

## PUNCTUATING *THE CHANGELING*

*THE CHANGELING* WAS WRITTEN BY THOMAS MIDDLETON and William Rowley in 1622. No manuscript of the play survives, and the earliest printed version dates from 1653, several years after both dramatists had died. The publication rights had meanwhile passed into the hands of Humphrey Moseley, who had it printed by Thomas Newcomb.

### The Text

The printed quarto was issued three times, or, more accurately perhaps, was given three different title-pages. Title-page I, which is the most common version, concludes with 'LONDON, | Printed for HUMPHREY MOSELEY, and are to be sold at his shop at the sign of the *Princes-Arms* | in *St Pauls Church-yard*, 1653'. A copy bearing this title-page in the British Library (press-mark 162.k.10) was used for a facsimile edition introduced by N.W. Bawcutt which was published by Scolar Press (Menston, Yorkshire) in 1973; in the main I shall refer to this copy — as though it is my 'copy text' — in the course of my discussion. Title-page II differs from I in that it ends more simply with the words 'LONDON, | Printed in the Year, 1653'. The different title-pages do not refer to different editions, but are more likely to be due to the fact that Moseley chose a bad time for the publication of his quarto: the Puritans had been responsible for the closing of the theatres in 1642, and by 1653 even the printing of a play could get one into trouble, which presumably Moseley's new title-page was intended to avoid. Title-page III accompanies a re-issue of the play by Moseley's widow in 1668; again, this version is not a different edition, in that the sheets used were those of the 1653 version. Thus, despite the variation in title-pages, there is only one seventeenth-century edition of the play.

This is not to say, however, that we do not find differences between various copies — variants which are unrelated to the variation in title-pages, but due to correction while the play was in the process of printing.<sup>1</sup> The corrections were not systematically carried out, although they are generally an improvement. In any case, they are not relevant to the matter at issue in the present essay.

It is difficult to decide just how authoritative Q is, and there is no agreement about that question, or indeed as to just what process of transmission was involved. Whoever corrected Q while it was printed does not appear to have had access to an authoritative source, for, while the emendations generally make sense, in G1<sup>r</sup>(17), where the uncorrected 'tho' equals modern 'though', the 'corrected' form 'thou' produces nonsense. Most likely, therefore, these corrections were undertaken by someone who relied on his notion of what the text should contain rather than something known to be of superior value, although it remains very probable that the manuscript from which Q was printed contained fewer errors than does Q.

Perhaps, as Bawcutt surmises in his Introductory Note, Moseley had a fresh transcript of the play prepared before he sent it to the printer. Certainly 1653 has a 'modern' look in such matters as spelling, and it is very conceivable that the 'modernization' was not solely the work of the compositor of Q. If there was indeed a transcript made shortly before printing, then Q places us at least two removes from what the authors originally wrote. The probability of errors occurring in Q is

thus fairly high, and even the most conservative editors are agreed that there are not a few places where Q is deficient, for emendations in all editions are fairly plentiful. Personally I think that, even so, the most conservative editors underrate the number of instances where Q is likely to be in error.

It appears to be impossible — or thus scholarly work on the text so far would indicate — to know whether the transcript prepared for Moseley (if there was one) was based on authorial foul-papers or on prompt-copy. Bawcutt raises both of these possibilities without coming to any clear view of the matter, and no one else has offered a firm conclusion since.

### The Status of the Q Punctuation

There appears to be a *prima facie* case for the belief that the punctuation in Q is not necessarily close to that of the authors. As is well known, scribes or compositors in the first half or so of the seventeenth century did not take the view that they had faithfully to copy the particular habits of authors in such matters as spelling or punctuation, which were not standardized. And of course those who supervised the preparation of prompt-copy or of printed text felt free to interfere as editors.

As it happens, there is the possibility of comparing the text in Q with Middleton's habits as a punctuator because those habits can be studied in his manuscript version of *A Game at Chess* (1624). The manuscript is MS.0.2.66 in Trinity College, Cambridge. There is, of course, no substitute for studying the manuscript *in situ*, and there is no facsimile edition of it. Even so, R.C. Bald gives us a tolerably accurate view of what Middleton wrote in the edition which he prepared for Cambridge University Press in 1929.

Although one must be cautious in comparing a printed edition of one play (*The Changeling*) with the author's own holograph version of another (*A Game at Chess*) it is nevertheless readily obvious that Middleton's punctuation is in some respects significantly different from that of Q, including those sections of *The Changeling* of which he is accepted as the author.<sup>2</sup> We get some impression of the differences involved by noting, for example, that Middleton characteristically does *not* use a period to end speeches, but rather a semi-colon, or a comma, or nothing. This peculiarity is not reflected in the punctuation of the printed version of *The Changeling*. There are other telling dissimilarities, and they are not altogether unlike those which Bald noted when comparing the habits of Ralph Crane, the scrivener to the King's Players, and Middleton:

