who spoke so sadly and cryptically to her was her dear Pedro. Shortly afterward she disguises herself and slips away to find her pilgrim.

Pedro's disguise is thus as effective as he wishes. He fools Alphonso but only temporarily fools Alinda. In the forest when he is caught observing the outlaw camp of his rival Roderigo, however, his pilgrim's disguise is easily penetrated. Roderigo recognizes his enemy and prepares to execute him; but he is saved by the intervention of a recently arrived boy at the camp, Alinda in her first disguise. Pedro disappears into the woods before Alinda can identify herself and the two are separated once again.

The choice of a pilgrim's robe as a disguise is an interesting device. It not only provides the title of the play, the habit also becomes symbolic; for in a sense all the principals are pilgrims, each on separate journeys. Both Pedro and Roderigo assume this attire and find it exercises a beneficial affect on its wearer. Pedro first adopts it as a convenient way to go on his travels. He is already a noble young man when we first meet him, but he finds he must behave in a manner worthy of his holy habit.
When Roderigo accuses Pedro of assuming a disguise merely to spy upon his camp, he is incredulous:

I come a Spie? durst any noble spirit
Put on this habit, to become a traitor?
When I put on this habit, I put off
All fires, all angers, all those starts of youth
That clapt too rank a bias to my being,
And drew me from the right mark all should aim at.

(II.ii.173)

Just the wearing of this costume confers certain desirable qualities. It is also appropriate because the pilgrim's habit is for those making journeys, and this is a play of journeys. Pedro is not the only one who assumes a pilgrim's role; Roderigo is so vexed when he finds out the "pretty boy" is really his unwilling fiancee who has escaped during the night, that he finds a similar costume and sets out to find the pair who have "fool'd and sleighted, made a Rascal" (IV.ii.200) of him. Thus there are two false pilgrims, one honorable, one dishonorable. But Roderigo has not reckoned on the symbolic powers of his disguise; his journey takes him from outlawry--outcast from society, feared by travellers and peasants--to repentance, forgiveness, and restoration. The alteration of his appearance brings unexpected, ironic results. First, Alinda, now posing as a lunatic, mistakes him for Pedro and narrowly evades discovery by performing mad antics. Roderigo also gets a taste of poetic justice when he is found asleep in the woods by disgruntled peasants seeking
redress. His disguise does not conceal him from these victims of outlaw raids. They tie him to a tree and are contemplating murder when Pedro arrives and chases them away at swordpoint. Roderigo is so overcome by this very unselfish act and the saintly character of his enemy—Pedro behaved in a manner worthy of his attire—that he is moved to repentance and thus becomes worthy of the habit himself. Pedro's final words in the repentance scene reveal the powers of the pilgrim's robe: "Come, let's keep up thus still, / And be as we appear; Heavens hand may bless us" (IV.ii.208). Later we find them travelling amicably together, subjected to the now unnecessary admonitions of Alinda and Juletta in their guise as old fortunetellers.

Alinda is a worthy heroine who disguises herself and follows her wandering lover. She differs from other Fletcher heroines in two significant ways. Unlike Belvidere, she is not primarily courageous and spirited, nor is she impulsive and mischief-loving like Celia. Instead she is a gentle, love-lorn maiden, known for her goodness and generosity, whose actions demonstrate courage and devotion. However, she outdoes Belvidere and indeed any of her Fletcherian sisters in the number of disguises she assumes. Her motives for so many alterations of clothing and behavior include the credible ones of escaping her father's tyranny, providing protection in the fearsome
forest, and evading all her pursuers—which include her father, his friends, her maid, the outlaws, and other concerned citizens who fear she is mad. Nowhere does she deceive simply to have fun and indulge in a little mischief; those motives are taken up by her maid Juletta. Her primary motive in leaving home in disguise is to find Pedro, a courageous move for such a young, unworldly girl. Her lover Pedro is disguised already, reminding us of Silvio's lower-class disguise. Dressed as a boy, with patches on her face, and wearing a gray hat, Alinda first follows her pilgrim to the outlaw camp where she is taken in as a companion to Roderigo. Pedro's disguise is penetrated but Alinda's is not, and she is able to serve him well. Feeling some pangs of conscience, the outlaw refuses to perform the deed himself and instead orders the new "boy" to execute his enemy. Alinda uses considerable eloquence to dissuade him and Pedro happily escapes death. The persuasive youth is not so fortunate. She manages to escape but her experiences have affected her deeply, and she wanders distracted in the woods until she meets two of her father's friends who are also searching for her. Alinda's disguise passes the test once again, this time comically, for before they meet her Seberto says to Curio, "She is certainly disguis'd, her modesty / Durst never venture else." And Curio replies, "Let her take any shape / And let me see it once, I can distinguish it" (III.iii.184).
He boasts in vain, for a few minutes later they converse with "a very pretty boy" and laughably fail to see that he is the object of their search. Alinda's boyish facade is so successful that in addition she deceives her own maid Juletta, also searching the forest, intent on helping her unhappy mistress. Another element which heightens the effect of this scene is that Juletta herself is dressed as a boy. Alinda recognizes "Juletta's face, and tongue," though she says nothing, fearing her maid may perhaps be mad or aiding her father, too, and she makes a hasty exit.

Alinda is subsequently discovered "a little craz'd, distracted" (III.vi.195) and brought to a madhouse, where Pedro later comes and finds her. Their reunion is cut short when the master of the asylum thinks her joyful behavior is an aggravation of her unhappy condition and forcibly separates them—another obstacle and a trial for the lovers but not one brought on by evil men or circumstances. Poor Alinda runs away again but she sheds her boy's garb and this time disguises herself as a fool wearing the natural's long, pied coat. Her speech and demeanor are so wildly inappropriate that she deceives both her father, who has had a tip that she is hiding in the madhouse still posing as a boy; and Juletta, who gives her a "Royal for the sport thou mad'st me, / In crossing that old fool that parted from thee"(IV.ii.198). On her journey Alinda encounters Roderigo again, and once more
her deception succeeds. Her actions are so strange the outlaw fears she is "the Devil in a Fools Coat" or perhaps a fairy or "some small Hobgoblin." He notes that "It is a handsome thing, but horribly sunburnt" (IV.ii.200-1), and allows her to drift airily on her way.

There is still a third costume change, on the advice of Juletta who—belatedly realizing she has seen her mistress twice and failed to recognize her—finally catches up with her and wins her confidence. The costume alteration is wise, the maid explains, for though the fool's coat has kept her "secret for a season, / 'Tis known now, and will betray ye . . . many are looking for ye."

Alinda's reply is one which is reiterated many times: "I know it: and those many I have cozen'd" (V.ii.217). Juletta's resourcefulness has discovered a poor widow to whose abode the two will repair "and new shape ye/ Myself too to attend ye." Two scenes later they reenter the woods dressed as old women and converse with Pedro and Roderigo who have become reconciled and are now enjoying the salutary influence of nature. Roderigo calls them "grandam things," "strange antiquities," and "strange wonders" (V.ii.221). The disguise is so complete that Alinda talks boldly to the men, advising Roderigo to retire, repent, and pray; and Pedro is not at all suspicious.

