

A STUDY OF JOHN FORD'S  
DRAMATIC ART

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## ABSTRACT

John Ford examines in his plays extreme states of passion, and creates theatrical images of the predicaments in which passion places his dramatic characters. Violent passions drive his protagonists to forms of behaviour which go against the code of conduct prevalent in their world, a fact which explains the critical preoccupation with Ford's psychological and ethical views. The present study attempts rather to examine how Ford dramatizes the conflict and eventual cleavage between the world and the individual. Ford makes the opposition clear not only by analysing the psychology of the individual, but by presenting the social structure (including the ethical system) of the playworld in which the individual exists. The characters reveal their motivations by direct confessions; the dominant ethical values of their worlds are stated or suggested in each play by representatives of the social will, such as the religious establishments in 'Tis Pity She's a Whore and The Broken Heart, the royal court in Perkin Warbeck, or the groups of elderly courtiers in The Lover's Melancholy or The Queen.

In his tragedies and comedies alike, the opposition between private and public necessities seems to lead the central characters to disaster, and to do so inexorably,

although actual calamities are averted in the comedies. Ford creates this inexorability in two ways. First, the characters are shown to be incapable of controlling their passions and of reintegrating with the world at large; secondly, after the initial surrender to passion, subsequent events are made to follow in strict causal succession. Human action is thus seen to be irreversible, and its dramatic equivalent, the plot, therefore conveys a sense of inevitability as it progresses.

Necessarily, the passions that drive the protagonists isolate them from their peers. In the tragedies, as the action develops, the protagonists appear more and more isolated from their world, with ever decreasing freedom of action. Perkin Warbeck best exemplifies this constriction of action. The comedies move in an opposite direction because they show that the protagonists are gradually freed from the grip of overmastering passions, and taught to live in harmony with their worlds. But the alienation of Ford's tragic protagonists is more complete because they commit themselves so unconditionally to their passions that they reject the moral imperatives of their world.

The dramatic device used to indicate this absolute commitment is the inviolable contract by which a character binds himself to a course of action. Even though the character loses the object of his passion, he remains true to the passion itself. His constancy to a human being is

thus replaced by a constancy to an ideal, a constancy that proves his worth to his own satisfaction. His integrity is admired by his world but his transgression ensures his rejection from it. Powerless against that rejection, the tragic character tries to gain permanence in men's memories by asserting his integrity and courage, celebrating those virtues through some brave or violent act. That act, as a statement of faith, defines his identity both for his world and for the audience. Ford thus uses violence in his plays not to create a sensationalist effect as some of his critics have assumed, but to define his alienated protagonists.

Ford gives visual life to that definition through the spatial composition of the figures on the stage. The stage-image of the protagonist standing alone, separated from others on the stage, becomes a metaphor for the tragedy of the character's predicament.

Ford's dramatic achievement, then, lies in creating his own language of the theatre, a composite structure of action, character, and spectacle, to express an individual view of existence.

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#### EDITIONS USED

'Tis Pity She's a Whore, ed. Derek Roper, London: Methuen, 1975.  
Revels Plays.

The Broken Heart, ed. Donald K. Anderson, Jr., Lincoln: U. of  
Nebraska, 1968. Renaissance Dramas Series.

Perkin Warbeck, ed. Peter Ure, London: Methuen, 1968. Revels Plays.

The Lover's Melancholy, Love's Sacrifice, The Lady's Trial, and  
The Fancies, Chaste and Noble, ed. W. Bang, John Fordes  
Dramatische Werke, Louvain: Uystpruyst, 1908. Materialen  
zur Kunde des alteren Englischen Dramas.

The Queen, ed. W. Bang, Louvain: Uystpruyst, 1906. Materialen.

## Chapter 1

### THE PROBLEM OF FORD

John Ford is often regarded as one of those successors of Shakespeare and Jonson in whose hands the larger spirit of Elizabethan drama, tragic drama in particular, became a contradictory mixture of contemplation and sensationalism. Many critics have found it difficult to decide whether the writings of these dramatists signify the decline of drama or experiments towards the creation of a new drama. Like other Jacobean and Caroline dramatists, Ford seems to revel in violence and passion, portraying minds lacerated by anguish and presenting to the spectator memorable images of love and courage. In his moral and psychological interests Ford shows an obvious kinship with his contemporaries, while in constructing his plots he freely utilizes the situations common to his tradition. Though Ford has earned a special fame for his depiction of incest in 'Tis Pity She's a Whore, he is no innovator as far as this sensational theme goes; it is explored by Beaumont and Fletcher in A King and No King, and by Massinger in The Unnatural Combat which presents a father's incestuous passion for his daughter. Yet, the violent eruptions of passion in Ford's plays are counter-

balanced by the rigid self-control of his characters, which on occasion lends to the plays an austerity of style and purpose beyond the mere cultivation of violence. Giovanni and Annabella's love is seen in 'Tis Pity as sinful but their unquestioned integrity in love proves that it is not a base passion. Set against the vehement energy of Orgilus in The Broken Heart we find Calantha's refusal to yield to grief. Warbeck gains credibility as a prince among men precisely when he fails, through his action, to live up to the image of the prince as a leader. In The Lovers' Melancholy Meleander's desperate ravings at the loss of his daughter Eroclea are contrasted with the muted grief of Palador for the same loss. This union of contrasts serves to identify Ford as a dramatist of extremes. When he examines the theme of rash love he embodies it through the extreme example of incest. Courage takes the form of suicide, as witness the end chosen by Penthea, Orgilus and Calantha in The Broken Heart, Giovanni in 'Tis Pity, Fernando in Love's Sacrifice and Warbeck in Perkin Warbeck. In choosing the settings for his plays Ford similarly reveals this interest in extremes. Guilty love and revenge in 'Tis Pity and Love's Sacrifice are set in the dark and close world of the renaissance Italy of popular imagination. Conspicuous fortitude and resolution on the other hand are discovered, in The Broken Heart, in a fittingly Spartan setting. This interest in extremes suggests that Ford specializes in terminal situations. In such situations he portrays noble individuals who have reached the end of the road. By what means Ford places them there, what dramatic effects he achieves

thereby and how he achieves them, are enquiries that constitute the subject of the present study.

There has been much critical uncertainty regarding Ford's achievement and this has been due in part to the lack of information available about his life and his writings. The most thorough biographical account to date is given in M. Joan Sargeaunt's 1935 book on Ford, which remains definitive as no additional facts have since come to light.<sup>1</sup> Ford was born at Ilsington, Devonshire, in early April, 1586. We know nothing about his youth but it is possible that he went to Exeter College, Oxford, for a year in 1601. He entered the Middle Temple in London in November, 1602, to which he belonged at least until 1617. He may have practised law but seems to have retired early in life. He wrote occasional poetry from 1606 on, and began his dramatic career from about 1612, engaging sometimes in collaborative work with Dekker, William Rowley, and Webster, but also writing on his own. He dropped out of sight after 1638 and the date of his death is unknown. We know that he wrote seven plays independently, and scholars agree that an eighth, The Queen, published anonymously, is also by him. The sequence of the plays has not been established with entire certainty although attempts to construct a chronology have been made on different grounds, including the doubtful one of metrical evidence.<sup>2</sup> The rough chronology established by Sargeaunt and accepted with minor reservations by G.E. Bentley in The Jacobean and Caroline Stage, is given below:

- 1606     Fame's Memorial (poem)  
          Honour Triumphant (prose pamphlet)
- 1613     The Golden Mean (prose pamphlet)  
          Christ's Bloody Sweat (poem)
- 1620     A Line of Life (prose pamphlet)
- 1621     The Witch of Edmonton (with Dekker and William Rowley)
- 1623-4   The Sun's Darling (with Dekker)  
          The Welsh Ambassador (with Dekker)
- 1628     The Lover's Melancholy
- 1633     'Tis Pity She's a Whore  
          The Broken Heart  
          Love's Sacrifice
- 1634     Perkin Warbeck
- 1638     The Fancies, Chaste and Noble  
          The Lady's Trial
- 1653     The Queen

These are mainly dates of publication, but The Witch of Edmonton is dated by its first performance and The Sun's Darling and The Lover's Melancholy by dates of licensing.

Ford's hand has been conjectured in several other plays, of which an account is given by Bentley.

In the absence of hard external evidence pertaining to the sequence of Ford's writings, critical enquiry cannot rest upon any unchallengeable view of Ford's "development." The present study is therefore concerned with a composite under-

standing of Ford's drama rather than with viewing his plays as stages in a pattern of development.

Ford's individuality as a playwright has been acknowledged by critics from the time of Charles Lamb who placed him in "the first order of poets."<sup>3</sup> This remark from so early and so influential a critic helped interest in Ford to grow, an early sign of that interest being Henry Weber's enthusiastic but less than competent edition of Ford in 1811. Taking an opposite view, William Hazlitt defined Ford's individuality as a reprehensible taste for overstatement and criticized the last scenes of The Broken Heart as extravagant displays of pointless stoicism.<sup>4</sup> Sensationalism and moral decadence have been frequent indictments against Ford. Criticism of his plays has been exclusively moralistic in the past, critics having been mainly concerned with his alleged approval of illicit love and his preoccupation with sensational events. The focus began to shift, towards the end of the nineteenth century, with critics such as Havelock Ellis and Swinburne claiming that Ford was not an immoral but an amoral playwright who sought to explain human conduct in the light of man's pathological rather than moral constitution. Both these critical traditions, the ethical and the psychological, have deflected attention away from problems of technique. But overemphatic though they are, these studies help to define Ford's interests and themes, and are therefore of considerable use to the present study in its attempt to examine the themes and the organization of Ford's plays.

Ford's supposedly nonconformist attitude and interest in psychology prompted several critics to identify him as a thinker far ahead of his time. Havelock Ellis, for instance, called him the "most modern" of his contemporaries and a writer closer to Stendhal and Flaubert than to Shakespeare. Ellis saw Ford as a dramatist who had "meditated deeply on the springs of human action".<sup>5</sup> The sense of Ford's modernity is shared by critics who follow, most notably G. F. Sensabaugh who identifies "scientific determinism" and "unbridled individualism" as intellectually and emotionally formative influences on Ford, turning him into a Caroline Marlowe.<sup>6</sup> By tracing at the same time the influence of the coterie cult of Neo-Platonism fostered by Queen Henrietta Maria, Sensabaugh also attempts to modify the view of Ford's stoic affiliations, affiliations that have formed a commonplace of Ford criticism from Hazlitt's days to our own.<sup>7</sup> Ford's modernity is acknowledged unequivocally by Sargeaunt, whose study (cited above) is one of the two most comprehensive studies of Ford made so far, the other being Robert Davril's Le Drame de John Ford, which at times relies extensively on Sargeaunt's work. Davril and Sensabaugh have made valuable contributions to the understanding of Ford's concern with the social, ethical and psychological conditions that shape a man's existence as an individual. These and other critics have taken special note of Ford's reliance on Robert Burton's Anatomy of Melancholy, the influence of which has been evaluated in close detail by S. B. Ewing.<sup>8</sup>

Ford's interest in terminal situations and abnormal states of mind<sup>8</sup> has kept Ford criticism close to ethical and psychological issues. Hazlitt's disapproval is shared by other critics, such as, George Saintsbury who places Ford only in the "second order" of genius, Felix Schelling who distrusts Ford's "unnatural originality" because it is "like a gorgeous and scented but poisonous exotic of the jungle," and Ashley Thorndike who recoils from Ford's "absorption with questions of sex."<sup>9</sup> A more systematic study of Ford's ethical position was made in 1908 by S.P. Sherman who came to the conclusion that Ford had a definite and consistent sympathy for his sinful heroes and heroines, which marks him as a rebel against the established moral order of his time.<sup>10</sup> Some years later, J.A. Bastiaenen more explicitly accused Ford of condoning crime, saying that "so far from acting as a stern censor of such criminal aberrations as occur in this play ['Tis Pity], Ford looks upon them with a lenient, sympathetic eye."<sup>11</sup> In a lower key, T.S. Eliot deplores Ford's "absence of purpose" which, he says, ends in "mere sensationalism" in all plays except Perkin Warbeck.<sup>12</sup> These accusations are now infrequent, although a recent historian of drama, T.B. Tomlinson, identifies Ford as the "real villain of the piece" in what he considers the ethical debasement of tragedy in the Jacobean age.<sup>13</sup>

These opinions notwithstanding, the view of Ford as a subversive figure has lost force in recent years. A more balanced estimate of his achievements has been made by Robert Ornstein and Mark Stavig who place him in the mainstream of

seventeenth century ethical thought and challenge the older view of Ford as an advocate of immorality or a critic of conventional morality. Ornstein connects Ford with the elitist Elizabethan Neo-Platonism and finds in his plays a sensitive attempt to identify honour as a guide to the conduct of life.<sup>14</sup> Stavig's study, the most searching examination yet of Ford's cultural roots, argues that Ford was neither a decadent nor a rebel but an upholder of traditional moral belief.<sup>15</sup> Cyrus Hoy makes the same point briefly in an essay comparing Ford's Giovanni with Marlowe's Faustus, discovering in 'Tis Pity the homiletic thrust of medieval drama.<sup>16</sup>

The concern with Ford's ethical purpose and psychological explorations has been much more sustained than attempts to define the tragic element in his plays or his dramatic method. For some time past, however, more attention has been paid to the aesthetic aspects of Ford. A major effort in this direction appears in Clifford Leech's book on Ford, one of the few full-length studies of the dramatist.<sup>17</sup> Leech relates the form of the plays with their ethical meaning and argues that the plays tend to move towards moments of stillness, at which the climax of thematic evolution is held suspended for the spectator's contemplation.

The analysis of Ford's dramatic technique has been slow to develop, although both Sargeaunt and Davril include in their books discussions of plot-construction, versification and dramatic conventions. Despite Leech's interest in dramatic form, he remains close to the tradition of ethical criticism,

the continuing importance of which is attested to by the number of recent studies in this area.<sup>18</sup> Studies wholly concerned with the aesthetic nature of Ford's plays are few. But these few studies have opened the way to a closer perception of Ford's dramatic achievement. H. J. Oliver's book on Ford makes an important venture in this direction by arguing that Ford constantly experimented with form in order to find equivalents for unusual states of mind in physical action.<sup>19</sup> Critics have also attempted to show how Ford uses thematic development as a technique of projecting a view of life. One of these critics, G. H. Blayney, has called attention to Ford's use of the theme of misalliance as a device to sharpen our perception of Ford's idea of tragedy.<sup>20</sup> R. J. Kaufmann interprets misalliance as a deeper and more tragic cleavage between man's actual powers and the heroic purposes he tries to enshrine in action.<sup>21</sup> Kaufmann's more recent article on The Broken Heart examines the nature of Ford's tragedy by analysing how Ford uses event, character and setting metaphorically to define tragic waste.<sup>22</sup> Ford's structural pattern has been examined by Juliet McMaster who sees the plays as three-level illustrations of the elevating influence of love, of the animal instinct of lust, and of a pretence at conformity that leads to eventual catastrophe, driving home the contradiction between love and lust.<sup>23</sup>

By moving away from the narrow debate whether Ford was decadent or not, Ford studies have gained today considerable variety in critical approaches, suggesting that interest in Ford is on the increase. He is not yet popular in the theatre

but 'Tis Pity, The Broken Heart, and Perkin Warbeck have been staged in recent years, 'Tis Pity more frequently than the others.<sup>24</sup>

There is a general agreement that Ford should be regarded primarily as a tragic dramatist, for even his comedies are touched by a sense of doom. How he creates this impression forms the central concern of Ford studies today. But, despite the growing variety of critical approaches some basic tasks remain to be undertaken. It is essential for students of dramatic method to know precisely what kinds of materials a dramatist chooses and how he manipulates them with some particular end in view. Of the material Ford uses, concepts of character and motive have received steady attention but his assumptions with regard to the world in which he sets character and motive have not been closely examined. Among recent critics, Kaufmann comments on the value of the Spartan setting of The Broken Heart in developing the theme of fortitude in that play.<sup>25</sup> But no general account of the environment of Ford's plays is available. Sargeaunt has dealt with the setting of the plays in a broad way, but as her treatment is limited in scope, a more complete examination has been attempted in the present study.

By environment the present study understands the social organization and the moral climate of the societies presented, rather than merely the locale used, or the characteristics of the particular group of people in a play. These latter are the

elements of environment that interest Sargeaunt.<sup>26</sup> Her account suffers from two serious shortcomings. In the first place, she is mainly concerned with Ford's use of national characteristics, as for instance, the supposed emotional instability of Italians in 'Tis Pity and Love's Sacrifice, and the celebrated fortitude of Spartans in The Broken Heart. Sargeaunt apparently assumes that Ford traced the individual's behaviour to national traits of character, or at least provided the audience with means to do so. In this Sargeaunt follows the lead of Gifford who declared that only Italy or Spain had "the soil for the production of such fervid and frantic displays of unhallowed desire" as we see in 'Tis Pity.<sup>27</sup>

Doubtless, the atmosphere established by locality and what Sargeaunt calls race, sets off the play of passions, but to note merely the atmosphere can tell us little about the human environment. How, for instance, does Ford define social relationships between his characters? This question must be answered if we are fully to measure the pressures and constraints that modulate action and impinge on the autonomy of the self, bringing Ford's protagonists to their lonely doom, or, less frequently, to realignment with their fellow-men. The analysis of the environment must take a sociological turn if we are to be sure of evaluating the dramatic impact of social relationships and their function in interpreting what happens in a play. The present enquiry hopes to fill this gap in Ford studies by undertaking an analysis of social structures found

in Ford's playworld, of the distribution of power and authority in the social group, and of the group's expectations from the individual, all these being conditions of social life that determine human action.

The second reason why Sargeaunt's view of the setting of the plays needs qualification is that she assumes that unless Ford's interest in national types is recognized, the plays cannot be rightly interpreted. In support of this methodological claim she cites Fernando's summing up of the Spanish, the French and the English in the opening scene of Love's Sacrifice, claiming the speech to be of great significance.<sup>28</sup> What that significance might be, she does not tell us. It seems as though the experience of loss and deprivation in the play cannot be perceived unless seen in terms of national characteristics. Admittedly, the familiarity of Elizabethan and Jacobean audiences with notions of Italian villainy or Spartan austerity probably helped them readily to accept the violence of passion or suffering in the plays. But the principle of critical method at issue is whether, as Sargeaunt implies, the taste or training of the audience is to be treated as a component of the dramatic effect of the plays. The fact that in 'Tis Pity "the deaths are all brought about by means which fit into the background of the Renaissance Italy of the Elizabethan theatre" no doubt marks the play as one of a numerous kind;<sup>29</sup> but how does it enhance Ford's particular achievement in showing the extremity of suffering? Does it not, on the contrary, emphasize that Ford

had much in common with his contemporaries? Again, noting this similarity may be essential for keeping the historical perspective clear, but it does not reveal much about Ford's individual method. The present study is therefore directed at a full understanding of the nature of Ford's playworld, examining the social structure found in the plays and investigating whether there is any consistent principle according to which events take place. It is hoped that on the basis of these enquiries we shall be able to understand the process by which Ford dramatizes man's entanglement, usually calamitous, in the network of forces within and without himself. As we examine how the plays are constructed we shall find that Ford's correlation of character and action, his method of leading the action to climactic points charged with passion, and his technique of visually isolating those moments on the stage, reveal a considered and specific view of existence.

## Chapter II

### THE PLAYWORLD OF FORD

Granted the sense in which the term "playworld" has been used in the previous chapter, we may explore that world along two broad lines. One would concern how events take place in that world, whether they arise fortuitously or are brought about by discernible causes. The other line of enquiry would be the investigation of the social structure of the playworld. The present chapter will proceed along both these lines, setting out the general features of the playworld, but reserving details for closer examination in chapters dealing with individual plays.

Needless to say, the world of drama with which we are concerned is a special world. We have to consider not the world of actual experience but of renaissance art, which may be either an Aristotelian approximation of the world of actuality or a Sidney-like idealization of it, but has at any rate a representational character, as Madeleine Doran has said.<sup>1</sup> As the representation of actuality, the world of a play must have a self-sustaining structure peculiar to itself. Furthermore, as a representational structure this playworld must have events for its basic stuff, these events cohering through some unifying

principle. One of the tasks of this study will be to discover in what the unity of the playworld consists. We may also note that the primary experience in the theatre is one of events taking place within the acting space, to which the spectator grants the status of an autonomous world for the duration of the play. There is a tacit contract between dramatist and spectator that what happens in that world happens by its own laws which may or may not be modelled on those of the actual world. It is this kind of understanding to which Ben Jonson makes ironic reference in the "Induction on the Stage" preceding Bartholomew Fair, where he writes, "It is further covenanted, concluded, and agreed that how great soever the expectation be, no person here is to expect more than he knows, or better ware than a Fair will afford...but content himself with the present."<sup>2</sup>

If we accept the playworld, as we must, as one that has its own laws, and if at the same time we remember that the events taking place on the stage afford the primary--not necessarily the most valuable--theatrical experience, then we must give priority to the basic question, how do events in Ford's plays occur? Obviously, we do not see in the plays a haphazard conglomeration of unrelated events, but some development in the lives of the characters. What binds the events together in an order, is an important question. In Ford, the cohesive principle is causation. The heavy dependence on fate and chance that characterizes so much of renaissance drama is

absent in Ford. Instead, the progression of the plot is causal. The chain of events that we see is not merely an assortment held together in time, but a sequence of cause and effect. Events in Ford's plays are never the handiwork of fate, and almost never the result of accidents. As a result, Ford's plays convey a sense of inevitability. The achievement of this effect is an important aspect of his plays, particularly of his tragedies, where the logic of cause and effect makes the catastrophe ineluctable.

As a structural principle causality is surprisingly rare in renaissance drama. In her study of Elizabethan tragedy M. C. Bradbrook says that the "first and most essential thing to be realised is that consecutive or causal succession of events is not of the first importance," and that "at the end of a tragedy, in particular, there was no need to discriminate the causes of slaughter."<sup>3</sup> She illustrates the point by quoting the physician Abraham in the early play, the anonymous Selimus, who drinks the poison he has given to the king, declaring,

Faith: I am old as well as Bajazet  
And have not many months to live on earth:  
I care not much to end my life with him  
(lines 1829-31)

She further cites a similar example from the late All's Lost by Lust by William Rowley, in which one of Antonio's two wives kills herself, saying, "I must die sometime/And as good die this day as another." The use of accidents in shaping the succession of events is only marginally less arbitrary a method of construction than Bradbrook's examples suggest. That accidents were not

merely a sign of careless craftsmanship but part and parcel of the Elizabethan dramatist's world-view, is a thesis advanced in Hardin Craig's well-known essay, "The Shackling of Accidents."<sup>4</sup> He reminds us that the Aristotelian, Senecan and Christian traditions of metaphysical and moral belief combined to persuade renaissance man of the essential badness of his lot. Tragedy was perceived as man's subjection to the accidents of fortune. Craig believes that a significant insight gained in that age was that the task of tragedy was not only to show man struggling against a cruel fate but to elevate the stoic doctrine of noble endurance into so powerful an ideal that it could "subordinate change and accident to fortitude and self-command."<sup>5</sup> Such subordination or shackling of accidents assumes that accidents form the material of Elizabethan tragedy. Craig does not cite instances of the accidents in specific plays that he may have in mind but he evidently finds in Shakespeare's tragedies, especially in Hamlet, a tragic vision of the kind described. Whether we accept that particular piece of interpretation or not, Craig's account of the cultural framework affords a cogent argument for viewing the prevalence of accidents in Elizabethan tragedy as one of its essential characteristics. The frequency of accidents in that drama is a demonstrable fact, as we shall shortly see.

If this is a characteristic Elizabethan phenomenon, and if the term "Elizabethan" includes dramatists from Marlowe and Kyd to Ford and Shirley, as it does in Bradbrook's study,<sup>6</sup> then Ford must surely stand out as an exception to the rule.

It is not that in the work of Ford's predecessors or contemporaries we never find any cause-and-effect relationship between events. Obviously, the perception of causal connections between events is hardly unique. As Kenneth Burke puts it, "syllogistic progression" is one of the common forms of literature.<sup>7</sup> The points to be made are that Ford is consistent in creating in each play a world where events arise in causal sequences, and that the cumulative evidence of his plays makes this practice characteristic of Ford.

Our argument goes thus: whereas the drama of his time frequently admits the rise of events through accident, Ford makes it his business to ensure the progression of events in causal sequences. Of the importance and frequency of accidents in that drama examples are only too numerous; Desdemona's handkerchief is perhaps the best known. Another persuasive example, again from Shakespeare, is Hamlet's capture by pirates and convenient return to Elsinore in time to leap into Ophelia's grave with Laertes, which leads to the fatal fencing match. Even more significant is the accidental exchange of the poisoned cup, which neatly disposes of the queen. Exactly the same accident--the exchange of wine cups--is used by Dekker in The Noble Spanish Soldier to bring about the death of the treacherous king (V.iv). It is difficult not to compare this switch with a similar event in Act IV, scene i of 'Tis Pity, where Vasques gives Hippolita the poisoned cup she has prepared for Soranzo. Here the switch is deliberate and comes as the logical

consequence of the well laid plans of Vasques. We might also consider The Two Noble Kinsmen, in which Palamon is saved while on the scaffold, by the sudden and unforeseen death of Arcite, who is killed by being thrown from his horse. In The Maid's Tragedy by Beaumont and Fletcher, the resolution of the plot is brought about by the entirely arbitrary appearance of Aspatia in Act V disguised as her soldier brother, supposedly seeking revenge for his sister's humiliation. For this neither preceding events nor the previous appearances of Aspátia have prepared us. About Beaumont and Fletcher it has been said that "the events in the tragicomic plot do not unfold in a causal sequence, but are arranged in a series of striking theatrical moments, constituted chiefly by impassioned rhetorical encounters."<sup>8</sup> By contrast, there is no lapse in the causal sequence in Ford. One of the most striking examples of the operation of chance is found in Tourneur's Atheist's Tragedy. In Act II of the play the ghost of the murdered Montferrers appears to his son Charlemont in camp, informs him of events and instructs him to return to France. Thereafter chance takes over the course of the action. In Act IV Borachio's pistol misses fire and Charlemont is saved. He then kills Borachio, and while fleeing from the churchyard where the encounter had taken place, he accidentally comes upon Languebeau Snuffe and his mistress Soquette, who happen to be there to carry on their amours. They run away, luckily leaving behind a false wig and a beard which Charlemont appropriates. The villain D'Amville,

who plans to ravish Castabella luckily brings her to this same churchyard and this gives Charlemont the chance to save her, the false wig and beard he had so fortunately acquired frightening away the villain. The accidents that thus pile up in the play are capped by the final one in Act V in which D'Amville secures for himself the task of beheading Charlemont. But as he raises the axe, it strikes his own head and he is killed.

These examples of this rule of chance throw into relief Ford's quite different method of consistently building his playworld on the principle of causation. The logic of cause and effect rather than the intervention of chance is what characterises the progression of events in his plays. Given the circumstances laid out in the first scene or so of a play, what happens next follows as the precise effect of preceding events. To take Ford's best known play, 'Tis Pity, the Friar's advice in the opening scene to Giovanni to return to his father's house throws Giovanni and Annabella together, allowing them to embark on their incestuous adventure. This in turn results in Annabella's pregnancy which leads to her prudent marriage. The causal relationship between events at this point, the third act of the play, is interesting. So far Annabella has been consistently rejecting Soranzo, going to the length of mocking his love in Act III, scene iii. By Act III, scene iv, however, she agrees to marry him, a decision that owes more to prudence than to any repentance aroused by the Friar. In fact, the Friar himself advises her,

'Tis thus agreed,  
 First, for your honour's safety, that you marry  
 The Lord Soranzo; next, to save your soul,  
 Leave off this life, and henceforth live to him.  
 (III.vi.35-8)

Safety comes first and the compromise is enforced by Annabella's condition which is the result of her secret life with Giovanni. Pregnancy being a condition impossible to conceal, it inevitably leads to Soranzo's discovery of it and so to his scheme of revenge which ends in the bloody finale.

Causal connections go beyond these major events to the details of the plot, providing links between the events of the subordinate action and binding them to the central action. The fight between Vasques and Grimaldi is caused by the rivalry of Soranzo and Grimaldi which leads to Grimaldi's determination to be revenged upon Soranzo. Soranzo's seduction of Hippolita causes Richardetto's encouragement of Grimaldi's plans and this in turn causes Bergetto's death. Bergetto's death, one of the extremely rare accidents in Ford's plays, seems predetermined rather than fortuitous because Ford creates an impression of events coming together unavoidably. Once we admit as parts of the initial situation the facts of Soranzo's seduction of Hippolita, and Donado's attempts to see his nephew Bergetto suitably wived, we may see the actions of Richardetto and Bergetto as consequences of their earlier actions.

In The Broken Heart, the other tragedy on which Ford's reputation has traditionally rested, we again discover a play-world ordered by the law of causation. The vengeful actions of Orgilus follow upon the injury done him by Ithoches and lead to

his murder of Ithocles. The heroic exploits of Ithocles result in Calantha's love for him, which, clashing with Orgilus's revenge, leads to a climax of ceremonious death. Penthea's madness springs from her forced marriage while her husband's jealousy is an understandable consequence of the knowledge that Penthea had been forced into giving up Orgilus. To go from the initial situation to the final, that is, from the despondency of Orgilus to Calantha's death, is to move from one line of action to another. But when we trace the roots of action back from Calantha's death we find it a conclusion plausibly following upon the angry resolution of Orgilus to redress past wrongs (Act I, scene iii, 175-83). In Penthea's death again we see the working out of the misalliance which devitalizes her. The decimation of the people in the play appears, as it does in 'Tis Pity, entirely determined by the components of the initial situation in the play. Different as it is from 'Tis Pity, The Broken Heart endorses the view we have in that play of the connection between events.