Commas suffice for Middleton where Crane uses commas, brackets, and colons. Middleton does use brackets, but far less frequently than Crane, and practically only for a vocative, while Crane uses them for most of the purposes set out in pp.87-97 of Mr P. Simpson's *Shakespearean Punctuation*. Middleton very rarely uses a colon . . . but Crane is very fond of them. Middleton often places a comma at the end of a speech, but in the main he employs a semi-colon for all the heavier stopping (he even ends a scene with a semi-colon) where most people, including Crane, would use a full stop, which Middleton uses only occasionally. (p.172)

Middleton's reluctance to use a full stop at the end of a speech, and his liking of a semi-colon (inasmuch as he does use that) 'for all the heavier stopping', must be seen as evidence of his preference for a lighter punctuation than is found in such texts as Q, and a moderner will feel that, comparatively, he is inclined to under-punctuate: one of the differences between the punctuation of the 1653 *Changeling* and Middleton's in *A Game at Chess* is that there simply are fewer punctuation marks in the latter. I think it is true, too, that the 1653 *Changeling* does not use such an abundance of undifferentiated commas as does Middleton, but the tendency does exist, and there is not the rather determined attempt at categorization which Bald describes as characteristic of Crane.

Certainly all the indications are that, although Q may at times reflect Middleton's punctuation (either precisely or by 'translating' his marks into others which were thought of as more appropriate), there are also marks in Q which are not likely to be based on anything Middleton wrote, or, alternatively (but perhaps less often) instances of omission in Q. And those marks in Q which presumably 'translate' Middleton's, such as a full stop for a comma, may well seriously mislead us about his intentions.

On the other hand, we would be mistaken if we felt that Middleton's punctuation, if that had been precisely adhered to in Q, would actually tell us much. For the very lightness of his punctuation in *A Game at Chess*, his reliance on the comma as his favourite mark for a multitude of purposes, and even his dislike of the full stop, lead to very serious difficulties in guessing just what his punctuation is meant to represent. Below I print a passage which I take from J.W. Harper's edition of the play for 'New Mermaids' (London, Ernest Benn, 1966), in which the spelling is modernized, but where I substitute Middleton's punctuation for Harper's:

How you forget yourself, all actions  
 Clad in their proper language, though most sordid,  
 My ear is bound by duty, to let in 150  
 And lock up everlastingly, shall I help you  
 He was not found to answer his creation,  
 A vestal virgin in a slip of prayer  
 Could not deliver man's loss modestlier,  
 Twas the White Bishops Pawn; (I.i.148-55)

Harper very defensibly produces the passage this way:

How you forget yourself! All actions  
 Clad in their proper language, though most sordid,  
 My ear is bound by duty to let in 150  
 And lock up everlastingly. Shall I help you?  
 He was not found to answer his creation.  
 A vestal virgin in a slip of prayer  
 Could not deliver man's loss modestlier:  
 'Twas the White Bishop's Pawn.

It is often suggested that punctuation in the early seventeenth century was intended to indicate pauses in speech rather than syntactical divisions. If so, some

of Middleton's marks would seem satisfactory, but not all. One could, of course, understand why he used commas rather than a more diversified range of marks: each comma would indicate a distinct pause (even though some pauses might be shorter than others), and the semi-colon at the end of the speech would signal a pause clearly longer than any of the others. Even so, puzzling features remain. Why, for example, would we need a comma after 'duty' in line 150? Why, by contrast, is there no mark at all after line 151? It makes no sense to suppose that the line-ending itself was meant to signal a break, for in that case no commas would be needed at the end of *any* line, and yet they are provided.

From a syntactical point of view, however, the punctuation is yet more confusing. The undifferentiated use of the comma disguises distinctions which we would now clearly make: for example, the commas are appropriate in line 149, but not after 'yourself' in line 148, or 'everlastingly' in 151. And, for syntactical as well as rhetorical purposes, we do not need a comma after 'duty' in 150, but certainly require a question mark at the end of 151; and so forth.

On balance, Middleton probably meant to indicate pauses rather than syntactical divisions, but even then he did not do a very good job, and I can only agree with Bald and Harper that his punctuation must often be considered careless. All in all, it seems reasonable to assume that in any case the punctuation of the printed *Changeling* was not meant to be, and is not, authoritative, while, insofar as it may nevertheless at times reflect authorial practice, it is not likely to be particularly consistent or helpful either from a rhetorical or a syntactical viewpoint. In practice, such is the impression which any reader is likely to gain from studying Q, no matter whether we study the Rowley portions or those by Middleton, and independent even of any speculation as to how the text may have been transmitted.

### Editorial vs Q Punctuation

The early editors, particularly Dilke and Dyce,<sup>3</sup> took the view that the punctuation of Q could generally be disregarded, and, just as they modernized the spelling, they also provided nineteenth-century, that is syntactical, punctuation. The procedure may seem a little disconcerting to us in principle, but it had the advantage of leaving no doubt in the reader's mind that the punctuation was editorial and meant to act as a guide to the sense.