Finally, the court is celebrating the king's birthday and marriage with music, singing, and ceremony. Alinda
and Juletta cast aside all concealing disguises and appear as shepherds, entering into the pastoral mood of the festivities. They are immediately recognized, all is forgiven, misunderstandings are cleared up, and Alphonso gives Alinda permission to marry whom she pleases. Hence Alinda's objective is achieved; furthermore, her disguises have helped reform her father and turn the originally noble Roderigo from his outlawry. He and his men are pardoned and restored to society in the general reconciliation scene.

The merry maid Juletta represents another category: servants who use deception to help their mistresses. Juletta, who is both witty and resourceful, a contrast to her gentle young mistress, has been described as "one of the gayest soubrettes ever invented by a dramatist" (Cone 144). She adopts as many disguises as her pious and charitable mistress, who is characterized by a passing pilgrim as "a living monument of goodness" (I.ii.159). Knowing Alinda's unworldliness, Juletta fears for her safety so the maid also adopts a boy's guise and sets out to help and comfort her. Juletta's main purpose in her deceptions is to assist Alinda. As a corollary her second purpose is humbling and distracting the impulsive Alphonso, whose unreasonable demands drove his daughter away. Still a third purpose is a simple love of mischief. Juletta's efforts result in several fine comic scenes, for Alphonso is that
stock figure, the choleric, tyrannical parent. She leads him a merry chase to dissipate his excessive anger, vowing "I'll make your anger drop out at your elbows e're I leave ye" (III.ii.183).

The maid is so proud of her skills that she recounts all her ruses in a comic speech in the final scene. In her breeches and doublet she enters the forest looking for Alinda. Before she finds her mistress, however, the guise allows her to perform merry tricks upon both Alphonso and the outlaws. First she is a "lacky boy" (outdoing As You Like It which boasts only one) for protection in the forest, a "little foot-boy / That walks a nights, and frights old Gentlemen; / Make 'em lose Hats and Cloaks" (V.vi.228). While looking for his daughter, Alphonso stumbles into the outlaw camp, weary, afraid, and horseless. Juletta purposely leads him out of the way all night, makes "him swear and curse; and pray, and swear again"; makes him leave his horse, whistles to him and leads him into prickly bushes, and laughs all the while. "A hundred tricks I have serv'd him; / And I will double 'em, before I leave him" (III.ii.183), she declares. Secondly, she is a "drum at midnight," playing a drum in the forest, frightening both Alphonso and the outlaws into thinking the king's soldiers are near. Third, she employs the false document trick, pretending to be a page from the Duke of Medina. In this pose she brings a letter to the
master of the madhouse which states that Alphonso is a lunatic and commands the master to keep him in custody. The document further orders him to correct the old man if he grows too violent, setting up a guaranteed farcical scene. Alphonso's violent protests make him appear insane and the keepers treat him accordingly. He is eventually rescued by his friends Curio and Seberto, but his confinement has an unexpected result: he is cured of his humour. He leaves the asylum repentant of his harsh treatment of Alinda and willing to let her have the man of her choice. Juletta's trick thus is doubly and ironically effective. Incarceration keeps the choleric parent away from his daughter and serves as a punishment for his harshness, but he leaves the madhouse a reformed man. Robert Reed discusses Alphonso's humour in *Bedlam on the Jacobean Stage*, explaining that this phenomenon—mental distraction purging his original choleric temperament—is based on a theory of Burton in his *Anatomy of Melancholy*: that a "counteracting passion, if severe enough, acted as a cure of the individual's original passion or humor" (101).

The scenes in the madhouse are important, for all the characters except Roderigo pass through it in their search for Alinda. It becomes a meeting place second only to the forest, the setting where the most dangerous, painful events occur. There are action and incident in the asylum too, but of different kinds. *The Pilgrim* is the richest
source of information Reed finds on Jacobean attitudes toward lunacy. While several other contemporary plays have short scenes set in Bedlam, Fletcher has two long scenes which give him the opportunity to satirize a number of popular humours. Among the inmates, for example, are a parson, a justice, a malt-mad Englishman, and a scholar who appears perfectly sane—until weather is mentioned. Contemporary attitudes to lunacy and lunatics are apparent. First, of course, the asylum was a place to confine and treat mad people, those whose humours were out of balance in some way. Hence, concerned citizens who find Alinda wandering in the forest bring her to the madhouse. Secondly, the asylum served as a place of entertainment for the gentry and the ordinary citizen. Thus Pedro is already at the madhouse when Alinda is brought in, having been taken there by a gentleman whom he met while entering town. Doubtless Pedro looked as though he needed cheering up, inasmuch as he had just escaped death in the outlaw camp, and the gentleman chose what he thought was a sure-fire distraction: laughing at the lunatics' antics.

The more common types of lunacy are represented by Alinda and Alphonso. Both are confined to the asylum because their outward actions and words seem abnormal, but as so frequently in this play, appearances are deceiving. It is true that both are a little mad at first: Alinda suffers from love melancholy (recognized by Juletta in
scene one and Alphonso possesses and rejoices in intemperate anger. Interestingly, both benefit from the place where there is so much confusion and misdirected, unbalanced passion. Although her journey is not completed, Alinda gets stronger when she finds Pedro there, and Alphonso recovers completely. He has journeyed to mental health, under the influence of the drastic "counteracting passion." Thus while the madhouse scenes were certainly put into the play for entertainment, giving Fletcher a chance to include topical satire, they are actually vital to the plot and serve important thematic and structural functions.