In constructing the playworld of Perkin Warbeck, Ford had of course the advantage of historical hindsight which automatically imposed upon the chain of events the rigidity of a causal sequence. Armed with such hindsight he perceived in the sequence of historical events a chain of cause and effect, as other writers of historical drama have done.<sup>9</sup> In Shakespeare's history plays, for instance, the forces of dynastic alignments and personal ambitions combine to grind inexorably from event to historical event, creating a sequence of cause and effect

stretching over a whole series of plays. Marlowe's Edward II does not have the wide sweep of Shakespeare's histories, but its intricate network of intrigue is woven to the logic of cause and effect. It is interesting that in our own days Bertolt Brecht has adapted Marlowe's play in a way that constantly discovers the sociological causes behind historic events. The truth is that because the perception of history is the perception of causes and effects, the history play by its very nature lends itself to causal order. That we find causal progression in Perkin Warbeck is therefore only to be expected. We may further note that it might have been the generic characteristic of the history play, its causal nature, that attracted Ford to this form at a time when the type was virtually extinct. The conditions of the historical form might have been particularly relevant to Ford's analysis of the gradual, logically motivated encirclement and alienation of a noble individual, which would gain in intensity from being set in the special context of the compelling causality of history. The unfolding of the action of Perkin Warbeck is seen as historic necessity. At its end we find three important historic occurrences: King Henry succeeds in protecting his throne; amity is reached between England and Scotland; Warbeck is executed. All of these can be traced back through an interlocking chain of events to those with which the play began, that is, with Warbeck's arrival in Scotland and Henry's mobilisation of forces to foil him. Warbeck embarks on his venture because King James

of Scotland lends him aid. He is defeated and captured because James abandons him, James's decision having been brought about by the crafty diplomacy of King Henry's ministers who of course act as they do under Henry's instructions. Granted the facts, initially presented, of Henry's attempt to make his throne safe, of Warbeck's ambition, and of James's attempts to match himself against the King of England, the whole course of events appears unavoidable, its conclusion logical.

Turning from Ford's tragedies to his most successful comedy, The Lover's Melancholy, we find the same insistence upon establishing causal links between events. Eroclea's return to Cyprus, an event occurring at the beginning of the play, directly leads to the cure of Palador and Meleander, both of whom have been distracted by having lost her. That the cause and effect relationship between these events is deliberately projected is strongly suggested by the connection made between Eroclea's absence and the maladies of Palador and Meleander, and between her return and their recovery. Her arrival in Cyprus also cures the proud princess Thamasta, though in a different way, of her scornful neglect of Menaphon by inducing her to fall in love with Eroclea who presents herself disguised as a young man. Once Thamasta's heart is softened by an emotion she had apparently never felt before, Menaphon's fortune is made as soon as Eroclea's true identity is revealed. Her appearance at court is therefore the key event which, by removing the causes of neuroses in the different areas of the playworld, becomes the direct cause of the happy conclusion.

Since it is the law of causation that determines events in Ford's playworld, the action always seems to progress out of logical necessity and what befalls the characters seems unavoidable. The events first seen in a play lead to others, these in turn lead to yet others until the final events are reached, the series suggesting that the initial events determine the outcome of the action, without the intervention of extrinsic elements such as accidents or supernatural occurrences. This is an important characteristic of Ford's plays. Because of the cause and effect structure of events the spectator finds that the people of the playworld are themselves responsible for what happens to them, and this accountability sharpens the crises in their lives. The central importance of human action in Ford's plays leads the spectator to question how and why the characters act as they do. The plays provide explanations that are in the main psychological but also sociological in part. The prime cause of action is discovered in character but the pressure of the world in which the play is set is also recognized.

In dealing with Ford's plays, then, we must see psychological conditions as part of the data with which a play begins, and agree that "cause" and "effect" cannot be separated from psychological stimuli and responses. This assumption is a common feature of all narration, dramatic or otherwise, but deserves special mention in the context of Ford's plays because of his insistence on presenting action as the index of character, which allows him to suggest that unusual character can be understood only through unusual action. Giovanni's love for his

sister asserts his essential dissimilarity with others in his world. In play after play Ford identifies special qualities of character as the ultimate activating force in the playworld. Palador and Meleander in The Lover's Melancholy are found in traumatic states because they are shown to be psychologically incapable of accepting loss. In The Broken Heart Orgilus brings about his own death and those of Ithocles and Calantha because he is incapable of looking beyond his injury, a trait of character described by his father as an "infection" of his mind (III,iv.44). These are subjective elements that are inseparable from objective circumstances. That these should be part of the *donnée* of the play is of course no exclusive feature of Ford's plays. The concept of character issuing in action is such a commonplace of dramatic construction and is so frequently encountered in plays of all times and cultures, notably Shakespeare's, that the contribution of character in determining the action of a play is best regarded as an essential characteristic of the dramatic form itself, as indeed pointed out by Aristotle.<sup>10</sup> Ford's playworld is clearly not unique in showing that character contributes to action. However, we find there that the responsibility of character for action is intensified by the emphasis on some particularized passion holding the individual to one course of action and blotting out all else. This portrayal of conduct may be conceivably based on the doctrine of the four humours, as Sensabaugh attempts to prove,<sup>11</sup> but Ford makes no explicit pathological or even metaphorical connections as Jonson makes.<sup>12</sup> The intensification

of the passion that moulds conduct aligns Ford's practice of depicting character a shade--though no more than a shade--closer to Shakespeare's method of conceiving character, especially in Shakespeare's tragedies, as slaves to passion,<sup>13</sup> than to Jonson's model of character as type. The mass of feelings sensed behind Shakespeare's characters implies many psychological qualities in addition to those actually revealed, and much potential for additional varieties of action. The psychological hinterland behind Hamlet, Othello or Anthony is not the less real for being unmapped. What we know of their character allows, perhaps even encourages us to speculate about what we do not know. This suggestiveness lends a comprehensive quality to Shakespeare's presentation of character that is lacking in Ford. Ford's characters are severely confined to the world in which they move. But Ford intensifies the particular psychological qualities of his characters to a point at which each character becomes unique. For this reason his characters, unlike Jonson's, are not divisible into types. At the same time, because they are understood exclusively in terms of the events in their particular worlds, they lack the fuller dimensions of Shakespeare's characters.

Since human action is so inextricably related by Ford to character, psychological motivation serves to strengthen the causal progression of events in his plays by constantly explaining events as products of traits of character. 'Tis Pity affords a good example of how events arise in this way. When

in the beginning of Act V the Friar brings to Giovanni Annabella's letter to him written in her own blood, the letter achieves an effect precisely opposite to what it is supposed by the Friar and by Annabella to accomplish, for it impels Giovanni to his suicidal acceptance of Soranzo's invitation. His acceptance is an event that ensures disaster. This event occurs only because Giovanni is so ruled by his love that he regards life as not worth the living without Annabella and wants to destroy a world that will not bring them together. His fatal bravado seems natural enough only because we rest our expectation of such a reaction on our understanding of his character. For the purposes of the play, what goes on in his mind is as real as what happens on the objective plane. This recognition of what happens within the psyche as springs of what happens without, suggests that events must be understood in these plays to be internal as well as external occurrences.

As an instrument for this purpose Ford had that powerful convention of renaissance drama at hand, namely, the soliloquy. His protagonists reveal themselves through direct and descriptive explanations of their dilemmas, decisions and actions. Ordinarily they use soliloquies for the limited purpose of revealing their immediate attitudes, as we find in the soliloquies of Giovanni in 'Tis Pity or those of Fernando in Love's Sacrifice. But occasionally Ford has his characters reach out to some extent towards generalized speculations on life. In The Lover's Melancholy, Rhetias relates his appearance as a

malcontent with reflections upon the general "madness of the times" (I.ii.1). In The Broken Heart Ithocles moralizes on ambition (II,ii,1-15). These moralizings are always linked to the speaker's mental state and afford explanations of their conduct.

The need for appreciating the principle of psychological causation is perhaps the most pressing in Love's Sacrifice, where one of the most important events is Bianca's nocturnal visit to Fernando's bedroom (II.iv). Her offer of submitting to Fernando's will, a seeming contradiction of her earlier scornful rejection of his love, appears a forced and arbitrary device to impel the play towards a tragic denouement by setting up a compact between Bianca and Fernando which leads to their undoing. But to consider Bianca's action by itself, as an external, material event, is to miss the internal unfolding of the action. Her insistence on her bridal vows and on forming a platonic relationship with Fernando is plainly an extension of her earlier demand for the recognition of her uncompromising chastity:

Look on our face:  
What see you there that may persuade a hope  
Of lawless love?

(II.iii.1205-7)

In the bedchamber scene she further strengthens her claim by revealing that her midnight excursion is really a test of her virtue. It is necessary for her to impose such a test upon herself in order that she may assure herself of an unequivocal victory over temptation. Why it is necessary, is revealed in her speech:

With shame and passion now I must confess,  
 Since first mine eyes beheld you, in my heart  
 You have been only king; if there can be  
 A violence in love, then I have felt  
 That tyranny...

...how e're my tongue  
 Did often chide thy love, each word thou spak'st  
 Was music to my ear;

(II.iv.1295-1303)

In the previous scene she had accomplished part of her victory over passion by disciplining the tempter assailing her. In the present scene she completes her triumph by subduing the enemy within, her own desire. The two consecutive scenes must therefore be taken as complementary parts of the same event. Her sally into Fernando's room is neither arbitrarily introduced into the sequence of events, nor is it inconsistent with her character. The consistency of her action cannot be perceived by placing it against preceding events but must be sought in her character. It is to this purpose that Ford arranges her long self-explanation. Once more, we find the psychology of the individual overriding the surface logic of circumstances as seen in external events.

The apparent arbitrariness of Bianca's action has a parallel in The Queen. In its opening scene we first learn that Alphonso, the leader of a rebellion against the queen, is about to be executed, but later on in the scene we see him pardoned. In the next scene we find him the beneficiary of a change of fortune which would have been astonishing had we not been given as a precondition in the first scene the queen's gentleness and obvious admiration for Alphonso's spirit which "flies out in his

daring language" (I.i.395). She follows up her pardon by marrying Alphonso and actually crowning him king of Aragon. However sudden this may seem it is not presented as an arbitrary event because it is seen as a consequence of the queen's tenderness and mercy in the first scene. That she heaps such favours on Alphonso is only proof of the compelling nature of her love which is presented to us by the dramatist as one of the two basic assumptions regarding the human world we are considering, the other being Alphonso's insane misogyny. Given these as conditions of that world, the rest of the play can be seen as a sure progress from cause to effect.

The influence of character on the causal progression of Ford's plays is of prime importance, but since individuals act within the social framework, we must also examine that framework in each play and see to what extent its pressure on character modifies the action of the play. Beyond these factors, the character of the individual and the nature of society, there is, however, no force in Ford's playworld that acts as a determinant of action. We have noted that chance as a principle is virtually non-existent here; to this we may add, nor is any importance conceded to fate or supernatural agencies. In 'Tis Pity, for instance, it is the obsession of Giovanni and Annabella with each other that starts the train of events and it is the social interdiction on incest that compounds their tragedy. Giovanni may at times attribute his predicament to fate but ultimately asserts his control over his own life. True, he laments in the

first act, "my fates have doomed my death" and "'tis my fate that leads me on" (I.ii.144,159). Yet, at the end of the play he categorically denies the rule of fate, declaring,

Why, I hold fate  
Clasp'd in my fist, and could command the course  
Of time's eternal motion

(V.v.11-13)

and,

Fate or all the powers  
That guide the motions of immortal souls  
Could not prevent me.  
...in my fists I bear the twists of life.

(V.vi.12-14,71)

It is doubtful how seriously Ford means us to take Giovanni's initial fatalism. Giovanni's only friend, the Friar, clearly lays the whole responsibility for Giovanni's problem on his "wilful flames" and his "leprosy of lust" (I.i.66,74). To blame it all on fate seems to be one of the excuses Giovanni invents to justify his decision in Act I, scene ii to approach Annabella, and of the same doubtful validity as his frequent references to nearness of blood. His desperation in looking for excuses is best illustrated towards the end of his appeal to Annabella when he actually lies to her, saying,

I have asked counsel of the Holy Church,  
Who tells me I may love you

(I,ii.241-2)

Considered comprehensively, Giovanni's statements about his motives suggest that his invocation of fate is an indication not of sincere belief in fate but of an attempt to justify the peculiar bent of his nature which, rather than fate, is what leads him on.

The Broken Heart is another play that endorses the accountability of character in shaping the detailed configurations of the action. Penthea is governed here by a strong death-wish. She exclaims, "Our home is in the grave" (II.iii.148) and later begs Ithocles, "Pray kill me,/...Kill me, pray. Nay, will 'ee?" (III.ii.64,66). So intense is her sense of defilement that she resolves to die. Her death is an event caused by her traumatic state and it is her fatal withdrawal from life that provides the actual occasion for Orgilus's revenge and gives fresh impetus to his vengeance. He acknowledges this when he says,

I foreknew  
The last act of her life, and train'd thee hither  
To sacrifice a tyrant to a turtle.  
(IV.iv.27-29)

That Penthea's death is an act of deliberate will is attested by her companions who describe how she starved herself to death and

...begg'd some gentle voice to tune a farewell  
To life and griefs.  
.....  
So down she drew her veil, so died.  
(IV.iv.5-6,10)

Penthea herself makes her intention clear in the scene with Calantha (III.v) which she turns into a formal ceremony of death-bed bequests and renunciation of the world, concluding the meeting with the resolution,

My reckonings are made even. Death or fate  
Can now nor strike too soon, nor force too late.  
(III.v.111-12)

Since her bequest of her brother Ithocles to Calantha apprises

Calantha of Ithocles's love for her, we see in this scene further proof of the shaping force of Penthea's wish to die.

The fundamental importance of psychological motivation cannot be surprising in plays so concerned primarily with conduct and states of mind. We have already seen that in Ford's playworld character is the ultimate cause of action. The resultant interest in character is heightened by Ford's attempt to explain not only the general trend of the action of a play but every event in that play by designating some psychological factor as its cause. Psychological causation is kept before the spectators as the structural principle at every turn of the action. As instances of the action resting on character in a general sense we have cited the connection between Giovanni's character and his decision to pursue his love, on that between Calantha's courage and her self-chosen death. But the plays also show how smaller units of action are tied to character. The disclosure of Panthenophil's identity as Eroclea in The Lover's Melancholy is one, for it is brought about by Thamasta's haughty and egotistical passion; another example is the murder of Ferentes in Love's Sacrifice which is linked with his character by Ferentes himself in his dying speech: "My forfeit was in my blood" (III.iv.1893). Ford's echoing of Webster here (The White Devil, V.vi.240) emphasizes Ford's attribution of events to character, although he anchors the confession to the specific act of a bloody death rather than using it, as Webster does, to reach for moral abstractions such

as sin and the dissolution of the soul. Correspondences in Ford's plays between event and character are keys to the understanding of the structure of the playworld, for they reveal character as the primary cause behind the chain of events, identifying as the prime mover in the playworld neither chance, nor the spite of time, but the quirks of the individual mind. Ford's assumptions regarding character are therefore basic ingredients of his playworld.

The assumption most in evidence is that human reason is not proof against passion. Bianca, whose virtue resists Fernando's entreaties in the first two acts of Love's Sacrifice, eventually falls victim to her own passion, casting aside not only her principles of propriety but even ordinary caution, besieging Fernando publicly with her importunities: "Speak, shall I steal a kiss? believe me, my Lord, I long." (III.ii. 1604-5). Fernando acknowledges the power of passion most sincerely when he says,

Traitor to friendship, whither shall I run,  
That lost to reason cannot sway the float  
Of the unruly faction in my blood?  
(I.ii.449-51)

The most celebrated case of such vulnerability of reason is of course that of Giovanni, "that miracle of wit" ('Tis Pity, I.i.47) whose fall has been compared to that of Marlowe's Faustus.<sup>14</sup> Although Giovanni tries to justify himself by blaming fate (I.i.84, I.ii.139, I.ii.154), the Friar sees his perverse logic as proof of the subjugation of reason by passion (I.i, II.v).

That overwhelming passion is the key to character issuing in self-destructive action, is constantly reiterated in Ford's plays. The catastrophic influence of such passion is no doubt best seen in Ford's tragic protagonists, such as Giovanni or Fernando, but its shadow envelops the comedies as extensively. If in the comedies the shadow lifts at all, it is due to the eventual cure of the stricken characters, such as Palador and Alphonso, which provides proof that man's felicity is proportionate to his control over his own passions. It is significant that the two major plays that end happily, The Lover's Melancholy and The Queen, are both constructed as deliberately controlled exercises in the cure of psychotic states. In the tragedies, the protagonists are frequently aware of their subjection to passion. Giovanni and Fernando bewail their helplessness. Ithocles carefully reminds himself of the folly of reaching up for Calantha. When such individuals are not actually shown to be resisting their passions, at least their awareness of their problems is marked. Even Orgilus, who seems never to question the validity of vengeance, recognizes vengeance as a tragic necessity. Perkin Warbeck cannot yield his claims but he knows clearly enough that his doom is certain. These characters are driven by strong emotions but they are not driven blindly. Their awareness of what their motives are conveys the sense that they go where they do as a matter of recognising a necessity and then deliberately choosing it.<sup>15</sup> This degree of self-consciousness distinguishes Ford's

characters from the "humorous" characters of Ben Jonson. It is this quality that marks the difference between a Bassanes and a Corvino. The distinction is subtle but worth noting. Undoubtedly, both Jonson's and Ford's characters are driven by obsessive desires. But Jonson's characters are driven blindly and remain unaware of the absurd courses that their desires make them run. Ford's characters are driven just as relentlessly but they know that they are being driven and they also know what drives them. Moreover, they have some idea of what awaits them at the end of the course because they recognize the dangers inherent in nursing obsessions. Since this self-consciousness emphasizes their helplessness, it adds a tragic meaning to their actions and engages a measure of the audience's sympathy rather than provoking laughter. That is why, even Bassanes has some dignity and is ultimately less ridiculous than Corvino.

The thesis developed by Ford that passion rules action helps him to explain and justify radical shifts of attitude and conduct. What might otherwise seem to be wholesale changes in character are made credible as contingencies of psychological necessity. The Queen displays a dramatic change in the last-minute conversion of Alphonso, and both Palador and Meleander in The Lover's Melancholy are instances of profound psychological shifts. Annabella in 'Tis Pity is another example, for from a brazen flaunting of her illicit affair before her husband in Act IV, scene iii, she goes to the other extreme of complete repentance in the next scene (V.i). Yet, radical as they are,

these changes are not arbitrary.<sup>16</sup> We know that Palador and Meleander are subjects of psychotherapy and hence their access of sanity appears as the effect of therapy. Alphonso's conversion too is shown to be the result of prior planning. Annabella's penitence in Act V, scene i, seems a violent transformation only because it comes so soon after her defiance of her husband. But we can hardly disregard, first, her previous confession of guilt to the Friar in Act III, scene vi. More significantly, the scene in which she defies her husband, Act IV, scene iii, ends with her acknowledgement of guilt ("These words wound deeper than your sword could do"--line 130), with Annabella kneeling before Soranzo. This implies that an affinity with virtue is a basic ingredient of her character and that her repentance is the result of an irreducible virtue that saves her from being a mere "whore." Ford always takes great care to explain sudden changes of attitude or conduct by revealing their causes. Even the transformation of Adurni in The Lady's Trial from Spinella's would-be seducer to a penitent worshipper is marked by stages of growing remorse (II.ii.1134-6, III.ii.1360-2, 1371-2, IV.ii.2085). In Ford's plays we do not see the complete and implausible aboutface of character that we see, for instance, in Philaster where the tyrannical king has a genuine change of heart for which no prior evidence has been provided.

Ford, on the other hand, uniformly prepares the ground for shifts of feeling and conduct. This deliberateness has one important consequence. While it reinforces the causal

inevitability of the action it also eliminates the element of surprise. The causal relationship between events is so strong, the suggestion of events being determined by what precedes them is so powerful that ready explanations are always available for character and situation. In The Lover's Melancholy the regeneration of Palador and Meleander is as deliberately controlled as a psychiatric regimen can be. In 'Tis Pity Giovanni's murder of Annabella and his own death--his suicide, one might say --are caused by the absolute commitment of brother and sister to each other, to the exclusion of any alternative way of life; what is more, Ford draws attention to this inviolable connection between their love and their lives by arranging a deliberately ritualistic troth-plighting in Act I, scene iii:

Annabella

On my knees, [she kneels]  
 Brother, even by our mother's dust, I charge you  
 Do not betray me to your mirth or hate,  
 Love me or kill me, brother.

Giovanni

On my knees, [he kneels]  
 Sister, even by my mother's dust, I charge you  
 Do not betray me to your mirth or hate,  
 Love me or kill me, sister.

(I.iii.249-55)

In The Broken Heart the murder of Ithocles by Orgilus comes as no surprise to us because of the understanding of character that emerges from the context of the suspicions voiced earlier by Tecnicus. Tecnicus had said that "much mystery of fate/Lies hid in that man's fortunes; curiosity/May lead his actions into rare attempts." (III.i.54-6). A few lines earlier Tecnicus had warned Orgilus, "Take heed thou hast not, under our integrity,/"

shrouded unlawful plots " (III.i.9-10). Crotolon too had charged Orgilus with an "infection" which, he says, "Threatens the desolation of our family " (III.iv.43-5). Similarly, Calantha's "marriage" to the dead Ithocles in the last scene (V.iii) is anticipated in Act III, scene iii, when she avoids Nearchus by calling upon Ithocles:

Thine arm I prithee, Ithocles. --Nay, good  
My lord, keep on your way, I am provided.  
(III.iii.75-6)

Her contract with Ithocles when she places her mother's wedding-ring on the dead man's finger in Act V, scene iii, line 64, recalls the business with the ring in Act IV, scene i, where Nearchus's attempt to take it from her fails when she tosses it down before Ithocles, saying

let him take it who dares stoop for't,  
And give it at next meeting to a mistress.  
(IV.i.27-8)

Ithocles makes the implied contract overt by offering it back to her upon his knees. Calantha's eventual revelation of her love does not therefore come as a surprise. The events in the play run courses so obviously determined by the data given initially, data in the form of material or psychological conditions, that there is no impression of an arbitrary intrusion into the lives of the characters of forces from outside the composite structure of character and event.

The deterministic nature of the playworld is further strengthened by the demonstrable influence of past events, not, as one might expect, in Perkin Warbeck alone but also in The Lover's Melancholy, The Broken Heart and The Queen. Like many of his predecessors and contemporaries, Ford here places segments

of human action in the larger framework of the process of time. Shakespeare's history plays are the most familiar examples. But on a less ambitious scale and in much narrower contexts other playwrights, such as Marston in Antonio's Revenge and Chapman in The Revenge of Bussy D'Ambois, draw upon the past to provide motivation for present events. Closer to Ford's time, Massinger and Field lay stress, in The Fatal Dowry, on past conflicts to show that the action of the play arises to a great extent out of Novall Senior's attempts to settle an old grudge. In those plays by Ford mentioned above, the past lies heavily on the present, enforcing a pervasive but muted historical determinism upon the structure of events. In The Lover's Melancholy the reason for Eroclea's disappearance, Meleander's insanity and Palador's melancholia is found in the tyranny of the dead king, Palador's father. The revenge motive in The Broken Heart, which runs through the plot as the unifying thread, is repeatedly traced back by Orgilus and Penthea to the past actions of Ithocles which, we are told, sprang from the dissensions between his father Thrasus and Orgilus' father, Crotolon (I.i.17-46). As one might expect, history appears more clearly in Perkin Warbeck as the sum total of forces, social and personal, acting upon one another. Since it is placed against the background of a nation's evolution, Warbeck's individual fate seems largely determined by the dynastic conflicts of times past. Although history is not consciously invoked as a determining force in The Queen; the first scene of the play implies

that Alphonso's bitterness has roots in his former bid for power and his consequent defeat. As his later gloating over Velasco's humiliation shows (III.i), this memory gives edge to his neurosis.

It would seem, then, that the major structural principle in Ford's playworld is one of mechanistic determinism. We have noted that events are linked strictly by the law of causation which rules out the play of chance. These links with the past that Ford so often forges are parts of the causal sequence which accentuate the deterministic growth of the action. Since the determinism rests on the law of causation and the supremacy of psychological motivation, it helps the spectator to recognize one more law of Ford's playworld. It is found that whatever happens has a rational or psychological, as opposed to supernatural, explanation. Despite references to the fates, the plays are entirely free from supernatural intervention. Like most of his immediate contemporaries, Ford avoids the use of the supernatural as an instrument of plot-development. But Ford's exclusion of the supernatural is total, while other dramatists of his time use it at least for theatrical effect. Although the supernatural in the drama of Webster or Fletcher has none of the structural force that it has in Doctor Faustus or Macbeth, it is an important ingredient of the shadowy atmosphere of The Duchess of Malfi, and in The Faithful Shepherdess it is used as the yardstick for measuring virtue and wickedness. Marlowe's or Shakespeare's metaphysics

may not have interested these later dramatists but they were not above exploiting the theatrical potential of magic or of the spirit-world. Ford, who played no less deliberately for sensational effects, does not however permit the supernatural any entry at all in his plays, whether as spectacle or moral symbol. Ford's rejection of the supernatural is complete and no acknowledgement of unseen forces dilutes the consistency of his rationalistic account of men and their actions. The people of his playworld neither see any need to rule their lives by omens nor discover strange meanings in trivial incidents. The oracle interpreted by Tecnicus in The Broken Heart contains more political acumen than magical vision and it is taken by the courtiers as wisdom rather than wizardry. In this regard Ford's world differs markedly from those of most of his contemporaries and predecessors. The supernatural never intervenes conveniently to solve unresolvable problems in Ford as it does, for instance, in Massinger's Unnatural Combat where Malefort, who has resolved to ravish his own daughter, is struck by lightning. Moreover, the sympathetic relationship between nature and the human world that is illustrated by the storms and earthquakes in Julius Caesar, or Duncan's horses devouring each other in Macbeth, does not exist in Ford's playworld. Nor do we see here the readiness to believe in supernatural agencies that Webster portrays through Antonio's terrified contemplation of his monogrammed handkerchief smeared with his blood, in the second act of The Duchess of Malfi.

Ford's by contrast is a materialistic world. The settings of The Broken Heart and, to some extent, The Queen may be exotic but this does not conceal the objective facts of the world presented there. Events are clearly explained by and firmly related to material circumstances and psychological necessities, and the remoteness of location does not allow marvellous happenings by suspending nature's laws as it does on the enchanted island of The Tempest. In Ford's plays events are what they seem to be. They have no supernatural association or significance, reveal no aspect of an existence beyond what is immediately visible, and suggest no symbolic cosmology as the stormy heath does in King Lear. This is emphatically the world of man; even nature, in the ecological sense, is conspicuously absent from the plays. They are rather set almost exclusively in an artificial environment. The only play in which characters at all appear in a setting of nature is Perkin Warbeck but even there the Scottish borderland or the Cornish coast are merely transit points in the journey from royal court to court. This is strictly a human world where nature's presence is not felt, nor the intrusion of the supernatural. We see a man-made world, separated both from the natural and the supernatural levels of existence, of which the centre is the prince's court or the great man's home. The sociology of Ford's world is therefore to be worked out in terms of relationships between men and women who are seen as being responsible for their lives rather than being guided by forces outside the world of men.

Looking at the human community in this world, we perceive some established and recurrent patterns of social relationships. We see a strongly patriarchal society in which authority is vested in the elders and where the father figure is an ubiquitous symbol of social organization. The hierarchy of age is accepted as inviolable and disregard of it is a sign of the catastrophic subjection of reason to passion that ruins the lives of the protagonists. We have the evidence of the Cardinal in 'Tis Pity that Giovanni's crime is not only against his sister but against his father as well: "Monster of children, see what thou hast done,/Broke thy father's heart!" (V.vi.63-4). In The Broken Heart Ithocles sets in motion Orgilus's revenge plot when in the pride of his youth he breaks the match made by his father between Orgilus and Penthea. Ithocles himself acknowledges the harm that can be done by "the heat/of an unsteady youth, a giddy brain,/Green indiscretion" (II.ii.44-6). Although the kingdom owes much to Ithocles, he does not belong to the inner circle of the rulers. Effective power remains in the hands of the king and his two elderly counsellors, Armostes and Crotolon. With this equation of age with power and wisdom goes the idea of unquestioned male domination. The failing health of the king gives urgency to the question of succession because he has no son, and when his concern is increased by the oracle's dark hint that his death will "cause to quail the budding grape" (IV.iii.26), that is, Calantha's death, he is assured by Armostes that all will be well when "Her marriage

with some neighbouring prince" strengthens the nation "with a sovereignty of power" (IV.iii.32-4). The principle of male superiority is seen in an extreme form in The Queen where the queen submits meekly to her husband's tyranny. This, of course, relates Ford's plays to conventional attitudes regarding the subservience of women. The patient Griseldas or faithful Euphrasias are too commonly found for us to make female submission a major issue here. But we may note that the kind of second look at woman's status hinted at by Shakespeare when he grants Portia not only independence but superiority of judgement, or when he raises Volumnia in Coriolanus to the status of the head of the family, is never taken by Ford. This conventionality is one of the factors that makes the social structure of his playworld rigid and incapable of change.