During the twentieth century, attitudes have varied from that of the early editors to something closer to the opposite extreme, namely retention of the punctuation as found in Q. This variation is not, of course, confined to *The Changeling*. Although perhaps the present trend is again towards modernization, and indeed is characterized by a decreasing confidence in supposedly 'authoritative' Renaissance texts, there have certainly been many editors of Renaissance texts opposed to such a trend. It is still the case that some feel that the primary source should be offered to the reader in totally unadulterated form, while others insist on offering an 'old-spelling' text with editorial punctuation, or a modernized text in which the original punctuation is retained.

Whatever the arguments pro or contra the modernization of spelling, I feel that in the matter of punctuation there are in essence only two possible approaches: either one retains the original punctuation, or one offers a modern punctuation which is clearly syntactical. The original punctuation may be — indeed is — perplexing in a case like *The Changeling*, but one at least gives the reader the facts as they are found in the primary text, and one can either just present some generalized account of one's sense of the punctuation or comment on individual instances as well (although that process would take up much space). For anyone but a specialist reader this approach would be less than helpful and clear, but it has a place and is now in danger of being ignored too readily in what has increasingly become a commercial market catering for the needs of students. Even so, the 'commercial' alternative, although it will not satisfy the specialist, has the advantage of presenting one reader's interpretation of the syntax of the text without creating confusion by attempting somehow to preserve the original punctuation at the same time.

Yet it is precisely such confusion between what one might call 'editorial' and 'historical' punctuation which, in the case of *The Changeling* and similar texts, has been not at all uncharacteristic of twentieth-century editions. The most prestigious and most frequently quoted modern edition, that by N.W. Bawcutt<sup>4</sup> for the 'Revels' series (London, Methuen, 1958; now published by Manchester University Press) states:

The punctuation is taken from the quarto wherever possible, but fuller or heavier punctuation has been freely inserted where it seemed needed to make the sense more immediately evident. (p.xviii)

What is particularly striking here is the absence of any account as to what the status of the Q punctuation is, or why it is worth preserving. It is simply assumed that some special merit attaches to it because it happens to be part of Q, and that the reader will not only accept it for that reason, but will also be able either to interpret the meaning of the marks if they are not syntactical, or will readily see them as on par with Bawcutt's own syntactical marks, from which indeed they are not kept distinct.

The results are far from gratifying. At times, Bawcutt supplies punctuation which we can at once interpret as syntactical. Thus he offers as his first sentence (I.i.1-3):

'Twas in the temple where I first beheld her,  
And now again the same; what omen yet  
Follows of that?

Q has a comma after 'same'. Although that is hardly confusing, one can only agree with Bawcutt that, syntactically, a heavier mark is needed. As a consequence, the punctuation in this first sentence immediately is no longer rhetorical (as the Q punctuation could be taken to be), but syntactical.

Yet only a little later we find the following in Bawcutt:

Even now I observ'd  
The temple's vane to turn full in my face,           20  
I know 'tis against me.

After the opening sentence, I think we have a right to expect normal modern English punctuation. But in this sentence that is not provided. We again need a heavier mark than a comma after 'face', but Bawcutt prints the comma found in Q. To a twentieth-century reader, what is produced looks semi-literate. The fault lies with Bawcutt rather than Q. If Bawcutt had adopted the Q punctuation throughout, the reader would have adjusted to that, though perhaps with reluctance. If, alternatively, Bawcutt felt that a semi-colon was needed in his first sentence, such a mark would have been fitting in line 20. Instead, we are offered a confusing mixture of two incompatible kinds of punctuation.

This confusion is primarily irritating from a stylistic point of view rather than damaging to the sense, but harmful to the play nonetheless, and there are many bewildering instances, as for example where Q has in B2<sup>r</sup> (7-8):

The Laws of the *Medes* are chang'd sure, salute a woman, he  
kisses too: wonderful!

Here modern practice demands something like this:

The laws of the Medes are chang'd, sure! Salute a woman? He  
kisses too. Wonderful!

Bawcutt, however, prints:

The laws of the Medes are chang'd sure, salute a woman? He  
kisses too: wonderful! (I.i.58-9)

Again, what we have is an incomplete modernization in which the comma after 'sure' stands out as strangely primitive and perplexing.

It will not be possible — or necessary — to list all instances of this kind. They are pervasive, and I have tried to offer suitable alternatives in my own forthcoming edition.<sup>5</sup> My concern here will now be with punctuation in Bawcutt's text which prevents the reader from seeing the sense.

We have something intermediate between a stylistic and a syntactical deficiency in a case like the following:

I know she had  
Rather see me dead than living, and yet  
She knows no cause for't, but a peevish will. (I.i.105-7)

The comma in line 107 does not make clear that 'but' means 'other than'. Bawcutt takes it from Q, but his text would be better without it. A somewhat similar but more telling case is found in:

There's no hope of recovery of that Welsh madman, was undone  
by a mouse, that spoil'd him a permasant; lost his wits for't.  
(I.ii.206-8)

Here the Q comma after 'madman' is particularly unfortunate, as it obscures the relative connection between 'madman' and the 'who' which (as so often in English c. 1622) is implied. My experience in the classroom has shown to me that in a case like this students only too readily take the comma as equivalent to something like a semi-colon followed by an implied 'he'. The Q comma after 'mouse' is also superfluous: there is a distinction between just any mouse which happens to cause

mischievous and the particular mouse which deprived the Welshman of his cheese. It is the latter meaning which Rowley clearly intends, and in modern English that would be shown by the absence of a comma. As Bawcutt substitutes a semi-colon for Q's comma after 'permasant', it should have occurred to him that it was logically possible to move in the opposite direction also, that is to lighten punctuation in one place if one feels permitted to make it heavier in another.

