Mythologizing the Middle Class: *'Tis Pity She's a Whore* and the Urban Bourgeoisie

VALERIE L.
JEPHSON
&
BRUCE THOMAS
BOEHRER

Summary: *This paper examines the strategies through which John Ford's play validates an image of the rising urban middle class as constitutionally confused and therefore destructive to the social fabric of seventeenth-century London. The portrayal of the middle class as struggling to inhabit signifiers of gentility while simultaneously undermining their value as indicators of adherence to any particular social code constructs the urban bourgeois as an object deserving of enmity and punishment; such sentiments are in turn mobilized in the service of humorous entertainment for an implicitly elite audience via a set of historical discourses associating political egalitarianism with incest, and class mobility with a self-interested disregard for traditional cultural practices.*

In 1723, as he passed through the obscure village of Anet, a few miles west of Paris, the Condé Comte de Charolais spotted a townsman in a night bonnet, standing by the front door of his modest dwelling. The Comte, already famous for extravagant behavior, shot and killed him as amusement.¹ When, the next morning, Charolais formally requested a royal pardon for the act, he received it on account of rank and got off scot-free.

This event might not be worth recounting as an isolated instance of social injustice, were it not at the same time both an act of entertainment and a declaration of personal identity. Charolais sees his hapless villager as an occasion for ugly, sanguinary fun, and this fun in turn distinguishes Charolais from the ranks of those theoretically beneath him; the unfortunate bourgeois, on the other hand, emerges from Charolais' behavior as both intrinsically

obnoxious and constitutionally impotent. Hence the nobleman, apparently offended by the very existence of his social inferior, manages to transform that inferior into two related things: an object of destructive pastime and a reaffirmation of the political distance between aristocrat and citizen, governor and governed. Charolais is not alone in pursuing such a project.

In seventeenth- and eighteenth-century England, the peerage's ongoing impulse *pour épater le bourgeois* is just as evident, if not usually so violent. Thus, in June of 1663, the infamous Sir Charles Sedley and two companions stood naked on the balcony of the Cock Tavern in Covent Garden, where Sedley pissed off the balcony into the gathering throng below and then "preached a kind of mock sermon, probably in ribald imitation of a Puritan divine."² The symbolism of such a gesture could scarcely be more blunt or explicit; the Restoration wit exposes himself to the subjects of Charles II, in the city from which those same subjects and/or their forebears had driven Charles's father in 1642; he declaims a parodic scripture lesson, in open mockery of such reformed, anti-royalist sects as the Ranters and the Family of Love; and he holds forth in naked assurance that these same citizens and sects can do nothing to restrain his behavior. Sedley's entertainment, like Charolais', aims to be both sweet and useful: it conveys merriment and ontological reassurance to its protagonists and their peers while at the same time subjecting their enemies and inferiors to humiliating, deprecatory abuse.

From this standpoint, Charolais' impromptu shooting match and Sedley's jolly *au naturel* sermon perform symbolic as well as material work: they operate, on the symbolic level, to reformulate and reconfirm the social distinctions whereby such aristocrats lay claim to such pastimes in the first place. To this extent, both the killing and the indecent exposure serve as a kind of literature, in Kenneth Burke's celebrated definition of the literary as "equipment for living"; both deeds develop as discursive "*strategies* for dealing with *situations*," and both embody attempts to "'direct the larger movements and operations' in one's campaign of living."³ Moreover, in both cases, the fundamental situation to be coped with is the same: a profligate nobleman finds himself confronted by a detested bourgeois other, whom he seeks to discredit or minimize or wipe out altogether. Finally, in both cases, the preferred mode of coping is the same, in kind if not in degree. Both Charolais and Sedley resort to brutal, offensive, and at best marginally legal behavior in order to abuse and humiliate and (in Charolais' case) destroy the other; then both write off the event as good fun while inviting their peers to laugh at the proffered spectacle. They have discovered, in Michael Bristol's words, how to

make “aesthetic or imaginative pleasure out of actual historical pain.”⁴

If it is therefore possible to regard these events as a kind of “symbolic action” that has an immediate “bearing upon human welfare” then, as Burke has argued, it should equally be possible to regard literary texts as doing analogous social work — as making it easier to maintain particular material arrangements by justifying and rehearsing those arrangements on the conceptual level.⁵ In this essay we examine a single instance of how such work can be done, and the work in question is virtually identical to that performed by Charolais and Sedley in their light-hearted capers across the stage of history. The immediate literary vehicle for this work is John Ford’s infamous incest-play, *’Tis Pity She’s a Whore*; however, we would suggest that Ford’s play is not unique in the social vision it promotes, and that its rhetoric may in fact be representative of persistent strategies for mythologizing the emergent urban bourgeoisie in Renaissance and Enlightenment England. These strategies are compactly rehearsed by both Sedley and Charolais, and played out in greater detail within Ford’s text. They involve a programmatic, violent abuse that represents itself as comic in nature, motivation, and effect; a persistent construction of the urban merchant class as constitutionally heteromorphous and confused — a kind of social *genus mixtus*; and an implicit identification of the audience with socially advantaged figures to whom the represented bourgeois stand in a relation of feckless and contaminating opposition. The first of these three gestures helps account for the spectacularly unamusing comedy of Ford’s play; the second helps to explain the workings of Ford’s main plot; and the third helps to situate the play with respect to its original place of production, the royal auspices under which the original players (the Queen’s Men) produced it, and the politics of the early seventeenth-century English theater in general.

To say that *’Tis Pity She’s a Whore* is a socially conservative play, identifying with the entrenched royalist politics of Charles I’s later reign and self-consciously twitting the anti-theatrical interests of Puritans and parliamentarians, is to say nothing terribly surprising. But it is surprising to note how little systematic attention critics have given to this idea; indeed, scholars have more often than not maintained that there is no unifying political element to *’Tis Pity* at all.⁶ We, on the contrary, believe the play’s conservatism is central to its overall structure and function, and should therefore receive a kind of systematic analysis that has not previously been attempted. To this end, we will argue that Ford’s play imagines a world in which dependable distinctions between upper and lower social ranks have collapsed, and that this collapse

effectively governs the play at all levels of organization, plot, and theme. The result is a work that combines sensational tragedy with horrific comedy, that presents the emergent middle class as both an incestuous monstrosity and a carnivalesque joke, and that draws in the process upon the rich traditions of Renaissance rogue and jestbook literature. Finally, thus, *'Tis Pity* performs on stage what the Comte de Charolais performed in fact; placing itself in the position of indisputable royal authority, the play kills off as many of its low characters as possible, subjecting them — and the play's world in general — to the “juridico-political” dynamics of Renaissance absolutist discipline.⁷