The patriarchal nature of the social power-structure is more pronounced in Perkin Warbeck than anywhere else in Ford. In that play that structure is represented by the relationship between its three main characters. The elderly King Henry proves his political acumen and his worth as the healer of the "bleeding wounds" of the state. Indeed, it is easy to see Perkin Warbeck's rebellion as a metaphor for the opposition between wise age and rash youth, a theme supported by the nearly disastrous impetuosity of young James the Fourth the Scottish king whose political salvation comes through his submission to King Henry who says approvingly, "A' studies to be wise betimes" (V.ii.19). Warbeck, on the other hand, is "This cub" (I.i.104),

"this young Phaethon" (II.iii.16), who in "A frenzy of aspiring youth hath danced" (V.ii.51).

Authority and age go together again in Love's Sacrifice. The elderly Duke is brought to ruin by the rash love of Bianca and Fernando whose youth is repeatedly contrasted with the Duke's age. Equally responsible for the Duke's downfall is his sister, Fiormonda, "that glorious widow" (I.i.92), who asserts, "My blood is not yet freez'd.../...my lips are warm" (I.ii.529-31). There is no necessary correlation between youth and wickedness, for neither Fernando nor Bianca, nor even Fiormonda could be called evildoers as D'Avolos and Ferentes undoubtedly could. But it is plainly suggested that the ardour of undisciplined youth rebelling against the established order results in disaster. This message of the main action of this play is repeated in a coarser way by the subplot where the vulnerability of youth is given an epitaph, ironically enough by Ferentes in his dying moment: "My forfeit was in my blood, and my life hath answer'd it" (III.iv.1893).

The hierarchy of age and sex is part of the larger hierarchy of power in the state. It is headed by the monarch in The Broken Heart, Love's Sacrifice, The Queen and in Perkin Warbeck. In The Lover's Melancholy power is concentrated in the hands of a small group of the king's counsellors who, however, exert themselves only on his behalf. 'Tis Pity is different from the other plays in having a domestic rather than a courtly setting. However, social organization is no

less hierarchical here, the ultimate power being concentrated in the hands of the Cardinal. His unquestioned status as the final authority responsible for dealing out justice proves how firmly the ideals of duty and obedience are built into the social framework. Though demonstrably corrupt, he is accepted as the head of the commonwealth because he is a prince of the Church.

This authoritarianism is not of course an exclusive feature of Ford's plays but a characteristic of the drama of his time, of which the most extreme example appears in Beaumont and Fletcher's The Maid's Tragedy. In Ford there is neither the absolute royalism nor the articulation of a thesis on degree, as in the speech of Ulysses in Troilus and Cressida (I.iii). What we find, however, has a direct bearing upon the shaping of action. The binding nature of the hierarchical order makes submission to authority an essential requirement in Ford's plays. This is the gist, in 'Tis Pity, both of the Friar's advice to Giovanni and the Cardinal's assumption of superiority over the citizens of Parma. Their claims provide the play with a framework of social expectations that cannot accommodate Giovanni's assertion of personal judgment. This incompatibility lies at the root of his feeling of estrangement. In the course of this study we shall note the presence of similar social expectations in other plays as well.

A close look at the social framework of Ford's plays suggests that its influence on character is not to be ignored.

That influence gains particular point because Ford's protagonists are driven by passion to unusual forms of action. Since they are also aware that they deviate from normal conduct, as it is interpreted in their world, their understanding of the ethical implications of social relationships exerts an influence on their actions. Consequently, the social situation in Ford's plays brings into sharper focus actions that define character. In dealing with the individual plays in the chapters that follow, we must therefore consider the individual's relationship with the group to discover the constraints against which must be set the elements of character shaping the action.

These constraints never give rise to the conflicts between social duty and individual will that we later find in the neo-classical drama of Otway and Dryden, and perhaps more memorably in Corneille and Racine.<sup>17</sup> But feeble as they are as final determinants, these constraints are necessary factors in modifying the play of passion in Ford's plays. For this reason the progress of Ford's protagonists to their destiny cannot be considered as independent events but must be judged with reference to the conditions of life in the playworld.

### Chapter III

#### 'TIS PITY SHE'S A WHORE

The pressure of the social environment upon the individual is nowhere more apparent in Ford's plays than in 'Tis Pity She's a Whore. The theme of incest on which the play is based brings forward the conflict of two contrary moral codes, one collective and the other personal. The play's social world has a rigid structure of authority and a correspondingly inflexible code of moral behaviour backed by definite religious beliefs. It has established values and expects the individual to share them and to accept the code of conduct authorized by those values. Accordingly, the individual is required to fit his private psychological necessities to the demands of the social code. 'Tis Pity makes it clear from the beginning that Giovanni is in love with his sister Annabella and so incapable of such adjustments. The conflict between social and private necessities is sharply drawn throughout the play which opens with Friar Bonaventura's injunction to Giovanni: "Dispute no more in this, for know, young man,/These are no school-points" (I.i.1-2). The phraseology suggests that the Friar sees the situation as a debate between himself as the representative of the established moral code, and Giovanni as the challenger of

that code. The Friar explains Giovanni's obligations to society in plain language. While doing so, he also makes clear the divine source of his own authority: "Heaven admits no jest" (4). The "Majesty above" (67-8) enjoins upon Giovanni an immediate recantation of his "unranged almost blasphemy" (line 45).

The Friar himself is forbidden by his religion from indulging in ethical speculations outside the limits set by established schools. Giovanni's reasoning cannot move the Friar who "may not hear it" (I.i.12). He views Giovanni's reasoning as "nice philosophy" (I.i.2) which rationalizes immorality and attempts to create an alternative religion celebrating "this idol thou ador'st" (I.i.61). In terms of the moral code stated by the Friar, right and wrong are ranged in an absolute dichotomy that allows no such antinomies as those that attend upon Orestes or Hamlet.

Giovanni is commanded to "Beg Heaven to cleanse the leprosy of lust" (line 74) and he himself sees this as his duty, failure in which can only lead to disaster. He knows that his desires will call down upon him "the rod/Of vengeance" (line 83-84). This awareness of violating an unbending code is made the plainer by Giovanni's lament at his next appearance, in the following scene, when he recounts his efforts at controlling his passion with prayers, tears and daily fasts (I.ii.139-50). Finding himself caught between his passion and a strict moral order he cries out,

O that it were not in religion a sin  
 To make our love a god and worship it!  
 (I.ii.145-6)

The social ramifications of the moral system, against which Giovanni's love shows so darkly, are clear. The world of 'Tis Pity is hierarchical and the rules of duty and obedience are authorized by religion. The function of religion in formulating the moral code is first seen in the opening scene. Later in the play, after Grimaldi's assassination of Bergetto the Cardinal's speeches in Act III, scene ix, show that religion not only controls moral conduct, it even assumes temporal power. Both the hierarchical order of society and the paramount authority of organized religion are manifest in the play because the Cardinal holds the position of the ruler of this particular world; he appears only twice in the play, in Act III, scene ix, and in Act V, scene vi, but on both occasions exercises his power with absolute authority. He does this in his capacity as "nuncio from the Pope" (III.ix.54). The Pope is nominally the supreme authority in the playworld but the actual power is wielded by the Cardinal. In Act III, scene ix, he not only receives into his protection his nephew Grimaldi, the unrepentent murderer of Bergetto, but even condones the crime with a sneer at the insignificance of mere citizens. The citizens accept his ruling even though they are affronted by his perversion of justice. They are not quite the common herd as the Cardinal's treatment of their petition might suggest, or he would not have addressed them with the respect implicit in

"masters of the commonwealth" (III.ix.36). His contempt for them, which includes the murdered man, shocks the citizens and calls forth Donado's bitter question, "Is this a churchman's voice? Dwells Justice here?" (III.ix.63). Florio concurs: "Justice is fled to Heaven and comes no nearer." (III.ix.64). Yet the hold of duty remains unbroken. In the same speech Florio calls his companions back to social reality: "Great men may do their wills, we must obey" (III.ix.69). The timid indignation that briefly agitates the two elders of this community is quickly suppressed by the thought of the duty that goes with their station in life. That duty they place above family ties although those ties themselves are strong, as we see in Florio's concern for his children and his expectations from them. Donado on his part feels responsible for his foolish nephew and tries to get him established in life through a good marriage, but his affection cannot rise above his submission to authority. Florio's or Donado's status as leading citizens merely marks their place in the institutional hierarchy which is headed, for practical purposes, by the Cardinal. His corrupt nature reveals itself on his first appearance as well as in the last scene of the play where he metes out arbitrary and unequal justice, ordering Putana to be burnt on Vasques' accusation,<sup>1</sup> dispensing with "grounds of reason" in pardoning Vasques and quickly appropriating "all the gold and jewels, or whatsoever" (V.vi.148) for the church. Greed and perversion of justice are nowhere more apparent than in the Cardinal's actions, and yet Donado, who has reason to question the Cardinal's ideas of justice, applauds his action as "most just" (ibid., 135) and

readily agrees to carry out the sentence on Putana. Corrupt or not, authority is expected to be obeyed in the world of the play.

Hierarchy and institutionalism hold together the society pictured here. The relationship of master and subject is seen not only in the Cardinal's arrogance but also in the three separate sets of family ties. Equally evident is the unquestioned acceptance of institutions such as the family and church, the interests of which are expected to preempt the individual's private interests. In Florio is the unquestioned master of his family, as Donado is of his. By contrast, Richardetto's position as master has been totally eroded by his wife's and Soranzo's joint betrayal of the institution of marriage. This necessitates his disguise and explains his inability to return to his world in his own shape until the usurpers have departed. The hierarchical pattern of society is well reflected in the different sets of master-subject relationships. Florio, Donado and Richardetto are socially inferior to the Cardinal and subject to his will but they themselves rule over their families with complete authority or expect to do so. One cause of their misfortune is that their power is not as real as the Cardinal's, for those over whom they have authority by social sanction consistently defy them. The betrayal of Richardetto is a matter of "common voice" (II.iii.13), known to all, as Putana tells Annabella (I.ii.92-4), but the violation of the familial authority turns out to be universal. This is most shockingly found in the case of Giovanni and

Annabella but essayed even by the good-natured Bergetto who demolishes Donado's hopes of a good match for him and attaches himself to Philotis.

At the lowest level in the play's social hierarchy we find the servants, Poggio, Putana and Vasques. Vasques is incomparably superior to the other two in intelligence and force of character, and by his shrewd handling of Hippolita and Putana shows himself to be one of the chief manipulators of the action of the play. His influence on his master, Soranzo, is great. When Soranzo discovers Annabella's infidelity and in his rage comes near killing her, it is Vasques who persuades him to pull back in favour of a more comprehensive revenge. In fashioning that vengeance too it is Vasques who plays the leading role rather than Soranzo. Yet Ford takes care to keep before us the identity of Vasques as Soranzo's servant. The barb in Soranzo's rebuke to Grimaldi in Act I, scene ii, is that Grimaldi deserves no better attention than chastisement by Soranzo's servant (I.ii.43-4). Vasques himself takes pride in being a totally loyal and resourceful servant when he justifies his conduct at the end of the play: "What I have done was my duty, and I repent nothing but that the loss of my life had not ransomed his" (V.vi.119-21). In their humble and foolish ways Putana and Poggio show similar attachment to their masters, Annabella and Bergetto. Even Putana's betrayal of her mistress's secret to Vasques only proves her eagerness to help Annabella. Poggio on

his part is not only Bergetto's faithful servant and constant companion but is the only person in the play to show real grief at Bergetto's death (III.viii.21 and 38).

Submission to authority and acceptance of hierarchy are signs both of the structured nature of the social world of 'Tis Pity and of the inflexibility of that structure. But 'Tis Pity also records the constant endeavour of the individual psyche to preserve its autonomy. Seen against this background, human action appears to be the product of two forces, one of social rules and the other of private psychological necessity. Since these are contrary forces, the actions of rebels, such as Giovanni and Hippolita, raise a barrier between society and themselves. Giovanni in particular attempts to build a private world within the public and it is his failure to create a secure private domain no less than his estrangement from the public world that is illustrated by the unfolding of the plot. Giovanni and Hippolita, and by association Annabella, are presented to us as examples of egocentric rebellion and are rejected by society because they reject its laws. There is no evidence to show whether Ford himself approves of these laws or admires rebellion against them. Whether he wishes the audience to accept or reject rebellion is also uncertain, for the condemnation of unlawful love is tempered throughout by constant acknowledgements of the noble nature of Giovanni. Annabella is more an object of pity than repugnance and the play, as its title indicates, ends on a note of pity rather than

indignation. The final judgment passed upon Annabella, by no less important a personage than the Cardinal, is singularly mild: "Who could not say, 'tis pity she's a whore?" (V.vi.160). It is evident that Ford allows his audience to see that extreme personal freedom and a rigid social code are irreconcilable, and he leaves the audience free to choose either as an ideal. Cyrus Hoy draws a parallel between Marlowe's Faustus and Ford's Giovanni, as intellectuals who employ a false logic to support an individualistic system of ethics.<sup>2</sup> This parallel should perhaps be extended to consider the neutral attitude assumed by Marlowe and Ford as regards moral rebellion. Ford remains content to provide the audience with clear portrayals of the opposing elements of the moral problem. On the one hand he presents individuals such as Giovanni, Annabella and Hippolita who in various degrees press claims of personal freedom. On the other hand he presents a structured society with a defined system of relationships among its members, and shows how this system is supported by a code of social obligations. The requirements of that code are, as we have seen, stated unambiguously at the very beginning by the Friar. The principle that the Friar chiefly impresses upon Giovanni is that of submission to a higher power, one that is "above the sun" (I.i.11). The theology of this society thus upholds a specific code of conduct and fortifies the expectations of the group against its individual members.

Giovanni's decision to defy society and to reveal his love to Annabella is significant for a number of reasons. On

tracing the development of the chain of events it is found that Giovanni's self-revelation sets the action of the play in motion. But equally important is the fact that it also sets Giovanni and Annabella apart from their fellow-men. Their alienation is deliberately underscored in the play by their ritual of troth-plighting. The potency of their betrothal, strong enough to withstand Annabella's marriage to Soranzo, does not rest upon lust<sup>3</sup> but upon an intangible identity of spirit which Giovanni tries to explain as part of the design of nature. In his disputation with the Friar in Act I, scene i, Giovanni argues,

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 the other bound  
 So much the more by nature, by the links  
 Of blood, of reason--nay if you will have't,  
 Even of religion--to be ever one,  
 One soul, one flesh, one love, one heart, one all?  
(I.i.28-34)

The final touch to his persuading of Annabella is,

You  
 My sister Annabella; I know this:  
 And could afford you instance why to love  
 So much the more for this; to which intent  
 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.  
(I.ii.228-34)

Undoubtedly, this is false reasoning in the given context of ethical premises and typical of the "ignorance in knowledge" (II.v.27) that so horrifies the Friar. The latter's dismay is justified, for he perceives Giovanni substituting a personal ethical system for the one accepted by society.

What makes such an anarchical position especially disturbing is that it should involve not only the odd intellectual such as Giovanni but a common earthy creature such as Hippolita. The thematic parallel between the main plot and the Hippolita sub-plot reveals what seems to be a universal malady because Hippolita, unlike Giovanni, is driven merely by common animal instincts undistilled by thought into an aesthetic sensibility.

Ford uses the contraposition of mutually exclusive ethical systems as a structural bond between the separate layers of action. Like Giovanni, Hippolita explains her passion as a force of nature. It is Soranzo's "sensual rage of blood" (II.ii.28) and the "devil in my blood" (line 72) that made her abandon the "honor of my chaster bosom" (line 34) and sacrifice her "modest fame" (line 31). Here, as in Giovanni's self-justification, the dictates of nature are pitted against those of human society. As the Friar puts it,

if we were sure there were no deity,  
Nor Heaven nor hell, then to be led alone  
By nature's light, as were philosophers  
Of elder times, might instance some defense.  
But 'tis not so; then, madman, thou wilt find  
That nature is in Heaven's positions blind.  
(II.v.29-34)

Presented as a formal sentence in the concluding couplet of the passage above, the Friar's rejection of nature's undisciplined liberty appears as part of an institutionalized dogma.

Hippolita and Soranzo are victims of the natural sexual drive as much as Giovanni and Annabella, although the finer

nature of the siblings makes their relationship one of love rather than of lust. One cannot miss the irony here that, of these two pairs of lovers, those guilty of the graver transgression should be the purer at heart. It is necessary to take note of Ford's attempt to persuade the audience that Giovanni and Annabella are sincere in their love and are not drawn merely by sexual appetite. Because of Ford's emphasis, their total commitment to each other seems to bear a moral meaning as an alternative ethical ideal. The attempt to enlist the spectator's sympathy for Giovanni and Annabella seems deliberate, for their courtship is presented as a set-piece belonging to the literary convention of romantic love.<sup>4</sup> Giovanni's declaration of love with bared breast (--"Rip up my bosom," I.i.210--) and his protestation that he may live only if Annabella yields to him, are components of a formalized situation. The exchange eventually develops into a formal betrothal per verba praesenti, as in The Witch of Edmonton, The Miseries of Enforced Marriage and The Duchess of Malfi. But the demonstration of true love between Giovanni and Annabella is not the sole function of the episode; the siblings' assumption of attitudes proper to legitimate love heightens our perception of the difference between that love and theirs. Their integrity enlists our sympathy but appears at the same time to be a questionable virtue because it is placed in the context of incest. As a result, the love of Giovanni and Annabella, ironically the only instance in the play of true and unconditional love, designates them as aliens at war with the world of the play.

The defiance of society is the measure of passion's hold over Giovanni, Annabella and Hippolita. Their surrender to passion is the more disturbing because they are capable of making reasoned choices. Their actions reveal a great deal of self-consciousness and proceed from deliberate decisions. Giovanni considers pros and cons and then decides, "I'll tell her that I love her, though my heart/Were rated at the price of that attempt" (I.iii.156-7). Annabella's surrender is not a response to his rhetoric, nor an impulsive act but a step over which "My captive heart had long ago resolved" (I.ii.161-2). On Hippolita's part, however powerful her passion might have been, she never says that she yielded to Soranzo without knowing what she was doing. On the contrary, she seems to have weighed Soranzo's position and his protestations of faith carefully before deliberately sending her husband on a hazardous journey (II.ii.67-81). Here as in the story of Giovanni and Annabella, a particular course of life is embarked upon, not blindly but with deliberate thought and understanding of the probable penalties involved. Both the main and the sub-plot make the point that the destiny of the characters is self-chosen. Further, given the unbreakable authority of the rules of conduct, the decisions that launch the characters into their individual courses are irreversible and exclude all others. Once Hippolita forsakes her "lawful bed;" she is committed to dependence upon Soranzo and to the loss of her reputation. When Giovanni and Annabella opt for their "stolen contents;" the

pressing necessity for secrecy bars them from honest relationships with their friends. It is the illegitimacy of their relationship again which forces on them the contingency of Annabella's marriage with Soranzo. The connection between their initial action and the subsequent course of their lives is perfectly clear, because the two stages of action are related as cause and effect. Transgressions against the social code, whether it is incest or infidelity, at once transforms the transgressors into outcasts. They have no option but to pay the penalty for deviation from the social norm. The lack of opportunities to re-establish themselves as honorable members of society is seen particularly clearly in the lives of Annabella and Hippolita. Being women they are more vulnerable because the discovery of their secrets is easier, and they are for that reason the more frantic to find solutions. In the case of Annabella, her problem is not simply that the only option she has is to find a husband to give a name to her child but also that she does not have a choice of suitors as she had had at the beginning of the play. Grimaldi is debarred by his conduct from the time he first appears, and Bergetto, who would have been the perfect dupe, relinquishes his claim in Act II, scene vi, before Annabella's problems begin. Giovanni too is forced by Annabella's pregnancy and their illegitimate love into accepting Annabella's marriage.

As the action unfolds, we observe the progressive curtailment of free choice for those who set up their own frame of values in opposition to that of society. The irony of the

situation lies in the fact that these characters are themselves responsible for creating their prisons. Once they admit the supremacy of their desires, the shape of their lives is determined. After Hippolita is rejected by Soranzo in Act II, scene ii, and after Giovanni discovers Annabella's pregnancy in Act III, scene iii, it seems that Giovanni and Hippolita have no option but to submit to the retribution meted out by society, as Annabella, the weaker character is ready to do. However, it is precisely at these critical points of their lives that Giovanni and Hippolita refuse to submit. They persuade themselves that though all is lost, they may yet transcend the web of circumstances and assert their individual will through the only course open to them. That course, for both, is to launch into some violent act that embodies their defiance. In the case of the less sensitive Hippolita defiance is equated with revenge. For Giovanni, however, the final grand gesture comprises not only revenge but also self-destruction, for it is his resolute welcoming of calamity that proves to him his superiority over the common run of people around him by whose judgment he is robbed of his joy. Hippolita thinks that her determination entitles her to respect and admiration. She has "a spirit doth as much distaste/The slavery of fearing thee, as thou/Dost loathe the memory of what hath pass'd" (II.ii.42-4). Soranzo's treachery can no longer weaken her, for "I'm arm'd in my resolves" (III.viii.14). In moments of total defeat fortitude emerges as the residual instrument of self-

affirmation. Even timid, gentle Annabella, when threatened by Soranzo, defies him by refusing to be intimidated: "I dare thee to the worst: strike, and strike home." (IV.iii.70). She can laugh at Soranzo and sing even when he actually drags her by her hair (IV.iii.60-61) because she sets no value on her life as ordinary people do: "I prize my life/As nothing" (IV.iii.94-5). She transcends physical weakness by the integrity of her fortitude. Her brave defiance lends irony to the portrayal of Soranzo dragging her by the hair, for the stage-image becomes a symbol of the will conquering brute force.

The same kind of unswerving resolution marks Giovanni's reaction to disaster but, as befits his philosophical inclinations, it is articulated with clarity and precision. When the Friar brings him the letter from Annabella written in her blood, his response to it is that even if it is genuine its warning can change neither his love, nor his life:

Death? I'll not fear  
An armed thunderbolt aim'd at my heart.  
She writes, we are discovered--pox on dreams  
Of low faint-hearted cowardice!

(V.iii.33-6)

His courage arises out of his nature, not out of his suspicion that the letter might be forged, as he learns immediately that it is genuine enough. His decision to persist in his ways is based on a clear recognition of facts, not on foolish bravado as in the case of Bussy d'Ambois, for example, who refuses to accept the warnings of the spirits, of the letter written in Tamyra's blood, and her own verbal warning. The scene in

'Tis Pity (V.iii) is carefully built up to underline Giovanni's fortitude and his perception of his place in his world. As the scene opens we find Giovanni congratulating himself on winning "the glory/Of two united hearts like hers and mine!" (V.iii.11-12). He has created a world for himself which he would not change "for the best to come:/A life of pleasure is Elysium" (V.iii.15-16). On this cue the Friar enters with Annabella's letter and the next moment Giovanni's world "and all of happiness" (V.iii.14) lie in pieces. Reversal of fortune could hardly be more sudden and shattering. Giovanni responds neither with fear nor with grief but with scorn. A second test of his spirit follows at once in the form of Soranzo's invitation brought by Vasques. Giovanni's reply to this is significant: "Yes, tell him I dare come" (V.iii.47). That this reply is designed as a moment of theatrical climax is indicated by Ford who makes Vasques seize upon Giovanni's phrase in pointed surprise: "Dare come?" Giovanni interprets this as an immediate challenge and the subsequent exchange of short, staccato lines sharpens our sense of challenge and response. The situation can be described as the individual's stand against the world. The attitude that such resolute courage suggests is reinforced by the martial imagery of the concluding part of the scene:

Stood death  
 Threat'ning his armies of confounding plagues,  
 With hosts of dangers hot as blazing stars,  
 I would be there. Not go? Yes, and resolve  
 To strike as deep in slaughter as they all.  
 (V.iii.58-62)

Giovanni's position is signified by the image: "I have set up my rest" (V.iii.72) and his motives and values by this:

If I must totter like a well-grown oak,  
Some under-shrubs shall in my mighty fall  
Be crushed to splits; with me they all shall perish:  
(V.iii.77-9)

"Some under-shrubs" has a wider application than Giovanni suspects; in the event everyone close to him perishes, including his innocent father. Giovanni loses sight of everything except his need to prove himself stronger than the society which denies him freedom as he understands it.

Since the affirmation of self-esteem is so inextricably linked with the idea of relentless battle and destruction, violence becomes in 'Tis Pity something more than the eruption of passions. It becomes the object of careful planning so that by its perfection its executor may prove himself (or herself) superior to his peers. As an activity designed at once to be perfect and to secure public attention, and also to communicate a message of self-affirmation, violence assumes the role of art. In a thought-provoking essay Maurice Charney examines the aesthetic function of violence in Elizabethan drama but fails to note its significance as an activity that, like art, separates the individual from the group.<sup>5</sup> The very excess that characterizes super-villains such as Barabas or Ferdinand, or desperate revengers such as Hieronimo or Vindice, and places them beyond normal feelings of pity and horror, also raises their actions to the level of art. Charney observes that in

episodes of violence the "will and being of the characters are both displayed and put to the proof."<sup>6</sup> We may add that violence also achieves an effect of alienation in the Brechtian sense. It jolts the audience out of empathy with the protagonists and forces the audience to recognize them as strangers in their own world. The rejection of the protagonists from the playworld is thereby made to seem inevitable.

We may also note that the perception of the Elizabethan dramatists went deeper than a horrified fascination with violence. The killer's pride in a finely tuned piece of mayhem is in truth part of the larger neurosis of the compulsion to prove oneself superior to all rivals. That Elizabethan dramatists were deeply concerned with this neurosis is suggested by their preoccupation with ambition as a moral problem. Furthermore, this compulsion to rise above others appeared to them as a malady frequently discovered in comic as well as tragic situations, although in comic situations the neurosis is less intense. Indeed, such situations are comic precisely because the malady is controllable and therefore does not set its victims irretrievably apart from the spectator. That is why in comedy it does not alienate the audience from the protagonist as it does in tragedy. Elizabethan dramatists had a deep interest in the impact on society of rapacious, predatory individuals, and this interest resulted in comedies about cheats and rogues and tragedies centred around overreachers. Volpone, A New Way to Pay Old Debts, and Michaelmas Term make

telling sociological points because they examine the compulsive need of a certain type of men who trample others underfoot in an effort to reach the top.

Seen in this context of fundamental psychology, Giovanni, Vindice and Bosola are not unrelated to Volpone, Mosca, Sir Giles Overreach and Ephestian Quomodo. The violence implicit in the cheat's knavery or the usurer's machinations is not the less destructive for being bloodless. The edge to the roguery of Volpone and Mosca is put on by their insistence that their aim is not merely to accumulate wealth but to do so by outwitting the world and thus proving themselves better than the richest and the most powerful members of the community. Mosca's analysis of the knave's character is most illuminating:

O! your parasite  
Is a most precious thing, dropt from above  
Not bred 'mongst clods and clodpoles, here on earth.  
But your fine elegant rascal, that can rise,  
And stoop, almost together, like an arrow;  
(Volpone, III.i.7-11)<sup>7</sup>

The aesthetic of villainy is succinctly set out earlier in the play by Volpone who says:

Yet I glory  
More in the cunning purchase of my wealth,  
Than in the glad possession, since I gain  
No common way;  
(I.i.30-33)

Quomodo's chief satisfaction lies in calling himself "landed Master Quomodo" and imagining the splash he will make in society. Sir Giles Overreach "will cut his neighbour's throat" to gain his ends. A New Way to Pay Old Debts comes close to the actual violence seen in tragedy in its portrayal of the mind

of a predator feeding upon society, when in the last scene of the play *Overreach* runs at his daughter with drawn sword and raves and foams at the mouth as he is being dragged off to Bedlam. From the point of view of social psychology, we may consider characters such as these essentially as disturbed personalities who, in comedy as well as in tragedy, have the identical motivation of reversing relationships of class or status. This similarity between tragedy and comedy may not be apparent at first glance because in comedy aggression does not assume the threatening proportions that it does in tragedy where violence is explicit in a physical sense and we see the murders and maimings directly before our own eyes. Though vital, this is a distinction of degree, not of quality, and cannot conceal the identity of interest between comedy and tragedy with regard to the psychology of violence. In The Revenger's Tragedy Vindice has suffered because he is weaker than the lecherous duke and unable to protect his lady-love. There is no question that the third act of the play reverses that relationship definitively. In Volpone, Mosca, a mere parasite, has no social status and yet he has the pillars of Venetian society fawning upon him. Bosola's is a more complex but similar case. His initial discontent is with the cool reception his services get. Since he finds himself powerless to right his wrongs, he blames it all on the nature of mankind and in the role of a malcontent he finds a bitter joy in discovering corruption everywhere and includes in his general

censure the private life of the Duchess. His hate incapacitates him to distinguish between the moral identities of the Duchess and her brothers. The shock of her death--the greater because he participates in her murder--awakens him to the realization that once again he has been used as a tool. His turnabout at the end of the fourth act of the play is therefore motivated as much by a desire to avenge the Duchess as to avenge himself on her brothers for having enslaved him.