The women adopt yet another disguise when Juletta finally joins forces with the still distraught Alinda. For protection Alinda must remove her fool's coat since it has now been seen by so many of her enemies. The clever servant has a way prepared already, when Alinda objects that she has no money and no other clothes. Juletta has found a source and she has the money to pay for the change of costume. When we see them next they are greatly altered, no longer the slim young boys in caps and patches flitting around, but aged, humped-over crones, probably in drab, dark clothes perhaps even padded to change their sizes. They come upon Roderigo and Pedro, still attired as pilgrims, resting in the woods. The scene contains much potential tension, for Alinda still regards Roderigo
as a rough outlaw and a personal enemy; Pedro she last
saw in the madhouse and has been looking for him ever
since. Her first reaction therefore is fear for Pedro:
"The Pilgrim is betrayed, a Judas dwells with him"
(V.ii.217). In actuality a reversal has occurred--
Roderigo has reformed, and now he is trying to revive the
low spirits of his companion who is weeping for his lost
Alinda. When they see the two old women they are filled
with wonder, thinking perhaps they have supernatural pow-
ers. Juletta tells her mistress she may boldly talk to
the men since they are unrecognizable. They advise the
men to go to Segovia and "before the altar pay thy vows, /
Thy gifts and prayers: unload thy heaviness" (V.iv.222),
and they will be rewarded. The disguise thus serves sev-
eral purposes other than simply giving the actors a chance
to change clothes again. In the forest things are not al-
ways as they appear, and those shapes that seem most
benevolent may be harmful or, as here, the reverse. The
girls adopt the disguise as protection, and it enables
them to approach the men and ascertain that the two are
now on amiable terms. The encounter further serves the
aims of the plot by ensuring that Roderigo and Pedro will
be present at the last scene celebration. Roderigo is so
changed he is even prepared to face the king's anger, an-
other foreshadowing of the happy ending to come.
Juletta's final guise is as a shepherd. She and Alinda discard all concealments and join the festivities celebrating the king's wedding. There is an altar, "solemn Musick," and all the principals come in and sing their prayers. The simple shepherd's attire is not intended to conceal their identity. There is no need for role-playing any more. The disguise becomes the reality and reinforces the festive pastoral mood with which the play ends. The temple is a sanctuary to which all can safely come: outlaw, tyrannical father, wandering daughter, estranged hero. Having found or recovered their truest, best selves, all come to participate in a new beginning—a birthday and marriage feast for the ruler signifying all is well in the land, and a reconciliation is effected between outlaw and ruler, father and daughter, father and servant, and father and disappointed suitor. Alphonso gives his daughter the freedom to make her own choice, Roderigo is forgiven and he and his men restored to society, and Juletta is her merry self. Appropriately, the governor's last words are "off with these weeds; and appear glorious" (V.vi.229), calling for yet another change, but with no deception in mind.
A Wife for a Month

A Wife for a Month is one of Fletcher's most discussed tragicomedies, generally considered too lewd by critics and therefore much maligned. Like The Island Princess it has an exotic setting, the court of the King of Naples, and the plot, filled with tension and suspense, is one of Fletcher's most ingenious.

The usurper Frederick's advances to the fair Evanthe, who favors Valerio, are decisively repulsed. Determining to exact revenge, he and his evil counselor, Evanthe's brother Sorano, devise an extreme punishment. Valerio and Evanthe may marry but the union can last only one month; at the end of those few days Valerio will die and Evanthe must choose another husband within twelve hours or her life will also be forfeit. Sorano refines the torture further by decreeing the marriage must not be consummated or Evanthe will die immediately. Valerio must not divulge the real reason for his abstinence or they will both die.

The main theme is thus honor exhibited in love which undergoes terrible trials. We see two ideal lovers subjected to a severe chastity test, surely one of the most severe in English drama. The admirable behavior of courtly lovers in trying circumstances is one of Fletcher's favorite themes and well illustrated in this play.
There are two plot strands, the trials of the lovers at the hands of the usurper being primary and, secondly, the events which result in the return of the rightful king. These two strands meet and link up in the last scene: restoration of the king means restoration of the lovers. Thus there is honor on trial in the private sphere and honor on trial in the public, for the country under a usurper suffers terribly, as comments by minor characters interspersed throughout attest. The same villains are responsible for the suffering of both lovers and country; hence when they are removed both victims are relieved. Health, morality, joy are restored, all symbolized in the union between Valerio and Evanthe, the constant lovers whose fortitude is finally rewarded.

Fletcher's ingenuity in using conventional deceptive devices is again evident: lies, disguises, and feigning illness are all employed. Deceptions are used by both the virtuous and the evil and for opposite purposes: to preserve honor or destroy or pervert it. Functionally they serve to move the action forward by adding interesting complications to a bizarre plot; they reveal admirable character traits of the lover-hero, and they aid in a satisfactory resolution. Morally the theme is the triumph of honor, so appropriately the deceptions of the wicked result in defeat, but the deceptions of the righteous result, eventually, in victory.
The most famous ploy in this play is the pretended illness, a favorite Jacobean device, most often used by Fletcher himself for comic purposes. In this play, however, it serves a serious purpose indeed. All the critics agree that the wedding night scene found in Act III, the middle of the play, is the climactic one. The act is skillfully constructed, showing the plight of both country and lovers. At the beginning of the act we see the pitiful condition of Alphonso, lawful ruler of the country. He is separated from his reason, suffering from melancholy, accompanied by the rare symptom of speechlessness brought on by the death of his father. At the end of the act we see a poignant scene showing the plight of the lovers who are separated from the enjoyment of their lawful union through no fault of their own. The sadness of the whole country is made personal in their suffering.

Valerio and Evanthe have nobly accepted that their marriage will be a short one, and they anticipate joyfully the delights to come, but when Rugio informs Valerio he must not go beyond kissing his new wife or her life is forfeit that joy turns to anguish. The tension and suffering of the scene are intense.

Valerio faces a cruel dilemma: to protect his wife he must on the one hand deny her the "lawful delights" she expects while at the same time he is forbidden to explain the reason for this denial. Unaware of this added refine-
ment to their undeserved torture, as soon as they are alone Evanthe quite naturally invites him to bed. Casting about for a solution Valerio at first tries the generalized illness excuse: "I am not well my love." Evanthe quickly disposes of that weak effort: "I'll make ye well, there's no such Physick for ye as your warm Mistris arms."

Deliberately misinterpreting and seeking perhaps to arouse her anger, which would rechannel some sexual energy, he asks, "Art thou so cunning?" The ploy doesn't work, for she assures him she doesn't speak from experience. Valerio tries another tack, turning the conversation from physical love to a safer higher plane, spiritual love:

I do love so dearly,
So much above the base bent of desire,
I know not how to answer thee.

When she thinks he is merely being coy, he asks, "May not I love thy mind?" Rather impatiently Evanthe replies with an argument of her own,

And I yours too, 'Tis a most noble one, adorn'd with vertue
But if we love not one another really
And put our bodies and our minds together,
And so make up the concord of affection
Our love will prove but a blind superstition
This is no school to argue in my Lord . . . .
(III.i.36)

and urges haste since they have so little time. To her dismay he continues the argument he is building against fulfilling the desires of the flesh:
But to enjoy thee is to be
Too sensuall in my love, and too ambitious;
O how I burn!

He continues with an allusion to Eden which illustrates the high value placed on chastity:

to pluck thee from the stalk
Where now thou grows't a sweet bud and a beauteous,
And bear'st the prime and honour of the Garden,
Is but to violate thy spring, and spoil thee.

He invites her finally to

sit together thus, and as we sit
Feed on the sweets of one anothers souls. . . .
Shall we love vertuously?

(III.i.37)

Valerio's refusal makes Evanthe think she is no longer desirable, that he must have another woman, and she offers to leave. At this threat he confesses he was lying and begins to weep. All arguments having failed to convince her they must stay apart, he then resorts to an even bigger lie, but one which is ultimately successful: he confesses he is impotent.

Evanthe's reaction to this news is remarkable. She is incredulous, shocked, and disappointed but rallies gamely and prepares to enjoy a sexless marriage if that is all that is allowed her.

