

Motley

by [Letitia Cary](#) (February 2024)



Arlequin, Bernard Fouilloux, 1973

“Motley is the only wear,” said Shakespeare,
Of you it’s especially true;
With your patches of different personas—
Twelfth century troubadour,
Victorian gentleman,
New Malden schoolboy—
Sewn together like diamonds, red, green and blue.
Sometimes pronunciation received,
Others with cockney crass;
But neither dialect nor demeanour—
Maternal Hampshire slang,
Pagan prejudice,
Radical Protestant genius—
Ever feel like just an act.

“Motley is the only wear,” said Shakespeare,
Because personality is always bricolage;
Only yours more eclectic than most—
Remnants of bygone centuries,
Disparate regions,
Rural folk songs—
Bound by a golden thread.
To them you are the heretic;
Brusque, mad, with caustic wit,
To me you are the lover;
Gentle, every word poetic,
But always the artful seamster, Lucius:
Forever will I marvel at your costume
In all its harlequin colours.

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Letitia Cary is the pseudonym of a writer from Oxfordshire,

England. She takes her name from the 17th century noblewoman who hosted The Great Tew Circle, a group of theologians and poets who discussed controversial ideas with her husband Lucius, the 2nd Viscount Falkland.

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