It should be realized that, again, instances of this nature abound in Bawcutt's text, and they certainly are injurious. To take just one more example:

Oh sir, I'm ready now for that fair service,  
Which makes the name of friend sit glorious on you. (II.i.1-2)

Beatrice may here be taken to mean that she is ready for the *particular* service which will reflect on Jasperino (whom she addresses) — not just *any* service. In other words, we must not have a comma after line 1, which again Bawcutt takes from Q. Many more examples could be quoted, but these will no doubt suffice to show my point.

These instances concern the nature of relative constructions, and are important. But more serious cases of mispunctuation occur. For example, we have a quite baffling kind of statement in the following:

Such to mine eyes is that same fellow there,  
The same that report speaks of the basilisk. (I.i.114-15)

Bawcutt's punctuation is that of Q, and it must be said in his defence that all editors have accepted that uncritically. Yet surely it makes no sense. The intended meaning is: 'Such is that same fellow there to my eyes — the very same as rumour speaks of, namely the basilisk'. In other words, we need a comma between 'of' and 'the', and then the sense at once becomes clear.

When Beatrice first meets De Flores on stage (I.i), she says to him

. . . how welcome for your part you are,  
I'm sure you know.

In an aside, De Flores reacts as follows:

Will't never mend this scorn      100  
One side nor other?

Again Bawcutt follows Q, but again the sense is obscure. We might well conclude that 'this scorn' is a direct object. But obviously — upon inspection, at least — De Flores means 'Will it, viz. this scorn, never improve . . .?' In other words, the Q punctuation needs to be supplemented with commas before and after 'this scorn'.

Frequently the punctuation in Q suggests an 'ambiguity' which upon examination turns out to be non-existent. For example, Beatrice asks Alsemero what might be his pet aversion, his 'poison', to which he replies, in Q(B2<sup>r</sup>,40):

. . . what might be your desire perhaps, a cherry.

Bawcutt offers the punctuation:

What might be your desire, perhaps, a cherry. (I.i.128)

Obviously he sees 'perhaps' as attachable to either 'What might be your desire' or to 'a cherry'. But in fact it is significant that his first comma is absent from Q. The sense could not possibly be that Alsemero's 'poison' is 'perhaps a cherry'; he no doubt knows what he dislikes. Instead he means (as an editorial colon should indicate) that his poison is just what perhaps might be Beatrice's desire; so we need '. . . desire perhaps: a cherry'.

In this instance, the seeming ambiguity disappears not only upon consideration of the sense, but also if we ponder the possibility that the comma after 'perhaps' may actually have a function: surely it *is* used in lieu of a modern colon. In another case, we have to depend on our notion of the sense alone, viz. in

Whatever ails me, now a-late especially,  
I can as well be hang'd as refrain seeing her; (II.i.27-8)

De Flores (in an aside) here reflects upon his obsession with Beatrice. The commas which Bawcutt prints are those of Q. As they stand, they leave open the possibility that De Flores speaks of something that ails him 'now a-late especially'. But what he means instead is no doubt that it is 'now a-late especially' that he 'can as well be hang'd as refrain seeing her'. In other words, an editor should eliminate the second comma.

By contrast, Bawcutt perhaps too readily departs from Q in II.ii.103:

There's no excuse for't now, I heard it twice, madam;

De Flores hears Beatrice sigh 'O' twice and feels convinced that there is something important on her mind. Like Bawcutt, I prefer to think that Dilke (whom he follows) was right in moving Q's comma from 'for't, now' to 'now, I'. But Bawcutt offers his punctuation without any comment, and at the least the Q punctuation deserves consideration. After all, De Flores may mean: 'Don't try to excuse yourself — now I have heard you sigh twice (and no doubt intentionally)'.

But more frequently Bawcutt's punctuation seems to me too hesitant and cautious, and hence confusing, as in III.ii.10-12:

Ay, there's ordnance, sir,  
No bastard metal, will ring you a peal like bells  
At great men's funerals.

The commas are those of Q (although Bawcutt defensibly adds one before 'sir'). As printed in a modernized text (or in Q itself, for that matter), the lines could be taken to mean: 'Ay, *there's* no ordnance, sir — no bastard metal which will ring you a peal like bells at the funerals of great men'; but the true sense can be indicated unmistakably as follows:

Ay, there's ordnance, sir —  
No bastard metal — will ring you a peal like bells  
At great men's funerals.

A relative 'which' with antecedent 'ordnance' — *not* 'metal' — is implied before 'will'. The Q commas before and after 'No bastard metal' need to be interpreted as indicating a heavier punctuation than they would today.