'Tis hard to dye for nothing
Now you shall know 'tis not the pleasure Sir,
(For I am compelled to love you spiritually)
That women aim at, I affect ye for,
'Tis for your worth. . . .

(III.i.38)
She cannot resist adding that perhaps if he will come to bed she can perform a "rare miracle." Valerio cannot risk this, so he says she may go to bed and he will sit up and mourn with her. Evanthe weeps too, making the noble concluding speech of the scene:

All fond desire dye here, and welcom chastity.
Honour and chastity. . . .

(III.i.39)

To Parse the central element of the scene is not Valerio's deception, but Evanthe's reaction, for she has passed a severe chastity trial. Her "courageous response to this trial is to be measured by the strength of her natural physical desires" (219), hence the emphasis on the lovers' eager anticipation. The deception allows her to make this response and is thus an effective dramatic device.

The ruse reveals Valerio's cleverness and is successful, for it enables him to keep Evanthe alive by providing a plausible excuse--one she will accept without repeated questioning--for not consummating the marriage. But even more, it reveals the noble qualities of Evanthe, for her reactions are convincing, heartbreaking, and admirable as she struggles to accept the unexpected blow. Later when Evanthe discovers from the usurper Frederick that Valerio's impotence was only feigned, she is greatly offended that he did not trust her. She asks,
And was not I as worthy to dye nobly? . . .
As he that married me?

(IV.i.56)

The speech reveals anew her passionate temper, bravery, and essential worthiness. As a result they are temporarily estranged, in a scene which shows the humanity of the pair. Evanthe at least is not perfect, and is the more likable for being so.

Another favorite form of verbal deception is the lie direct of which there are plenty in A Wife for a Month. The villains lie of course to advance their villainy. Frederick, still enamored of Evanthe, tries to win her again later in the month, but when she still proves adamant, tells her lies and half-truths about Valerio. He begins by suggesting that her lord faked impotence only to save his own skin, a cowardly act. Evanthe considers this idea and is understandably angry. Seeing he has scored, the king presses on by intimating that, furthermore, Valerio set her own waiting-woman on her to act as a bawd, telling her that what the king wanted was worth little after all and would result in no loss of honor. She becomes so angry at Valerio's seeming cowardice that she almost agrees to meet the King's desires. But when he further suggests that Valerio would also have served as a bawd:

"That fool that fears to dye for such a beauty / Would for the same fear sell thee unto misery" (IV.i.52), Evanthe
"smells the malice." Knowing Valerio is not so vile, she rejects this calumny:

There can be no such man, I am sure no Gentleman;
Shall my anger make me whore, and not my pleasure?

(V.i.52)

She accuses him outright of lying shamefully and chastises him, for it is "not an honour for a Prince to lye."

Thus the result of Frederick's deceit is the opposite of what he intended, for Evanthe soundly rejects him once more, appropriately couching her refusal in terms of warfare:

Thou hast almost whor'd my weak belief already,  
And like an Engineer blown up mine honour;  
But I shall countermine, and catch your mischief,  
This little Fort you seek, I shall man nobly  
And strongly too. . . .  

(Iv.i.53)

She thus passes another chastity test, winning another battle against her enemy the usurper, frequently called a Devil by the honourable characters.

The second villain, Frederick's wicked henchman Sorano, also dissembles, with surprising results. He pretends to change his character verbally, using no physical disguise. The ruse is part of the second plot strand—restoring of the rightful ruler, Alphonso. Sorano and Frederick discuss how to make their power secure, a problem since the real king is still alive, although suffering from a strange melancholy which prevents his speaking. Furthermore, the honest courtiers are beginning to express
disapproval of the new regime. The evil pair decide the safest way to eliminate these threats is to remove their source: King Alfonso. There is one difficulty, however; he is guarded by loyal soldiers in his monastic retreat. To get around them Sorano pretends he has changed sides and is now thoroughly repentant. At first the honest guard and friar are understandably suspicious, charging him with "gilt hypocrisy." Beast imagery is repeated in Rugio's reaction:

You pull your claws in now and fawn upon us.
As lions do to intice poor foolish beasts;
And beasts we should be too if we believ'd ye,
Go exercise your Art.

(IV.i:40)

But the false one weeps piteously and shows them the vial he has brought which, he says, contains "the remedy and cure for all my honour" and for the Prince's malady. Building the wall of untruth even higher, he announces he obtained this "jewel" from a Jew and it cost him—like the pearl of great price—all his wealth. His crowning deception comes next when he performs the one act which convinces his audience that the potion is not poisonous: he drinks it, making what turns out to be an ironic speech:

if you will see
A flourishing estate again in Naples
And great Alfonso reign that's truly grand;
And like himself able to make all excellent;
Give him this drink, and this good health unto him.

(IV.i.40)
When they leave, potion in hand, he exults in their gullibility, for he has an antidote and looks forward to hearing of Alphonso's death with a "bon fire in's belly."
The plot backfires, ironically, for the poison unexpectedly, miraculously, cures the king. Thus the villains themselves set in motion the forces of righteousness which will restore Alphonso to the throne, bringing the second plot line to its happy conclusion.

The audience is treated to a graphic illustration of irony, similar to that in The Island Princess, when the evil king who poses as a priest in that play finds that his false assumption of piety fails also. The evil counselor Sorano feigns repentance, contrition, and love for his monarch, while his true motive is to see him dead. But his evil is turned into good since the poison turns out to be the one method that would restore the king's health. Here Sorano and Frederick engineer their own defeat and the pretended good actually was good, whereas if they had been content to let nature take its course, Alphonso would soon have died. The contrast with Valerio who deceived for honorable reasons with very different results is pointed.

There are, however, lies told for benevolent purposes. One good character who prevaricates is Castruccchio, the honest captain of the citadel. His untruths are important to the plot for they are part of the chain of
events which link up the two plot strands at the end. At the end of the month, in a touching scene, Evanthe and Valerio reach an understanding. She learns the truth about why he lied and the falsehoods of Frederick are exposed. At first she is angry that he did not share his dilemma with her:

And was not I as worthy to dye nobly?
To make a story for the time that follows,
As he that married me? . . . . Would I had married
An Eunuch, that had truly no ability,
Than such a fearful lyar. . . .

(IV.i.56-7)

But she forgives him and the two agree that since they are now in harmony they will simply ignore the decree and enjoy each other. At this tender moment Castrucchio enters and separates them at the king's command, forever they think. Later, when asked, he informs Frederick that Valerio's body is now feeding the fishes. When the usurper wonders why they have heard nothing from the monastery, the captain adds that Alphonso is dead for he has just returned from there and observed the signs of mourning.

With these lies, Frederick and Sorano feel safe, thinking there is no one to oppose them seriously, and they turn from political matters to personal ones, preparing to bestow Evanthe on any suitor who will accept their harsh conditions. Unknown to them, however, the honest captain has been in contact with the loyalists at the monastery and, unwilling to be an accessory to murder,
spares Valerio. Further, he joins the rebel group, cautioning the miraculously healed Alphonso to remain hidden until the timing is right and victory assured. Thus when he tells Frederick his enemies are dead, the usurper lets down his guard feeling relieved and secure, and is entirely unprepared for what follows.