I

The *dramatis personae* of *'Tis Pity She's a Whore* at once identifies the play with the relatively small number of Renaissance tragedies that focus on bourgeois character-types. There are no heads of state, landed aristocrats, or frustrated heirs; they are replaced by “the gamut of urban types who populate the city comedy.”⁸ Nonetheless, we cannot fully endorse Derek Roper's claim that *'Tis Pity* therefore “has no concern with the court or courtiers,”⁹ and we thoroughly disagree with Robert Ornstein's comment that “*'Tis Pity* lacks the concern with aristocratic modes of behavior that marks Ford's later plays.”¹⁰ On the contrary, Ford makes aristocratic modes of behavior conspicuous by their absence; he presents a world in which the few noble figures that remain have been alienated from their proper roles and forced into a pernicious competition with the bourgeoisie as a result of Parma's latent pluralism. Hence the first of only two mentions of an aristocrat comes from the nursemaid Putana, appraising Annabella's suitors: “there's Grimaldi the soldier, a very well-timbered fellow; they say he is nephew to Duke Mont Ferrato . . . I do not like him” (I.ii.75-9). Richardetto later refers to Grimaldi as “near allied/ Unto the Duke Montferrato . . . by which means/ He hopes to get the love of Annabella” (II.iii.28-33). Grimaldi's status wins him no favor, however, and as the Cardinal points out, “you, sir Florio,/ Thought him to mean a husband for your daughter” (III.ix.58-9). The failure of rank to command respect is symptomatic of a larger cultural abscess: a pervasive infection by the bourgeoisie leads to other such anomalies as a gentleman and a servant brawling in the street over a merchant's daughter, servants guiding and goading their masters' actions, and the play's immediate vehicle, incestuous relations between brother and sister. The Cardinal's admonition to the justice-seekers after Bergetto's murder nicely distills *'Tis Pity*'s advice to the bourgeoisie in

general: “learn more wit, for shame” (III.ix.61).

Florio certainly needs “more wit” in choosing a husband for Annabella; although he has already promised his daughter to Soranzo (I.ii.55-6), he later claims, “I will not force my daughter ‘gainst her will” (I.iii.3) as he turns to consider Donado’s “fair proffer” (I.iii.19). Florio finally chooses a suitor, deciding to “order ‘t/ She shall be married ere she know the time . . . My Lord Soranzo is the man I mean” (III.iv.10-15), but the marriage negotiations as a whole — with their attendant contradictions, street-fighting, and general disarray — illustrate the folly of cross-class wooing. Negotiation between fathers and suitors for the hand of a young woman figures often in Renaissance drama, but in *’Tis Pity* it serves to invert the social order and foreground Florio’s bourgeois incompetence; thus Grimaldi must resort to a murderous plan, “an unnoble act” (III.v.3), because in a world of social equality, “Where merit cannot sway, policy must” (III.v.5).

Anabella’s nursemaid, Putana, has a similarly ambivalent attitude toward the bachelors, at first favoring Soranzo but later promising to praise Bergetto. Her motivation, like Florio’s, is financial; to Bergetto’s uncle she attests, “Truly I do commend him to her every night before her first sleep, because I would have her dream of him” (II.vi.15-17), and thus solicits a bit of coin. For this gratuity Putana promises, “now I have a feeling of your mind, let me alone to work” (III.vi.22-3). She may also have a commission from Soranzo; she mentions that he is “liberal, that I know” (I.ii.95) while extolling him to such an extreme that Anabella remarks, “Sure the woman took her morning’s draught too soon” (I.ii.102-4). This opportunistic servant also supports the incest between Annabella and Giovanni and maintains, “if a young wench feel the fit upon her, let her take anybody, father or brother, all is one” (II.i.48-9).

Although the humor in *’Tis Pity* is elusive at best, we believe that Ford undertakes to amuse the audience with Florio’s and Putana’s greedy equivocations. But because their behavior betrays a preference for money over rank — an ignoble discrimination in the eyes of the peerage — *’Tis Pity*’s “angry justice” (III.vii.6) makes examples of these two: Florio dies suddenly upon hearing Giovanni’s confession of incest, and Putana meets a much more violent end as an accessory to the crime. Earlier blinded and tortured by Vasques’s henchmen-in-waiting, she is finally sentenced by the Cardinal “to be burnt to ashes” (V.vi.135) — all this for the prurient interests of the “goodly madam-merchant” (II.ii.49).

Ford most humorously embodies the ills of Parma in the character of Bergetto, a wealthy oaf whose plebeian demeanor makes him the laughing-

stock of the play. Midway through the play Grimaldi fatally stabs Bergetto, mistaking him for Soranzo, and even while bleeding to death Bergetto remains comic: he remarks, “I am sure I cannot piss forward and backward, and yet I am wet before and behind” (III.vii.11-12). His wound is “a stitch fallen in my guts,” and he calls “for a flesh-tailor quickly” (III.vii.8-9). Bergetto’s murder thus contrives to amuse the spectators, who implicitly endorse the play’s adjudication and punishment of this pesky upstart—who earlier would “undertake with a handful of silver to buy a headful of wit at any time” (I.ii.114-6), but finally learns what lies beyond purchase.¹¹

’Tis Pity cannot excuse Bergetto’s twofold crime against the ranks: not only does this bourgeois “golden calf” (I.ii.129) have an income and a patrimony, but he also seeks to play the part of an aristocrat. While the nursemaid Putana sees him as a “brave old ape in a silken coat” (I.ii.105), Bergetto believes himself a gentleman and wants to “go abroad to see fashions like other gallants” (I.iii.50-1). Other characters repeatedly refer to Bergetto with mocking epithets — fool, coxcomb, ass, etc. — and even worse, some of these insults come not from “higher” characters but from the “low” servants, Putana and Poggio. By the fourth act, Bergetto has been mocked, reviled, beaten and killed; this is satire with a vengeance.

Bergetto explicitly constructs himself as an object of derisive amusement when he relates to Florio, Annabella and Donado “a good jest” (II.vi.66) that seems simply brutal:

As I was walking just now in the street, I met a swaggering fellow who would needs take the wall of me; and because he did thrust me, I very valiantly called him rogue. He hereupon bade me draw; I told him I had more wit than so; but when he saw that I would not, he did so maul me with the hilts of his rapier that my head sung whilst my feet capered in the kennel.

(II.vi.69-75)

This scene enacts a failure of the microeconomy of power relations in Parma; the bourgeois upstart spurns as inferior a member of the peerage and then refuses to back his effrontery with the satisfaction that traditional social codes demand. Bergetto’s remark that “I had more wit than so” reveals his view of the nobleman’s etiquette as an essentially meaningless game—a fashion to be tried on and discarded when convenient. The gentleman physically vents his frustration on Bergetto, who “laugh[s] at him for a gull” (II.vi.78) from the excrement-filled gutter. To this tale Bergetto’s uncle responds in an aside, “Was ever the like ass seen!” (II.vi.76)—another cue to the audience that this

episode invites mocking laughter rather than compassion or pity.

The figure of the upstart had long been a target of popular literature in England,¹² but Ford's portrayal of the urban merchant class goes beyond satirizing to the point of victimizing, with the same humorous intent; thus for his "apish running to motions and fopperies" (II.iv.43-4) and his pretense of gallantry Bergetto suffers comically, albeit mortally. Ford's characters threaten to undermine aristocratic authority by blurring class distinctions and sending contradictory signals to the unprivileged masses; if commoners conflate the peerage with fools like Bergetto, who is gulled by the story of "a strange horse, a most excellent beast . . . whose head, to the wonder of all Christian people, stands just behind where his tail is" (I.iii.37-40), then how can the aristocracy maintain its own identity and social distinction? Ford's answer to this problem, perhaps as shocking to modern audiences as it was humorous to the Renaissance gentry, alleviates any threat to aristocratic power by exposing and annihilating the most consummate (and hence most comical) representatives of the motley bourgeoisie.