On the other hand, a Q mark may also represent something *less* heavy than, for example, Bawcutt uses today. In III.iii, Franciscus pretends that he is Tiresias. Lollo expresses his disbelief, after which we have the following in Bawcutt's version:

*Fran.* Yes; but make no words on't, I was a man  
Seven years ago.

*Lol.* A stripling I think you might.

*Fran.* Now I'm a woman, all feminine. (68-71)

In Q, 'ago' is followed by a comma, not a full stop. Surely, in this case, the comma indicates that Franciscus is interrupted: Q (in contrast to Middleton!) is in the habit of indicating the end of a speech by a full stop, an exclamation mark, or a similar 'final' sign. In Q, 'might' is followed by a full stop, but it seems very improbable that we are to see Lollo's speech as finished; rather he, too, is interrupted. I would therefore re-punctuate thus:

*Fran.* Yes. But make no words on't: I was a man  
Seven years ago —

*Lol.* A stripling, I think, you might —

*Fran.* Now I'm a woman, all feminine.

One of Bawcutt's (and other editors') chief difficulties is his failure to see that punctuation marks in Q are used for a *range* of possibilities which we tend to indicate in more categorical fashion — by the use of such distinct marks as a comma, a semi-colon, a colon, a dash, or indeed by the absence of a sign. One would have no cause for complaint if Bawcutt reproduced the Q punctuation faithfully, but as many marks are his own, and syntactical in intent, one must question his use of punctuation whenever from a modern viewpoint it has no grammatical function, or an obscure one. Thus again, for example, in III.iii when Isabella explains to Antonio what she sees as the reasons why the mad people in her husband's asylum behave the way they do. Antonio dismisses her concern by saying 'These are no fears' (198). Meanwhile Lollo enters, and is seen by Isabella, who then says to Antonio:

But here's a large one, my man. (199)

Bawcutt's comma is derived from Q. The problem about reprinting it without more ado in a modern edition is that we are likely to read the statement as one in which Isabella addresses Antonio as 'my man'. What she means, though, is that a large fear has arrived now, that is 'my man'. Thus we could punctuate: 'But here's a large one — my man'.

One of the most difficult passages in Q, syntactically, occurs in III.iii, when Alibius explains that a party of fools and mad people is to assist in the celebration of Beatrice's wedding. I give the relevant text from Q, E3<sup>r</sup> (31-7):

. . . could we so act it,

To teach it in a wild distracted measure,  
Though out of form and figure, breaking times head,

It were no matter, 'twould be heald again

In one age or other, if not in this,

[265]

This, this *Lollo*, there's a good reward begun,

And will beget a bounty be it known.

Bawcutt prints:

. . . could we so act it,  
 To teach it in a wild distracted measure,  
 Though out of form and figure, breaking time's head,  
 It were no matter, 'twould be heal'd again  
 In one age or other, if not in this: 265  
 This, this, Lollio, there's a good reward begun,  
 And will beget a bounty, be it known.

There is widespread agreement that something like a new sentence begins at 'could'; likewise, it appears to be generally accepted that Alibius interrupts himself (and sums up his feeling) after line 265. Obviously the sense cannot run on in such a way as Q's commas suggest, and I agree with Bawcutt's colon before 'This, this . . .'. But, if that colon is acceptable, it follows that the punctuation at other points in Q may also be disputed and changed.

I cannot make sense of Bawcutt's text as he offers it, and he does not attempt to explain the passage except by saying that it 'is rather clumsily expressed, though no emendation seems necessary' (as if his colon after line 265 is *not* an emendation).

The passage starts in effect with a subordinate clause 'if . . .' which can only be followed by a main clause 'then . . .'; most probably that main clause is 'It were no matter'. I think we can therefore paraphrase 'could . . . matter' as follows: 'if only we could so perform it as to teach them to do it by means of a wild, crazy dance, then that, though not according to proper form and pattern, making a cuckold of the musical rhythm, would not be objected to . . .'. The force of 'twould be heal'd again | In one age or other, if not in this' is parenthetical, that is 'for it would be remedied at some future stage if not now'. And we can therefore re-punctuate as follows:

Could we so act it  
 To teach it in a wild, distracted measure,  
 Though out of form and figure, breaking time's head,  
 It were no matter ('twould be heal'd again  
 In one age or other, if not in this): 265  
 This, this, Lollio, there's a good reward begun,  
 And will beget a bounty, be it known.

This punctuation is at any rate a good deal clearer than Bawcutt's or Q's. Possibly the sense would stand out yet more boldly if dashes occurred before and after 'Though . . . head'.

We have already seen that Bawcutt's handling of the Q punctuation is not consistent. On the whole he adheres to it too much, without comment, although he also (again without comment) adds his own modern punctuation. But there are times when, from any point of view — including a modern, syntactical one — the Q punctuation should be kept and yet is disregarded. In III.iv, De Flores comments on Beatrice's reaction to his showing her Alonzo's finger, which he cut off after killing him:

Why, is that more  
 Than killing the whole man? I cut his heart-strings.      30  
 A greedy hand thrust in a dish at court,  
 In a mistake hath had as much as this.