The final deceptive ruse is the familiar one of physical disguise: Valerio appears disguised as another man in the last scene. It is an interesting variation on the "disguise to see a lady" ploy which is usually a comic device, but Fletcher employs it here for a serious purpose. The disguise at first seems superfluous until examined more closely.

Since Valerio is presumed executed, Frederick orders Evanthe to choose another husband. In one of the few comic scenes a parade of unsuitable suitors crowds the court to advance their claims on the young beauty. Their ardor is noticeably dampened when they learn that the lucky victor must die at the end of a month and the process begin all over again. Each hastily declines the honor and finds urgent business elsewhere. Evanthe, revolted, in an impressive speech begs for death and even offers herself to Frederick if he will agree to die with her afterward. At this tense moment another suitor appears: Valerio disguised as a soldier. He claims to be Prince Urbino seeking his noble friend Valerio, and tells
such a moving story of his friend's bravery in a naval battle that Evanthe's heart is won. Urbino professes himself desirous of marrying his friend's lady, though he knows the penalty to be exacted. Evanthe accepts joyfully, but Frederick, villainous to the end, refuses to let anyone else have her and orders the stranger away. At this climactic point when all seems lost and everyone's attention is focused on the lovers' difficulties, suddenly the castle bells ring. It is the signal for Valerio to shed his disguise and the rightful king sweeps in with his entourage of loyal followers, thus joining the two plot lines with happy results for both.

Why the disguise then? It is not merely another sensational trick. Although the audience may suspect that the hero still lives, most of the players do not. The change of identity and costume enables the young noble to enter the court undetected and play the part of a distractor while Alphonso's forces are converging on the palace. When he reveals his true self, the usurper is totally unprepared, still in the throes of jealous lust. His defeat is completed on both fronts--personal and political--at the same time. The scene is a theatrically effective, spectacular ending. The disguise puts the hero onstage along with all the other characters. There is pageantry and panoply, surprise and satisfaction when the bell signals the revelation of Valerio's identity as he seemingly
returns from the dead, the rebel army marches onstage, and the rightful king and the entourage of loyal courtiers further crowd the stage. There are unexpected reunions: Valerio and Evanthe's is joyful because she had thought him dead, but Frederick and Sorano have an unpleasant reunion with Alphonso, whose demise they had plotted. There is thus rejoicing, justice, the triumph of good over evil, and finally compassion, for the villains are punished leniently.
CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSION

As this study has shown, Fletcher excels at his craft. His thirteen independently written comedies and tragicomedies display the range and versatility of his talents. His ability to take stock techniques and devices, familiar themes and conventions, and compose ingenious variations that are invariably entertaining is an achievement few can match.

As a step in the needed reassessment of Fletcher as a dramatist the present study has examined one of the prominent techniques found in all of these plays: deception. The definition of deception adopted is a simple one: any device, trick, or dissimulation with words used with the intention of deceiving another. Fletcher found deceit so important that in all but two of these plays it is central. He used well-known devices beloved by Elizabethan and Jacobean audiences: disguise, deception with words, and tricks like feigned physical or mental illness, fake death, and forged letters, and invented a few of his own. He chiefly relied on disguise—the changing of one's identity by altering the outward appearance, or the alteration of one's character but not his identity. His variations
were much appreciated by his audiences, who prized invention and wit.

Frequently dismissed as no more than showy tricks, these devices are much more; we have seen how Fletcher makes them functional, integral to plot and frequently to theme. He employs deception to serve a range of dramatic purposes, such as to comment on human follies and foibles, to reveal character, to cure humours, to put obstacles in the way of lovers, and to restore a rightful ruler to the throne.

All kinds of characters employ deception: noble heroes, modest heroines, faithful servants, wicked villains, loyal friends, meddling relatives, pompous schoolmasters, lecherous kings, brave soldiers, evil advisors, women in love, men trying to escape women in love. The honorable characters use deception for such reasons as self-protection, to aid in reforming another, to assist another person in trouble, or to promote their own romances. Dishonorable characters use subterfuge to further reprehensible schemes such as seducing a woman, eliminating a rival, or gaining political power. It is axiomatic in Fletcher's dramatic world that the deceptions of the good characters ultimately succeed while those of the bad ones fail.

Fittingly, the largest group of deceivers are those who disguise themselves, which explains why more has been
written about this ruse than any other. Indeed, after reading Freeburg one wonders if there were any Elizabethan or Jacobean plays which did not have at least one important disguise in the plot. There are several reasons Fletcher's characters employ complete disguise; motives differ according to sex, men finding more need of concealment than women. It is noteworthy that the female page occurs only three times in these plays, twice in the same play.

Several of Fletcher's women characters alter their appearance and thereby change identity, sometimes assuming more than one guise as the play progresses. One group of young women chooses disguise in order to follow their lovers who are exiled by the opposition of circumstances or by a parent who disapproves of the match. In *Women Pleas'd* it is Belvidere who follows her lover Silvio after her mother, the imperious Duchess of Florence, banishes him for breaking the law which forbade any man to enter her presence. She is both spirited and determined, genuinely concerned for her lover's welfare. However, she is not above teasing him once that welfare is assured. She disguises herself as an old hag and appears to Silvio when he is in need of encouragement. She seems a gifted seer and her words inspire him to fight bravely, winning recognition for his exploits. Later at court she saves his life by giving him the answer to a riddle but lets him
think for awhile that he must marry the witch rather than the lovely princess.

Another girl with a very different personality who follows her wandering lover is Alinda in *The Pilgrim*. She assumes no less than four disguises. Alinda is gentle and charitable and her plight is fraught with pathos and peril for most of the action as she searches for her Pedro. Unfortunately for her state of mind, whenever she finds him she loses him again. At first she dons doublet and hose making "a very pretty boy" and while in this guise is able to rescue Pedro from execution by outlaws. Later she is found in a madhouse, which gives Fletcher a chance to employ topical satire as well as generate more sympathy for the heroine. While there she adopts the long, homespun coat of a natural and the unmistakable behavior that accompanies its wearing. Her maid Juletta follows her mistress, also indulging in several costume changes. She contrasts greatly with Alinda in motivation and the merry spirit in which she undertakes her adventures. She is first a page; later the two appear together as old women and, in the final scene, as shepherds.

Another reason for choosing disguise is exemplified by Oriana in *The Wild Goose Chase*: to trap a man into marriage. Her fiance Mirabel is reluctant to enter the wedded state, so Oriana tries to trick him into compliance. She tries various strategies but is unsuccessful
until she masquerades as a rich Italian lady, impressing him with her rich apparel, jewels, and elegant manners.