A similar, although far less vicious, caricature of a wealthy merchant-class idiot appears in Robert Greene's *Groats-worth of Wit, bought with a Million of Repentaunce* (1596). This pamphlet tells the story of Luciano, who inherits the estate of his father Gorinius, a usurer to whom "gallants sprung of noble parents . . . have lost their patrimonies."¹³ Gorinius' dying words advise Luciano how to infiltrate the ranks: "certaine Marchants of this Citie expect your company, sundry Gentlemen desire your familiarity, and by conuersing with such, you will be accounted a Gentleman" (125). Not only does Gorinius assume that gentility and reputation can be bred through association, but he errs further by equating merchants with gentlemen. Gorinius counsels Luciano to consort with "yong gallants . . . and be not moved to think their Auncestors were famous, but consider thine were obscure, and that thy father was the first Gentleman of the name" (124-5). A similarly self-important attitude underlies the problems in Ford's *Parma*, where the sarcastic Cardinal must reprimand "the masters of this commonwealth," because they "know nor duty nor civility" (III.ix.35, 30) and treat a cardinal's palace as if it were some "common inn" (III.ix.33); like Greene's characters, these "saucy mates" (III.ix.29) have overstepped their bounds.

In the case of Greene's narrative, moreover, such behavior leads to inevitable exposure and retribution. The *nouveau riche* "gentleman" Luciano promptly falls in love with a courtesan, whom he desperately tries to impress by "striuing to set a countenance on his turnd face, that it might seem of

wainscot prooffe”(130). In case she missed the hint, Luciano flashes “a gold wrought handkercher, whence of purpose he let fall a handfull of angels” (130). Luciano’s dual transgressions against the peerage (both having money and flaunting it) are reprimanded; the courtesan and he “consume, in lesse than two yeares, that infinite treasure gathered by his father,” landing him a place “on pennillesse bench” (147). Luciano’s treatment, although not so harsh as what Ford’s characters receive, comes about for the same reason and yields the same result: a foolish upstart has conflated money with rank, and must therefore be punished and humiliated—while his degradation is offered up to an audience of “gentlemen” for their “mirth and benefit” (117).

II

It is easy to relate such symbolic punishments of socially transgressive characters to the incest theme of *'Tis Pity She's a Whore*. Indeed, the Marquis de Sade makes this relation explicit in his notorious sequence of philosophico-politico-moral dialogues, *La philosophie dans la boudoir* (1795). Toward the end of this work, Sade’s principal libertine, Dolmance, reads a lengthy political tractate entitled “Yet Another Effort, Frenchmen, If You Would Become Republicans.” The professed aim of this ironic and wide-ranging discourse is to provide the citizens of post-revolutionary France with “a creed, a creed befitting the republican character”¹⁴, and in pursuit of this end, Dolmance’s pamphlet literalizes the revolutionary maxim “*Liberté, égalité, fraternité*” with ferocious opportunism:¹⁵

Is incest . . . dangerous? Hardly. It loosens family ties and the citizen has that much more love to lavish on his country. . . . The most primitive institutions smiled upon incest; it is found in society’s origins: it was consecrated in every religion, every law encouraged it . . . I would venture, in a word, that incest ought to be every government’s law — every government whose basis is fraternity (324).

It is admittedly hard to view Sade’s insistence upon the ancient dignity of incest as entirely straightforward or ingenuous. However, the argument adduced in this passage is in fact not a new thing at all; by the late eighteenth century it had already lain ubiquitously implicit in two centuries of early modern absolutist political theory. Sir Thomas Smith’s *De Republica Anglorum* (1562-65) thus derives royal power from Old Testament paternal authority within the individual family, claiming that “*Adam, Noa, Abraham, Jacob, Esau* . . . absolutely ruled over their owne children and bondmen” as primordial

patterns of royal absolutism;¹⁶ Robert Filmer's *Patriarcha* (c. 1636) follows suit, insisting that "the private dominion which God gave to Adam" could not be "abrogated" in favor of "a community of all things instituted between Noah and his sons";¹⁷ and James I lends royal support to this convenient commonplace, remarking that "Kings are . . . compared to Fathers of families: for a King is trewly *Parens patriae*, the politique father of his people."¹⁸ Such thinking — which survives in twentieth-century neo-conservative paeans to traditional family order — assumes a complementary, specular relationship between the arrangements of family discipline and those of political hierarchy; the differential system of kinship that privileges fathers over wives and children likewise privileges sovereigns over subjects, and to undo one hierarchy is to undermine the other as well. The obvious implication of this argument is that the collapse of political absolutism will entail the breakdown of kinship distinctions as well, and those distinctions are nowhere more clearly instantiated than in the prohibition against incest. If one were actually to institute Filmer's nightmare of "a community of all things . . . between Noah and his sons," such a community would logically have to involve equal sexual access to the family's women, irrespective of their kinship status.

From this standpoint, the single most remarkable thing about Sade's argument in *Philosophy in the Bedroom* is its profound conservatism. The axiological basis of his republican creed is identical to that of Filmer's absolutism insofar as both hold kinship difference and royalist hegemony to be mutually reinforcing, interdependent entities. The only variance is that Sade deliberately presents incest — like republicanism — as a wonderful idea, coextensive with nature and tradition; Filmer, Smith, and James I implicitly demonize it, identifying it with social and moral chaos. The mode of reasoning in the Sadean and absolutist arguments remains constant, however, and to this extent Foucault may rightly call Sade's work a "negative" of "the Classical age."¹⁹

Philosophy in the Bedroom thus provides a late counterpart to *'Tis Pity She's a Whore* — a play in which the breakdown of "specialty of rule" within the commonwealth as a whole parallels the development of incestuous passion within the individual nuclear family. At the very least, it must be granted that Ford's Giovanni and Sade's Dolmance reason similarly; as Giovanni — for whom the natural authority of incest becomes something of an obsession — insists to Annabella,

Wise Nature first in your creation meant
To make you mine: else 't had been sin and foul
To share one beauty to a double soul.

Nearness in birth or blood doth but persuade
A nearer nearness in affection.

(I.ii.236-240)

Or again:

Say that we had one father, say one womb
(Curse to my joys!) gave both us life and birth;
Are we not therefore each to other bound
So much the more by nature? by the links
Of blood, of reason?

(I.i.28-31)

Sade echoes these sentiments antiphonally, almost to the word, when he remonstrates against the incest prohibition:

Is it not, I ask, an abominable view wherein it is made to appear a crime for a man to place higher value upon the enjoyment of an object to which natural feeling draws him close? One might just as well say that we are forbidden to love too much the individuals Nature enjoins us to love best (324-325).

To this extent, Giovanni explores notions of family relation that could be and were allied to the practice of political heterodoxy. It is worth recalling, in a related context, the glee with which Milton's royalist critics connected his advocacy of divorce to his defence of regicide, arguing that Milton "turned from the dissolution of marriage to the divorce of kingdoms" in an inevitable gesture.²⁰ Giovanni, in his turn, extends this familial and political apostasy to the sphere of religious doctrine as well, insisting that hell itself "is nought else/ But slavish and fond superstitious fear" (V.iii.19-20). If, as James I famously maintained, no bishop means no king; and if, as Smith, James, and Filmer all tend to assume, no king means no family; then Giovanni emerges as the unavoidable end-product of an ideological levelling-principle that is simultaneously incestuous, republican, and atheistic. He becomes the malignant icon of an aggressive and emergent English underclass that has no use for bishops or kings, and never will.