Such sophisticated dealers in death as Bosola or Giovanni are of course not to be equated with fiendish villains like D'Amville or Deflores who kill for specific ends. The point at issue here is not violence itself but attitudes to violence. However unreasonable it may seem that Giovanni or Bosola should see themselves as wronged by the world and punish it for their own wrongdoings, there is no doubt that they eventually find themselves rejected by the world and feel that they are left with no option but to fight. In such a situation of incurable antagonism, violence becomes the only way to prove one's worth. Violence, like art, immortalizes. That such a character as Giovanni finds himself in an utterly irreducible situation is obviously his own doing. His fate is the creation of his own nature and this responsibility of the sufferer for his suffering is a basic element of tragedy in 'Tis Pity. One senses here an Aristotelian perception of the tragic in human life and this sense is augmented by the sympathy secured for Giovanni and Annabella, of which we have taken note earlier.

At the same time, 'Tis Pity is unrelenting in its emphasis on human responsibility. Early in the play the major characters make decisions that irrevocably shape their actions. Subsequently, they have opportunities to reverse or alter their way of life but their initial decisions do not allow them to take up these options. After Annabella's marriage Giovanni might have, had he so wanted, kept away from her but his decision to enjoy his sister remains firm and when he realizes the impossibility of fulfilling his desire, the only option he accepts is that of death. A similar either-or attitude characterizes Hippolita. Her rejection at Soranzo's hands might have turned her to a fresh direction in life had she not been so thoroughly ruled by her original purpose of possessing him that she must needs claim him for her own, permanently, by killing him. Annabella, the one central figure who wants to re-order her life, is not allowed a second chance as she is betrayed by her "too fruitful womb" (V.vi.48) which is of course a consequence of what her "captive heart had long ago resolved" (I.ii.246). At every stage of the action the protagonists choose what turns out to be the worst of all possible courses for themselves. Clearly, they do so under the influence of intense passion. The portrayal of its intensity is not, as some critics have felt, the product of a sensationalist purpose but a strategy to create an ambivalence in the response of the spectator, for the very extremity of passion proves at once its integrity and destructive influence over judgment.

Human responsibility for tragedy is defined in 'Tis Pity first as surrender to passion, and secondly as false perception. The surrender of Giovanni and Annabella to desire is reflected, as we have seen, in a coarser way in the life of Hippolita and in Grimaldi's desperate eagerness to murder a rival, which leads to Bergetto's death. Grimaldi acknowledges that assassination is "an unnoble act, and not becomes/A soldier's valor" (III.v.3-4) but his so-called love compels him to follow "some angry justice" (III.vii.6). His murder of Bergetto and Hippolita's plot against Soranzo demonstrate the driving force of passion and confirm the thesis underlying the love of Giovanni and Annabella that uncontrolled passions lie at the roots of tragedy. This general notion is hardly unique to Ford. But Ford, instead of merely reiterating the idea of man's enslavement to passion, refines that idea.. into a specific concept of the perversion of judgment. He shows that passion erodes judgment not only by swamping the mind with desire but by actually inducing a false perception of the self in relation to the outside world. Giovanni and Hippolita are striking examples of the subjective taking full control of the objective self. Several critics have commented upon Giovanni's casuistry,<sup>8</sup> but it is not only to his false logic and pseudo-Platonic justification of incest that attention should be directed in considering the problem of false perception, although the two are related. To his self-justification we must add his readiness to consider himself betrayed and injured as he fails to

have his own way. When Annabella is persuaded by the Friar to accept Soranzo, Giovanni phrases his reaction thus: "I fear this friar's falsehood" (III.vi.49). In the last act again he reproaches Annabella with faithlessness. He becomes incapable of recognizing his culpability, for the perversion of his understanding takes the form of a conviction that his is a special kind of incest, investing it with the highest morality. His and Annabella's is a "sacred love" (V.v.57), Annabella is worthy "to fill a throne/Of innocence and sanctity in Heaven" (V.v.64-5) and although they are being penalized by the world, it is only because the world is blind. He is confident that in "after times",

When they but know  
Our loves, that love will wipe away that rigor,  
Which would in other incests be abhorr'd.  
(V.v.71-3)

This invincible conviction of worth is what transforms the gory killing of Annabella into a sacrificial offering to the spirit. Death is by no means an expediency but a statement of self-approbation. It is therefore not a mark of defeat but a prologue to augmented honour, and by arranging his death in a spectacularly public setting Giovanni expects to establish his superiority over those "under-shrubs" around him. The theme of a unifying love ritually affirmed in the first act comes to perfection in the fifth. The contract between brother and sister at the beginning of the play--"Love me or kill me" (I.ii.252,255)--is fulfilled in the explicit equation of love and killing at the conclusion.

In Hippolita's story the element of false perception is of equal importance. Admittedly, she has cause to plot vengeance against Soranzo whose double-dealing is too much even for Vasques. But her own integrity becomes suspect when in the course of storming at Soranzo she denies her own part in her downfall, even while admitting that she had deliberately considered the prospect of a permanent relationship with Soranzo. She sees herself as a wronged woman but we know, on her own evidence that she had plotted the death of her husband, that "Unhappy man, to buy his death so dear/With my advice!" (II.ii.79-80). Moreover, one immoral act leads to another, murder following upon lust,<sup>9</sup> and the hollowness of Hippolita's large claims of honour is soon evident in her attempt to suborn Vasques by prostituting herself: "wert thou mine, and would'st be private to me and my designs, I here protest, myself, and all what I can else call mine, should be at thy dispose" (II.ii.137-9). Hippolita's furious appearance in this scene provides visual proof that passion has made her frantic. Vasques' reproach, "Fie, mistress, you are not near the limits of reason" (II.ii.61), is a literal description of her state in which she cannot recognize her own culpability.

Through these revelations of character the failure of reason is shown to be a result of overwhelming passion. This explains the errors of judgment by which Hippolita and Giovanni see themselves as victims. Hippolita's coarser nature is incapable of looking beyond her immediate interest and her

attempt to assert her rights involves Soranzo alone. But the finer mind, the trained intellect of Giovanni, "that miracle of wit...wonder of thine age" (I.i.47-9) seizes upon his fundamental isolation from society at large. Unlike Annabella, who confesses, "My conscience now stands up against my lust" (V.i.9), Giovanni feels no urge to be accepted by the group whose taboos he has violated. Through repentance, Annabella regains her sense of identity with her fellow-men and finds a kind of listless peace; for Giovanni and Hippolita it is war to the last. They die like rebels, crying defiance against society and reiterating till the end their faith in the courses they had chosen. Annabella, on the other hand, turns her eyes towards heaven. She dies a sinner but recognizes the play's framework of established values. Significantly enough, Richardetto's comments on the death of Giovanni and Hippolita are virtually identical; he sees in their death "the end/Of lust and pride" (IV.i.101-2) and the "effect of lust and pride" (V.vi.153). Calamity is seen here to be brought about by unruly passion as well as an arrogant assertion of the self. The comparative validity of public or private morality is of course immaterial in 'Tis Pity, for what the tragedy implies is the irreconcilability of the two. Whether incest is right or wrong is not the question, nor marital fidelity as such. The real issue is that Giovanni, Annabella and Hippolita choose to reject the laws of their group and to live by their own laws. These are mutually exclusive sets of laws. Moreover, the very

concept of personal ethical systems operating parallel to the corporate system contradicts the concept of the group. By the necessities of its existence society must always reject the rebel. The greater the polarity of the two sets of laws, the greater must be the distance between the rebel and his parent group. Besides the physical decimation therefore, 'Tis Pity also presents a process of progressive alienation which is the more fearful for not being engineered by fate or accident but proceeding out of man's own nature. The strict causal framework of the play, which has been noted in the previous chapter, both enforces the inevitability of disaster and intensifies the spectator's awareness of the growing loneliness of the principal characters by linking it with their tragedy. From the very beginning of the play Giovanni focuses our attention on his special kind of character, one that suffers from hopeless love as from "incurable and restless wounds" (I.ii.143). His decision to declare his love is, as he well knows, one that sets him upon a lonely path, for before he treads it he deliberately consigns "fear and low faint-hearted shame with slaves" (I.ii.155) and abandons "smooth-cheek'd virtue" (I.ii.223). When he and Annabella exchange vows they create a special world of their own closed to all else. This sense of existing in a private and self-supporting world is strengthened by Giovanni's assertion, reminiscent of Donne, that he holds himself, "in being king of thee/More great than were I King of all the world" (II.i.19-20). In terms of practical necessity

too, their love must be secret and this again raises a barrier of complicity and fear. Annabella tells Putana, "I would not have it known for all the world" (II.i.50), and the duplicity she learns in her "paradise of joy" (II.i.43) is at once demonstrated dramatically in the act she puts on for her father in this scene, sitting demurely with her needle-work. She has become a stranger to her father. Later, she repulses with equal determination the attempts at friendship made by Philotis.

The progress of Giovanni's estrangement seems less marked if we remember that Ford presents him as one who had never been too close to anyone other than his tutor. As a scholar he is evidently acknowledged by his family to be somewhat different from ordinary people. He is "so devoted to his book," says Florio, "I doubt his health" (I.iii.5-6). Giovanni already belongs to a different climate, from which he draws sustenance in the form of a certain skill in logic. This skill he uses to construct an ethical framework that holds together his private world. We see his alienation in the form of a shallow intellectualism, with which he cuts himself off from ordinary people. The Friar tells us how the university applauded him; yet it is the university that Giovanni rejects first, choosing to be a "castaway/By the religious number" (II.v.5-6) of the Friar's order. He is finally abandoned even by the Friar (in V.iv), Giovanni's only link with the world around him. In his outward behaviour too, Giovanni seems closed to his fellow men. He seldom speaks to anybody but Annabella or the Friar and muses

continually, recapitulating his love and reiterating his rationalizations of it, thus building up for himself an alternative existence. This creating of a private paradise becomes so overwhelming an act of will that he eventually formulates it as the rejection of one world for another:

Let poring book-men dream of other worlds,  
My world, and all of happiness is here,  
And I'd not change it for the best to come:  
A life of pleasure is Elysium.

(V.iii.13-16)

For the spectator this is perhaps the sharpest moment of tragic perception, for he knows, but Giovanni does not, that this "Elysium" is a paradise already invaded by death. What Giovanni declares to be a life of pleasure is in reality the most terrifying agony of all, for it places on him the task of killing what he loves most. We might almost say that with Marlowe's Faustus Giovanni confounds hell in Elysium. Whether Ford uses the word "Elysium" as a deliberate echo of Doctor Faustus can be no more than a speculation, but he does create here, as Marlowe does in his play, a situation in which a man, eminently fit to avoid errors of reasoning, confuses felicity with ruin, life with death. This is indeed a situation central to a long line of dramas that locate the cause of tragedy in man's assumption of final responsibility for himself. The stage-image of a man confident in his powers proclaiming the perfection of his joys and wholly unaware of the imminent blow that shatters his achievements, expresses the fearful ironies inherent in such a choice as Giovanni's. The moment after he

proclaims the perpetual joys of his love we see him standing with Annabella's letter, changing colour (V.iii.27) at his sudden misfortune. The visual moment has in fact the double function of presenting a model of blind confidence and of illustrating the self-chosen exile of Giovanni from the world of his peers. Ford's translation into visual terms of the tragedy of the estranged but noble soul is of primary importance in understanding Ford's concept of tragedy, and instances of this visual technique occur in each of his plays at critical moments. The most striking of such visual presentations in 'Tis Pity is of course Giovanni's last entry with Annabella's heart upon his dagger. Ford sets the stage carefully by having all the main characters seated at the banquet when Giovanni enters. As he stands facing the seated banqueters, he dominates the stage, "trimmed in reeking blood" (V.vi.10) and holding up the impaled heart. Ford isolates him visually from the other characters on the stage and through this isolation supplements our impression of Giovanni's estrangement from his fellow-men, an estrangement that is soon proved by his proud narration of his terrible act. In effect, what Ford achieves here by his stagecraft is a compression of the tragic sense of Giovanni's alienation into the immediate experience of a visual image. In Ford's other celebrated tragedy of passion, The Broken Heart, Orgilus the revenger stands in mid-stage, bleeding to death and surrounded by shocked courtiers. Again, in Perkin Warbeck, Warbeck stands in King Henry's stocks, mocked by the king's

ministers but winning for himself the admiration even of Henry by his undaunted integrity to his royal claims. Such visual compositions, signalling the climax of the process of alienation as they do, epitomize the alienation of Ford's protagonists.

This process of alienation seems inexorable because it depends on a chain of cause and effect. By making one event lead to another, Ford illustrates how, once the initial situation is established and the initial decisions made, nothing can deflect the course of events. Even Bergetto's death is made to seem less of an accident than it is, because our attention is directed at the variety of conflicting schemes set afoot by different characters, including Bergetto himself. Bergetto is anxious to hasten his marriage with Philotis, "for he fears/ His uncle else, if he should know the drift" (III.v.30-31). Meanwhile, Richardetto arranges the ambush of Soranzo by Grimaldo. Behind these immediate precedents of Bergetto's death there are of course past events to explain them. The moment itself at which the accident occurs represents the convergence of several sequences of cause and effect. The revenge-schemes of Richardetto and Grimaldi, and Bergetto's own attempts to get married combine to place Bergetto at the one place in the world, the street before the Friar's cell, where Grimaldi is waiting with drawn rapier (III.vii). The incident is also presented as a case of the revenger caught in his own trap insofar as Richardetto hopes to combine his vengeance with his "other business" (III.v.25) of catching a husband for

Philotis. His overingenious machinations are thus directly responsible for Bergetto's death.

Another way in which Ford fits the accident into the causal scheme of the play is by presenting it, through Grimaldi's confession in Act III, scene ix and Soranzo's testimony in Act IV, scene i, as one of the two hazards through which Soranzo passes before he marries Annabella, the other being Hippolita's plot, the climax of which comes in Act IV, scene i, fast upon the heels of Grimaldi's ambush. To turn for a moment to issues farther afield, it is tempting to see here a use, unconscious no doubt, of the folk archetype of the brave man passing through dangers before being united with a beautiful woman. In the present instance the irony of Soranzo escaping palpable dangers only to be caught in the unsuspected trap of a monstrous marital situation heightens the sense of disaster. This pattern of plot-development is a well-known product of folk-imagination, as expressed in tales of some brave man winning at great risk a beautiful woman who turns out to be a demon.<sup>10</sup> As in that archetypal perception of misfortune, in 'Tis Pity too the sense of an inescapable danger is strengthened, as we see Soranzo saved from one kind of danger only to fall a sure victim to a greater calamity.

The progress of the action from cause to effect lends inevitability to the tragic protagonist's alienation from his world. The causal sequence is the stronger because the character of individuals and the pressure of society--both unavoidable conditions of human life--function as powerful causes. Undoubt-

edly, it is Giovanni's passion-driven nature that shapes his decisions and hence the destiny of everyone involved with him. But it is the rigidity of social ordinances against incest that makes the world of the play inimical to Giovanni and ensures his estrangement from his fellow men. In this social setting everyone is assumed to occupy a definite niche and play a defined role. Should an individual attempt to break out of the role determined for him by his social and familial position, he must necessarily go against social ordinances, placing himself outside the framework of conduct and expectations that holds society together. In 'Tis Pity, Giovanni's public role is clear enough. He is a scholar devoted to other-worldly matters but he is also expected to be a dutiful son and loving brother, and to accept the task, as far as his scholarly pursuits may allow him, of tending to his family's honour and fortunes. Annabella's role is that of the virtuous daughter who submits to the decisions made on her behalf by her father. This role she plays quite consciously as we find in Act II, scene i. Hippolita on her part apprises us of the role she played happily and well until the "devil in her blood" led her to break out of it. There is in these people some element that sets them apart from their world, a fact established from the beginning of the play and one that is a constituent of the initial situation. This essential alienness remains under the surface in the beginning but grows harder to conceal as the action unfolds. None of these characters is blind to what he

or she is doing but recognizes the force of their passions just as clearly as they recognize the social interdiction they have to risk. Since they do accept that risk, their decisions can be taken as objective expressions of their alienated psyche.

In stating that alienation in dramatic terms, however, Ford differentiates between his three chief characters. Annabella cannot finally bear to be cast out and repents. She cannot raise her voice in support of Giovanni's fevered denunciation of society and dies seeking heaven's forgiveness and mercy. Her estrangement is evidently a temporary state out of which she finds her way back to the fold, earning the Friar's blessing: "live, to die more blessed!" (V.i.57). But Hippolita and Giovanni are unwilling to mend the break between their world and themselves. Here again Ford draws a distinction, as much of quality as of degree, between these fierce spirits. Hippolita sees herself as an outcast, "a scorn to men and angels" (II.i.29), but cannot go beyond her humiliation to question the social values that she transgresses. Her dying ravings are imprecations against one man in particular, not against the world that rates her as "so vile a creature" (IV.i.101) that it can see only the "Wonderful justice" (IV.i.88) of a righteous Heaven in her tragic end as it would at the destruction of a strange monster. Giovanni, on the other hand, withdraws ever farther from his fellow men, and as his proclamations indicate, he does this as a matter of deliberate choice and with every sign of self-approval. Ultimately, his sense of his own alienation becomes to him the proof of his freedom. What begins as

breaking a particular taboo ends as a generalized rejection of the basic concept of human organization, that is, the concept of accepting restraints on private rights. At this point his alienation is total. All except his love is meaningless. He stands alone with Annabella's heart upon his dagger as his prize dug out of a "much richer mine than gold or stone/Of any value balanc'd" (V.vi.26-7). That piece of dead flesh is his "food" (V.vi.25), yet at the same time it is his last refuge in which his heart lies "entomb'd" (V.vi.28). That last word epitomizes the irreversibility of his retreat. Predictably, the world responds by rejecting Giovanni equally completely. Part of Giovanni's tragedy is the promptness with which oblivion overtakes him. After his death not one word is said for, against, or about him. The Cardinal's concluding speech has no place for Giovanni, the chief mover of the ceremony of horrors that has just been witnessed, but places the emphasis on Annabella in a surprising verbal shift in the concluding couplet. The Cardinal speaks of incest and murder meeting together, and this ought to refer to Giovanni's actions; however, we find that "one so young, so rich in nature's store" in the next line (V.vi.158) does not refer to him as one might expect, but to the passive Annabella. The implication seems to be that Annabella, sinner that she is, is accepted as a member of the community but Giovanni is not, for he chooses to the end to be an outcast.

It is the inevitability and finality of that estrangement that form the tragic impact of 'Tis Pity. Giovanni is so far alienated from the life of his social world that it has no

value for him. In a world drained of meaning for him, a self-chosen death becomes the sole instrument of proving the integrity of his passion and giving meaning to it. The progression of the play's action illustrates a process of increasing alienation that culminates in the choice of death as a felicity. Giovanni's tragedy, simply put, is that he comes to prefer death over life. As we have argued in Chapter II, and demonstrated here, both the rigid structure of Giovanni's world and his own nature contribute to the process of his withdrawal from life, while the inexorability lent to that process by the causal development of the action sharpens our sense of his predicament. The pattern of passion, perception, choice, and action that marks his journey from life to death in search of some permanent value can be thus seen as the pattern of tragedy established in the play. That this pattern is not a product of the unusual circumstances of 'Tis Pity but a distinct attribute of Ford's tragedies in general, becomes evident when we examine what might seem at first glance to be the radically different world of The Broken Heart.

## Chapter IV

### THE BROKEN HEART

Many of Ford's readers have felt The Broken Heart to be radically different from 'Tis Pity She's a Whore; the reasons for this are understandable. The Spartan setting of The Broken Heart, with its princes and courtiers forms a sharp contrast to the Italianate world of 'Tis Pity, peopled by common citizens who, despite their affluence, are not aristocrats. The occupations and interests of the characters of 'Tis Pity are domestic and private rather than public, while characters in The Broken Heart constantly show an urgent awareness of the fortunes of the kingdom. Ford's choice of Sparta as the setting of the play is important. The association of Sparta with myth and legend lends it a remoteness that obscures the structural aspects of its society which, we shall see later in this study, bears a strong resemblance to the social world of 'Tis Pity.

By locating his play in Sparta Ford has associated it with a particular milieu. His aim cannot be simply that of utilising the charm of the exotic, as S. P. Sherman implies while finding a source for the play in Sidney's Arcadia.<sup>1</sup> The world of The Broken Heart is neither the bucolic world of Fletcher's Faithful Shepherdess, nor the Arcadian world of The Two Noble Kinsmen. In M. J. Sargeaunt's view the Spartan

setting is thematically the most appropriate,<sup>2</sup> and R. J. Kaufmann explains how that setting assumes the function of highlighting courage and self-control as man's primary virtues.<sup>3</sup> These views show how effectively the setting emphasizes moral qualities while diverting attention (as noted above) from the social structure. The mere setting seems to confer nobility upon the characters in this play while those in 'Tis Pity seem by comparison to belong to the common herd. Spartan fortitude is usually taken to be an elitist virtue--an assumption implicit in the frequent references in Ford criticism to the aristocratic quality of The Broken Heart.<sup>4</sup>

Actually, however, the resemblance between the worlds of 'Tis Pity and The Broken Heart is both strong and obvious. Even though 'Tis Pity portrays a middle-class community and The Broken Heart an aristocratic one, this indicates, rather than any fundamental difference of social structure, a distinction of manner. The characters in The Broken Heart strive to hold back emotions and to present a calm, controlled front to the world. Concealment of feeling seems to be the behavioral model in the world of The Broken Heart, best approximated by Calantha but aspired to even by Bassanes in the last act of the play. On the contrary, the dominant pattern of behaviour in 'Tis Pity, as seen in the conduct of Giovanni, Hippolita, Soranzo and Grimaldi, is one of unrestrained self-declaration.

But even the dissimilarity of manner may be more imagined than real, being a product of our conditioned response to traditional views of heroic Sparta and intrigue-ridden Italy. At

critical moments Orgilus or Ithocles are no less vehement in discussing their predicaments than Giovanni or Hippolita, nor is Orgilus' plot against Ithocles any more honourable than Richardetto's against Soranzo. The central sociological problem, that of the cleavage between public and private necessities, is identical in both plays because the Italian and the Greek societies presented by Ford have the same kind of organization and rest on the same belief in authoritarianism. This similarity, arising as it does from a resemblance of structure, suggests an underlying uniformity of dramatic method.

The basic resemblance between the worlds of 'Tis Pity and The Broken Heart may be stated simply. Social organization is hierarchical and social authority is centralized in both plays, with the ethical standards set in each by religious institutions. The primary unit of the hierarchical structure of society, in both plays, is the family. The patriarchal organization of the family is that of society in general and power relationships within the community reflect those within the family. As the leader of his flock the Cardinal in 'Tis Pity is a father surrogate and has the patriarch's function of disposing of property, meting out arbitrary justice and ordering last rites. The concept of family is similar, though stronger, in The Broken Heart in which the royal family stands as the symbol of the organization of the kingdom and is formally recognized as such in the pronouncement of the oracle. The patriarchal form rules political relationships; the king's impending

death spells disaster for the kingdom as the death of a father does for his family, and this disaster cannot be averted by the old king's daughter until she marries or until some suitable (that is, male!) alternative authority figure takes up the reins. That is the function of Nearchus, Prince of Argos and suitor for Calantha's hand, the "neighbouring elm" of the prophecy.

The emphasis in both plays on the family as a model of social organization helps to show that the forces that hold the worlds of these plays together are not forces of economic or political interest but of duty or obedience. Here again we may note the sociological similarity of this play with 'Tis Pity. Personal and public conduct are set in both plays within similar frameworks of ideals, ideals of duty and obedience. These ideals are provided in both plays by religious teachers who represent the wisdom of the religious establishment. Tecnicus is Orgilus' religious instructor just as Friar Bonaventura is Giovanni's and both these teachers take pains to press upon their pupils the moral values held by their religious orders. There may seem to be a great difference between the Greek system of a mediating priesthood, as found in The Broken Heart, and the more complex Christian church of 'Tis Pity. Theologically, that difference is real and basic but the two systems, insofar as they present ideals of conduct, function similarly in both plays. Tecnicus and Friar Bonaventura have special knowledge and wisdom that enable them to hold up the mirror of virtue before their erring charges, Orgilus and

Giovanni, although these holy men do not have any compelling authority, nor a place in the power structure of society. They may advise but cannot compel. Those whom they advise are free to choose and this freedom is a notable characteristic of both 'Tis Pity and The Broken Heart.

The sociological similarity between 'Tis Pity and The Broken Heart extends farther. Kaufmann's observation, that in The Broken Heart there is "a deep fissure between public standards and individual needs"<sup>5</sup> is just as true of 'Tis Pity, as we find demonstrated by the struggle in Giovanni's mind between his sense of duty and his love in the first act of 'Tis Pity. The incompatibility between a personal and a public code of conduct is sharply presented in both plays, so much so that in both plays the pursuit of private goals brings about disaster.

The importance of private needs as opposed to public standards at once brings home to us the fact that in The Broken Heart, as in 'Tis Pity, the action arises out of psychological necessities. The action of The Broken Heart progresses from cause to effect but the primary cause is found to be elements of character. The causal chain is strong, carefully constructed and clearly pointed out. In the very first scene, when Orgilus gives his father his reasons for leaving Sparta, he links past and present as cause and effect. He is unhappy because he has been deprived by Ithocles of his troth-plighted wife, Penthea. Ithocles did so because his father and Orgilus' were at one time bitter enemies. Orgilus' own subsequent actions are caused by

his hate for Ithocles engendered by Ithocles' tyrannical action. The ultimate cause of all this lies quite clearly in character. We are told, first by Orgilus in Act I, scene ii, lines 39-42 and by Ithocles himself in Act II, scene ii, lines 45-9, that Ithocles' enmity arose from an arrogant assumption of superiority. Ithocles further confesses in Act II, scene ii, lines 1-15 that it is his taste for social pre-eminence that makes him set his sight on the ambition of marrying the princess of Sparta. Equally, Orgilus' unrelenting hatred for Ithocles arises from his consuming anger. These are the qualities of character that determine the course of the action.

It is evident that Ford wishes to emphasize the importance of the psychology of the individual, for he deliberately gives his characters in The Broken Heart suggestive names as keys to their personalities.<sup>6</sup> The association between the names of these characters and their distinctive psychological qualities is brought out by the prefatory list of "The speakers' names fitted to their qualities." The list is so palpable an attempt to draw our attention to the connotation of the names that it is worth examining at some length. It is of course possible that it was not Ford who made up the list but Hugh Beeston, the publisher. In the first place, as a practising playwright Ford cannot have helped knowing the difficulty of presenting a list such as this to his audience (even though the audience at Blackfriars was presumably literate and orderly). On the other hand, the list would be appreciated by the reader

of the printed drama. A publisher, therefore, would be its likelier author. In the second place, the gloss is at times somewhat inexact. Also, it seems unlikely that the dramatist himself would include in the list of characters Thrasus and Aplotes. Thrasus, the dead father of Ithocles and Penthea, is known to have died long before the play begins, and Aplotes is Orgilus in disguise. These two are not actual characters, but to someone other than the dramatist who undertook to annotate the names, the names "Thrasus" and "Aplotes" might well have seemed to fit in with the emblematic purpose underlying the naming of the major characters.

Whoever was responsible for the list did succeed in calling attention to Ford's conception of the characters in the play as embodiments of moral qualities. Gifford was less than just when he said that Ford "has not been very successful in his appropriation" of some of the names.<sup>7</sup> While it is true that in a few instances Ford's etymology is roundabout or even doubtful, most of the names are derived from Greek words suggesting traits of character, as Donald K. Anderson has explained in his edition of the play.<sup>8</sup> "Orgilus" is from "Orgilos", meaning "proud and quick tempered", the sense in which Shakespeare uses the word in the Prologue to Troilus and Cressida. "Bassanes", derived from "basanos", means "a trial or test", "Armostes" is from "harmostes", meaning "one who arranges or governs", "Crotolon" from "krotos", meaning "a rattling noise", and therefore appropriate to this loquacious character, "Prophilus" is constituted by combining "philos",

meaning "dear", and "pro", meaning "before", the whole designating one who is cherished before all. "Nearchus" is a similar compound of "archos", meaning "leader, chief" and the prefix "ne", meaning "fresh, young". "Technicus", from "teknikos", is an obvious choice for a wise man. "Hemophil" is a compound of "haima", meaning "blood", and "philos", the name indicating one who is fond of blood. Hemophil is well named, for he is the braggart soldier of the play. The name does not, however, have the meaning of "glutton" as given in the list.<sup>9</sup> The arbitrary gloss on the name may be one of the signs of the publisher's rather than the playwright's hand. "Groneas" is from "gronos", meaning "cavernous, hollow, eaten out", or from "grone", "hole, or hollow vessel", both roots suggesting one given to drink and therefore a "tavern-haunter". Phulas is from "phylasso", meaning "to keep watch and ward, specially at night", an exact description of this character's function. "Calantha" is derived by combining "kallos", meaning "beauty", and "anthe", meaning "full bloom of a flower or plant". "Pentheia" is from "pentheo", meaning "to mourn, lament"; "Euphranea" from "euphrantes", meaning "one who cheers, gladdens", "Philema" means "a kiss", and "Grausis" is from "graus", which means "old woman".