Lines 31-2 mean that, as De Flores cut Alonzo's heart-strings anyway, cutting off the finger was a trifle: the hand of a greedy courtier, stuck into a dish by mistake, has had a finger cut off by another diner's knife. In other words, the mistake was, at least initially, that of the courtier rather than the diner's, as it resulted from the courtier's greed. The distinction is brought out in the original Q punctuation, where there is no comma after 'court', so that 'In a mistake' comes to be attached to line 31; the division in the sense, in Q, is indicated by a comma after 'mistake'. At the very least, an editor should not simply abandon the Q comma and substitute one after line 31. If one believes the sense to be ambiguous, as is possible, it would be best not to print a comma at all.

Above all, the editor clearly needs to *think* about his or her punctuation. In IV.i, Beatrice reflects upon her wedding night. She has had intercourse with De Flores, and fears that Alsemero will discover the fact:

The more I think upon th'ensuing night,  
 And whom I am to cope with in embraces,  
 One that's ennobled both in blood and mind,      5  
 So clear in understanding (that's my plague now),  
 Before whose judgment will my fault appear  
 Like malefactors' crimes before tribunals —  
 There is no hiding on't, the more I dive  
 Into my own distress; . . .      10

Bawcutt here follows the Q punctuation except that in some places he 'translates' it. Thus in line 6 'that's . . . now' has commas before and after it in Q, and Bawcutt's stronger punctuation is acceptable. What he fails to see, however, is that 'The more' in line 3 is correlative with 'the more' in line 9 — a general failing amongst editors, although it has not been universal. As the punctuation stands in Bawcutt, 'The more' is never followed by anything linking up with it, except 'There's no hiding on't' in line 9, which in fact is largely self-sufficient (it merely emphasizes that her fault *will* be obvious to her husband). The punctuation which we need, therefore, is something like this:

The more I think upon th'ensuing night,  
 And whom I am to cope with in embraces —  
 One that's ennobled both in blood and mind,      5  
 So clear in understanding (that's my plague now),  
 Before whose judgment will my fault appear  
 Like malefactors' crimes before tribunals  
 (There is no hiding on't) — the more I dive  
 Into my own distress; . . .

Thoughtless adherence to the Q punctuation is the greatest danger that an editor can easily lapse into. In the same scene (IV.i) Diaphanta, Beatrice's maid, protests she is a virgin. Beatrice responds as follows, in Bawcutt's text:

I'm glad to hear't then; you dare put your honesty  
Upon an easy trial? (98-9)

Bawcutt's semi-colon in line 98 is based on Q's comma. But if we ponder the likely sense, surely that comma is mistaken. I would at the least offer the following punctuation as an alternative:

I'm glad to hear't. Then you dare put your honesty  
Upon an easy trial?

In IV.iii, Isabella presents herself as a lunatic to Antonio (a counterfeit fool), and (mockingly) rebukes him when he rejects her advances:

Have I put on this habit of a frantic,  
With love as full of fury to beguile  
The nimble eye of watchful jealousy,  
And am I thus rewarded? 130

As so often, Bawcutt's punctuation is that of Q. But it does not provide satisfactory sense. In the Q-Bawcutt version, Isabella appears to say: 'Have I put on this dress of a lunatic, in order to beguile, with a love just as full of fury, the nimble eye of jealousy . . .?' (etc.). But in fact she means, of course: 'Have I put on this dress of a lunatic, and also a love as full of fury, in order to beguile (with both my dress and my pretended love), the nimble eye . . .?' (etc.). To indicate this structure, we need a comma after 'fury'.

Later in this same scene (IV.iii), the counterfeit madman Franciscus (Antonio's competitor as a would-be lover of Isabella) arrives upon the scene, singing. Bawcutt punctuates as follows:

'Down, down, down a-down a-down, and then with a horse-trick,  
To kick Latona's forehead, and break her bowstring.' (158-9)

This suggests that both lines are part of the same utterance, that is, Franciscus' song. Admittedly, Q provides no quotation marks, so even an editor as reliant upon it as Bawcutt is here left to his own devices. He is surely wrong to assume that *both* lines

are part of a song. I feel confident that the song-fragment is confined to 'Down . . . a-down'. Franciscus is singing part of a song to which Ophelia refers in *Hamlet* IV.v.167 (although Bawcutt curiously overlooks the parallel), when she says: 'You must sing "A-down, a-down"' — a bawdy song, obviously, as here, of which the remainder of Franciscus' speech is not part, but which it amplifies.

On Beatrice's wedding night Diaphanta takes her place in Alsemero's bed, but stays there for longer than planned. As a result, De Flores (with Beatrice's approval) decides to set fire to the house, in the hope that this will make Diaphanta return to her room, where he intends to shoot her with a 'piece' (a hand-gun). Soon we see him instruct the servants, and address Beatrice (V.i):

Away, despatch! Hooks, buckets, ladders; that's well said;  
 The fire-bell rings, the chimney works; my charge; 75  
 The piece is ready.