Other women who robe themselves in rich apparel for deceptive purposes are those courtesans who impersonate noble ladies. In Fletcher at least they are minor characters, part of someone else's intrigue. In the farce The Wild Goose Chase a whore is hired to pose as a travelled English lady in order to humiliate the haughty Lillia-Bianca who has scorned her suitor Pinac. The pair go so far as to pretend to be at the altar before the intended victim punctures the charade and has the last laugh. The camp follower Cloe is found in The Mad Lover, impersonating Princess Celia twice, as part of two different plots: one to discourage an unworthy suitor of the Princess, and another to help cure the madness of the title character Memnon, whose love for Celia is so extreme he tries to present his heart to her literally. She is partially successful in the first plot, her efforts evoking laughter from the mad lover, and completely successful in the second, for she secretly marries her old lover Syphax while he is under the impression he is marrying the princess.

The women who disguise themselves completely are comparatively few. Fletcher seemed to find more reasons for men to alter their appearances. One group includes the lovers forced to flee because of various adverse circumstances. Pedro, title character of The Pilgrim, dons a
pilgrim's habit, adds a beard, and joins a band of wayfarers, which stops at Alinda's home as she is known to be generous in dispensing alms. She recognizes Pedro only after the pilgrims have moved on; the realization is the impetus for her first disguise, as she slips away from her father's domination to search for Pedro. The disguise accomplishes his purpose since he does communicate with Alinda. Later the guise is penetrated by his enemy, the outlaw Roderigo, but he is saved by Alinda in her boy's attire. Thereafter the habit serves as a catalyst in the reformation of the outlaw, who assumes a similar costume to pursue the fleeing Pedro.

Another young man forced to leave the country who adopts disguises for his own protection is Silvio in *Women Pleas'd*. He is first banished for a year, but later a price is put on his head. Among others, he assumes a lower rank, posing as a farmer's servant. While in this position, he volunteers for the army, fights heroically, and is suitably rewarded. With Belvidere's help he escapes punishment and wins the right to marry her.

There are also minor characters who choose disguise. In *The Wild Goose Chase* it is to aid young women in their pursuit of the reluctant men of their choice. Lugier, tutor of two of the girls, engineers most of the tricks they play. In one of his schemes, he arrays himself as a noble
Savoyard with umbered face and patches, an unsuccessful ruse, but great fun for actor and audience.

A third group of men disguise themselves in order to gain access to a lady, an ancient comic device. Fletcher uses it in a farce and in a tragicomedy, with different results. In the comedy *Monsieur Thomas*, that engaging rogue at one point dresses as his twin sister Dorothy so he can enter his sweetheart's bedroom. This getup has hilarious results, including a mock marriage and a visit to a nunnery.

The device is not limited to young impetuous lovers, however, nor are all the maidens favorably disposed to the pursuers. In *The Humourous Lieutenant*, the lecherous King Antigonus poses as a servant in a vain attempt to seduce the virtuous Celia, already promised to his son Demetrius. The shrewd girl is not fooled and the scene gives her an opportunity to deliver a ringing defense of chastity, a favorite Fletcher theme.

An interesting variation of this ploy is found in the tragicomedy *A Wife for a Month*. Here the intentions are honorable and the tone is not at all comic. The lovers Valerio and Evanthe suffer many trials of their love and constancy. Finally Valerio is ordered executed and Evanthe ordered to choose another husband. When all the suitors decline after learning the marriage can only last one month, Evanthe begs for death. At this tense moment a
new suitor enters: Valerio disguised as a soldier. He offers to marry his supposedly dead friend's wife though he knows the penalty. Evanthe allows herself to hope, but the villainous king orders the stranger away. At this climactic point, when all hope seems lost for the lovers and no happy resolution seems possible, Valerio sheds his disguise, the rebel army rushes in, the rightful king enters, and all is happily resolved.

Still a fourth reason for complete change of identity is for protection: young Archas, son of General Archas, title character of The Loyal Subject, is the chief example. He appears as a girl named Alinda throughout the play, and even the audience does not know the truth until Act V, when the reason for the deception is revealed. His uncle has also been masquerading as another, both men for protection against the hatred of the new ruler of their land who has shamefully dismissed, exiled, and punished the loyal soldier Archas. Together they are able to influence events favorably now and then; further, "Alinda" falls in love with his mistress Olympia, thus providing another couple for the happy ending.

A fifth reason for disguise is the obvious one of furthering questionable ends. There is only one example in these plays, in The Island Princess, a tragicomedy set in the Spice Islands of India. The villain garbs himself as a Moorish priest, wearing elaborate robes, false beard,
and wig, in order to promote enmity between the islanders and the Christian Portuguese soldiers who have ventured there. He almost succeeds, driving a wedge between the hero, Armusia and the heroine, the island princess Quisara. Urged on by the false priest she asks her lover to change his religion. His vehement refusal so impresses her that she converts to Christianity, setting in motion other plot strands which could easily have resulted in death and a tragic ending. Fortunately, the villain's identity is discovered, and he is unmasked in the final scene, his evil plans foiled.

In the same play the resourceful Armusia uses disguise for yet another purpose: a means of rescuing the king of Tidore, brother of Princess Quisara. While other suitors are discussing ways and means, he and his men dress as merchants, sail to the island where he is imprisoned, plant explosives in a storage building next to the princess, and in the general confusion following the fire, remove the king and bring him home.

Spying on another, a final reason for disguise, is a stock device, skillfully used by Jonson and others but rarely by Fletcher, in whose plays there is only one minor example, in *Women Pleas'd*, where the spying is combined with a servant disguised as his master to aid him in a love affair. Mistaking the servant for the master, the hero Silvio shoots at him and thinks he has killed his ri-
Subsequently the rival, Claudio, appears as a merchant to learn how his "incensed friend carries my murder." He attends the hearing where Silvio is tried before the Duchess, found guilty of soliciting the princess's love, and banished. Nothing comes of this deception, except that he retains the merchant's habit, takes the name of Rugio, and appears in the subplot as the ardent lover of another woman. The purpose of this assumed identity turns out to be a contrived one—he is her brother who is only testing her chastity. Such chastity tests are a favorite device in Fletcher plots, but there are much better ones in plays like A Wife for a Month and The Loyal Subject.

To sum up, physical disguise is found in nine of the thirteen Fletcher comedies and tragicomedies, demonstrating its importance and showing a great variety of aims and results as well as serving different dramatic and plot functions.

Another device Fletcher uses often and probably the one he is most known for—it certainly receives the most critical attention—is a more sophisticated kind of deception. Rather than putting on new clothes and changing makeup and hair, some characters adopt traits foreign to their natures, thus concealing not their identity but their personality and character. The device has obvious comic possibilities which Fletcher explores fully in
farces like Monsieur Thomas. Thomas oscillates between being the rake his companions and girl friend know him to be and pretending to be reformed and virtuous any time he is with his father. The comic twist comes from the fact that the father desperately wants his son to be a rascal; consequently, he is bitterly (and hilariously) disappointed when Thomas appears to be so tame. The scenes between the two are comic masterpieces. In the farcical subplot of Women Pleas'd, Isabella needs to discourage the attentions of one Captain Bartello. In order to teach him a lesson she pretends to welcome his advances, but in reality she has laid a plot to humiliate him in front of his wife and friends. The results are satisfyingly comic, for he winds up inside the chimney overhearing his own wife pretending to dally with another man. Everyone has a good laugh when he crawls shamefacedly down, covered in soot.