Donald K. Anderson's remark that there are no clear Greek roots for the names Amyclas, Ithocles and Amelus, is not quite true as far as the name Ithocles is concerned. It is derived from "ithys", meaning "straight, upright", and from "cleos", meaning "fame". The name therefore signifies a man

upright in nature, of unswerving purpose, and of rising fame. "Amyclas" is not a meaningful word as such nor does the gloss claim it to be so. The list does not fit this name to the quality of the man but simply states that it is "common to the kings of Laconia".<sup>10</sup> The name "Amelus" is inexplicable. A possible Greek root would be "ameles", but that means "careless", not "trusty" as the list has it. An unlikely root might be "melos", which means both "song" and "limb"; as Nearchus' close companion Amelus might be regarded as a limb of the prince but this seems far-fetched.<sup>11</sup>

By taking such care in contriving these names Ford invites his audience to look for the roots of action in the psychological make-up of his characters. But an interesting question that the etymology of the names raises is, what class of spectators (or even readers) does Ford have in mind? He must be thinking of someone who would be capable of working out the distant Greek roots; in short, an educated and cultivated spectator or reader. This is a legitimate conjecture because this aim ties in with the scorn for "vulgar admiration" expressed by Ford in the Prologue and with the claim made in the Epilogue, that

Our writer's aim was in the whole address'd  
Well to deserve of all, but please the best:

These elitist views imply an admiration for the thoughtful few, an attitude of which there is evidence in Ford's earlier work, the prose pamphlet, A Line of Life (1620). In this moral and didactic work, one that is strongly influenced by Stoic thought, Ford says, "It is true, the old Greek proverb concluded that one

man was no man; yet with their most approved authors, by the very word many were the worst sort of people understood, and by few the best" (line 396). It is an audience of such men, of "noble judgments and clear eyes" (Epilogue, The Broken Heart), that Ford wishes for, in the belief that only to them can "truth" appear. Seen in this light, the "truth" with which Ford is so concerned appears to be the moral concepts implicit in the play rather than a definite historical event.<sup>12</sup> This explains the cryptic statement in the Prologue,

What may be here thought a fiction, when time's  
[youth  
Wanted some riper years was known a truth;

Ford is not, as might be assumed, claiming historical authenticity for his plot. He is telling us that his play examines the meaning of man's moral nature, a meaning that in an earlier age was apparent to all as truth. It is this interest in man's moral identity that makes the suggestive naming of the characters purposeful rather than whimsical.

The emphasis on the distinctive psychological qualities of the protagonists makes it easy for Ford to identify powerful passions as the source of human action. Ford builds up the conflict in the play by pitting these passions against the rigid code of behaviour that defines social relationships in the world of The Broken Heart. That world itself is so precisely structured that every individual has a specified place in it and a definite role to play. We see here a kingdom ruled by a wise and just king who is helped and counselled by an aristocracy

wholly committed to the service of their sovereign and their country. The kingdom is physically powerful, having defeated Messenia so decisively that, in the King's words, "Laconia is a monarchy at length" (I.ii.13). Its security is further guaranteed by the proposed marriage between Princess Calantha and Nearchus, who is not only a powerful neighbour but actually an insider, "In title next, being grandchild to our aunt" (III.iii.8). Family relationships guarantee the political power of the kingdom. As Nearchus is related to the royal family, so is Ithocles, "Delight of Sparta" (I.ii.52), related to the powerful minister, Armostes, while his protege, Prophilus, by successfully courting Euphranea, brings the houses of Armostes and Crotolon together. The kingdom is politically self-sufficient, under no foreign influence, and firmly bound by ties of duty and kinship.

The tight organization of this world imposes well-defined roles upon all individuals. As Kaufmann observes in the article cited earlier,<sup>13</sup> the world of the play cannot possibly admit any other conception of character. It is a world in which social stratification is carefully maintained and matched with the apportionment of power. Government is centralized and though the ministers seem to wield considerable power, they are really instruments wholly controlled by the central authority vested in the king. Armostes is continually running errands for the king and when he has some suspicion of his nephew Ithocles' ambition he warns Ithocles against dreams of sharing the power

reserved for royalty:

Contain yourself, my lord. Ixion, aiming  
To embrace Juno, bosom'd but a cloud  
And begat centaurs. 'Tis an useful moral:  
Ambition, hatch'd in clouds of mere opinion,  
Proves but in birth a prodigy.

(IV.i.69-73)

Although Ithocles is hailed as the "Delight of Sparta" to whom a temple should be reared (I.ii), it is evident that he has no sovereign authority and has to wait upon his master the king's commands as much as do the Messenian prisoners he took. A rich state, a dying king, a young princess and a victorious general make the political climate ripe for a power-struggle but no such situation arises. The possibility of political confusion is touched upon by the Delphic oracle but is at once circumvented as much by the death of Ithocles as by the eagerness of the Laconians to accept a royal master though he may only be "from the neighbouring elm a dew" (IV.iii.15). The monarchy is never in danger and the transition from one royal ruler to another is effected swiftly, not once but twice. As soon as the king's death is made public, Calantha asserts herself: "We are queen, then" and all present acclaim her: "Long live the queen!" (V.ii.34,36). Similarly, when Calantha herself dies, her place is promptly filled by Nearchus:

Nearchus. I am your king.

Omnes. Long live

Nearchus, King of Sparta.

(V.iii.101-2)

Despite the violence of war, private murder and suicide, the structure of society remains unaltered, nor does its authority

over its members diminish. The idealized Sparta of the play makes unchallenged demands upon her citizens. Ithocles accepts these demands whole-heartedly:

who is so sluggish from his birth,  
So little worthy of a name or country,  
That owes not out of gratitude for life  
A debt of service, in what kind soever  
Safety or counsel of the commonwealth  
Requires for payment?

(I.ii.74-9)

That he is voicing a general belief is confirmed by Calantha: "'A speaks truth" (I.ii.79). When Ithocles recognizes the expectations of society and agrees to fulfil them, he commits himself to a definite role. It is not Ithocles alone who is thus constrained by social expectations, nor are these expectations limited to the "Safety or counsel of the commonwealth" but matched rather with his status as the scion of a noble line and a professional warrior. Ithocles accepts these expectations without question. A similar submission to social expectations is demonstrated by Orgilus who accepts the role of the dutiful son to the extent of bowing before his father's command that he make his peace with his enemy, Ithocles. To turn to another of the play's major figures, Penthea, we find that even though she looks upon her marriage with Bassanes with revulsion, she unconditionally accepts the requirements of the institution of marriage as an ethical imperative and plays the loyal and dutiful wife to perfection. The most striking example of role-playing is of course Calantha's self-control in facing disaster, for through her mastery over herself she justifies her identity

as a princess. These instances of role-playing are vital clues to the identity of the human community of The Broken Heart since they show how well social relationships are codified, and reveal the pressures that society exerts on the individual.

Not surprisingly, in the world of The Broken Heart vows and promises are the primary counters of social intercourse. The principal instrument of social interchange and cohesion is the contract between two individuals or between individuals and society in general. The play has been viewed as a tragedy of misalliance and broken contract,<sup>14</sup> but it can also be seen, perhaps more coherently, as a tragedy of the inviolable contract. Here again The Broken Heart reminds us of 'Tis Pity, in which Giovanni draws up a contract of love between himself and his sister, setting out conditions and penalties. Giovanni's final acts, those of killing his sister and himself welcoming death, are consequences of his total commitment to that contract. In The Broken Heart, however, the value of a contract as an ethical definition of human relationships is claimed more insistently and more articulately.

The Broken Heart opens with Orgilus' angry condemnation of the violation of contract that has robbed him of Penthea, his bride-to-be. There is general agreement that his reproaches are just; even Ithocles, the violator of that contract, admits his culpability and rashness. Ithocles concedes that "'Twas a fault,/A capital fault" (II.ii.49-50) and confesses, "I did the noble Orgilus much injury,/But griev'd Penthea more. I now

repent it;" (IV.i.9-10). Undoubtedly, this shadow from the past darkens the lives of Orgilus and Penthea, driving Penthea to suicide and Orgilus to murder. But at the same time, contracts that are rigorously observed contribute no less significantly, though less overtly, to the shaping of events and to the tragic overtones of the play. One of the purposes foremost in Orgilus' mind is the enforcement of the contract between himself and Penthea. A major concern of Act II, scene iii is to formulate his assertion of his rights; he repeatedly importunes Penthea:

my interest  
 Confirms me, thou art mine still  
 . . . . .  
 I would possess my wife; the equity  
 Of very reason bids me.  
 . . . . .  
 Penthea is the wife to Orgilus,  
 And ever shall be.  
 . . . . .  
 Come, sweet, thou art mine.

(II.iii.63-4, 71-2, 96-7,  
 109)

It is when he realizes the impossibility of repairing the broken bond that desperation overtakes him and he formally binds himself over to revenge, taking final leave of Penthea with the ominous announcement, "Action, not words, shall show me " (II.iii.126).

Yet this same Orgilus who rages against the tyranny of Ithocles, is himself no less a tyrant, no less "proud in his power" over his sister, Euphranea, whom he binds most arbitrarily in a promise to himself in the first scene, insisting that she must

promise  
 To pass never to any man, however  
 Worthy, your faith, till with our father's leave  
 I give a free consent.

(I.i.92-5)

Later, as he watches Euphranea and Prophilus from a distance, the disguised Orgilus hears her affirm her resolution not to accept Prophilus without her brother's consent. In spite of this clear proof of her constancy he becomes frantic at the very thought of her being in love with Prophilus. Euphranea's "chaste vows" (I.iii.89) of love elicit from him the unwarranted generalization,

There is no faith in woman.  
 Passion, O be contain'd! My very heartstrings  
 Are on the tenters.

(I.iii.90-92)

By opposing Euphranea's free choice he duplicates the tyranny of Ithocles. That he does so in order to test Euphranea's constancy to her vow, provides ironic proof that a vow blindly kept is as much a cause of misery as one broken; both are acts engendered by an uncontrolled egoism that overrides reason.

The agony of vows faithfully kept is felt more acutely in Penthea's case which she summarizes thus:

she that's wife to Orgilus and lives  
 In known adultery with Bassanes  
 Is at the best a whore.

(III.ii.73-5)

It is not only the breaking of one contract but the imposition of another that compounds her tragedy. She warns Orgilus against approaching her, for she must now be true to her wedded husband:

I profess,  
 By all the laws of ceremonious wedlock  
 I have not given admittance to one thought  
 Of female change since cruelty enforc'd  
 Divorce betwixt my body and my heart.

(II.iii.53-7)

Here again the play underscores the moral that like a broken promise a forced contract can only propagate misery. G. H. Blayney has noted "Ford's concern with the problem of enforcement,"<sup>15</sup> but this is not all that should interest us in the function of contracts in the play. Blayney calls The Broken Heart a "problem play", because it is a study of a forced marriage, that is, of an externally imposed tyranny. According to this view, the forced separation of Penthea from Orgilus and the vengeance of Orgilus are the central facts of the play, Calantha's death being a mere off-shoot of that vengeance. But such a view misses the significance of Calantha's constancy to her love because it overemphasizes the contract between Penthea and Orgilus. Calantha is not simply a passive subject of the action around her. Ford is quite explicit in designating her as the mistress of her own fate. At the same time, he defines her identity as the symbol of absolute, unconditional constancy. In her decision to express her love through death we recognize man's responsibility for his own life. But in addition we perceive there the deadly claims of total constancy. Calantha's choice of noble sufferance epitomizes the courage and constancy of Orgilus, Penthea and Ithocles, and in the lives of these major characters of the play we find proof that man's nobility is just as potent a cause of calamity as his fall from virtue.

By dramatizing this concept of suffering Ford achieves in The Broken Heart a sharper perception of tragedy than the experience of an externally imposed tyranny, or even violence itself, can afford.

The importance of contracts in The Broken Heart suggests that constancy is the central ethical category in the world of the play. Just as the kingdom's security rests upon the faithful service of subjects--from Armostes and Crotolon to Hemophil and Groneas--so does personal happiness rest upon keeping faith with a promise. Such is the force of this imperative that the characters of the play choose to remain true to their vows, however oppressive the vows may be. Ford presents a series of contracts through which the moral force of constancy is progressively intensified. Beginning with Euphranea's vow which comes to fruition in the joy of union, the play goes on to display the honour of martyrdom won by Penthea through her two-fold constancy--to her precontract with Orgilus and her marriage-vows to Bassanes. But these are mere preludes to the lesson in constancy to be drawn from Calantha's ceremonious equation of death and constancy. Her sad but glorious end presents echoes of themes from the lives of both Euphranea and Penthea. All three women are bound by compelling vows but Euphranea's vow leads her to joy and union while Penthea's leads to misery and loss. Calantha's vow leads her, paradoxically, to both kinds of results. She loses Ithocles but "new-marries" him at the same time, announcing Cleopatra-like that at the moment of her

apparently irreparable loss she has secured an inalienable happiness:

Thus I new-marry him whose wife I am;  
Death shall not separate us.  
(V.iii.66-7)

The twin motifs of death and marriage are derived separately from the lives of Penthea and Euphranea and the apparent contradiction between loss and union is resolved by Calantha's inflexible fidelity to the idea of love which, because it is an abstraction, can transcend the conditions of material existence.

The pattern of events in The Broken Heart helps us to recognize constancy as a structural element in the play, one that relates separate endeavours to attain to perfect conduct. On analysing the progress of the plot we find that the constancy required by vows generates conflicts which influence actions. Euphranea's love for Prophilus is placed under severe strain by her promise to obey Orgilus, whose wish to test her constancy is one reason for his disguise. The necessity to "harken after ... Euphranea's faith" (I.iii.34-5) provides the material of the long third scene of the first act. Euphranea's vow also makes it necessary for the king to send for Orgilus and creates the occasion for Ithocles to sue for Orgilus' friendship. It is in consequence of these events that Orgilus has the opportunity to search out Ithocles's weakness and plan his revenge.

penthea's constancy too lies at the root of much of the action. Hers is an ambitious endeavour to rise above circum-

stances. She tries to be true to two disparate ideals, the first, her plighted troth to Orgilus, and the second, her marriage-vows to Bassanes. This dual task she accomplishes by rejecting both Orgilus and Bassanes and by transforming physical relationships into abstractions. She knows the sacrifice she has to make: "Honor,/How much we fight with weakness to preserve thee" (II.iii.130-1). Her constancy to her ideal compels her withdrawal from action. But her very inaction gives her a unique identity by contrasting her with every other character in the play. Everyone except Penthea has some interest to follow, some task to accomplish; she alone has no occupation save that of mourning. Her inaction isolates her as an emblematic figure of ravished innocence whose suffering commands adoration. That adoration is conscious and its potentialities are understood by Ithocles who prophesies:

Thou shalt stand  
A deity, my sister, and be worshipp'd  
For thy resolved martyrdom.

(III.ii.82-4)

Ithocles is perhaps a partisan but even an outsider such as Nearchus cannot fail to cite Penthea as an example. In setting his own course Nearchus feels instructed by her misfortune:

for affections injur'd  
By tyranny or rigor of compulsion,  
Like tempest-threaten'd trees unfirmly rooted,  
Ne'er spring to timely growth. Observe, for instance,  
Life-spent Penthea, and unhappy Orgilus.

(IV.ii.205-9)

Calantha's vow of constancy to Ithocles is less ostentatious. Their love is not publicly announced till the

very end and even the contract between them, brought about through the episode of the ring in Act IV, scene i, is sealed by seeming misdirection, though not the less firmly articulated for that. Calantha's injunction is specific and her words full of purpose. She first says, "let him take it, who dares stoop for't,/And give it, at next meeting, to a mistress" (IV.i.27-8). It is then that she throws the ring before Ithocles. When he picks it up and offers it back on bended knee she makes sure that the implied claim should not go unnoticed:

This is pretty.  
I am, belike, a mistress! Wondrous pretty.  
Let the man keep his fortune, since he found it;  
He's worthy on't.

(IV.i.32-5)

In this speech the words "Dares", "mistress", "fortune" and "worthy" are heavy with intent. The message appears clearly enough as Nearchus acknowledges in his speech to Amelus:

Amelus, I perceive Calantha's bosom  
Is warm'd with other fires than such as can  
Take strength from any fuel of the love  
I might address to her. Young Ithocles,  
Or ever I mistake; is lord ascendant  
Of her devotions;

(IV.ii.196-201)

Calantha herself finds no occasion to declare her love openly but it appears in her successful effort to have Amyclas "give" her Ithocles as "to a mistress" (IV.iii.77, 85).<sup>16</sup> Calantha does not do very much in the play until the end but whatever she does arises out of her commitment to Ithocles, to the extent that her first greeting to Ithocles when she crowns him with the victor's chaplet (I.iii.65-6) appears to anticipate her final

act, that of honouring the dead Ithocles. The honour she accords him is conventional in itself but in the event augurs a greater conquest for Ithocles.

These events in the play show that contracts have the structural function of supplying causes out of which the action arises. But they also contribute to the emotional texture of the play by carrying out the ambivalent function of highlighting on the one hand the fundamentally tragic human effort to conquer mutability, and on the other, a refusal--equally tragic--to come to terms with reality. These are the "truths" about man's nature that Ford hopes to discover by studying how men create and conduct relationships. In The Broken Heart contracts are the objective expressions of such relationships.

The authority of vows and contracts adds to the tragic dimensions of role-playing in The Broken Heart. In the structured society of Ford's Sparta the individual is boxed in by obligations, interdictions and expectations to the extent that everybody is individually contracted to the group in specific ways, that is, obliged to play particular roles. These roles are carefully outlined in the play and are used as instruments to define how the characters perceive and evaluate their distinctive identities. The "Death-braving" Ithocles is introduced as the saviour of Laconia and stands,

Like a star fix'd, not mov'd with any thunder  
Of popular applause, or sudden lightning  
Of self-opinion. He hath serv'd his country,  
And thinks 'twas but his duty.

(I.ii.44-7)

He plays up to this image of the noble, disinterested patriot, totally loyal to his monarch, and goes on playing this role till the end of his life when he defines it further by objectively demonstrating just how "Death-braving" he can be. Calantha on her part is the "royal maid", a perfect representative of the ruling elite. Amyclas describes her aptly when he exclaims, "She is in all our daughter" (I.ii.69). Penthea understands her relationship with others only in terms of her dual role as the wronged maid and the constant wife. Her jealous husband Bassanes knows, as Corvino in Volpone does not, that he is foolishly and unreasonably jealous and yet he continues to play the part of one frantic with suspicion. But Orgilus, the most energetic of all the characters, has, appropriately, more than one role. Part of the time he is the dutiful son, who constantly defers to his father, but he also plays a convincing role as the meek and devoted pupil of Tecnicus. But his more striking role is that of the lover robbed of his lady, a role that impels him to assume his final identity as avenger.

Observed closely, this faculty for role-playing appears to evolve similarly in each individual psyche. As we go through the play we realize that while playing their rôles the characters attempt to set up some model of conduct and this search for a model intensifies to a point at which action becomes unimportant in itself but is undertaken for the sake of perfecting the role being played. To this is added the motive of displaying that perfection to the world. Each major character therefore demands --and secures--an audience whose admiration for that character's

part in the action provides the measure of his self-justification. A major dramatic device in the play is to lead a character to the point of his most perfect rendition of his role while surrounding him with a circle of onlookers who accord him the honour of their single-minded attention. We begin to notice this technique at work when Ithocles first enters. The stage is carefully set by Amyclas, Prophilus and Calantha for his triumphant entry, with a captive audience on the stage directly commanded by the king to idolize him: "Hark, warning of his coming. All attend him" (I.ii.50). Ithocles plays up to the image drawn of him by Prophilus, a picture composed of modesty, loyalty and valour, which matches Ithocles perfectly as he stands before the admiring court. That picture of honour is drawn in even stronger colours in his courtship of Calantha and confrontation with Nearchus in Act IV, scene i, where he becomes the centre of the action because he is favoured by Calantha and scorned by Nearchus. That all eyes must be fixed upon Ithocles is guaranteed by the deliberate play with the ring, Amelus' rash rivalry, Armostes' admonition and, most significantly, by Ithocles' own long explanation of what he understands to be "felicity" (IV.i.37-54). The strongest expression of the kind of honour and happiness that he has in mind is set forth by the final action of his life. As he sits in Orgilus' chair, trapped but undaunted, he proves by his conquest of the fear of death his irreducible identity as a warrior. He scorns Orgilus' threats, saying, "a courage/As keen as thy revenge shall give

it welcome" (IV.iv.39-40) and "A statelier resolution arms my confidence,/To cozen thee of honour" (ibid. lines 45-6), and asserting that his resolute courage will bring him to heaven "on the sacred altar/Of a long-look'd for peace" (ibid. lines 69-70). In this scene Ithocles does not control the action but nevertheless it is he who occupies the centre of the stage. The spectator's attention is focused on him while Orgilus, who manipulates the action, functions primarily as the demonstrator of Ithocles' "noble sufferance" (line 72) and as an admirer of this "fair spring of manhood" (line 71). For the moment this last and best battle of the great warrior is witnessed only by Orgilus--and presumably by the spirit of Penthea, whose body has been placed in a chair beside the one in which Ithocles is caught. But Ithocles is given his audience in the concluding scene of the play where Calantha formally invites the world to look at his regally robed and crowned body.

Like her "sweet twin," to use Orgilus' phrase (IV.iv.74), Penthea does little by way of physical action but occupies the centre-stage at every appearance. When we first see her, the mild passion of Bassanes frames the calm fortitude she displays in her dual roles of innocent victim and submissive wife. She clarifies these roles to the impatient Orgilus in Act II, scene iii, where she acknowledges both her misery and her duty. This scene develops her image as persecuted innocence so thoroughly that the image envelops the woman and estranges her from what she holds most dear. Her command to Orgilus, "Remove/Your steps some distance from me" (II.iii.73-4) translates into theatrical action her estrangement and her awareness of it. That awareness

is reiterated through her life. When she appears for the last time, in Act IV, scene ii, she is distracted and yet she consistently emphasizes her suffering which she feels will immortalize her "to all memory" (IV.ii.147). She is "a killing sight" (IV.ii.60), as Ithocles puts it, a "sight full of terror", according to Armostes (174), and has therefore a compelling presence that fills the onlookers with pity and fear. Her unhappy life becomes so famous an example of martyrdom that she always has an audience committed to an awed contemplation of her pathetic figure as an icon of misery and constancy.

The problem with Penthea's doting tyrant of a husband is the insecurity of old age. This is an incurable condition in which reason is clouded over, though Bassanes eventually wins the dignity of some brief flashes of sense. He confesses his debility at the end:

What can you look for  
From an old, foolish, peevish, doting man  
But craziness of age?

(V.iii.35-7)

His weakness forces him to identify possible rivals on all sides, including among them even Ithocles. However, for all his lunacy the man has, as Gifford remarks, "a vigorous understanding, broken indeed and disjointed, but occasionally exhibiting in its fragments traits of its original strength."<sup>17</sup> This seems to be Calantha's view as well, for she solicits his counsel (V.iii.21) and appoints him marshall of Sparta (V.iii.46). It is also Bassanes who actually notes that Calantha's instructions to Nearchus in the final scene of the play have a

special import: "This is a testament;/It sounds not like conditions on a marriage" (V.iii.53-4). This shrewdness asserts itself from Act III, scene ii onwards as Bassanes sets about the task of curing himself. Having been so long incapable of normal responses to the marital situation, he deliberately seizes upon a defined model of conduct, that is, the role of a penitent, accepting his chastisement as the price of his schooling. From this point on we see a different Bassanes, a man who stands outside of himself contemplating his role. That he looks upon his future task as an attempt to fit himself into a preconceived role is proved by his declaration:

I'll stand the execution with a constancy.  
This torture is unsufferable.  
(III.ii.189-90)  
Some way I must try  
 To outdo art and cry a jealousy.  
(III.ii.205-6)

Later it becomes obvious that his eyes are set upon the honour to be gained by playing his role perfectly; he

will put in practice instantly  
What you shall still admire. 'Tis wonderful,  
'Tis super-singular, not to be match'd.  
Yet when I've done't, I've done't; ye shall all  
thank me.  
(IV.ii.170-3)

Bassanes is directing all his energies to playing the penitent as thoroughly as possible, meekly submitting to Orgilus' contempt and through his grovelling self-abnegation calling attention to his altered identity: "What a fool am I/To bandy passion" (IV.ii.106-7). His role reaches a climax in Act V, scene ii, when he counsels the assemblage, "Make me the pattern of digesting evils" (line 58), and solicits approval in these words:

Mark me, nobles,  
I do not shed a tear, not for Penthea.  
Excellent misery!

(V.ii.64-6)

The beginning of his exhortation as well as the concluding explanation shows how consciously Bassanes plays the penitent's role, putting it on as one might put on a ritual robe of self-mortification.

Bassanes' schooling of himself is a form of the self-conquest that characterizes the circle of heroic individuals in the play, although their achievement is set in a larger scale. While Bassanes conquers his jealousy and moves on to a calmer life, Penthea, Ithocles, Orgilus and Calantha conquer life itself with all its changeability, and attain to a form of immutable existence in the chronicles of their world.<sup>18</sup> Orgilus makes this philosophy of permanence quite clear as he executes vengeance upon Ithocles. His attitude to his victim undergoes wholesale revision in the course of the scene. The "statelier resolution" of Ithocles turns Orgilus' hate to so intense an admiration that he resolves to win fame by emulating his victim's "noble sufferance"; he will "henceforth welcome/Best expectation of a noble sufferance," for "No monument lasts but a happy name" (IV.iv.71-2, 76). His thoughts shift from the satisfaction of revenge to the glory of proving himself equal to Penthea and Ithocles in self-control. His initial jubilation over capturing Ithocles in his trap and the desire to "confound" Ithocles' dream "To bosom/The delicacies of a youngling princess" (IV.iv.30-31), gives way to esteem and homage. His announcement, "to

linger/Pain, which I strive to cure, were to be cruel" (IV.iv. 61-2) is at marked variance with his former gloating. The position he now takes, that the pain of life can be cured by a glorious exit, is derived from Ithocles' assertions that all earthly glories are vain and that honour consists in fortitude. Murder becomes sacrifice, for it cures Orgilus of anger and enables him to assimilate the virtue of his victim. From being enemies they turn into partners in celebrating the transmutation of loss into honour and jointly perfecting death as the symbol of their contract with courage. The value of noble sufferance is set so high by Orgilus and Ithocles that Penthea's "agonies, her miseries, afflictions" (IV.iv.35) recede into the past, leaving in sharp definition only her fortitude and brave constancy. In that she is well matched by her brother and so Orgilus salutes them: "Sweet twins, shine stars forever" (IV.iv.74).

The shift in Orgilus' attitude from hatred to reverence indicates an alteration in his perception of his identity. In effect, he transfers his allegiance from Penthea the woman to Penthea the icon of suffering, and finally he moves away altogether from Penthea to an abstract ethical category. By doing so he exchanges his contract with Penthea for a contract with an ideal. This exchange follows a similar shift in the case of Ithocles, who with equal agility transforms his pursuit of the princess into the pursuit of honour. Both Ithocles and Orgilus are however anticipated by the distracted Penthea who rejects

particular human relationships in favour of a commitment to honour. To reiterate, then, the point made at the beginning of our study of The Broken Heart, although the violation of contracts is a force behind the chain of events in The Broken Heart, the tragic outcome of those events is ultimately determined by absolute and unconditional fidelity to ideals. In other words, we have here the paradox that it is not the broken contract that leads to tragedy but the contract too faithfully kept.

The transformation of material ambitions into ideals is signalled most vividly by Ithocles' quick renunciation of his ambitions in the revenge scene and his instant dedication to the ideal of courage. Schooled by his example, Orgilus learns to look beyond the immediate interests of his vengeance and accepts the ideal of fortitude that has been pointed out to him. But the only action he is capable of performing, in order to formulate the ideal, is the violent action of revenge. The revenger's role is a necessity, for it is the only way for Orgilus to fulfil his commitment to the memory of Penthea who had explicitly "tutor'd" him with her "powerful inspiration" (IV.ii.124-5). In the event this role too lets him follow the example for bravery set by Ithocles. As with Penthea and Ithocles, Orgilus is led by his actions to a climax in Act V, scene ii where he perfects his self-defined role as the noble revenger in the presence of the whole world, much as Othello calls the world to attention while he takes revenge upon himself for his murder of

Desdemona. Orgilus, by making his deed public, forces his world to recognize that he scorns to betray "fame to ignoble flight/ And vagabond pursuit of dreadful safety" (V.ii.116-7) as befits one who in after life will "tug for mastery" with Ithocles (IV.iv.56). Orgilus thus earns the spontaneous admiration of Armostes and Nearchus for his "Desperate courage" and "Honorable infamy" (V.ii.123). The few moments of life left him are given to a demonstration of courage to which he calls attention: "look upon my steadiness, and scorn not/The sickness of my fortune" (V.ii.118-9). If his desperate courage alienates him from his world, the inhabitants of which admire but reject him, it also allows him to triumph over mutability, for his violent deeds (his murder of Ithocles and his own death) are transformed at the end into an aesthetic act as Bassanes tells us:

This pastime  
Appears majestic; some high-tun'd poem  
Hereafter shall deliver to posterity  
The writer's glory and his subject's triumph.  
(V.ii.131-4)

Ford reserves his most astonishing instance of role-playing for the end. Calantha, who is described in the list of characters as the "Flower of Beauty," plays the part not only of a gracious princess but that of a sovereign with total consistency. When she first greets Ithocles she clearly enunciates her reasons for honouring him and emphasizes her prerogative to reward him. In Act III, scene v, when Penthea reveals Ithocles' love for her, Calantha at once assumes a regal dignity, reminding Penthea of their respective social positions:

What new change  
Appears in my behavior that thou dar'st  
Tempt my displeasure?