Thus, moreover, Giovanni replaces the evacuated stations of political and religious hierarchy with what is, in effect, a kind of auto-idolatry. Bereft of any externally-established system of social rank and lacking any reverence for the theology that supports such systems, Giovanni endows his beloved sister with the authority and divinity he cannot find anywhere else. Her "lips would tempt a saint" (I.ii.202); her beauty, "if framed anew,/ The gods would make a god of" (I.i.21); her lips are like Leda's, from which Jove "sucked divine ambrosia"

(II.i.17); and on and on. Annabella replaces Giovanni's prior commitment to strict religious and educational discipline, and in the process she comes to embody an entirely misplaced reverence for oneself, one's class, and one's family — a reverence promoted at the expense of the larger community represented by church, school, and state:

O Giovanni! hast thou left the schools
Of knowledge, to converse with lust and death?
For death waits on thy lust. Look through the world,
And thou shalt see a thousand faces shine
More glorious than this idol thou adorest.

(I.i.57-61)

The problem, of course, is that Giovanni really has forsaken the "world" and its institutions, choosing to reconstruct them within the bosom of his immediate family: "View well [Annabella's] face, and in that little round/ You may observe a world of variety" (II.v.49-50). From the twentieth-century Euro-American perspective, it may seem ludicrous to claim that if you reject traditional absolutist social order you will end up sleeping with your brother or sister. But that, put unceremoniously, is the moral of Ford's play.

To argue this thesis is not, however, to deny that there is an element of sympathy and even salacious gratification in Ford's construction of Giovanni and Annabella. Editors and commentators from the nineteenth century forward have been unnerved by the warmth with which Ford portrays his main characters' incestuous affair. A number of such scholars (including William Hazlitt, William Gifford, and T. S. Eliot)²¹ have been so displeased by Ford's treatment of incest that they have ascribed his work to a late "literary decadence" characterized precisely by a perverse "taste for the more extraordinary sexual themes."²² This position unfortunately forgets that incest was a popular topic of Elizabethan dramatic representation at least from Thomas Preston on;²³ moreover, it displays a curious blindness to the epistemological interdependence of decadence (or perversion) and canonical morality — an interdependence Jonathan Dollimore has recently and forcefully argued on the theoretical level.²⁴

We object both to the large group of authors who identify Ford's work as morally decadent and to the smaller but equally vocal group of those who would recuperate it to an ideology of unconflicted medieval conservatism.²⁵ As an alternative, it is at least possible to regard *'Tis Pity She's a Whore* as mobilizing the discourses of repressive morality and transgressive perversion

at the same time, and as employing each of these apparently-exclusive discourses to authorize and enable the other. In this respect it is worth recalling Alan Bray's work on that other much-demonized Renaissance sexual practice, homoeroticism. Bray notes something remarkable about homosexuality in Renaissance England: the very social structures that protest against it tend to encourage it surreptitiously at the same time; moreover, Bray observes, Renaissance Englishmen who themselves engage in homosexual relationships frequently are among the most vociferous in their moral denunciations of homosexuality.²⁶ Bray resolves this apparent contradiction by arguing that the socially constructed self tends, by virtue of its own constructedness, to locate perversion as a quality intrinsic to others rather than to itself — that Renaissance society's "readiness . . . to recognise homosexuality in an alien context is in marked contrast to its reluctance to do so within."²⁷ Hence the discourse of the traditionally socialized individual remains concertedly blind to its own dependence upon the categories of behavior it seeks to exclude from the community.

This ambivalence in the discursive structure of the self comprises what Peter Stallybrass and Allon White have called "a mobile, conflictual fusion of power, fear and desire in the construction of subjectivity: a psychological dependence upon precisely those Others which are being rigorously opposed and excluded at the social level."²⁸ And it is just this sort of conflicted dependence that ultimately relates *'Tis Pity's* spectacle of incest and social transgression to the equally spectacular discourse of the Comte de Charolais and Sir Charles Sedley. For both of these figures the gesture of social or moral discipline (suppressing the bourgeois, expounding upon scripture) is subtended and enabled by a concurrent element of immorality and transgression. Likewise, Ford's incest plot locates itself at the intersection of a rigidly repressive moral code and a defiant, irrepressible prurience. Faced with the pervasive atrocity of bourgeois disorder, Giovanni and Annabella respond to it in the only possible way; where Charolais' response involved specially-sanctioned murder, and Sedley's involved indecent exposure and disturbing the peace, Giovanni and Annabella take refuge in an incestuous union that they sanctify as holy wedlock. Incest is "abhorred" (V.v.73), but it is always "other incest" (V.v.73); the "laws of conscience and of civil use/ May justly blame" Giovanni and Annabella (V.v.70-71), but even as Giovanni acknowledges that this is so, he can despatch Annabella "to fill a throne/ Of innocence and sanctity in Heaven" (V.v.64-65). The incest that assumes an atrocious air when attached to the bourgeois other may nonetheless serve, at the same time, as occasion for pathos within the socially constructed and privileged self. *'Tis*

Pity She's a Whore remains a profoundly conservative, moral play only because it is so flamingly perverse.

III

Not only does Ford imply morality through perversion, but he also extracts humor from violence and contumely; such is the seemingly contradictory structure of *'Tis Pity She's a Whore*, where a conservative moral and political discourse conceals its own heteroglossia as it ridicules and punishes a similarly mixed self-conception in the bourgeoisie. In this sense Steven Mullaney's astute appraisal of the liberties region as "a place where the contradictions of the community, its incontinent hopes and fears, were prominently and dramatically set on stage" might also describe *'Tis Pity's* exploitation of the urban middle class, a similarly "irreducible *coincidentia oppositorum*."²⁹ Ford's portrayal of this substratum as a hodge-podge of noble pretension and vulgar sensibilities provokes violent abuse, which in turn elicits scornful laughter; this construction effectively synthesizes a prevalent derision toward the bourgeoisie, evinced in jestbooks and pamphlets, with a tradition of hostility toward the poor as expressed in rogue literature and English judicial practices.