It is difficult to see the syntactical function of 'my charge' here. Does Bawcutt mean, by implication, that the charge 'works'? Or does this noun-phrase simply hang loose?

I think that he offers a timid, unhelpful adaptation of Q's punctuation, where 'my charge' is preceded by a comma, though followed by a semi-colon. If we accept the need for a semi-colon after 'works', it becomes clear that no such heavy mark will do after 'charge'. De Flores means that his 'charge', viz. his loaded 'piece', is ready. All we require after 'charge' is a comma.

In V.ii, when Tomazo strikes De Flores, the latter says:

I take my injury with thanks given, sir, 35  
 Like a wise lawyer; and as a favour,  
 Will wear it for the worthy hand that gave it.

The comma after 'favour' derives from Q. If printed as a 'rhetorical' mark only, it would be innocuous, though a pause at the end of the line seems neither necessary nor expected. In a text in which the punctuation is not merely rhetorical, the comma is likely to be interpreted by the reader as having a syntactical function, and thus De Flores is made to say something like: 'By way of favour, I will wear my injury for the worthy hand that gave it.' Surely a much likelier sense emerges if we discard the comma, so that he says that he will wear the injury *as* a favour.

My position is that, unless the Q punctuation is reproduced faithfully as historically interesting, an editor must reject it when it conflicts with the sense. An editor who, like Bawcutt, offers a mixture of the Q punctuation and his own must expect the reader to interpret all of the punctuation as syntactical, especially if 'fuller or heavier punctuation has been freely inserted where it seemed needed to make the sense more immediately evident' (that is, not just for rhetorical purposes). On the other hand, if the Q punctuation *does* make sense syntactically, it should of course be kept. Thus in a noteworthy example in V.iii. Alsemero reports to de Flores how Beatrice has confessed that he for her sake murdered Alonzo; and, Alsemero suggests, she has confessed 'much more than that'. De Flores replies, in Bawcutt's version:

It could not be much more;  
 'Twas but one thing, and that — she's a whore. (106-7)

Fortunately, Bawcutt does here point out that the dash after 'that' is not in Q, but was first inserted by Dyce. In fact, Dyce's punctuation in this instance appears to have been accepted by all subsequent editors. Yet surely it is mistaken. If it means anything, it indicates to us that, in the Dyce-Bawcutt view, Beatrice confessed only one thing additional to the murder of Alonzo; so presumably 'and that' in a clumsy way would have the sense of 'viz.'

But let us consider the Q punctuation of this line:

'Twas but one thing, and that she's a whore.

There is in fact no problem with this whatever. De Flores means that there was only one thing to confess (the murder), *and* (additionally) that she has been adulterous. The mistake which Dyce made was that he took 'one thing' to refer to that fact, instead of the murder. Working on this fallacious assumption, he then came to misinterpret the syntax of the remainder of the line, and to introduce a confusing punctuation mark which posterity has preferred, quite wrongly, to the punctuation in Q.

However, our last telling example is again one where an editor should abandon the Q punctuation rather than uncritically accept it. Once Beatrice and De Flores have been exposed as murderers (etc.), Alsemero locks them up in his closet. De Flores there not only wounds Beatrice fatally, but also stabs himself. Later, upon the prospect of torture, he stabs himself again, and says to Beatrice (in Bawcutt's version, cf. V.iii):

Make haste, Joanna, by that token to thee:           175  
 Canst not forget, so lately put in mind,  
 I would not go to leave thee far behind.

Bawcutt's punctuation is clearly based on Q's, though with some variation:

Make haste *Joanna* by that token to thee.  
 Canst not forget so lately put in mind,  
 I would not goe to leave thee far behind.

Bawcutt interprets the full stop after 'thee' as though it signals a significant syntactical break; or at any rate his own colon certainly does so. But in his text 'Canst not forget' appears to hang loose, and it is in any case difficult to see how we can make sense of lines 176-7 as he presents them. It does not help us much that he tells us about this passage: 'The exact syntax of these lines is hard to determine, and they could be punctuated and interpreted in a variety of ways.' However, in saying this he at least opens the way for any sensible interpretation which might involve rejection of the Q punctuation.

He adds that 'the "token" seems to be the wound De Flores has just given himself, which will remind Beatrice that he is unwilling to be parted from her.'

I would re-punctuate Q significantly, as follows:

Make haste, Joanna, by that token to thee  
 Canst not forget, so lately put in mind;  
 I would not go to leave thee far behind.

I take the sense to be: 'Make haste in dying, Joanna, in keeping with the promise which I made to you when I first wounded myself, and which you cannot forget, having been reminded of it so recently now that I have wounded myself a second time; I should not be keen to go (and will not go) while I leave you far behind me.' In my interpretation, the 'token' is not the *second* wound, which De Flores has just given himself, but the *first*, of which the second wound now, he trusts, will remind Beatrice. And we should realize that there is no break in the sense after 'thee': rather a relative is implied at this point (as well as, of course, a 'thou').