The Wild Goose Chase contains another comic reversal of character, for no other purpose than simple love of mischief in the eternal battle of the sexes. Two sisters, Lillia-Bianca and Rosalura, each with distinctly different personalities, are courted by two friends, Pinac and Belleur. Each behaves in exactly the opposite manner to her reputation, to the men's bewilderment and the audience's delight. This behavior fuels the rest of the subplot, for the men react with their own (unsuccessful) schemes to try to repay the women.
Fletcher's most famous variation of the reversal of character pretense is the one he has been strongly castigated for: those modest and chaste young maidens who suddenly appear to be wanton, using language and revealing knowledge unsuitable to their years and experience. As Nancy Cotton Pearse has shown, however, Fletcher had a definite moral purpose, one clearly accepted and admired by his audiences: usually the girls who do this, having exhausted traditional methods do so to aid in reforming a lecher. One of these young women is the appropriately named Honora in *The Loyal Subject*. She and her shy sister, Viola, are summoned to the corrupt court of the Duke of Moscovia who has treated their fiercely loyal father shamefully. The Duke makes advances which Honora at first soundly rejects, but then she changes tactics and begins to kiss him and seemingly welcome his suggestions. The Duke is so horrified that his cure begins right there, and by the end of the play he is so thoroughly transformed that Honora accepts his proposal of marriage.

Fletcher also employs this form of deceit for more serious purposes, too, like curing evil humors and reforming lecherous rulers. In *Rule a Wife*, for example, Margarita has wanton tendencies but desires the respectable cover of marriage, so she recruits the gentle soldier Leon, who seems malleable and passive enough. Shortly after the wedding, however, he discards his mild manner,
takes charge of his willful wife and deals masterfully with her and her assorted suitors until she reforms, and then helps him turn the tables on the admirers so that everyone is reformed or humbled at the end.

Another example of how deceptive behavior can be used to cure humours is found in The Island Princess. Here Pyniero pretends to be as wicked as his uncle, Ruy Dias, who is so jealous of the hero, Armusia, that he plans to murder him. It is an interesting variation partly because the deceiver is a man. It is done for a serious purpose, and his character is that of a comic satirist whose witty asides and comments help lighten the tone of a fundamentally serious play. Pyniero pretends to both his uncle and the princess that he is willing to perform the murder, hoping that time will enable him to think of a way to thwart their evil plan. Events do turn out for the best and eventually his uncle thanks him for his help in restoring his senses.

Another large category of deceit is deception with words, a category which includes half-truths, omissions, misleading truths, and outright lies. Fletcher's use is as usual judicious. A simple division which covers his uses is lies and half-truths told for dishonorable purposes and lies told for benevolent reasons. To begin with the first, there are two instances of deliberate lies told to young maidens to lure them to a corrupt court and into
the arms of a lustful ruler. Celia, the spirited heroine of *The Humourous Lieutenant*, meets this fate. King Frederick first sends her a fine gown indicating it is from her lover, Prince Demetrius. She is thus tricked into thinking the prince is at court, so she goes there, although somewhat suspiciously. Her virtue is proof against all temptation, however, and it is the king who ends up changing his values, not Celia.

Another heroine tempted by a wicked king is Evanthe in *A Wife for a Month*. Frederick uses all the verbal tricks—misleading half-truths, omission, and deliberate falsehood—to destroy her loyalty to her husband and thus break down her resistance to his own advances. She is at first tempted to believe him, but the accusations become so outrageous that Evanthe soon recognizes their falseness and rejects him soundly. Still another wicked king, when he finds disguise and the usual court temptations, jewels, and flattery unsuccessful, tries a lie which impugns the virtue of the heroine and falsely proclaims her death. King Antigonus in *The Humourous Lieutenant* informs the prince that his beloved is a devil who perished as a confessed traitor. Naturally the lie causes the son to grieve and also makes it difficult for him to accept the fact that she is alive and that she is truly virtuous.

Fletcher also finds benevolent reasons to deceive with words. Sometimes lies are told to bring couples to—
gether, as in *Wit Without Money*, where the protagonist's uncle devises a way to bring him to a sense of his fiscal responsibilities (he has given up his fortune in order to live by his wits) and to unite him to a wealthy widow to whom he is attracted. The uncle and a merchant friend congratulate the Lady on her new marriage and add that everyone also knows she is with child. The bewildered widow rushes off to confront Valentine, and in the ensuing sparring match he decides to leave his follies so they can marry in fact.

The widow's sister also engages in deception with words for the purpose of bringing a couple together—herself and Valentine's younger, more conventional brother Francis. He is so bashful he is afraid to court her boldly, so she helps him out by ingenious conversation, on the surface pretending to rebuff his shy advances but actually leading him on until he finally declares his intentions and proposes.

Sometimes women dissemble for love's sake, as do the heroines of both plots in *Women Pleas'd*. There is a classic farcical situation in the subplot when Isabella finds she must deal with three men all at once: her would-be lover, an unwanted suitor and her husband. In time-honored fashion she invites the lover to step behind a curtain and concocts a plausible story to account for the
presence of two strange men in the house. Though suspi-
cious, her husband accepts the explanation.

Belvidere, heroine of the romantic main plot, also
lies, tricking her mother out of the answer to the riddle
which will save her banished lover Silvio's life. To do
so she pretends to be an obedient daughter who will accept
her mother's choice of husband. Her behavior is so pleas-
ing that the mother begs her to ask for a boon. Belvidere
asks for the answer as if it were a mere trifle and the
duchess complies willingly, thus setting in motion the
rest of the plot, for the princess disappears to follow
her lover, assuring the happy ending.

A comic twist of a mischievous lie which turns out
benevolently is found in *The Humourous Lieutenant*. The
humour of the title character is that he fights gallantly
while under the pain of venereal disease, but when he is
well he refuses to fight. There is a national emergency
during one of his periods of recovery, and a soldier
friend plans a trick to make him fight; several soldiers
convince the lieutenant he looks sick and is suffering
from an incurable disease, and doctors offer to operate.
Therefore, when he hears the noise of battle he is eager
to join the fight, hoping for his usual method of healing.
The irony is that he does indeed distinguish himself in
the field, capturing the enemy kings singlehandedly.
Besides disguise and deception with words, there were many familiar and popular conventional tricks and ruses available to Fletcher. One of these is the feigning of physical or mental ailments, generally a strategem in the war between the sexes. Fletcher used this method of coz- enage several times, usually in comedies. Oriana, heroine in The Wild Goose Chase, for example, pretends to be mad in one of her attempts to catch the elusive wild goose, Mirabel. Her friends lament her poor condition, brought on by unrequited love. She is brought in on a bed, the better to display her pitiable condition. Even the callous Mirabel is moved to declare his love, but when Oriana recovers too suddenly in her joy, he is angered and repudiates her once more.