Bourgeois merchants — in this respect, at least, like Shakespeare's Shylock — fulfill a position at once necessary and odious: as economic crutches for "the needy courtiers"³⁰, they perform a valuable service; as self-interested capitalists, turning a profit through "hard bargains gotten of gentlemen"³¹, they earn enmity and derision. In his "moste pleasant and merrie commodity" (subtitle) *The Tyde Taryeth No Man*, George Walpull demonstrates this equivocation:

The Marchaunt is encouraged in greediness to lurke,
And the Courtyer to win worship by Corage is glad.
The one is good, no man will deny;
I meane corage to win worship and fame:
So that the other is ill all men will say,
That is corage to greedinesse, which gettith ill name.³²

Such a dichotomy might be tenable if the courtier were self-sufficient, but in fact the man — "If man he may be, that money doth lacke" — seeks the merchant's financial help in order to buy favor, or rather, "to win worship and fame."³³ As in Hegel's parable of Lord and Bondsman,³⁴ such a dependency effectively inverts the traditional relationship between the upper and lower

strata; in this instance, it explains the “naturall malice in the hearts of gentlemen against citizens; in so much that if a gentleman purpose to scoffe a citizen, he will call him a trimme merchant.”³⁵ As London’s “decaying gentlemen”³⁶ increasingly found themselves at the mercy of bourgeois merchants and usurers, the urban business class evolved — again parallel to drama in London — from “an interstitial form” to “an incontinent one.”³⁷

Representation of the social upstart in popular literature of the Renaissance echoes a medieval tradition based on “fear and detestation” of this figure as “violator of a fixed social order”³⁸; denying money as the instrument of social advancement, writers instead praise the more elite notion of “noble and vertuous conditions.”³⁹ A jest from 1567, for example, tells the story of “a rude clubbysshe felowe, that longe had serued the Duke of Orliance.”⁴⁰ Desiring “to be made a gentyll man,” he ought the Duke’s help; the Duke’s reply that “I may well make the ryche, but as for gentyl man I can never make the” ridicules the proposition of social mobility.⁴¹ One early seventeenth-century pamphlet simply counsels, “wit and reason doth men teach/ Never to clime above their reach” — advice which Renaissance writers variously reiterated.⁴²

In *The Merchant of Venice*, Portia jokingly remarks of an English suitor, “I think he bought his doublet in Italy, his round hose in France, his bonnet in Germany, and his behavior everywhere” (I.ii.70-3); this young man’s higgledy-piggledy selection of both clothing and manners relegates him to the status of *parvenu*.⁴³ Portia’s observation points out that although appearances can belie position, the gentry has recourse to codes of behavior to differentiate itself from the rabble. Thus Bergetto’s insult in *’Tis Pity* quickly provokes the passing gentleman, who had taken the wall as a privilege of rank; his refusal to draw because he “had more wit than so” (II.vi.76-7) angers the gentleman even more because it attacks aristocratic etiquette — perhaps the last bastion of social bifurcation.

The anonymous “Song of Anarchus” (c. 17th cent.) explicitly relates such etiquette to the maintenance of aristocratic authority:

We’ll teach the nobles how to crouch,
And keep the gentry down.
Good manners have an ill report,
And turn to pride, we see;
We’ll therefore cry good manners down,
And hey! Then up go we!⁴⁴

Of course, the bourgeoisie’s ambition — as Frank Whigham has carefully

demonstrated⁴⁵ — was not to “cry good manners down” but rather to mirror them and thereby insinuate themselves into the ranks. Thomas Dekker offers sarcastic advice to such would-be courtiers in his *Gul’s Horn-Booke* (1609), outlining the “proper” way to behave in various circumstances. At the theater, he advises, the “yong gallant” should sit on the stage, which

will bring you to the most perfect light and lay you open: neither are you to be hunted from thence, though the Scarecrows in the yard hoot at you, hisse at you, spit at you, yea, throw dust even in your teeth: tis most Gentlemanlike patience to endure all this, and to laugh at the silly Animals.⁴⁶

Of course, while this foolish upstart — the “gul” of the pamphlet’s title — laughs at “the silly Animals” abusing him from the ground, his antics provide amusement for “much new Satten” watching from above.⁴⁷ The gallant in his frippery, like Ford’s Bergetto, endures the hatred of those above and those below (both figuratively and literally) because he fits into neither category — he is essentially other. *’Tis Pity* explores the implications of this social seepage, indicting and punishing those responsible for it; to this end, Ford employs violent abuse which recalls the similar treatment of “rogues, vagabonds, and sturdy beggars” (Vagrancy Act of 1572)⁴⁸ by the law and by earlier writers in rogue literature.

One of the earliest English rogue pamphlets (1535) characterizes vagabonds as

Rufflers, and masterless men that cannot work,
And sleepeth by day, and walketh in the dark,
And with delicates doth gladly feed,
Swearing and cracking — an easy life to lead!⁴⁹

Such sloth and licentiousness seemed to warrant the publicly-inflicted punishments for vagrancy — which included the ducking-stool and pillory, along with whipping, branding, hair-polling, ear-cropping, and of course hanging.⁵⁰ Vagrancy was a crime of position — the lack of ties meant that vagabonds were criminals waiting for opportunities, and therefore should be eliminated.⁵¹ Ford simply extends this logic in *’Tis Pity She’s a Whore*, castigating a similarly transgressive and opportunistic group of “masterless men”: the urban bourgeoisie.⁵²

Although Ford’s characters receive their due on the stage rather than at the gallows, the effect may be rhetorically parallel; William Kempe’s reference (1600) to “a noted Cut-purse, such a one as we tye to a poast on our stage, for all people to wonder at, when at a play they are taken pilfering” attests to the

ease with which one scaffold may be substituted for another.⁵³ The spectacle of corporal punishment could likewise be both didactic and entertaining; George Whetstone's account (1587) of the execution of the infamous Babington conspirators reports that "their traiterous harts [were] burned, and bodiless heads aduanced to the view and comfort of many thousands of people."⁵⁴ Whetstone calls this gruesome scene "a happie sight . . . and a fearefull example to al traitors."⁵⁵

Karen Cunningham argues that the state exploited popular tastes for the macabre, using corporal punishment to "enhance and validate the ruler's power."⁵⁶ Well-attended ceremonies of the scaffold enacted a version of the morality play: "the accused was transformed into a figure of evil, the monarch and justices into representations of good, and the condemned's body into a posttrial symbol of the triumph of 'right.'"⁵⁷ The "quasi-dramatic structure"⁵⁸ of the spectacle of punishment finds its corollary in what might be called the quasi-judicial structure of the theatrical *tableau* — a feature of which Ford takes full advantage in *'Tis Pity*, where audiences witness the "happie sight" of six bourgeois transgressors meeting their various dooms onstage.

IV

'Tis Pity thus affirms the health and integrity of the social body through the symbolic punishment of a demonized, bourgeois, incestuous other; as the spectators witness chaos descend upon Ford's Parma, they remain in a position of aloof security, observing and adjudicating upon the proceedings while in themselves comprising a kind of serene counter-image to the community being dismembered onstage. If, as this study began by suggesting, *'Tis Pity* performs social work, that work largely consists in the fabrication of just such an illusion of wholeness and imperturbability for the figures — patrons, audience, players, etc. — that the play serves. This job is admittedly never done; on the contrary, the very conceptual structure of patron, audience, and player unavoidably demands the demonized other as testimony to its own solidity and solidarity. To this extent, the categories of moral, social, or political privilege can only affirm themselves through an ongoing program of invidious comparison with the immoral, the common, and the abject. In short, *'Tis Pity She's a Whore* maintains the myth of a united, gentle audience by projecting that audience's own disunities and equivocations onto the symbolic space of the stage, where they may be objectified, exorcised, and disowned.