(III.v.93-5)

The same commanding tone rings out again in the next scene in which she plays the haughty princess to the adoring Ithocles. But by now we begin to doubt the consistency of her role, for her action in the scene cited above suggests that she may not be what she is supposed to be. She appears to assert her regal identity in Act IV, scene iii, when she begs the king for the services of Ithocles. At once, however, she denies that identity, and her words to Ithocles identify her as a woman in love: "Sweet, be not from my sight" (IV.iii.96). But in Act V, scene ii, she is back in her role again when the action of the scene begins to build up, with messengers of death stalking in, to a climactic portrayal of princely courage. Her regal calm amazes the watching courtiers. Orgilus confesses, "I am thunderstruck" (V.ii.19) and Armostes wonders, "'Tis strange these tragedies should never touch on/Her female pity," to which Bassanes' reply sums up the general attitude: "She has a masculine spirit" (V.ii.94-5). She carries on this role to the last scene until she has played it out by deputizing or surrendering all the functions of government. As she sheds her identity as a sovereign we re-discover her identity, briefly glimpsed in Act III, scene i, and Act IV, scene iii, of a bride to be. She discloses her true, inalienable self, one that is not constituted by social rank but by an irreducible virtue. Her role does not change completely but becomes distilled into

a truer picture of her nature as she rejects the identity of a ruler of men in favour of the identity of one who rules herself. Through that self-conquest, she seals the bond between herself and the concept of a limitless, undying love. She acknowledges in the dirge she has fitted for her end that no symbolism can after all replace material sensibility, that "art/Can find no comfort for a broken heart" (V.iii.93-4). But she makes the point that her constancy can defeat oblivion by its exemplary nature. That is why she puts her trust in the paradox: "Love only reigns in death" (V.iii.93).

The concluding song neatly sums up the lesson of life implied in the progress of the separate lives of the protagonists. It also complements the Delphic oracle that Tecnicus unravels. Both presentations, the oracle and Calantha's dirge, harp on the mutability that circumscribes all human efforts and ambitions, although the oracle does not bear the burden of personal grief that the song does. Yet, by rationalizing private pleasures and desires, the song hints at a larger framework of existence, of which the oracle and Tecnicus' wisdom are part. In the failure of Calantha and Ithocles to achieve happiness on earth lies the explanation of the prophecy of Tecnicus that "The lifeless trunk shall wed the broken heart" (IV.i.134). Tecnicus' status as seer allows him to reach out towards a larger framework of metaphysical truth against which the transitory facts of human life can be set. The title of the play thus comes from the gods themselves, so to say, unlike that

of 'Tis Pity which is given by the Cardinal, a man--and a patently worldly man at that. It is that framework of philosophy that allows the paradox of Calantha's loss being transmuted into her richest achievement, and this it does by shifting our attention from the objective plane to the subjective.

One might see in the use of the prophecies and Calantha's song a proto-existentialist attempt to convert nothingness into being through the subjective conversion of objective reality. We find that material happiness, perhaps objective experience itself, is the most fragile thing in life, which, being an aggregate of human actions governed by passions, is by nature unstable. These men and women try to achieve permanence for what they most cherish, by devising inviolable covenants with each other or with society in general. But in the keeping of those covenants the material conditions to be protected are lost, leaving only the virtues implicit in them. Separated from their material expressions, these virtues are given the timelessness of abstractions and thereby gain a degree of permanence. Ford's characters learn this condition of life as it is lived in the world of The Broken Heart when they become aware of their moral identity. This awareness emerges in the play, as in 'Tis Pity, through the development of personal crises. To take the most obvious examples, Orgilus and Ithocles perceive only at a moment of crisis and in the same way as Giovanni does, the falseness of particular ambitions and the contrasting immutability of virtue. This recognition lies at the heart of

these tragedies not only because it is won at the price of concrete achievements but also because it estranges the tragic protagonists from the rest of their world which remains committed to material interests. Ford's characters in The Broken Heart opt for abstract virtue rather than a comfortable life because experience teaches them the impermanence of material interests and shows a possibility of meeting eternity in abstractions. In the progress of these characters we see then a pattern of passion, perception and choice. We see also the fall of noble beings which elicits the "pity, with delight" promised by Ford in the Prologue, because by studying these noble strangers Ford's audiences learn something about themselves.

## Chapter V

### PERKIN WARBECK

Perkin Warbeck has perplexed Ford's critics because it seems uncharacteristic of Ford; in the first place it neither presents a consuming love nor a ceremony of violence as other tragedies by Ford do, and secondly, it is a history play, a form of drama in which Ford's immediate contemporaries had lost interest. But the play has never lacked enthusiastic admirers. An anonymous critic reviewing in 1812 Henry Weber's edition of Ford's plays asserted that of all English plays Perkin Warbeck is the only one that can "induce us to admit the lawfulness of a comparison with Shakespeare."<sup>1</sup> Gifford approved of this judgment, and Hartley Coleridge in his edition of Massinger and Ford called Perkin Warbeck the "best specimen of the historic drama to be found outside of Shakespeare."<sup>2</sup> In our own century, T.S. Eliot has stated categorically that this play is "Ford's highest achievement," justifying his opinion by claiming that in this play "there is no lapse in taste and judgment."<sup>3</sup>

Casual and vague as it is, Eliot's statement is clear in its implication that Perkin Warbeck is unlike any other play by Ford. In noting the play's distinctive identity, Eliot was anticipated by Havelock Ellis who said--with perhaps a touch of

regret--that Perkin Warbeck was "the least interesting of

Ford's plays for those who care for the peculiar qualities of Ford's genius."<sup>4</sup> A later critic, Una Ellis-Fermor, agrees that

the play lacks certain "characteristic marks of Ford's genius"

and his "individual fervour."<sup>5</sup> H.J. Oliver also emphasizes the

uncharacteristic qualities of the play when he argues that Ford

wrote it as an experiment in technique and that in deciding on

the subject Ford was taking on "the challenge offered by the

restrictions of historical drama."<sup>6</sup> Reviewing these critical

positions Peter Ure admits in his edition of the play that he

is "an admirer of Ford's peculiar qualities, especially as

they are displayed in 'Tis Pity She's a Whore and The Broken

Heart." He too regrets that Perkin Warbeck lacks these

qualities but that there can be "no way of evading facts."<sup>7</sup>

But the "facts" of a literary work are open to interpretation

and the present study will argue that although Perkin Warbeck is

different in many ways, there are enough "facts" to show that in

theme and technique it follows Ford's characteristic approach

to play writing.

To the question of the play's likeness (or lack of likeness) to Ford's other plays, critics have added another, and

perhaps a more pressing question: Why did Ford choose in the

first place to write a history play, to revive in the 1630's what

many of his contemporaries no doubt would have viewed as an out-

moded form of drama? A supplement to this question is, what was

Ford's interest in this particular piece of British history,

that is, in Perkin Warbeck's appearance as a pretender to the

throne? No ready answer can be given to either question. But there was enough material to feed Ford's interest in the subject. He read and used as sources of information, Bacon's History of the Reign of King Henry VII (1622) and The Time and Wonderful History of Perkin Warbeck Proclaiming Himself Richard the Fourth (1618), written by Thomas Gainsford, interest in whose works was revived after his death in 1624. Warbeck's insurrection seems to have caught the attention of the public, for Gainsford mentions in his True History of the Earl of Tyrone (1619) a play, now lost, on Warbeck.<sup>8</sup> If, as seems likely from the evidence of the Stationers' Register and the date of the play's first publication,<sup>9</sup> Perkin Warbeck was written shortly before 1634, that is, a hundred and forty years after Warbeck's insurrection, then Ford must have found in the historic event some lesson of contemporary relevance. That Ford's choice was neither accidental nor arbitrary is suggested by his prologue which shows a conscious and keen interest in the subject. It is therefore evident that an examination of Ford's choice of topic and form must be central to our understanding of the play and its place in Ford's work. In order to keep this examination grounded in the evidence of the text we must scrutinize the world of the play and note how Ford places event and character in that world.

As we have seen before, to many readers Perkin Warbeck has seemed far removed from other plays by Ford. Three main reasons account for that impression. In the first place, the whole sexual penumbra of frustrated love, jealousy and illicit

passion is missing. Then again, the setting is familiar rather than exotic. Finally, the play is concerned primarily with the fortunes of an entire kingdom rather than a family or a coterie. These distinctive features of Perkin Warbeck obscure the fact that the play is built on the same structural principles as Ford's other plays. The causal progression of the plot and the primacy of psychological motivation are as vital in this play as anywhere else in Ford but our interest is so much more closely engaged by the historical form that we may often overlook these structural aspects. Yet, these principles are not only as deeply enshrined in Perkin Warbeck as in 'Tis Pity or The Broken Heart but are actually followed more strictly, so much so that Ford's choice of the historical form, considered so surprising, may reflect an attempt to give his habitually rationalistic view of human action its severest formulation.

As we may find on analysing the process of Warbeck's fall, the progress of the action of Perkin Warbeck is marked by the logic of cause and effect. The two initial situations in the play are, first, King Henry's decision to take the initiative in hunting down Warbeck (I.i) and second, King James' acceptance of Warbeck's claim (II.i). Henry's decision leads him personally to interrogate Clifford (in I.iii), whose confession helps Henry secure his rule against internal subversion and plan his strategy. At the other end of the political balance, King James, by receiving Warbeck as the rightful heir to the English throne, not only starts the border war but also

thrusts Katherine into an unexpected marriage with Warbeck. Warbeck's fate, both political and personal, is thus largely decided between the two kings and his eventual downfall is a result of their actions. It is ensured by King James' repudiation of his friendship with Warbeck. But this is a direct result of King Henry's instructions to Pedro Hialas (in III.iii) to win over the Scottish king by showing him where his most favourable prospects lie. Henry determines Warbeck's fate more directly by cunningly manipulating his forces--military as well as economic--and cutting him off from his potential supporters. When Warbeck's secretary Frion reports to James that Henry has overthrown Warbeck's supporters "in open field" (III.iv.85), James finds the real cause of the defeat rather in Henry's "subsidies," that is, his taxes (III.iv.87). These incidents suggest that Warbeck's helpless isolation is no accident but an inevitable consequence of Henry's maneuvers.

Yet the structural similarity of Perkin Warbeck with plays bearing the "characteristic marks of Ford's genius," such as 'Tis Pity and The Broken Heart, goes beyond the law of causation. As in those plays, in Perkin Warbeck action bears a measured relationship to character. The events of the play can always be traced back to the psychological qualities of one or the other of the three principal characters. The best example of character shaping action is of course King Henry, whose function as the manipulator of the action is throughout connected closely with his particular psychological qualities. From beginning to end we mark both his function of controlling

the action, and his most striking character-trait, an aggressive self-interest tempered by a pragmatic sense of justice. He establishes himself as the ruler firmly in control because the courage of the lion and the cunning of the fox meet in him, allowing him to hold the threads of action in his hands. He manipulates followers and enemies with equal skill. His ministers, Lord Daubeney and the Earl of Oxford testify to his acumen:

Oxford

See, 'a' comes smiling.

The king!

Daubeney

O, the game runs smooth  
On his side, then, believe it; cards well shuffled  
And dealt with cunning bring some gamesters thrift,  
But others must rise losers.

(IV.iv.23-7).

Henry is effective enough as a warrior, as Act III, scene i, is designed to suggest (and who could doubt the bravery of the victor of Bosworth field?), but his real distinction lies in his mastery of organization. It is this ability that lets him weave and draw a net around his adversaries, his strategems constituting the web of events in the play. That web catches not only Warbeck but King James as surely, Warbeck because he is rash enough to challenge a powerful king, and James because he is vulnerable in his impulsiveness. Again we observe how the individual temperaments of James and Warbeck decide their respective destinies.

Psychological motivation and causation being basic principles of Ford's dramatic method, they link Perkin Warbeck conclusively with Ford's other plays. But these structural

similarities are easily overlooked because causality in Perkin Warbeck is placed in the grand scale of historical evolution, and because the personal qualities of the protagonists have the far-reaching influence of historical causes. Causes and effects are understood in terms of battles, conquests and treaties, while character influences the lives of whole nations as easily as the lives of private individuals. It is to this enlarged responsibility of the historic personage that Huntley draws attention when King James announces his support for Warbeck and issues a defiance to Henry; Huntley says, "Some of thy subjects' hearts,/King James, will bleed for this!" (II.iii.66-7).

Henry's main charge against Warbeck, when they first meet, is that Warbeck's "frenzy of aspiring youth" has caused a "combustion through our kingdom" (V.ii.50-1). The action of the play encompasses the fate of dynasties and European politics in general, as evident in Hialas' remonstrance to King James:

France, Spain and Germany combine a league  
Of amity with England; nothing wants  
For settling peace through Christendom but love  
Between the British monarchs, James and Henry  
(IV.iii.1-4)

It is true that in The Broken Heart there are references to the fortunes of Sparta, most directly in the lamentation of Tecnicus:

When kingdoms reel (mark well my saw)  
Their heads must needs be giddy.  
(The Broken Heart IV.i.126-27)

But this concern is in the background and is rather a recognition of the subjection of all human affairs to the sway of time,

than a vision of the progress of a country through political conflict. We shall also see in a later chapter that Ford's comedies, The Lover's Melancholy and The Queen, illustrate the conventional idea that the welfare of a country depends upon the well-being of its ruler. But in those plays again, as in Ford's tragedies, the overwhelming concern with the individual makes the fate of the community a subject only of peripheral interest. Compared to these, Warbeck explicitly portrays the confrontation of clearly marked political forces and ideologies of ruling and Ford distils, as we shall see later, a tragic view of social existence out of this conflict of disparate ideals. King Henry and Warbeck represent these opposed forces. Henry believes in expediency and the power of manipulation in a Machiavellian manner. Warbeck on the contrary holds firmly to ideals of chivalry, eschewing moves--such as the rampage proposed by James (III.iv)--that offend his sense of a king's duty to his people. His is an immaculately honourable though manifestly impolitic stand.

The study of historic events and personages in Perkin Warbeck not only highlights the forces behind the evolution of national life, it also reveals the nature of the world in which that life is led. Ford looks away from renaissance Italy and the mythic past, bringing his play home to England and placing it in a recognizable, not too distant historic period. He does so consciously, feeling that this history is

most noble, 'cause our own;  
Not forged from Italy, from France, from Spain,  
But chronicled at home.

("Prologue")

It is still set in the world of royal courts, but life in this world moves with larger strides, over vaster locations, in a crowded human scene where there are a great number of participants in the action whose fortunes are thrown in the balance. The personal destinies of Stanley, Clifford, Katherine, Dalyell, Frior and the other followers of Warbeck are settled with those of Henry, Warbeck and James, and there are hints, left vague by Henry, that some great fortune is going to befall the Bishop of Durham (IV.iv.71-5) and that the absent Earl of Warwick is going to lose his life (III.iii.60-7), the hint in the latter's case soon becoming a reality (V.iii.16-17).

The social organization of this troubled world of political conflict is absolutist rather than hierarchical. The two kings, Henry and James, have absolute authority in their respective spheres and even Warbeck is accorded a place of social eminence for a while merely because he is the pretender to the throne. But the community portrayed is not organized in clearly differentiated classes. In both 'Tis Pity and The Broken Heart we have noted several levels of authority, the social status of persons at each level being matched with social powers and responsibilities. The status of the courtiers in The Broken Heart conforms to their respective functions, as shown by the precedence given to Armostes, the principal minister, over Crotolon and Bassanes. The hierarchical order is

equally prominent in 'Tis Pity. In creating the world of Warbeck, Ford does not lay this stress on degree. Instead of a graduated scale of authority, there is only one focal point of power. Ford's emphasis rests upon the absolute power wielded directly by the monarch. The great gulf between the king and his subject tends to place at the same level all subjects, great and small, in relation to the king. The absoluteness of the king's power derives of course from his divine right to rule, which, as Irving Ribner reminds us, was the principal political theory of Tudor and Stuart England and provided a common theme for the drama of the time.<sup>10</sup> Whether, as some critics have suggested for some time, Ford tries to undercut that theory in the play is a question to which we shall later attend.<sup>11</sup> But there is no doubt that social organization in the world of Perkin Warbeck is anchored firmly to a belief in the absolute authority of the king. Huntley, who has reason to resent King James' arbitrariness, nevertheless preaches the doctrine of divine right:

But kings are earthly gods, there is no meddling  
With their anointed bodies; for their actions,  
They only are accountable to heaven.

(III.ii.57-9)

Absolutism is such a key political concept in Warbeck that subordinate characters, such as Oxford, Daubeney or Surrey, are perceived generically as followers of King Henry rather than as the politically important personages that historically they were. It is not that they are mere props in the background filling the human scene. On the contrary, they are continually

on the move to carry out Henry's commands and perform a function no less important than that of Armostes in The Broken Heart.

But all is done by the king's directions, as Ford is careful to point out. On the only occasion when one of the ministers questions the king's decision, Henry's gentle rebuke underscores his status as the only power in the land. The occasion is his command to Daubeney and Oxford to set out for Salisbury.

Daubeney is incredulous:

Daubeney. Salisbury?  
Sir, all is at peace at Salisbury.

Henry Dear Friend,  
The charge must be our own.

(IV.iv.83-5)

In The Broken Heart the courtiers are subordinates with a measure of independence and initiative on their own level. In 'Tis Pity the domains to which the different classes belong are carefully mapped out, as is the extent of authority at each level. Social stratification is not of course absent in Perkin Warbeck, but since no one except the king has any independent power, we do not see the gradation of social status and power that distinguishes a hierarchical order. Hierarchy is replaced by a nucleic structure, with courtiers, soldiers and ministers clustering round the central figures of authority. Three nucleic groups are present in the play. Henry's court is the best organized as a network of administration, but James' smaller court also confirms the centrality of power. The same nucleic structure is found again in Warbeck's entourage, but in this case as a parody of an enthroned king's sphere of authority

because Warbeck has no power to wield and his followers are mere clowns.

The concentration of power in the monarch's hand is so complete in the world of Perkin Warbeck that there is no institution in that world other than the monarchy to determine conduct and to hold up ideals of conduct. In marked contrast with 'Tis Pity and The Broken Heart, Perkin Warbeck accommodates no religious establishment. No religious instructor such as Friar Bonaventura or Tecnicus is present here to set out moral sanctions or interdictions. There is indeed a priest, the Bishop of Durham, but his function is entirely secular and he has a political rather than a religious identity, much like that of the political divine, Richard Scroop, Archbishop of York, in Shakespeare's Henry IV plays.

The absence of hierarchy in Perkin Warbeck can also be seen if we look at Ford's handling of the family as a social unit. Both 'Tis Pity and The Broken Heart deal largely with conflicts between families or within them, these conflicts finding a parallel in the turmoil that affects the community. Dissolution of families is a notable part of the tragic pattern of those plays inasmuch as it reflects the dissolution of society. But on the surface at least, the family as an institution has no importance in Warbeck for the obvious reason that the play is not centred around the fortunes of a family. We have seen in Ford's other plays that he uses the family as the primary model of the hierarchical structure of society. But in Perkin Warbeck, on the contrary, the family as an organism is never highlighted.

While family ties are not used in Perkin Warbeck to indicate the nature of the social structure, they are nevertheless used to project the twin notions of duty and responsibility. We may perceive this in Katherine's submission to her father which colours her response to Dalyell's suit in Act I, scene ii. Her deference to parental authority is an acknowledgement of filial duty as a basic virtue. Though soft-spoken, Kate is very positive:

all my studies  
 Shall ever aim at this perfection only,  
 To live and die so that you may not blush  
 In any course of mine to own me yours.  
 (I.ii.136-39).

Although at the end of the scene she has not yet actually given her word to Dalyell, a compact seems to have been made between Kate, her father and Dalyell. This compact with its muted familial overtones is set aside by King James's arbitrary decision to give Katherine to Warbeck in marriage. But to regard this as a rejection of family ties is to miss the meaning of the king's action. By forcing the match James in fact binds Warbeck to him in family bonds because Katherine happens to be related to him (I.ii.103-105) and he may best prove his identity of interest with Warbeck by bringing Warbeck into his family circle.

Paradoxically, the value of family ties is emphasized in James's rejection of Warbeck. This piece of political prudence seems to be a denial of familial commitments on the part of James. But in reality it acknowledges much more effectively the authority of the family by reinterpreting the king's commitments, which leads to an enlarged definition of the family

to which a king should rightfully belong. James's capitulation to Henry secures for him a sure position in the European community of princes as King Henry's emissaries, Hialas and Durham point out:

Hialas

France, Spain and Germany combine a league  
Of amity with England; nothing wants  
For settling peace through Christendom but love  
Between the British monarchs, James and Henry  
.....What can hinder  
A quietness in England?—

Durham

But your suffrage

To such a silly creature, mighty sir,  
As is but in effect an apparition,  
A shadow, a mere trifle?

Hialas

To this union

The good of both the church and commonwealth  
Invite 'ee.

(IV.iii.1-16)

The situation here is analogous to that which arises when a family exerts its authority over an erring member. For James the idea of the family has been transformed into that of a community of princes. This change in definition is indicated by his actual entry into Henry's family. Durham makes this plain to James:

King Henry hath a daughter,  
The princess Margaret; I need not urge  
What honour, what felicity can follow  
On such affirmity 'twixt two Christian kings  
Inleagued by ties of blood;

(IV.iii.19-23)

and James is quick to reach out for the opportunity to enter the community of his peers:

A league with Ferdinand, a marriage  
With English Margaret,.....  
We could not wish it better.

(IV.iii.56-61)

Political concord is thus secured by familial alliance. In order to assure this bright future for himself he rationalizes his rejection of Warbeck as a necessary sacrifice of personal ties for the sake of the larger interests of his kingdom. Having declared that Warbeck's "mixture with our blood,/Even with our own, shall no way interrupt/A general peace:" (IV.iii.44-6), James goes on to justify his decision in the solemn accents of duty:

But now obedience to the mother church,  
A father's care upon his country's weal,  
The dignity of state, directs our wisdom  
To seal an oath of peace through Christendom.  
(IV.iii.73-6)

The play depicts the education of James in statecraft, in the course of which he progresses from a headstrong self-assertion to an enhanced understanding of responsibility in government. That responsibility consists as much in accepting his commitment as the protector--or as he puts it, the "father"--of his people, as in realizing his identity as a member of a larger family of nations. From this point of his career James indeed "studies to be wise betimes" (V.ii.19) and begins to model himself according to Henry's pragmatic paternalism.

Even though James does not emerge from his rejection of Warbeck with his honour entirely unspotted, he at least avoids the greater stain of perfidy. He refuses to buy his peace by what he calls the "blood of innocents" (IV.iii.34) and makes sure that the price he will pay will only be "Warbeck not delivered, but dismissed" (IV.iii.60). No doubt this compromises

his honour and Ford is careful neither to emphasize nor to conceal the fact. But James' only alternative, that of irrevocably committing his kingdom to war, would clearly be a betrayal of his kingly duty. It is true that his compromise brings him personal advantage but it is also true that it saves his people immeasurable suffering. His decision, therefore, marks his coming of age as a ruler. That kingly duty should demand the dereliction of personal honour is a part of the political experience of Perkin Warbeck and lends it a tragic irony.

James' progress shows how personal qualities assume historical significance in the given social structure of the playworld. James' open and impulsive nature, his quick sympathy and rash courage are pitted against Henry's cautious and deliberate opportunism. The different modes of kingship that they represent are thus convincingly accounted for by their different qualities of character. This opposition becomes historically meaningful because in the world of the play authority is so firmly concentrated in the monarch that his ideal of government becomes an essential factor in the evolution of his world. The clash of personalities--or "the strength of passion" as Ford puts it in the Epilogue--is seen in this play, as in Shakespeare's histories, as the moving force of history. We see here a world in which the psychological forces that lie at the roots of conduct coalesce around ideals of kingship. At the beginning Henry and James represent

totally different modes of ruling. But events teach James to follow Henry's example and he renounces his directionless, naive love of authority in favour of Henry's realpolitik. On the other hand, Warbeck is incapable of embracing "policy." James' capitulation, therefore, not only isolates Warbeck politically, but highlights his role as the symbol of the ideal of truthfulness and honour in government. Political expediency is contrasted here with idealism. King Henry's goal is to make himself and his kingdom secure. To this end he is ready to use cunning or force as need be, employing informers, diplomats, soldiers and priests with equal readiness. His planning is impressive but more so is his ability to fit his plans to contingencies. He tells us in Act I, scene i, of having been occupied with Yorkist uprisings mainly in Ireland and yet he has sufficient political prescience to be ready for a threat from another direction, the "smoke of straw" coming now from France. He is confident enough to assert: "We will hunt him there too, we will hunt him" (I.i. 121). This is the confidence of an old campaigner who, despite the political threats that make him uneasy at first, remains self-controlled and devises plans for all eventualities, as suggested by his sudden move to the Tower:

My lords, for reasons which you shall partake,  
It is our pleasure to remove our court  
From Westminster to th' Tower.

(I.i.135-7)

The Stanley episode illustrates Henry's ability to weather every storm, including this which so violently shakes his sense of personal relationship that he cries out, "let me turn traitor/

To mine own person" (I.iii.110-11). Yet he does not lose his "constant temper" (ibid., 113). Grieved as he is, he yet remains decisive, wholly in control, so much so that Daubeney's arrival at this point with the news of the Cornish rebels fails to trouble him. This new danger too has been anticipated and plans have been made to cope with it:

But let them come,  
Our forces are in readiness; we'll catch 'em  
In their own toils.

(II.ii.129-31)

The battle-plans are in order and there are twenty-six thousand men on the field. At the same time Henry also foresees, on the strength of a carefully deployed intelligence service, the "sudden storm to England from the North" (II.ii.153). Nowhere is his cunning pragmatism better illustrated than in Act III, scene i, where he makes the profound pronouncement that "Money gives soul to action" (line 29), and goes on to point the moral by disparaging Warbeck and James who, he says,

Will prove what courage, need, and want can nourish  
Without the food of fit supplies

(III.i.31-2)

Not content, however, to leave his enemies to their improvident muddling, Henry has strategems other than military or economic ones. He has

a charm in secret that shall loose  
The witchcraft wherewith young king James is bound,  
And free it at my pleasure without bloodshed.

(III.i.33-5)

The operative word is "secret", alluding to his negotiations with the king of Spain through Hialas. He keeps his throne, and

rightly so, precisely because both politically and militarily he wields the supplest stick, as his actions show and his counsellors attest. Daubeney says,

Wise Henry  
Divines aforeshand on events; with him  
Attempts and execution are one act.

(IV.iv.66-8)

That success lies in foresight and practicality is claimed by Henry himself:

The use of time  
Is thriving safety, and a wise prevention  
Of ills expected.

(IV.iv.96-8)

Such pragmatism implies a spirit of realism which is wholly absent from the considerations that drive King James and Warbeck. Warbeck's grand rhetoric is backed by no schemes for organizing his party. Romantic idealist that he is, he leaves that task to the justice of his cause. His political and military incompetence is demonstrated by his pathetic expectation that the British people would spontaneously rise on his behalf. Henry's sarcastic description of Warbeck as "this colossic statue" (I.i.109), that is, a heroic form of no substance,<sup>12</sup> aptly defines the insubstantial nature of Warbeck as a contender for a kingdom. It is significant that it is his demeanour, particularly the rhetoric he uses, rather than his achievements that win him admirers in King James's court. The Countess of Crawford extolls his "brave aspect" (II.i.116) while the king himself comes to the unprovable conclusion that "He must be more than subject who can utter/The language of a king" (II.i.103-4), and James asserts that Warbeck's "fair demeanour,/"

Lovely behaviour, unappalled spirit,/Spoke him not base in blood, however clouded" (IV.iii.37-9). Warbeck's is a nobility of manner which he does nothing to support with a design for concrete worldly success. With neither political nor military skill he fails to get a handhold upon the real problems facing him, the problem of actually rousing the people against Henry, of organizing campaigns, and more important, of gathering useful followers. His lack of understanding is rebuked by King James, in Act III, scene iv, when Warbeck begs the king to prevent "a kingdom's devastation" and to "spare, spare, my dear, dear England." James angrily replies,

You fool your piety  
Ridiculously, careful of an interest  
Another man possesseth.

(III.iv.67-9)

To James' query "Where's your faction" (III.iv.69) Warbeck can return no answer. As a mere dreamer he stands no chance against Henry who is a man of practical wisdom. His failure as a leader is total because he believes that leadership rests solely on highmindedness. Events show that the mode of kingship to which he moulds himself cannot stand the pressure of the actual political necessities of his world. It is not lack of resolution but a weak grasp of reality that makes him ineffectual. He proves himself incapable of action, which is why this eventful play allows him so small a part of its action although it is named after him.

By contrast, James comes out well as an example of political success. At first he too is unrealistic in his

calculations and unwise in designing action, as proved by the impulsive challenge to a duel that he sends the English general. In the beginning he relies on non-political values such as compassion for a fugitive (II.i.32-3) or pursuit of heroic fame (III.ii.42) and rushes into fruitless hostilities with a powerful neighbour. When he announces his intention of invading Britain Huntly warns him: "Some of thy subjects' hearts,/King James, will bleed for this!" But James has no misgivings whatever as to the moral worthiness of his decision and asserts, "Then shall their blood/Be nobly spent" (II.iii.66-8). But James eventually learns the lesson of expediency from Henry's indirect tutelage because, unlike Warbeck, he does not exist primarily in an internalized ideal world of perfect truth and justice, but tries through action to give shape to his notions of authority and kingly duty.