In fairness to Bawcutt's edition, it should be pointed out that it has many good features, and also that his punctuation is not atypical. Nevertheless, I hope I have shown just how unsatisfactory the punctuation in this text — widely accepted as the standard edition — actually is. I should be glad if the specific instances I have discussed will never be viewed the same way again, and if — at least in most cases — my interpretation of the sense is accepted by future readers and editors. But this paper was also meant to serve another purpose, of a more general editorial nature. Some of Bawcutt's faulty or confusing punctuation appears to arise from his failure to understand just what the authors mean. But in any case, I would contend, an unsatisfactory punctuation is bound to arise from his general procedure, which, unfortunately, is not confined to this particular edition of *The Changeling*, and indeed is fairly common in editions of Renaissance texts.

What has happened on the one hand is that Bawcutt has taken the punctuation of the quarto seriously, in that he, for reasons unexplained, accepts it 'wherever possible'. But the Q punctuation need not have any authority whatever, and in any case an editor who reprints it will find it unsatisfactory either rhetorically or syntactically. In an uncompromising scholarly edition for a highly specialized audience the Q punctuation might nevertheless be reprinted as something of historical interest on which it would be possible to comment and which readers could not confuse with modern editorial punctuation. Of course, now that facsimiles of Renaissance texts are often available, it might be less necessary to reprint the punctuation from the original texts, although facsimiles do not always reproduce that punctuation clearly.

On the other hand, Bawcutt has added his own modern punctuation — which any reader can only interpret as syntactical in keeping with his own statement that 'fuller or heavier punctuation has been freely inserted where it seemed needed to make the sense more immediately evident'. And as this punctuation ("freely inserted") is not kept apart from the original punctuation which Bawcutt so often adopts, we cannot tell just which marks are editorial and which are not, so that we come to interpret *every* mark in Bawcutt's text as though it is intended to make syntactical sense. It is clearly impossible to do so, and the result of the whole approach is damaging to the sense as the authors must have intended it.

The alternative, then, is clear. Unless the original punctuation is accepted in its entirety for reprinting, without adulteration, an editor must accept responsibility for the punctuation produced, and this means that the Q punctuation should be reproduced only where it makes sense syntactically, and otherwise be rejected or replaced by the editor's own punctuation. In practice, this means that the punctuation will end up as something very different from that of Q. It should aim to be something which, in the editor's view, the authors might feel happy with if they were alive today. Such a punctuation will inevitably be interpretative, but in this there is no harm so long as that fact is clearly understood by all and so long as the editor truly attempts to convey what he can in reason believe the dramatists must have meant.

After all, a facsimile edition will in most cases show well enough to what extent the editor has departed from a text in which the punctuation in any case may well

not be authorial, and a clear modern punctuation must surely be preferable to one like Bawcutt's, which not only does not do justice to the work of the authors, but which a reader will also feel hesitant to reject because it is not clear just when a mark may derive from Q, the punctuation of which is likely to be regarded as in principle perhaps authoritative.

I am advocating an approach to the matter of punctuation which one could think of as 'responsibly subjective', which I suggest is preferable to one which is neither that nor 'objective'. An 'objective' approach does not seem called for in a case like this because the Q punctuation not only is not a reliable guide to authorial punctuation in all instances, but also is not likely to be much use to the extent that it is, given what we know of Middleton's punctuation in *A Game at Chess*. The Q punctuation should not be ignored, but the primary duty of an editor who does not consistently reproduce it must be to provide a punctuation which helps us to see the sense of the text.

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#### NOTES

1. On this matter, see R.G. Lawrence, 'A Bibliographical Study of Middleton and Rowley's *The Changeling*', *The Library*, 16 (1961), 37-43.
2. This issue has been studied with great care by David J. Lake, in *The Canon of Thomas Middleton's Plays* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975) and MacD. P. Jackson, in *Studies in Attribution: Middleton and Shakespeare* (Salzburg: Universität Salzburg, 1979). The authorship of individual scenes is as follows: Rowley wrote I, III.iii, IV.ii.1-16, IV.iii, and V.iii, while Middleton composed the remainder.
3. The edition by C.W. Dilke is to be found in vol.IV of *Old English Plays* (London, 1815), and that by Alexander Dyce in his *The Works of Thomas Middleton*, vol.4 (London, 1840).
4. Of editions coming after Bawcutt's, I best like those by G.W. Williams (Nebraska: Nebraska University Press, 1966) and M.W. Black (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1966). My own position comes closest to Black's, who says 'I have not emulated the quixotic attempts to follow the quarto punctuation' and calls that 'merely careless' (perhaps with some exaggeration). But in practice Black's handling of punctuation is not consistently as good as it might be, and neither he nor editors or other scholars before him or after have attempted to deal with punctuation in *The Changeling* as an issue worthy of serious study, either generally or with reference to specific examples. Bawcutt's edition remains the standard one on which critics rely, generally, when discussing the play, and its punctuation not only affects these critics, but also subsequent editions, including the most recent one, in Bryan Loughrey and Neil Taylor, eds., *Thomas Middleton: Five Plays* (London: Penguin, 1988).
5. To be published by A. & C. Black (London) in 1991.



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