As a last point, it is worth noting that this process of projection and

exorcism does not simply condition Ford's play; it also informs the theater in which that play was originally acted, and the body of players who initially performed it. With respect to the players, the conditioning is obvious and by the late 1620's thoroughly conventional. They are the Queen's Men — technically servants of the royal household and to this extent attached to its representatives, conventions, and values. In this capacity, they inherit one of the classic self-defining gestures of the nascent theatrical profession — the legal fiction, suggested in 1572 by James Burbage to the Earl of Leicester, that they are somehow of a piece with the gentry:

We therefore, your humble Servaunts and daylye Oratours . . . humblie desir[e] . . . your honor that . . . you will now vouchsaffe to reteyne us...as your houshold Servaunts and daylie wayters . . . Wherebie we maye enjoye our facultie in your Lordshippes name as we have done heretofore.⁵⁹

Burbage does not exactly propose that Leicester make his players something *new*; on the contrary, he cunningly requests that Leicester make them ("your humble Servaunts") what they apparently have always been ("your houshold Servaunts and daylie wayters . . . as . . . heretofore").⁶⁰ Yet this fiction is necessary precisely because the relations of patron to servant are themselves so discontinuous and incoherent. The players, after all, have been actively persecuted as vagabonds; and how indeed are Burbage's men to be Leicester's "daylie wayters" if, as Burbage himself further proposes, they use their privileged status to leave the nobleman's court and "travayle amongst our frendes as we do usuallye once a yere?"⁶¹ Burbage's own carefully-worded letter takes pains to represent these necessary peregrinations as a sort of family outings "amongst our frendes" — leisure excursions ostensibly modelled upon the royal progress — rather than as the business venture they so obviously were.

In this sense, at least, it is brilliant wishful thinking to suppose that players might ever fully amalgamate with their patrons, and against such fantasies we must set the long history of tension between these two groups — a history which testifies to the self-division of the patron's own household. Elizabeth's temporary suppression of the theaters in 1597,⁶² which led the Queen to adopt an almost Puritan antitheatrical rhetoric;⁶³ Ben Jonson's imprisonment for cracking wise at James I's expense in *Eastward Ho*; the pervasive censorship and supervision facilitated by the Office of the Revels: such evidence of disunity in unity is everywhere in theater records of the period. Given the ubiquity of such discord, one can understand the fervor with which dramatists like Ford sought to create a counter-image of wholeness for themselves and their institutions.

Even the very building within which *'Tis Pity She's a Whore* was first acted attests to the ongoing divisions and discriminations demanded by the social articulation of the theater business. As a private playhouse, the Phoenix represented a major change in the business orientation of the early modern theater — a radical revision of the industry's target audience to favor what contemporary advertisers would call a restricted upscale market. Within the fully-enclosed space of establishments like the Phoenix, audiences were reduced to a fraction of their size in the old public playhouses; admission prices were raised accordingly; and even the fashionable locations of the new buildings — generally near court — tended to distinguish them from their predecessors in the Bankside and Moorfields liberties.⁶⁴ The result was — theoretically, at least — a restriction of the clientele to “the better sort,” and the concomitant production of plays like *'Tis Pity She's a Whore*. To this extent, the private playhouses represented a conscious effort at creating a select and homogenized society of and within the theater.

But the effort didn't really work. At least two problems stood in its way. First, a principal element of the new playhouses' social filtering-mechanism — the cash demanded for admission — was rapidly becoming alienated from traditional landholders and gentry and being re-invested instead in London's emergent merchant sector. This dispersion of the attributes of privilege could generate rich ambiguities. It could lead, for instance, to the social embarrassment of the players' noble patrons, who — in a stunning reversal of the effect James Burbage sought in his letter to Leicester — seemed to become contaminated by their servants' baseness. Hence the indeliberate ease with which William Prynne's famous attack upon players could wheel about to touch the royal person itself: “It hath beene alwayes reputed dishonorable, shamefull, infamous, for Emperors, Kings, or Princes to come upon a Theatre . . . to delight themselves or others.”⁶⁵ Moreover, the redistribution of wealth could make it impossible to guarantee that those who were able to pay for admission to a private theater really were “the better sort,” in any traditional reading of the phrase. In this sense, the private playhouses were not only defenseless against the buying-power of the new bourgeoisie, but in fact they depended upon it for their own continued existence. Theaters negotiated this position — as in *The Knight of the Burning Pestle* (1613) — by simultaneously deriding the urban middle class while condescending to sell them seats: when a grocer mounts the stage and accosts the actor during the prologue, complaining of unfair “girds at citizens”⁶⁶ he and his wife then become targets for such japes themselves.⁶⁷

Such recriminations could go on forever; indeed they are built into the

social dynamics of the Renaissance English theater, insofar as the theater owes its very existence to economic and historical forces that it must renounce and disown as part of its claim to cultural legitimacy. If this rhetorical gambit compensates for honor lost in the name of economics, it also elides the boundaries between spectator and spectacle; in the same theater where, for a premium, patrons could buy themselves a seat onstage, it plants in the audience actors who regularly become the butt of the play's humor. And if drama will burlesque the audience's behavior, the audience can certainly reverse the process, in the mode of *The Rocky Horror Picture Show*; thus in 1603 at Blackfriars, when Sir Richard Cholmley "stood up to refresh himself [and] a young gallant, very brave, clapped himself upon Sir Richard's [onstage] stool," Cholmley promptly escorted the offender outside and challenged him to a duel.⁶⁸ Although this young man, like Ford's Bergetto, was brash enough to risk offending a gentleman, he was also diffident enough to avoid the hazard of swordplay, protesting that he in fact had no sword. To this Sir Richard responded with an offer to buy him one; unfortunately for the nobleman, the watch was coming around just then, and Cholmley had to content himself with "two or three good blows"⁶⁹ before returning to the play, where he might attempt to persuade himself that aristocrats were immune to such debasing insults.

University of California, Santa Barbara & Florida State University

Notes

1. Henri Pierre Carre. *La noblesse de France dans l'opinion publique au XVIII^e siècle* (Paris: Honoré Champion, 1920), p. 293. Carre recounts the incidents as follows: "Traversant le village d'Anet, près de Dreux, en 1723, le comte (de Charolais) vit un bourgeois, en bonnet de nuit, sur le pas de sa porte, et, par manière de distraction, le tua d'un coup de fusil. Le lendemain, il alla demander sa grâce au Régent, qui lui dit: 'Votre grâce est due à votre rang. Le roi vous l'accorde; mais il l'accordera plus volontiers à celui qui vous en fera autant.'"
2. Viola de Sola Pinto. *Sir Charles Sedley, 1639-1701* (New York: Boni and Liveright, 1927), p. 62. Sedley's companions were the equally notorious Charles Sackville, Lord Buckhurst and Sir Thomas Ogle; the performance itself seems to have engendered a minor riot, in which the heavily Puritan crowd pelted Sedley and his companions with stones and smashed the windows of the tavern, while the three young men replied by hurling bottles.
3. Kenneth Burke. *The Philosophy of Literary Form: Studies in Symbolic Action* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1967), pp. 293, 296, 298.
4. Michael Bristol. *Shakespeare's America, America's Shakespeare* (London: Routledge, 1990), p. 7.
5. Kenneth Burke. *Op. cit.*, p. 294.