It is therefore in its focus on the ideal of kingship that Perkin Warbeck can be claimed to project a view of history, not merely because it deals with a known historical event. Why it should project any such view at all, that is, why Ford should concern himself with history, is a question that we may now take up, since we have before us the basic facts relevant to the structure of events and of society, and the place of characters in society.

Different answers to the question have been offered, but recent critics are agreed that Ford's presentation of contrasted modes of kingship suggests a pressing interest on his part

in defining the ideal king. It is likely that Ford was led to this problem by the contemporary concern with the growing absolutism of the Stuart kings, particularly the incompetent autocracy of Charles I. Political responses to such absolutism were to play an important role in determining the destiny of Western Europe. Their specific impact on drama has been studied by Robert P. Adams who has argued that even by the end of Elizabeth's reign many thoughtful people had begun to realize that princes were less than perfect and that their claims of creating a harmonized social framework did not stand the test of experience.<sup>13</sup> Adams believes that this realization opened new tragic dimensions for many dramatists by destroying faith in previously cherished beliefs in the perfection of social existence and making it unstable or even threatening. This, Adams feels, explains the political bias of many tragedies of the late Elizabethan period. For many playwrights tragedy became the spectacle of history ruled by the monarch's power to destroy. If we put Ford within the context of these political attitudes we can see why the conduct of kings should have interested him both as an ethical problem of immediate relevance, and as a theme full of tragic possibilities.

While Ford's interest in defining the ideal king in Perkin Warbeck is taken for granted by most readers, opinion differs as to which of the royal figures in the play is ideal. Irving Ribner contends that it is King Henry who has that status. He views Ford's interest in history partly as an

interest, like that of Jonson, in the truth about the past. But Ribner also believes that Ford had the additional, perhaps greater, purpose of offering a political point of view about the conduct of kings which "the excesses of King Charles I were causing many thinking men to embrace."<sup>14</sup> Ribner argues that Ford defines ideal kingship both through the positive example of King Henry and the negative ones of James and Warbeck. James is aristocratic without being just or responsible; Warbeck has only the "appearance of kingship" which crumbles before the reality of ruling.

Like Ribner, Donald K. Anderson stresses the political bias of the play, calling it a "lesson in kingship."<sup>15</sup> He argues that King Henry is presented in it as an idealization of the most perfect kind of ruler, one who tempers his divine right to rule by compassion and justice. Anderson takes the political thrust of the play to be its chief characteristic, but strongly doubts that the play is a criticism of Stuart absolutism.

On that issue Mildred C. Struble is most positive; she believes that Ford's interest was aroused principally by the contemporary struggle against the concept of the king's absolute and divine right to rule. Struble goes so far as to suggest that as a young barrister Ford must have been influenced by the distrust in which the legal profession held the Stuart model of kingship, and that in the play he must have been trying to "insinuate against the pernicious dogma" of absolute monarchy.<sup>16</sup> These assertions are not endorsed by biographical or textual

evidence and have been termed "most improbable" by G.E. Bentley.<sup>17</sup> Anderson not only finds Struble's contention doubtful but offers evidence against it from Ford's prose pamphlet, A Line of Life (1620), an ethical treatise which concludes with a discussion on kingship. Anderson shows that the ideal ruler presented in that work conforms to Machiavelli's pragmatic model and is therefore similar to King Henry in Perkin Warbeck.

Ford's preference for the Machiavellian model may not, however, be as unambiguous as Anderson's presentation might suggest. Ford's sympathetic treatment of Warbeck's nobility has led Jonas Barish to suggest that Ford's view of the pragmatic model as the only workable one is deeply tinged with regret at the ineffectuality of the romantic ideal of the chivalrous king.<sup>18</sup> Philip Edwards, who accepts Barish's view of the tragic polarity of two modes of kingship in the play, argues that by sympathising with Warbeck Ford is expressing the nostalgia of his time for the uncompromisingly honourable, truthful and highminded king of past times.<sup>19</sup> Comparing Massinger's Believe As You List with Perkin Warbeck, Edwards proposes that the royal pretender in each of these plays should be seen as "a luminous figure appearing from the mists" who has "a kind of beauty of being" and is the "guardian of the idealized, authentic, undivided life, when truth and government were not separated" (p.34). Edwards feels, as Barish does, that the tragic vision of Perkin Warbeck is grounded in the realization that no matter how attractive the "charismatic figure of lost royalty" might seem, the prevailing ethics of success demand the rejec-

tion of such a ruler and the acceptance of the practical and resourceful--if morally dubious--governor.

These critical judgments rest on the assumption that Warbeck possesses such nobility of character that his fall constitutes the material of tragedy. The play encourages this assumption by pressing to our attention the seeming contradiction that in its world of energetic political activity Warbeck is distinguished by his incapacity for action. His appearances are marked by speeches in the "language of a king" but their only function is to emphasize his obsession with his regal origin. Beyond asserting his royal birth, lamenting the loss of his rights, Warbeck takes no action that might help his venture in any particular way. Even apart from the primary fact that Warbeck's whole adventure is initiated, before the actual play begins, by Margaret of Burgundy, it is a significant revelation of his character that his decisions are made for him by James and Frion. We have repeated testimony that it is Frion who masterminds Warbeck's moves. He is introduced in the course of Clifford's confession as a "subtle villain" who, "cunning/ Above these dull capacities, still prompts" Warbeck and is a "Pestilent adder" (I.iii.51-67). That Henry sees this "practical politician" (IV.iv.35) as the real source of danger is demonstrated by his relief when Frion is caught:

Frion is caught, the man  
Of cunning is outreached; we must be safe.  
(IV.iv.69-70)

Warbeck himself is considered of no account and proves himself to be so by readily accepting the counsel of Frion and the

leadership of James. Act III, scene iv shows him at his weakest, in a confused state of mind, when he submits--"effeminately dolent" (III.iv.76)--to the bitter jeers of James, "An humble-minded man" (line 83). Subsequent scenes reinforce the devaluation of Warbeck as a man of action. In Act IV, scene ii he is so weak and despondent that though he flares up at Frion's suggestion of imposture (IV.ii.20), it is on Frion that Warbeck depends for counsel and for the revival of his spirit (IV.ii.40-50). He has courage but no programme. Before the first engagement with Henry's northern army begins, James is the one to make plans (III.ii.114-25) while Warbeck can only reiterate his claim to a royal identity. The core of his speech to Katherine in this scene is the promise,

then withal  
Shalt hear how I died worthy of my right  
By falling like a King;  
(III.ii.152-4)

Not only here but in every one of his longer speeches, from his first appearance in Act II, scene i, to his last in Act V, scene iii, we hear the same proclamation, that he is of royal birth and therefore the rightful king of England. Neither political acumen, nor achievements in the field, but the "brave aspect" of nobility is all that he has to offer.

To this nobility Warbeck is wedded permanently. Weak and inept though he is in the context of material achievements, he has the total inflexibility of moral certitude. He can adapt neither his strategy--determined for him by others and skeletal in any case--nor his ambitions to changing circumstances.

He starts with what he considers to be fair prospects by winning the support of James but when those prospects begin to dim and finally fade away he still holds on to his dream of a direct, crushing engagement with Henry. One of the subtler dramatic devices in the play for portraying this inflexibility is that at every critical juncture in his career Warbeck's conduct centres around a statement of his belief in himself. In Act II, scene i, he is the "sole heir/To the great throne of old Plantagenets" (lines 47-8). In Act IV, scene ii, he asserts that though Henry's forces may destroy his, "yet can they never/Toss into air the freedom of my birth/Or disavow my blood Plantagenet's!" (lines 10-12). At the pitifully exaggerated account of support in Cornwall, he sees the power of his majesty at work and muses, "O divinity/Of royal birth!" (IV.v.56-7). Nothing changes him. To the end he claims the "sun of majesty" and the "sphere of majesty" (V.i.56,84) for his own because of the power of the royal blood that flows in his veins (V.iii.65-6). This insistent claim of royalty becomes for him the verbal equivalent of a royal standard; the reiteration is so constant that in the theatre a perceptive director might well want to underscore it with a musical cue.

It is therefore not by accident that to friends and enemies alike Warbeck appears principally as a maker of speeches in the grand style. King James' commendation of Warbeck's language is followed by Katherine's admission, "his words have touched me home/As if his cause concerned me" (II.i.118-19).

Katherine re-states her first impression in Act III: "You have a noble language, sir" (III.ii.163). When he is brought before Henry his defiance shocks the court as much because he claims to be Henry's superior in title as because he speaks so grandly. Daubenay exclaims, "Whither speeds his boldness?/Check his rude tongue, great sir!" (V.ii.66-7). Henry notes that the assertion of royalty is a "familiar dialogue" (V.ii.78) of Warbeck's but "we shall teach the lad another language" (V.ii.134).

If Warbeck is seen by his fellow-men chiefly as a speaker of fine phrases, what then is his dramatic status? We have here a character who is central to the action and yet does not control it. His difference in this respect from Giovanni and Orgilus is obvious. Yet it is also evident that Warbeck occupies the centre of the stage whenever he appears, even if only to be upbraided by James or ridiculed by Henry. His incapacity for action makes him a pawn in Henry's hands but he nevertheless commands attention and by the force of his faith in his cause sets others in motion. Consequently, our attitude towards Henry and Warbeck as movers of the play's action is marked by an ambivalence. Henry is the manipulator and undoubtedly controls the action of the play decisively. But it is also true that everything happens because of Warbeck, all events ultimately arising out of the threat that he poses to Henry. Warbeck does not act and yet he impels the action of the play merely by being in it.

This ambivalence brings to light the essential contrast that Ford creates between Henry and Warbeck. The only way that we can explain how both of them can be the centre-piece of the action of the play is by putting them on separate planes altogether. Henry rules the action because he is the pragmatic king capable of ruling by means of bribes, threats and "policy". This plane of political existence is not one on which Warbeck can rightfully move, for his proper element is imagination's realm of ideal truth and honour. This is why his identity has to be defined in the play exclusively through speech and demeanour rather than action. His passivity and his ineffectiveness as a political leader are the very qualities that define him as a symbol of a royalty that cannot, in the world of the play, be expressed in action.

It is in order to make us aware of the two different planes on which Warbeck exists that Ford devises the technique of simultaneously developing contradictory images of the man. We hear him spoken of as a deluded fool, and his actions seem to prove him one. But we also see him as a man of noble presence and absolute integrity. Peter Ure views this ambivalence in the play as an attempt by Ford to rivet attention upon Warbeck by means of surprise; at Warbeck's first appearance there is to be "a vivid surge of interest because of the difference between what we have been told and what we now see and hear." Ure notes the same purpose again in Warbeck's and Katherine's "parting ceremony" (III.ii.141), where Ford "seems to be contriving an effect of surprise".<sup>20</sup> There is no doubt that this strategy succeeds theatrically, but if we extend over

the entire play our perception of the double image of Warbeck, we can realize that surprise is not the only, nor indeed the chief, dramatic effect achieved. Ford's greater achievement lies in persuading us that Warbeck is not what he seems to be. This helps to set Warbeck apart from the other inhabitants of his world and to place him at a distance from them. As he stands on the stage he is marked by his noble bearing. At the same time, his claims of preeminence are constantly undercut by all the characters, even his wife.

Ford shows that the only characters in the play to accept Warbeck's claim unquestioningly are his four clownish followers. Frion is plainly skeptical. As for James, even while he takes Warbeck under his wing, he makes the reservation, "Be whatever thou art." (II.i.105). Katherine is always careful to draw a distinction between her love for him and her belief in his cause. Her essential rejection of his pretensions is also apparent in that she claims deference as a Scottish princess rather than as queen to King Perkin and even terms the misfortunes that befall her husband and herself as the "angry justice" of fate (V.i.2). Till the last she has reservations about his claims, though she has none about their love:

Be what these people term thee, I am certain  
Thou art my husband

(V.ii.116-7)

Since it is so strongly suggested to us that his is not a nobility arising out of a verifiable social position, we are brought to the recognition that nobility is elemental to his

nature, inalienable and permanent, unlike the glories bestowed by social institutions. Judged by the social values of this playworld, Warbeck is a pitiable lunatic and this is how he has been seen by psychological critics.<sup>21</sup> Yet this is at odds with the estimate of Warbeck available within the play. Apart from Katherine, whose love is in itself a eulogy, the most upright characters in the play, Huntley and Dalyell, accord Warbeck a measure of admiration, overcoming their initial disapproval and risking Henry's ire. Henry himself concludes that Warbeck deserves to be honoured (V.iii.215). We may remember that a similar ambivalence marks 'Tis Pity and The Broken Heart as well. Neither Giovanni nor Orgilus has any logical claim to admiration, but their integrity wins at least a qualified respect for them from both the other characters and the audience. In those plays as in Perkin Warbeck, Ford manipulates our sympathy by suggesting to us that his protagonists engage themselves to virtue; but he also suggests that they do so in an ethical framework alien to their worlds. Warbeck's authenticity as a leader can be judged only by placing him on a plane different from the one on which Henry and, later, James move. That Warbeck's nobility was accepted by Ford's audience is suggested by the commendatory verses attached to the 1634 Quarto. Even in Stuart England the writers of these verses found it natural to speak of "The Glorious Perkin" (Ra[lf]. Eure, "To his worthy friend, master John Ford, upon his Perkin Warbeck," line 11) and of "His lofty Spirit" (George Crymes, "To my Faithful, no less deserving, friend, the author, this indebted

oblation," line 7). At the same time, however, the commendation is qualified. Both Eure and Crymes are careful to mention that Warbeck was not the real king but merely played the "King's Part" (Eure) and his title "doubtless proved unjust" (Crymes).

The ambivalence in the evaluation of Warbeck in the world of the play shows that the price he pays for nobility is his alienation from that world. We may thus see here an ethical pattern similar to that we have found in 'Tis Pity and The Broken Heart. Dissimilar in behaviour as they are, Warbeck, Giovanni and Orgilus belong to the same minority of men set apart from their respective worlds by some essential strangeness of character. They are similar in choosing courses of conduct that their world find unacceptable, and their commitment to their choice is equally absolute. The lengthening distance between Warbeck and the political system of his world implies the same kind of estrangement as that of Giovanni and Orgilus from their own communities. What sets Warbeck apart is that his alienation is accompanied by upheavals in two entire kingdoms while the estrangement of Giovanni and Orgilus affects private relationships. But the rigour of Warbeck's fidelity to a conception of himself argues his kinship with Giovanni and Orgilus, both of whom we have observed staking their lives upon their commitments to their chosen roles. The contract into which these individuals enter with themselves destroys them by its inviolability because it is impossible to fulfill that contract within their given social frameworks--except through death.

In consequence, death becomes the definition of life as much for Warbeck as for Giovanni and Orgilus. We note here the same call to bystanders to observe and acclaim the passing of a resolute spirit. Like Giovanni in the last banquet scene of 'Tis Pity, and Orgilus at Calantha's court in The Broken Heart, Warbeck commands the assembly, the "peers of England", to wonder at his "victory" over death (V.iii.186-90). Again, as in 'Tis Pity and The Broken Heart, Ford marks the moment of climax by a vivid stage-image; he presents Warbeck standing alone and held immobile in King Henry's stocks, but unshaken (like Giovanni and Orgilus) in his belief in himself. True to the eloquence that has always taken the place of action with him, Warbeck uses a blazing style to create a model of courageous resolution which becomes the definition of his life; as Urswick testifies (V.iii.20-1), Warbeck chooses his death deliberately. It is at this moment as at no other that Warbeck's choice defines his existence. Here Ford almost approaches an existentialist position by making Warbeck create an artifact out of his manner of facing death. In order that the world may come to accept his innate nobility Warbeck turns his death into a "spectacle" for others to witness and remember. He expects that the world will

to time deliver,  
And by tradition fix posterity,  
Without another chronicle than truth,  
How constantly my resolution suffered  
A martyrdom of majesty.

(V.iii.71-5)

By choosing to die bravely, Warbeck defines his identity absolutely, at least for himself, and through his statement of that definition he preserves it for posterity, as an artist preserves a thing of beauty from oblivion. Warbeck's choice at last allows him to fight on his own ground and turns defeat into victory.

Faced with death, then, Warbeck achieves for the first time a real identity that can be defined not by speech alone but by action. The process of failure and alienation by which Warbeck reaches this moment of self-definition is, ironically, a process of enhancement as well. The farther Warbeck drifts from viable political forces, the closer he gets to individuals. Henry gains everything but loses Stanley, the only man with whom he had a personal tie; Warbeck loses all only to gain the unconditional allegiance of Katherine and so stands "enthroned a monarch" (V.iii.126). In this reversal again we see the kind of ambivalence that we have earlier noted in the depiction of Warbeck as an ineffectual dreamer. The design of events by which Henry ensures his political supremacy and Warbeck's ruin also grants Warbeck a personal achievement that Henry is denied.

It is important to reiterate that Warbeck's gains are personal, not political. He is enhanced as a person, not authenticated as a king. Thereby Ford makes sure of continuing the ambivalence towards the status of both Warbeck and Henry. The enhancement of Warbeck's personal qualities is also a reminder of his failure as a leader. His march to the scaffold

reaffirms Henry's success as a king and also reveals the deeper tragedy of the world of political realities rejecting a moral being. The idealist--or the saint, to use Edwards' term for Warbeck--draws sustenance from an ideal world of imagination and refuses to come to terms with the real world. That world therefore rejects the idealist and chooses the man who knows reality and can consequently mould it. Yet the idealist's presence in an arena where he stands weaponless, a presence apparently futile, has meaning for men because it helps them to test their praxis against normative values. Ford, then, turns to history for "truth" because history alone can affirm that there exists such a confrontation between the real and the ideal on a universal scope.

## Chapter VI

### "STRAINS OF A LIGHTER MIXTURE": FORD'S COMEDIES

#### The Lover's Melancholy

Of Ford's four extant comedies, The Lover's Melancholy and The Queen are the better known and the more carefully written. The other two, The Fancies, Chaste and Noble and The Lady's Trial, have, as Donald K. Anderson remarks, "the slightest reputations",<sup>1</sup> and are dull in the reading, their plots lacking in dramatic tension, their main characters colourless and their themes feeble. Nor are they distinguished by the gripping spectacle of men and women in extremities of passion and suffering "the dilaceration of the spirit"--as Lamb puts it--which is representative of Ford's drama, including The Lover's Melancholy and The Queen. We shall therefore concentrate on these two comedies, though we shall note correspondences between them and The Fancies and The Lady's Trial.

Ford seems to have had little confidence in the value of humour. In the Prologue to The Lover's Melancholy he apologises for the "strains/Of lighter mixture" in the play and begs his audience to cast their eyes "Rather upon the maine, then on the bye." His attempts at humour, in tragedy as in comedy, are at best clumsy and at worst vulgar. The comic subplots of 'Tis Pity She's a Whore and Love's Sacrifice are not

only maladroit but uninventive, using repeatedly the common basic pattern of the discomfiture of the fool in the play. Ford seeks to strengthen the crude humour that is meant to pass for wit but rests almost entirely upon scatological abuse and sexual innuendo. The one situation that seems to have struck Ford as particularly diverting is that of a foolish character giving a demonstration of his folly before an appreciative but mocking gathering. When Ford attempts to relieve the gloom of 'Tis Pity he presents the antics of Bergetto who, assisted by his servant Poggio, sets about proving himself a fool. Similarly in Love's Sacrifice, the "pleasant humour of Mauruccio's dotage" (I.ii.610) is drawn out elaborately in the second act, with the Duke and his court watching him from the upper gallery as they would the antics of a clown.

The limited success of Ford's humour seems more jarring in ventures into comedy. In his best known comedy, The Lover's Melancholy, the laughter is provided almost exclusively by the antics of the foolish courtier, Cuculus. Even this crude laughter is aroused infrequently, a fact that raises the doubt whether laughter is at all a significant part of comedy as Ford understands it. The Lover's Melancholy--and in a less clearly formulated way The Queen--suggest that for Ford comedy depicts the cure of suffering. Unlike Jonson and Dekker, Ford does not see laughter as the instrument of that cure; he uses it rather as an ingredient of superficial merriment. This is why laughter in his plays arises neither out of situations integral to plot-

development, nor from traits of character related to the action, but from the antics of the occasional fool.

In providing humour through the antics of a fool, Ford was of course not following a unique method but continuing a long tradition. His brand of humour is not far removed from the readiness of his contemporaries to laugh at idiots and madmen, as witness the sport provided by similar characters in Dekker's Honest Whore Pt. I, Middleton's Changeling, Beaumont and Fletcher's Love's Pilgrimage, and Brome's Northern Lass. This humour invades even The Broken Heart, the most chastely fashioned of Ford's plays, in which the frantic jealousy of Bassanes becomes a subject of mirth for his servants in Act II, scene i, Act II, scene iii, Act III, scene ii and Act IV, scene ii. These comic episodes fall into a common pattern. The main figure in them is that of a fool whose stupidity and social pretensions are so utterly ludicrous that the mockery directed at them seems to lose its edge of cruelty. The injustice inherent in the fool's pitiable end is in consequence glossed over. The Bergetto's and Mauruccio's of Ford's play-world suffer as much as the heroic Giovanni's and Ithocles's, but with far less cause. However, justice seems a minor issue in Ford's plays, a point sharply made by Putana's miserable end in 'Tis Pity and Mauruccio's undeserved banishment in Love's Sacrifice. Putana, we may remember, is conceived primarily as a comic character, a gross caricature of the nurse in Romeo and Juliet. Ford uses her as he uses his other comic characters,

such as Bergetto and Poggio in 'Tis Pity, Cuculus in The Lover's Melancholy and the followers of Perkin Warbeck. They provide sport for their fellow-men in the playworld but suffer for no great fault of their own. The culmination of their comic gambols in chastisement is reminiscent of the humour of the later moralities ringing with laughter at Vice and Folly being belaboured or carted off to hell on the Devil's back, as in Wapull's The Tide Tarrieth No Man, Fulwell's Like Will to Like, Wager's Enough is as Good as a Feast or The Trial of Treasure. We may perhaps trace a line of descent from that kind of laughter, through Marlowe's treatment of Robin and Ralph (turned into an ape and a dog), to the humour Ford discerns in the blunderings of these characters. Ford's own familiarity with humour of this kind goes back to his collaboration with Dekker on The Sun's Darling, a moral masque, in which Folly is carried off to hell by Vice. A more sophisticated example comes from another collaborative work, The Witch of Edmonton, in which the village yokel Cuddy Banks is mercilessly abused--with perhaps marginal justice. Even Ben Jonson's consciously crusading sense of the comic is not altogether untouched by this low humour, as we see in the chastening of that inoffensive crank, Sir Politic Would-Be in Volpone. The darker aspect of this common situation seems, predictably, to have been perceived only by Shakespeare who fuses the comic with the tragic in the rejection of Falstaff and Malvolio.

The comic appeal of the chastisement of these fools in Ford's plays rests on the fact that these characters attempt

feats too great for their powers. Their ludicrous conduct tends to obscure the fact that their actions are not essentially so very different from what their betters do. But because they are of no social consequence, they are never allowed the dignity that clothes the superior characters and can be cast aside as superfluous ballast without disturbing questions raised as to the justice of their fate. We may remember here the clown in Titus Andronicus (IV.iv) who is summarily hanged by Saturninus merely for bringing him a letter from Titus. In 'Tis Pity, Bergetto's attempt to marry Philotis is not much different from the preoccupation of Giovanni, Soranzo and Grimaldi with Annabella's love. Mauruccio in Love's Sacrifice and Cuculus in The Lover's Melancholy become objects of ridicule because they ape the manners of their betters but are unable to emulate their nobility. When Perkin Warbeck's rag-tag followers play at courtiers, they are ridiculed not because politics as such is viewed in the play as a contemptible pursuit but because these particular players of that game are capable only of playing out a parody of noble actions. It is the inner nature rather than the external action itself that distinguishes the hero from the fool. This is why Warbeck's fame withstands the jibes of the English courtiers at his feeble insurrection and their attempt to equate him with his followers.

Without fail, the comic episodes that we have been discussing terminate grimly. The little humour they have is mainly of a crude verbal kind, strained in formulation and obsessed with physiology. The "apish laughter" from which Ford recoils in the prologue to The Broken Heart infects not only

the relatively earthier plays such as 'Tis Pity and Love's Sacrifice but the more restrained Perkin Warbeck and The Broken Heart. The substitution of ribaldry for humour is frequently so thorough that we encounter in more than one play slanging matches between characters. In The Lover's Melancholy Rhetias and Corax formally engage in a duel of words, watched and applauded by Cuculus and Pelias, their mutual vilification being taken by everyone as high wit, "good morrowes" between friends (I.ii.407). A similar combat between Pynto, Muretto and Bufo marks the beginning of The Queen. The two braggarts in The Lady's Trial, Guzman and Fulgoso, engage in a continual wordy wrangle and much of the comic action of The Fancies is nothing but verbal sparrings between Secco and Spadone.

The emphasis on questionable jests and the punitive termination of comic episodes indicates an inability, or perhaps unwillingness to explore humorous situations. To reiterate a point made earlier, nothing better illustrates Ford's uneasy approach to humour than his comedies, in which laughter exists only in unimaginative jests and that only in disjointed bursts. The Lover's Melancholy allows at its beginning a brief passage of mild irony at the Stanyhurst strains of Pelias who talks about

The frothy fomes of Neptunes surging waves,  
When blustering Boreas tosseth up the deepe,  
And thumps a thunder bounce

But soon--from line 35 on--the scene moves into the serious business of the reunion of friends, the re-affirmation of



woman (I.ii.270-4), his homosexual innuendo is deliberate and obvious. More explicitly bawdy is the exchange between Cuculus and Grilla when they act out the courting of Princess Thamasta by Cuculus. Cuculus declaims,

I am  
Like to an ugly fire-works, and can mount  
Above the Region of thy sweet Ac--count.  
(III.i.1194-6)

The sexual implication of this, with the syllables of the last word deliberately split, is clarified in the last line of the address: "Behold the man ordain'd to moove within thee" (line 1198) and ratified by Grilla's reply, "if thou touch me touch me but behind" (line 1202).

Humour thus seems to be the least important business in Ford's comedies. The Lover's Melancholy and The Queen are deliberate studies of the psychology of traumatic grief, anger and jealousy.<sup>2</sup> Like these plays, the slighter comedies, The Fancies and The Lady's Trial, are built around some dangerous crises in the lives of the major characters. In The Fancies the honour and happiness of an innocent girl, Castamella, is apparently threatened. The menace over Castamella hangs heavy because we do not learn till the very end that the affair is an elaborate masquerade arranged by an honorable if over-subtle lover, Troylo-Savelli, to win the girl by duping her previous suitor, Romanello. The Lady's Trial goes closer to tragedy with its portrayal of a constant wife besieged by a licentious nobleman and accused of infidelity by her husband's over-zealous friend. All these comedies are studies of crises with which the

occasional mirth has only the most tenuous connection. The common patterns of comedy, such as, the rise of the hero to fame and fortune, or the gulling of parents or guardians, do not occur in Ford's plays. As noted in several critical studies of Ford, his comedies fall into the tragicomic pattern established by such plays as Beaumont and Fletcher's A King and No King, Fletcher's Faithful Shepherdess or Massinger's Maid of Honour.<sup>3</sup> Some of Ford's critics have, however, suggested that if Ford was following any tradition of tragicomedy in particular, it was the Shakespearean rather than the Fletcherian tradition. T.S. Eliot believed that The Lover's Melancholy "could hardly have been written but for Cymbeline, The Winter's Tale, Pericles, and The Tempest."<sup>4</sup> H.J. Oliver has followed this lead by differentiating Ford's comedies from the Fletcherian kind in which many of his contemporaries excelled, notably Massinger.<sup>5</sup> The Shakespearean parallel was driven hard even earlier, to the extent that in 1748 the actor-manager, Charles Macklin charged Ford with stealing the manuscript of The Lover's Melancholy from Shakespeare's papers and passing it off as his own. Attempting, presumably, to publicize his production of The Lover's Melancholy --a benefit performance for Mrs. Macklin--Macklin claimed that the play was Shakespeare's. In support of this claim he cited a pamphlet, later proved fictitious, entitled "Old Ben's Light Heart made heavy by Young John's Melancholy Lover," which related a supposed quarrel between Ford and Jonson. According to Macklin, the pamphlet asserted Ford's inferiority to Jonson by charging Ford with appropriating The Lover's Melancholy.