There are two examples in The Woman's Prize, one in each of the plots. Petruchio pretends illness to soften his wife Maria's heart. She refuses to consummate the marriage, her goal being to tame a husband with a reputation for harsh wife-taming. Instead of relenting when she hears of his "illness," however, Maria turns the trick to her own advantage. She has the household furnishings removed and Petruchio locked inside, telling everyone he is plague-stricken. He subsequently has a difficult and hilarious time getting anyone to believe he is not horribly contagious.
In the subplot of the same play, Livia also fakes illness, to escape marrying her father's choice, the rich but repulsive Moroso. To this deception she adds another familiar trick, the false document. She sends for her father, Moroso, and her lover Rowland, whom she has sign a paper which reputedly releases him from his old vows and oaths. The father and Moroso sign as witnesses, humoring her because of her sad condition. Later, and happily, Rowland finds he has signed a marriage contract.

*The Wife For a Month* contains a different counterfeit and Fletcher's most famous. Valerio feigns impotence on his wedding night, for the very serious purpose of saving his wife Evanthe's life. The pair have earned the enmity of the evil usurper because Evanthe has rejected his advances. In revenge he devises an extreme punishment: they must not consummate their marriage and Valerio is forbidden to explain the reason to Evanthe—hence the lie about his physical condition. It is clever because it is the one thing Evanthe will believe.

Substitution, another stock comic device, is found in two of the comedies. Thomas, in *Monsieur Thomas*, pursues the cautious Mary with madcap tricks, including disguising himself as his twin sister so he can enter Mary's bedroom. Her maid, being forewarned, appears to go along with the gag and invites the spurious Dorothy to creep into her mistress's bedroom. Unknown to him Mary has changed
places with a blackamoor, and the girls laugh heartily as Tom makes a fool of himself. A second bedtrick occurs in *Women Pleas'd* when Isabella cozens her jealous husband, the usurer Lopez. He comes home unexpectedly and finds evidence that she is planning a rendezvous with another man. While he works up his rage to a violent pitch, Isabella switches places with her maid, promising her gold. The maid is in need of reward, for the jealous husband storms in and claws her face. When he calls witnesses to come see his handiwork, there is Isabella with an unmarked face, and he appears ridiculous before his friends.

Then there are those who pretend to be dead in order to gain their ends; in Fletcher only men try this trick, and always to force a response from a woman. To maximize the effect, the "corpses" are always borne on stage in coffins, so the potential for emotional, heart-rending scenes is present. The effect is usually the opposite of what the perpetrator expected, however. For example, Petruchio in *The Woman's Prize* tries to gain the obdurate Maria's sympathy by feigning death. But instead of repenting her unwifely behavior, she expresses joy that he has died before they had any children who might emulate their father. Petruchio is so chagrined he leaps from his coffin, totally spoiling the aimed-for effect. There are two sham deaths in *The Mad Lover*, both arranged by Polidor, brother of the title character, Memnon, to help him
overcome his mad humour and gain the love of Princess Calis. Both also turn out ironically. The first is an ingenious variation of the usual body-in-the-coffin device. Polydor stage-manages a solemn funeral processional with mourners and doleful dirges, but instead of a body, he presents the princess with a golden goblet which he says contains his brother's heart. The trick fails, for rather than repenting of her haughtiness toward Memnon, Calis falls in love with Polydor. Later Polydor has himself brought onstage in a coffin, giving out that he has perished for his brother's sake. But again, instead of accomplishing the goal of uniting his brother and Calis, Memnon prepares to follow his self-sacrificing brother in death, and Polydor has to rise to prevent a real death.

Another favorite deceptive device, used occasionally by Fletcher, is the false document. He generally uses it for comic purposes, as in The Pilgrim where Juletta in her page garb brings a letter purportedly from the Duke of Medina which asks the master of the madhouse to care for the lunatic Alphonso and correct him if he should grow too violent. Needless to say, Alphonso, the father of her mistress Alinda who is searching for his runaway daughter, is not mad, but he is treated as if he were and in the process is cured of his excess choler. In another comic-benevolent use, Rowland in The Woman's Prize signs a paper he thinks is a kind of death-bed repentance by his beloved
whom he fears is false to him. When he peruses it in full light, he is delighted to find he has instead signed a marriage contract.

As the above survey shows, all the deceptive devices can be used for good, bad, or mischievous purposes; but in Fletcher, though some are humbled and villains exposed, no one is ever put to death or punished severely. Fletcher uses a variety of devices in a variety of ingenious and unexpected ways to serve several purposes. The most common one is to aid in plot construction; if the deception doesn't begin the plot, it fuels it, providing complications, humor, revealing character, and contributing to the denouement. An unmasking provides a particularly satisfying resolution, as happens in The Island Princess, for example. As for the characters who adopt disguise or choose other strategems, their motives generally fit into a few well-known categories: one is the benevolent one of aiding young lovers; others are tricks used in the battle between the sexes, for protection, and the laudable purpose of curing humours. On the negative side are those who want to pursue villainy in some form, usually robbing a maiden of her virtue. Finally there are the tricksters who simply love mischief. It is noteworthy that Fletcher does not, like Shakespeare, develop any Pucks or wise clowns nor, like Jonson, any master intriguers. He also has no real gulls who are made ridicu-
lous, no pompous fools whose pretensions need deflating. His satire is more gentle. Nearly always the deceptions are organic, integral to plot and theme, and functional, not simply entertaining tricks for their own sake.

Structurally deceptions may or may not initiate the plot, but they are the heart and soul of it, moving it forward from one complication to another and usually contributing to a satisfying ending. In the comedies deception is the basis of the humor, with tricks like pretended madness, injury, death, the substitute-bedmate trick, a boy disguised as a girl or the girl disguised as a page. All these are guaranteed to provoke laughter; however, most of them can be found in the tragicomedies as well, serving more serious purposes, eliciting sympathy or admiration rather than smiles. To illustrate Fletcher's mastery of his techniques, he sometimes uses the same device in very different ways in the same play. In The Island Princess disguise is used both to conceal and reveal true character, to cure an evil humor, and to perform a daring rescue, and all related to his main theme, honor.

This study is merely a modest beginning of what is to be done, not just with Fletcher's unaided plays, but with the whole Beaumont and Fletcher canon. A serious attempt to study other techniques and themes could yield rich results and contribute to a reawakened critical approval. The ultimate goal, however, is to revive interest in per-
forming these plays, for they are above all theatrical, and many of their fine qualities can only be appreciated in performance.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


Betty Jo Wilson was born near Crossville, Tennessee. She has spent most of her life in school. She attended various public schools in Tennessee and Virginia, graduating from high school in Wytheville, Virginia.

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