6. Donald Anderson, for instance, claims that *'Tis Pity* has “the loosest construction” of Ford’s major plays, that the play’s “subplots . . . have little direct connection with the main story,” and that the result is a good deal of “superfluous” dramatic action on the periphery of the main plot (Donald K. Anderson, Jr., *John Ford* [New York: Twayne Publishers, 1972], p. 105). M. C. Bradbrook likewise discerns no relation between the play’s subplots and its main plot (M.C. Bradbrook, *Themes and Conventions of Elizabethan Tragedy* [Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1935, rpt. 1960], p. 256), while Madeleine Doran decries Ford’s “tendency to organize events around several episodic centers, with the connections falling slack between them” (Madeleine Doran, *Endeavors of Art: A Study of Form in Elizabethan Drama* [Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1954], p. 298). Such observations may derive ultimately from Maeterlinck’s famous revision of the tragedy (1895), in which most of the secondary material is suppressed; in any event, conclusions of this kind militate directly against any attempt to establish the play’s thematic unity via social analysis.
7. Michel Foucault. *Discipline and Punish*, trans. Alan Sheridan, (New York: Pantheon, 1977), p. 48.
8. Verna Foster. “*'Tis Pity She's a Whore* as City Tragedy.” in Michael Neill, ed. *John Ford: Critical Re-Visions* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1988), p. 185.
9. John Ford. *'Tis Pity She's a Whore*, ed. Derek Roper, (London: Methuen, 1975), p. xxvii. All subsequent citations of *'Tis Pity* are from this edition.
10. Robert Ornstein. *The Moral Vision of Jacobean Tragedy* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1960), p. 203.
11. Bergetto’s dying words of course recall the death of Mercutio in *Romeo and Juliet*; however, the downscale revision of Mercutio’s social status in the figure of Bergetto — a revision coextensive with Bergetto’s conspicuous lack of wit — lends an entirely different character to the wordplay in *'Tis Pity*.
12. Sandra Clark. *The Elizabethan Pamphleteers: Popular Moralistic Pamphlets 1580-1640* (East Brunswick, New Jersey: Associated University Presses, 1983), pp. 183-6.
13. This, and all subsequent Greene quotes, from George Saintsbury, ed. *Elizabethan and Jacobean Pamphlets* (New York: Macmillan, 1892) pp. 115-63.
14. This, and all subsequent Sade quotes, from *Justine, Philosophy in The Bedroom, Eugenie de Franval and other Writings*, trans. Richard Seaver and Austryn Wainhouse (New York: Grove Press, 1965).
15. Marc Shell briefly refers to Sade’s views on incest, noting that “other French ideologists, beginning with Montesquieu, had come to see that their version of the doctrine of universal brotherhood entailed a kind of incest” as well (*The End of Kinship: “Measure for Measure,” Incest, and the Ideal of Universal Siblinghood* [Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1988], p. 17).
16. Sir Thomas Smith. *De Republica Anglorum*, ed. Mary Dower (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), p. 55.
17. Robert Filmer. *Patriarcha and other Political Works*, ed. Peter Laslett (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1949), p. 64.

18. James I. *The Political Works of James I*, ed. Charles Howard McIlwain (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1918), p. 307.
19. Michel Foucault. *The Order of Things* n.t. (New York: Vintage, 1973), pp. 47, 210.
20. For example: "Modo enim [Milton] a matrimonium dissociatione ad Regnorum divortium transit" (Peter Du Moulin. *Regii Sanguinis Clamor ad Coelum Adversus Paricidas* [The Hague, 1652], sig. B6r).
21. Hazlitt thus regrets that "the play of [Ford's] which has been most admired (*'Tis Pity She's a Whore*) had not a less exceptionable subject"; furthermore, he goes on argue that this choice of subject-matter confirmed Ford's inferiority to authors like Shakespeare, who "never tampered with unfair subjects" (William Hazlitt, *The Complete Works of William Hazlitt*, 21 vols. ed. P. Howe [Rpt. New York: AMS Press, 1967], 6:268). Gifford's objections are more colorful; in a note to his edition of Ford's plays, he exclaims, "What a detestable set of characters has Ford here sharked-up for the exercise of his fine talents! With the exception of poor Bergetto and his uncle, most of the rest seem contending which of them shall prove worthiest of the wheel and the gibbet" (William Gifford and Rev. Alexander Dyce, eds., *The Works of John Ford*, 3 vols. [Rpt. New York: Russell and Russell, 1965], 1:143 n.). Eliot takes a soberer tack, insisting that "to the use of incest between brother and sister in a tragic plot there should be no objection of principle" (T.S. Eliot, *Selected Essays* [London: Faber and Faber, 1932], p. 196). Yet nonetheless Eliot ultimately agrees with Hazlitt and Gifford that the play's subject matter is not well done: "it hardly rises above the purely carnal infatuation . . . Giovanni is . . . almost a monster of egotism, [Annabella] virtually a moral defective" (*Op. cit.*, p. 197). Likewise, Clifford Leech complains that "Ford goes out of his way to shock his audience" by introducing the incest-theme (Clifford Leech, *John Ford and the Drama of His Time* [London: Chatto and Windus, 1957], p. 49).
22. M. C. Bradbrook. *Op. cit.*, p. 243.
23. Helen Bueler's "Structural Uses of Incest in English Renaissance Drama" offers a fine beginning survey of early modern English plays dealing with incest, spanning 1559 to 1658 (Helen Bueler, *Renaissance Drama* n.s. XV [1984], pp. 117-118); Marc Shell has reviewed much of the same material with particular application to Shakespeare's work.
24. Johnathan Dollimore argues that "perversion is . . . a culturally central phenomenon" insofar as "civilization actually depends upon that which is usually thought to be incompatible with it" (Johnathan Dollimore, "The Cultural Politics of Perversion." in *Textual Practice* 4.2 [1990], p. 179). This dependency, he continues, arises out of the "binary interdependence" (p. 187) of the linguistic terms that establish and maintain personal and corporate identity; as a result, he concludes that "sublimated perversion is intrinsic to normality and indeed provides, as it were, the cement of culture" (p. 190). We believe the social contradictions mapped by our reading of *'Tis Pity She's a Whore* illustrate precisely this interdependence, at one crucial historical moment, of the normative and the perverse — within both the play itself and the audience that attends the play.
25. Mark Stavig is probably the most outspoken of these critics, arguing that Ford has constructed Giovanni as a kind of late-medieval exemplum — a cautionary instance of the "moral deterioration" of individuals who "love outside the moral code" (*John Ford and the Traditional Moral Order* [Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1968], p. 191). Stavig's

argument is also implicit in the opinions of S. Blaine Ewing — who regards Giovanni as a mentally-deranged Burtonian melancholic (S. Blaine Ewing, *Burtonian Melancholy in the Plays of John Ford* [Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1940], p. 106) — and Robert Ornstein, who claims that Giovanni “has no ideology that would substitute for traditional ethics” (*Op. cit.*, p. 207).

26. As examples of this contradiction Bray cites such prominent historical figures as Bacon (Alan Bray, *Homosexuality in Renaissance England* [London: Gay Men’s Press, 1982], p. 49) and Nicholas Udall (*Op. cit.*, pp. 52-53), along with various less distinguished individuals. Further, Bray argues that institutionalized relations between master and servant in Renaissance England, the statistical tendency to marry late, and various other social practices (such as those associated with the schools and universities) worked to encourage homosexuality despite repeated and vehement condemnation of the practice. As a result, Bray concludes, homosexuality played an important — albeit unrecognized — role in “the maintenance of the social order” (*Op. cit.*, p. 74). It should scarcely be necessary to note how well this conclusion agrees with Dollimore’s theoretical analysis.
27. Alan Bray. *Op. cit.*, p. 75.
28. Peter Stallybrass and Allon White. *The Politics and Poetics of Transgression* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1986), p. 5.
29. Steven Mullaney. *The Place of the Stage* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988), pp. 22, 43.
30. George Walpull. *The Tyde Taryeth No Man*. (London: 1576). Rpt. in J. Payne Collier, ed. *Illustrations of Early English Popular Literature*, 2 vols. (London: 1863; rpt. New York: Benjamin Blom, 1966), vol.2 p. 34.
31. Richard Johnson. *Look On Me, London* (London: 1613). Rpt. in J. Payne Collier, ed. *Op. cit.*, vol.2 p. 16.
32. George Walpull. *Op. cit.*, vol.2 p. 32.
33. *Loc. cit.*, vol.2 p. 28.
34. Recall Hegel’s conclusion that the “essential nature” of lordship “is the reverse of what it wants to be” (G.W.F. Hegel. *Phenomenology of Spirit*, trans. A.V. Miller [Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1977], p. 193) because it relies upon another consciousness — the slave’s — as a means of asserting its own independence.
35. Richard Johnson. *Op. cit.*, p. 15.
36. *ibid.*
37. Steven Mullaney. *Op. cit.*, pp. 48-49.
38. Sandra Clark. *Op. cit.*, p. 183.
39. Anonymous. *Mery Tales, Wittie Questions and Quicke Answers, Very Pleasant to Readde* (London:1567), rpt. in William Hazlitt, ed. *Shakespeare’s Jest-Books*, 2 vols. (London: Henry Sotheran, 1881), vol. 2 p. 90.

40. *Loc. cit.*, vol.2 p. 89.
41. *Loc. cit.*, vol.2 pp. 90, 89.
42. Richard Alison. *An Howres Recreation in Musicke, &c.* (London: John Windet, 1606), p. 27.
43. This, and all subsequent Shakespeare quotes, from John Brown, ed. *The Merchant of Venice* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1959).
44. Michael Roberts, ed. *The Faber Book of Comic Verse* (London: Faber & Faber, 1974) p. 50.
45. Whigham's detailed study of Renaissance courtesy literature supports this contention: having been used to articulate a fixed distinction between the gentle and the common, these "very texts that were designed to govern the scramble" (Frank Whigham. *Ambition and Privilege* [Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984], p. 7) can be appropriated by socially mobile members of the underclass to call any such distinctions into question. Extending Whigham's argument to the sphere of the drama, we maintain that this same urge to create social boundaries provides *'Tis Pity She's a Whore* with its fundamental structure and thematic orientation.
46. Thomas Dekker. *The Gul's Horn-Booke* (London: 1609), rpt. in George Saintsbury, ed. *Op. cit.*, pp. 209-276.
47. *Loc. cit.*, p. 258.
48. Cited in Muriel St. Clare Byrne. *Elizabethan Life in Town and Country* (London: Methuen, 1925), p. 150.
49. Robert Copeland. *The Highway to the Spital-House* (London: 1535-6). Rpt. in Judges pp. 1-24.
50. Cf. Frank Aydelotte, *Elizabethan Rogues and Vagabonds* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1913), or A.L. Beier, *Masterless Men* (New York: Methuen, 1985).
51. Although the myth abounds in rogue literature, the accusations that masterless men were the "means whereof daily happeneth horrible murders, thefts, and other great outrages" (cited in Muriel St. Clare Byrne. *Loc. cit.*) may have been quite unfounded; Beier asserts that "no rapes or infanticides involving vagabonds have been discovered . . . homicides are so few that it is difficult to generalize about them" (A.L. Beier. *Op. cit.*, p. 138). See Salgado for an explanation of Elizabethan (mis)perceptions of the underworld (Gamini Salgado, ed. *Cony-Catchers and Bawdy Baskets* [Baltimore: Penguin, 1972]).
52. The marriage of cruelty and comedy which Ford so eagerly effects might also have its roots in rogue literature, which, intentionally or not, adapted a jestbook structure by following "the tendency that jestbooks always had to cluster groups of tales around a central figure who might be either fictional or real" (Sandra Clark. *Op. cit.*, p. 266). This suggests that rogue anecdotes may have functioned much as jests, those witty tidbits that make light of wife-beating, servant-beating, rape and insanity — not an outrageous hypothesis, considering that Renaissance England generally viewed violence as potential amusement.
53. Cited in Andrew Gurr. *The Shakespearean Stage, 1574-1642* (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1980), p. 215.

54. George Whetstone. *The Censure of a loyall Subject* (London, 1587), rpt. in J. Payne Collier *Op. cit.*, vol.2, p. 9.
55. *Ibid.*
56. Karen Cunningham. "Renaissance Execution and Marlovian Elocution: The Drama of Death," *PMLA* 105.2 (March 1990), p. 210.
57. *Ibid.*
58. *Ibid.*
59. E.K. Chambers. *The Elizabethan Stage*, 4 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press: 1923), vol.2, p. 86.
60. See Wickham (Glen Wickham. *The Early English Stage, 1300-1660*, 3 vols. [London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1959-1981], vol. 2.1:104-106) for an enlightening brief survey of the development of theatrical patronage in England before the Civil Wars. Wickham argues that this development sorts into four separate stages, during which the right of theatrical patronage is gradually withdrawn from gentlemen and lesser gentry and ultimately — apparently in an attempt to make the theater more homogeneous with the royal person — vested only in the monarch's own family.
61. E.K. Chambers. *Loc. cit.*
62. Glen Wickham. *Op. cit.*, 2.2:10.
63. The text of Elizabeth's letter of 1597 to the Lord Mayor of London ordering the suppression of the theaters is quoted at length in Wickham (*Loc. cit.*). Suffice it here to note that the text refers to the "common playhouses" of London as the site of "verie greate disorders . . . committed . . . both by lewd matters that are handled on the stages and by resorte and confluence of bad people." It therefore resolves that "not onlie no plaies shalbe used within London or about the citty or in any publique place during this time of sommer, but also that those playhouses that are erected and built only for such purposes shal be plucked downe."
64. Cited in Andrew Gurr. *Op. cit.*, p. 115.
65. William Prynne. *Histriomastix* (New York: Garland Publishing, 1974) p. 5Q1v.
66. Francis Beaumont and John Fletcher. *The Knight of the Burning Pestle* (London: Walter Burre, 1613; facsimile rpt. New York: Da Capo Press, 1969), introduction.8.
67. Indeed, as Andrew Gurr investigates at length (*Op. cit.*, p. 195-215), London's theaters engaged in an ongoing battle of social one-upsmanship, each claiming to serve the most refined audience.
68. Cited in Gerald Eades Bentley. *The Jacobean and Caroline Stage* 7 vols. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1968), vol.6, p. 9.
69. Cited in Andrew Gurr. *Op. cit.*, p. 70.