Malone showed the whole story to be an invention of Macklin's.<sup>6</sup> Among recent critics Clifford Leech accepts Ford's closeness to Shakespeare but discovers the frequent use of Fletcherian devices of plot-construction in his play. However, Leech's understanding of Ford's debt to Shakespeare and Fletcher leaves room for qualification. He overstates the case, perhaps, when he observes that Ford, like Shakespeare, comes to depend upon Providence to bring about a happy ending. Leech cites the frequent acknowledgment in The Lover's Melancholy of the benevolence of fate in uniting Eroclea with her father Meleander and Prince Palador, and asserts that Eroclea's return is the work of Providence. In his attempt to argue Ford's affinity with Shakespeare, Leech seems to have overlooked the actual facts of the plot. The play insists that Eroclea's return is the result of deliberate and premeditated manipulations by Sophronos and Rhetias. This militates against Leech's assertion that Providence controls the action in Ford's comedies. The controller is rather a man who by his manipulations shapes the action. In its attribution of this central function to a man rather than to Providence The Lover's Melancholy is similar to Ford's tragedies. The role of the manipulator is important there as in The Lover's Melancholy and The Queen. Among the tragedies Perkin Warbeck has the most striking example of the manipulator in the figure of King Henry, but Vasques in 'Tis Pity, Orgilus in The Broken Heart, and D'Avolos in Love's Sacrifice are conceived, abortively as it turns out in this case, as controllers of the dramatic action. The prominence of the

manipulator in The Lover's Melancholy enables us also to question Leech's other claims that Ford did on occasion use the arbitrary solution typical of Fletcher to take care of an apparently irresoluble problem of comic development. By using Sophronos Ford not only attributes the prevention of disaster squarely to human endeavour but also proves the conclusion to be the culmination of a chain of cause and effect. In The Queen Muretto's revelation in the final act of the play of his therapeutic efforts may be a surprise but it is not an arbitrary condition pulled out of the hat to force a happy ending. Again in The Fancies, what Leech identifies as a typical Fletcherian surprise ending is in reality the working out of the manipulator's scheme, because Castamella's apparently compromising association with the elderly Duke turns out to be a plan devised by Troylo-Savelli, the Duke's nephew. The suspense too is somewhat diluted in this poor piece of writing, because Castamella is shown from the beginning quite capable of defending herself, and also because Troylo-Savelli's honourable intentions are hinted at even before the conclusion, when he praises Castamella for her virtuous spirit in Act IV, scene i, 1771-82. This hint becomes clearer later at the mention of his "honourable and secure contrivements" (V.i.2212). In choosing the manipulator as a basic ingredient of plot-construction, Ford might have been recalling his work with Dekker on The Welsh Ambassador, a play that affords one of the best examples of the type in the character of Voltemar.

The importance of the manipulator's role supports the thesis that for Ford it is neither Providence nor chance but endeavours of reason that must guide man in potentially destructive situations. The central concern of Ford's tragedies as of his comedies is with such situations. But in the tragedies the action marches inevitably to disaster because passion proves too strong for reason, whereas in the comedies happiness can be achieved because human affairs there are guided by reason. However, the sense of approaching calamity lies as heavily over the comedies as over the tragedies, for neither Ford's understanding of human nature nor his perception of man's social environment alters from the tragedies to the comedies. The Lover's Melancholy shows this clearly in the composition of the world in which it is set, as well as in the view it articulates about the relationship between man's passion, reason and destiny.

The world of The Lover's Melancholy is socially narrow, tightly knit by ties of political and familial loyalty. It is the aristocratic world of the royal court peopled by the ruling family, courtiers, and a small number of their dependents. Common citizens are never seen and they are mentioned only once, and that unflatteringly, in the discussion between Sophronos and Aretus in Act II, scene i, regarding the problems arising out of Prince Palador's melancholic indifference to state affairs. The prince's subjects are termed "the unsteady multitude" (II.i.564) and the inferiority of common subjects

that the term presumes is evidently general, for the prince is "nettled" to hear of their discontent and has to "borrow patience/A little time to listen to these wrongs" (II.i.648-52). He will "Conceive the generall voyce" from "the few" (II.i. 650-1) who attend upon him. This reliance on aristocratic opinion leaves no doubt as to which section of Palador's subjects constitutes the significant class in his world. In this respect the world of this play is a virtual replica of the playworld of The Broken Heart.

As in that play, here too the playworld is narrowed down mainly to two families. The action is built around the ruling family, consisting of Palador, Amethus, and Thamasta, and the family of Sophronos. All the major characters fall into one or the other of these two sets and are related by blood. Amethus and Thamasta are cousins to Palador. Sophronos and Meleader are brothers, Eroclea and Cleophila are Meleander's daughters and Menaphon is Sophronos' son. The two families are connected not only by the contract and love between Palador and Eroclea but also by Amethus' love for Cleophila and Menaphon's devotion to Thamasta. Society as we see it in The Lover's Melancholy is constructed as a network of dependencies arranged in a hierarchy of authority. All power is ultimately vested in the prince and it is his neglect of it--according to those around him--that brings Cyprus to the brink of political disaster. As Sophronos says, the "Common-wealth is sick" (II.i.553), for its head "sleepes/In the dull Lethargy of lost security" (II.i.554-5).

The prince's melancholy is the central situation of the play in more than one sense. Not only does it provide material for the action of the play, it also reveals the principle by which Ford arranges the events of the play. That principle is, as we have found in other plays by Ford, the strict relationship of cause and effect. There is a demonstrable cause of everything that happens and every event has a specific effect. Given the initial situation, that is, Eroclea's disappearance, all subsequent events and situations can be causally traced back to it. The play begins in a deadlock. When Menaphon returns to Cyprus after a year's foreign travel, he finds it unchanged, wearing "the old lookes" (I.i.94) and not progressing beyond the state in which Agenor, Palador's father and ruler before him, had left it at his death. Agenor had arranged a match between his son Palador and Meleander's daughter Eroclea, but later tried to make her "a prey to some less noble designe" (II.i.749). Eroclea disappeared, leaving Palador, now the ruler after Agenor's death, plunged into a debilitating grief. In Agenor's actions, then, lie the seeds of the present condition of Cyprus. Here we see the influence of the past inexorably moulding the present, as we have seen in The Broken Heart in the actions of Thrasus, and, following him, of his son, Ithocles. This discovery of the roots of the present in the past, which is a fundamental perception that underlies any causal analysis of events, has a more general relevance in Perkin Warbeck where the formative power of a dynastic conflict begun long ago is

constantly acknowledged, but The Lover's Melancholy shows the same readiness on Ford's part to discover causal connections between events. When we study the stagnancy in which Palador's court is sunk, we find Agenor's misdeeds unambiguously and frequently named as the cause. Sophronos attributes the vulnerability of Cyprus to

such injuries,  
As the late Prince, our living Master's Father,  
Committed against Lawes of truth and honour.  
(II.i.560-2)

Rhetias comes close to the origin of Palador's trauma when, at his first meeting with Palador, he hints-- for the benefit both of Palador and the audience-- that Palador's "misery" is associated with his father (II.i). Soon, with the revelation of past history, things begin to fall into place for the audience and doubtless for the prince who seems so far not to have known much about his father except that the dead ruler's name was much traduced (II.i.727-32). Now we are told of Agenor's initiative in contracting his son with Meleander's daughter, his dishonorable courting of the girl himself, and the subsequent attempt at "a Rape, by some bad agents" (II.i.753), leading to Eroclea's disappearance. Rhetias' recital proves in the light of later events to be one of the central statements of causal association in the play. The first part of it lays the background of the present situation, which is followed by an oblique but clear portrayal of possibilities for the future. That this discourse is deliberately planned as a two-part summing-up of the events of the play, is made clear by Rhetias himself who reassures Palador: "There was, as I said, an old Tale: I have

now a new one, which may perhaps season the first with a more delightful relish" (II.i.763-5). He also makes it clear that the hypothetical transition from the despondency of the first tale to the promise of the second can be effected only if the prince is true to Eroclea. Referring to his story of a wronged woman reunited with her lover after many trials, he asks: "if you did love the Lady Eroclea, why may not such safety and fate direct her, as directed the other?" (II.i.787-9). As Agenor's treachery brought about the disappearance of Eroclea and the sickness of the commonwealth, so may Palador's constancy bring about her return and effect the cure of the state. The philosophy of achieving a cure through the diagnosis of cause and effect assumes a more distinctly therapeutic complexion when outlined by Corax. He makes the connection between cause and effect explicit when he tells Rhetias of Meleander's distraction:

'twas a Princes tyranny  
 Caus'd his distraction, and a Princes sweetnes  
 Must qualifie that tempest of his mind.  
 (IV.ii.1819-21)

The hope of cure held out to Palador by Rhetias arises out of his positive statement of the cause of the sickness, for only when the cause is known can the cure be devised, which his forthright analysis does by identifying Eroclea's return and the restoration of her status as the only cure. The logic of cause and effect is simply but powerfully stated here. The sequence is plain: Agenor's villainy leads to Eroclea's flight which results in her father's madness and Palador's melancholy.

Meleander's condition prevents Cleophila from returning Amethus' love and Palador's melancholy leads to the schemes of Sophronos, Aretus and Corax for restoring Palador's mental balance, their solution having the result of curing Meleander as well.

Eroclea's return acts as a truly universal remedy because it brings happiness even to the minor characters. Cleophila can at last accept Amethus because she no longer has to look after her father. Eroclea's return also connects the resolution of the Thamasta subplot with that of the main action. Thamasta's humour is pride which turns her away from Menaphon's love. She taunts her brother with his love for Cleophila who is socially inferior to them. Amethus is "an humble youth," for Cleophila is lacking in "A portion to maintaine a portly greatnesse" (I.iii.453, 457). That pride enables her on her part to claim immunity from similar considerations of her family prestige: "I am a Princesse,/And know no law of slavery" (III.ii.1411-12). Her arrogance relates her not only to Princess Fiormonda in Love's Sacrifice but to the Duchess Aurelia in Massinger's Maid of Honour who similarly denies any dependence upon social custom when she demands to be preferred to Camiola by Bertoldo. Thamasta's arrogance forebodes a lonely life for her, of the sort to which Fiomonda is destined, and this is implied in Amethus' reprimand to her:

Let her first purge her follies past and cleere  
The wrongs done to her honor, by some sure  
Apparent testimony of her constancy:  
Or wee will not beleeeve these childish plots;  
As you respect my friendship, lend no eare  
To a reply. Thinke on't.

(IV.i.1786- 791)

It is Eroclea's return that brings Thamasta to her senses.

At each step in the development of the action we realize that suffering is understood in terms of Eroclea's absence, and joy in terms of her return. The logic of this, in its simplicity, serves to highlight the causal character of the action. If Eroclea's absence, caused by Agenor's action, is the malady, then her return must necessarily be the cure, always provided that Agenor's action can be neutralized. That can be done only by the affirmation of Palador's constancy to Eroclea, the wholeness of which must be affirmed before Sophronos and Rhetias can expect any good to come of having Eroclea return as Parthenophil. It is for this reason that Sophronos, suspecting the cause of the prince's melancholy, but not sure of it, presses Corax for a diagnosis. Finding Corax alone he says to Aretus, "let's learn the cause" (III.i.1242). His anxiety is obvious in his dejected comment, "as the cause is doubtful, the cure must be impossible" (III.i.1267-1268). The same belief that a cure must be preceded by a diagnosis lies behind Rhetias' rather different and less circuitous approach to the prince.

The elaborate apparatus of investigation that Corax builds up appears clumsy and roundabout when viewed, as it is generally viewed, as a piece of psychoanalysis.<sup>7</sup> A contrast is offered by Richard Brome's The Antipodes, another play inspired by Burtonian psychotherapy. The therapeutic regimen in that play forms most of the action and lends tension to the plot. It is thus of greater relevance to this play than Corax's scheme is in The Lover's Melancholy. Both the investigation

and the treatment that Corax derives seem somewhat redundant as far as practical results go. It is perhaps fairer to consider it as a methodological statement asserting that cures must be derived from the knowledge of causes. Rhetias compliments Corax precisely on this ground because he finds the doctor's method to be the opposite of the practice of "close-stoole Empricks, that will undertake all Cures, yet know not the causes of any disease" (IV.ii.1807-8). Although it might be argued that the tiresome "Masque of Melancholy" is a needless diagnostic exercise in view of Rhetias' easy discovery of the prince's secret, we may remember that Palador enjoins silence upon Rhetias. Rhetias keeps his word, for in a later scene, Act III, scene i, Sophronos and Aretus are still ignorant of what troubles the prince and so is Corax who promises, "ere many minutes passe,/I will discover whence his sadnesse is" (III.i.1272-3). This promise he keeps with his masque in Act III, scene iii which concludes with Palador giving himself away before the whole court. This justifies Corax's triumphant observation, "love pent ne'er so close yet will be seene" (III.iii.1696). It may be conceded that as entertainment Corax's invention falls flat. Aretus wryly observes, "men singular in Art,/Have alwayes some odde whimsey more than usuall" (III.iii.1565-6). The recreational function of the masque is obviously not its main function, nor do any of the characters present seem to take it as entertainment. The masque proper is merely a prelude to the real core of the exercise, namely, Corax's pointed

lecture on Love-Melancholy which he forces on the prince by leaving a blank in the written "plot" of the masque.

This last contrivance suggests that Corax's purpose is less to discover what ails Palador than to compel him to recognize his condition as a malady. Considered thus, the masque may well be seen as a variation of the play-scene in Hamlet (III.ii). Sensabaugh notes the parallel but not Ford's handling of the situation.<sup>8</sup> Hamlet's purpose is to confirm his suspicions. In The Lover's Melancholy the masque has a dual function. Corax's concluding address to Palador after the masque strongly intimates that he had planned the show as much as a psycho-analytical probe as a therapeutic stimulus to self-cure through self-knowledge. Hamlet's strategem is only an attempt at diagnosis; Corax's is diagnosis and therapy at the same time.

Support is lent to this interpretation of the masque by Corax's parallel strategy for the treatment of Meleander. In that old nobleman's case there has never been any question that his distraction is caused by the loss of his daughter. Accordingly, Corax fits the cure to the cause. Instead of expending efforts in determining the cause he proceeds to lance Meleander's wound by pretending to mourn his own daughter, "Snatched from me in her youth", so that Meleander's "Close gripping griefe" (IV.ii.1817, 1902) may find relief by being shared and prevented from festering inwardly. Meleander confesses,

whilst I am franticke,  
Whilst throngs of rude divisions huddle on,  
And doe disranke my braines from peace, and sleepe;  
So long I am insensible of cares.

So my distemper'd thoughts rest in their rage,  
Not hurried in the Ayre of repetition,  
Or memory of my misfortunes past.  
Then are my griefes strooke home,  
When they are reclaym'd.  
To their owne pittie of themselves

(IV.ii.1910-21)

He has been living with his grief so long that Corax's attempt to bring him out of his isolation by telling him of his own long lost daughter has only the partial success of making Meleander look briefly beyond his grief. He does ask Corax, "What of your daughter now?" (line 1922) but soon returns to the contemplation of his own anguish. The greater success of Corax is in making Meleander, as he had made Palador, more self-conscious than Meleander had been before. In Donald K. Anderson's words, Corax guides Meleander "from frenzy to coherence."<sup>9</sup> Meleander's previous appearance in Act II, scene ii, is marked by the violence of his brief and wholesale condemnation of the world. That mood continues in the earlier part of Act IV, scene ii, where Meleander again harps on the corruption of the world:

So Politicians thrive,  
That with their crabbed faces, and sly tricks  
Legerdemayne, ducks, cringes, formall beards,  
Crisp'd haire, and punctuall cheats, do wriggle in  
Their heads first, like a Foxe, to roomes of State,  
Then the whole body follows.

(IV.ii.1875-80)

But later in the scene his anger gives way to a gentler mood of self-pity in which he recognizes Corax's undertaking as a

therapeutic plan although he does not hold it in any regard.

He says,

'las poore man; canst thou imagine  
To prosper in the taske thou tak'st in hand,  
By practising a cure upon my weaknesse,  
And yet be no Physician for thy selfe?  
(IV.ii.1927-9)

More important, the helpless affliction assumed by Corax makes Meleander accept him as a companion in distress and in this gentler mood he accedes to Cleophila's adjuration, "let not passion overrule you" (IV.ii.1984). His attitude to the world at his earlier appearance had been one of total rejection, driving him to suspect, "All these are come/To jeere my ripe calamities" and to announce, "Ile out-stare'ee all, fooles, desperate fooles" (II.ii.1050-52). Now, by accepting Corax as a friend, Meleander comes out of his loneliness, which proves to be his first step towards a cure.

The parallel between the progress of Palador and of Meleander points at the fundamental tension of the play. Structurally, The Lover's Melancholy is an unusual play because there seems to be no conflict in it either of personalities or of ideals. The characters are in surprisingly clear accord, all agreeing that Palador and Meleander must be cured, and they lend their energies to that end alone. But if the characters are united in their efforts, what resists them? Two answers are possible. In the first place, the characters around Palador have to contend against lack of knowledge. This is understood by them to be their primary problem, as indicated by Sophronos' despondency in discussing the prince's melancholy with Corax

and Aretus in Act III, scene i. The first two acts are therefore directed at overcoming this obstacle, the effort at that forming the action of this part of the play. In the second place, Sophronos and the others must break down the barrier behind which Palador and Meleander have retreated. There is a qualitative distinction between Palador and Meleander on the one hand, and the rest of their world on the other, an emasculating neurosis that estranges them from their fellow-men. All characters save these two central figures are energetic individuals, constant and pressing in their endeavour. It is a minor but significant rhetorical point that the play begins with the question, "Dangers?" for it at once suggests a context of exertion and venture. Caught in the grip of a hopeless passion, Menaphon has not been moping at home as Palador has been, but has been travelling abroad "For bettering my mind with observation" (I.i.14). There is a contrast here between his activity and lethargy, and the contrast cannot be fortuitous since Menaphon himself points out the similarity of his suffering with the prince's:<sup>10</sup>

Why should such as I am,  
Groans under the light burthens of small sorrowes,  
When as a Prince, so potent, cannot shun  
Motions of passion?

(I.i.106-9)

Menaphon not only comments on the prince's subjection to passion but also agrees with what Amethus has said before about Palador's melancholy passivity. It is this inaction on the part

of the prince that his subjects have to contend with, and the resultant confrontation between passive suffering and energetic effort forms the action of the play. The problem that Palador's subjects face is that while they wish to press forward with their business in life, their ruler, to whom alone ultimate authority belongs, remains immobilized by his grief. These two approaches to life are mutually exclusive, for one denotes activity and the other a lack of activity. The classic confrontation between the irresistible force and the immovable object is given shape--admittedly a gentle shape--in the relationship between Palador and his world.

Like the prince's melancholy, Meleander's distraction, his vehemence notwithstanding, is a static condition which precludes any action on his part. Because of his ravings his incapacity for action is not as obvious as Palador's but it is intimated as surely by his constant harping on his decrepitude and loneliness. One of his first statements is, "I am leane/ And falne away extremely;" a few lines later he says, "we are seclused/From all good people" and again, "I am a weake old man" and he concludes pitiably by admitting, "I am childish./I talke like on that doates" (II.ii.1003-4, 1014-5, 1050, 1086-7). He reiterates his isolation on his second appearance: "We are a paire of things the world doth laugh at" (IV.ii.1975). Finally in Act V, scene i, he remonstrates with Palador, "alas, why do you mocke me?/I am a weake old man" (V.i.2704-5). The parallel

to King Lear has been noted by Davril, Leech and Anderson,<sup>11</sup> and no doubt Meleander's grief is in part caused by his sense of impotence. But in addition we must note the loneliness of suffering to which Meleander insistently draws attention. Both in his life and in Palador's we see the same estrangement from their fellow-men through sorrow and although he is vociferous where the prince is silent, their responses to grief are identical insofar as that grief alienates them from their world. Both dedicate themselves to the memory of their loss, transforming it into a monument which by its privacy cuts them off from their world and imprisons them. When Palador appears for the first time he is immersed in a book and his first sentence is a mildly vexed query: "Why all this Company?" (II.i.610) "in stead of following health,/Which all men do covet, you pursue your disease" and terms Palador's melancholy a "wilfull dulnesse" (II.i.612-3, 623). This suggestion of deliberate retreat is later repeated by Sophronos who charges, "I thinke you too indulgent to such motions,/As spring out of your own affections" (II.i.660-1). Palador's tutor, Aretus, is even more outspoken:

I think you doate (with pardon let me speak it)  
Too much upon your pleasures, and these pleasures  
Are so wrapt up in self-love, that you covet  
No other change of fortune:  
(II.i.666-9)

That his melancholy is enhanced by a deliberate constancy to grief is an admission made by Palador himself who confesses to

Rhetias that his tongue was "vow'd to silence" (II.i.798). He then bids Rhetias "to an oath of secrecy" and enjoins total silence upon him:

O be faithfull,  
And let no politicke Lord worke from thy bosome  
My griefes

(II.i.814-16)

Meleander's contract with his grief is vehemently articulated, bringing out the masochistic element in the consecration of anguish. His readiness to speak is as effective an implement, and as deliberately conceived by him, as Palador's silence, to alienate him from those around him. Ford takes pains to establish this. For Meleander grief becomes a thing to be nurtured with care, growing into an idealized style of living as we see in the fourth act. As he leaves the stage at the end of Act II, scene ii, he announces, "I will breake my heart a little,/And tell yee more hereafter" (II.ii.1091-2). In Act IV, scene ii, his programme becomes far more elaborate:

If thou canst wake with me, forget to eate,  
Renounce the thought of Greatnesse; tread on Fate;  
Sigh out a lamentable tale of things  
Done long agoe, and ill done; and when sighes  
Are wearied, piece up what remains behind,  
With weeping eyes, and hearts that bleed to death:  
Thou shalt be a companion fit for me,  
And we will sit together like true friends,  
And never be divided.

(IV.ii.1936-44)

He ends this speech with the significant admission, "With what greedinesse/Doe I hug my afflictions?" (lines 1944-5). His morbid attachment to his grief is attested by Cleophila who tells Eroclea that he has been "Shunning all meanes that might procure him comfort" (V.i.2596). In effect, Meleander nurses

and idealizes his grief as the only thing he lives for and thereby transmutes his mourning virtually into an art-form. His grief, by its constancy, immortalizes the memory of Eroclea and turns that memory into a monument.

Of such a response to powerful emotions we have found instances in other plays by Ford. In 'Tis Pity and The Broken Heart Giovanni and Orgilus respectively create out of violence models of their constancy in love while Calantha, in the last scene of The Broken Heart, transforms her grief into a ceremony, thereby claiming immutability for her love. In the least distinguished of Ford's tragedies, Love's Sacrifice, the alienated individual's attempt to immortalize his passion is most vividly visualized in Fernando's appearance within the tomb of Bianca, rising up in his winding sheet and claiming possession of the tomb as his "inheritance" where lyes the monument of all my hopes" (Love's Sacrifice, V.iii.2771-2). The immortality of his love is conceded by the Duke himself who hurries to share the tomb, recognizing it as a "monument" to love (line 2818).

In all these plays we note that retreat from life is the ultimate consequence of overwhelming passions. The expression of that alienation becomes the more tragic when the persons involved cling to it as the only form of self-expression left open to them, celebrating their total commitment to some emotion to the exclusion of all others. Earlier in this study we have observed how Giovanni in 'Tis Pity and Orgilus in The Broken Heart bring tragedy upon themselves and on everyone else around them through their intractable constancy to love. In The Lover's Melancholy too the obsessive constancy of Palador

and Meleander brings them close to tragedy, but since--Agenor being dead--the initial situation in the play precludes any vengeful action, the only course consistent with their constancy and grief is to retreat into themselves. As Palador remarks to Eroclea upon their re-union, he had been "Buried" (IV.iii.2187) till her return. This estrangement leaves Palador and Meleander with the inward contemplation of their loss as their sole occupation.

This, then, is the source of conflict in the play: Palador and Meleander lock themselves into their grief so completely that their friends and followers must unceasingly contend against their estrangement. The tension in the dramatic structure arises out of the efforts of the people of the play-world to break down the barrier of unexplained melancholy that separates them from their leader. These are the efforts that formulate the dramatic action rather than the task of actually bringing Eroclea back which demands no exertion at all, for that has been pre-planned by Sophronos and Rhetias. Its efficacy as a remedy depends on what they learn from Corax's experiments. We have here a measure of Ford's structural skill, for the lover's melancholy is at the centre of the action not only as the problem, but also as the solution and hence can rightly be the only possible title for the play. Excessive love causes the malady; but equally, excessive love guarantees the success of the cure. It is fair to claim that Ford has created in this play a carefully ordered tragicomic structure by attributing to the central problem of the play the dual function of complication and resolution. In essence this is a vision of

harmony achieved through a dialectic of the contending emotions of grief and joy, a conception of harmonic structure epitomized by Menaphon's long tale of a musical contest in Act I, scene i, which ends with the discovery of "Concord in discord" (I.i.175).

### The Queen

If The Lover's Melancholy is a comedy primarily by virtue of its meliorist conclusion rather than any conspicuous merriment, The Queen appears even less inclined to pleasantry. As the play is hard to come by, a summary of the plot is given below, which will show how heavily the play leans towards tragedy. As the play opens, Alphonso, a young rebel about to be executed for treason, is pardoned and married by his queen. Once his king, Alphonso declares himself a misogynist and banishes his hapless queen from his presence. Meanwhile, Velasco, the queen's general, has fallen under the spell of the widow Salassa, who asks him to prove his love by vowing not to fight for a period of two years, no matter what the provocation. The two actions converge when Alphonso, provoked by his counsellor Muretto, accuses his queen of adultery, condemning her to death unless a champion will take up her cause.

The queen's counsellors offer a prize for a champion and Salassa promises to get Velasco on pain of forfeiting her life. Velasco refuses to break his vow. He gives in when Salassa is about to be executed, but as he goes to fight Alphonso, he spurns Salassa for having made him break his vow. Although the queen forbids her subjects to take up arms against

Alphonso, Velasco is followed by two more champions, Petruchi, who has been freed from prison by a trick, and Muretto himself, the man responsible for Alphonso's jealous suspicions of the queen. Muretto reveals that it was all a contrivance on his part to make Alphonso aware of the queen's beauty and goodness, and through jealousy to bring him to love her. Alphonso declares his love for the queen, and Velasco is persuaded to forgive and accept Salassa.

The play contains some farcical action, slack and coarse, which centers exclusively around Alphonso's followers, Pynto, Bufo and Muretto, and Velasco's servant Mopas, his friend Lodovico and the aging bawd Shaparoon who is also Lodovico's cousin. What little humour the presence of these characters achieves arises out of the coarseness of their language which is a standard feature of low comedy in all plays by Ford. Scurrility pervades the speeches of Bufo and Mopas, and their crudity is ably supported by the vulgar and witless clowning of Pynto and Shaparoon, but not a single comic situation comes to fruition in the play. It opens with a quarrel between Muretto and Pynto which is similar to the quarrel between Rhetias and Corax in Act II, scene i of The Lover's Melancholy but somewhat less incisive and much less amiable. Pynto is apparently intended to serve as the clown in the play for he contributes nothing to the play except gibberish of a dulness unmatched by anything else in Ford's plays. The closest the play comes to a humorous situation is towards the

end of Act IV when Pynto meets and courts the bawd Shaparoon. Pynto's courtship, like Bufo's coarse wooing of Herophil, comes to a marginally humorous end, though Ford does not develop the situation, and disposes of it in a dozen lines. After the reclamation of Alphonso's good sense and love for the queen, Bufo and Pynto rush in, clamouring for justice, Pynto because he has just found out Shaparoon's calling and Bufo because he has been nearly duped into marrying Mopas, Velasco's servant disguised as a woman. The parallel between the duping of Bufo here and Cuculus in The Lover's Melancholy is apparent. However, the possibility of laughter is quickly choked by the more pressing business of uniting Velasco and Salassa.

Not only is The Queen singularly lacking in humour, it stops literally a hair's breadth away from a violently tragic end. Velasco's lady-love, Salassa, the widow whose perverse injunction upon him has robbed him of his natural valour, has her head on the block with the axe actually raised over her when Velasco halts the execution. From the inception of its action, the play is enveloped by an air of menace. The ostensible cause of this is Alphonso's bitter hostility against the queen and her subjects. Against Petruchi's rebuke, "You are distracted;/She is our lawful Sovereign, we her Subjects." he retorts: "Subjects, Petruchi, abjects, and so live" (I.i. 262-5). That the queen should not merely pardon this violent malcontent, but actually marry him presages a disaster both

personal and communal, and not simply because she thereby unchains his neurosis. What are we to think of a ruler who thus jeopardises her kingdom? If Alphonso is unbalanced, is the queen any less subject to passion? This question gains importance particularly in the light of the ideal of kingship that Ford advances in Perkin Warbeck through the contrast between King Henry's pragmatism in ruling his kingdom and Perkin Warbeck's adventurism.

The queen's action in pardoning Alphonso and then marrying him suggests that the hazards facing the kingdom are inherent. As in Ford's other plays, especially The Broken Heart, Love's Sacrifice and The Lover's Melancholy, the dangers threatening the community are not external but arise from the unruly passions of its members and, equally noticeably, from the nature of social relationships obtaining in that world. In The Queen disaster is invited alike by the insane misogyny of Alphonso as by the rash love of the queen. But such wilfulness can thrive only in a community where the sovereign has unchallenged authority. The queen expects and receives absolute loyalty even when her commands threaten her own safety. Such is the force of loyalty to the crown that Columello, Almada and Petruchi find it impossible to shake off the inaction enjoined upon them by the queen although they know that thereby they are allowing sovereignty to change hands. They are quite aware of what is going on but cannot move against the queen's interdiction. After Alphonso's sudden onslaught upon the queen, the "Monstrous enchantress" (II.ii.1182) whose "luxurious blood"

and "raging pleurisie of lust" he repudiates, Petruchi feels strongly enough to burst out, "Let the King remember/It is the Queen he speaks too" (lines 1212-13). When after Alphonso's hysterical parting shot, "I hate thy sex; of all thy sex, thee worst" (line 1236) the queen numbly asks, "Where must I go?" (line 1241) Columello tells her,

Y'are in your own Kingdom, 'tis your birthright,  
We all your Subjects; not a man of us,  
But to the utmost of his life, will right  
Your wrongs against this unthankful King.  
(lines 1242-6)

The Queen at once rebukes him: "Away, ye are all traytors to profane/His sacred merits with your bitter terms" (lines 1249-50). In a later scene the forthright Lodovico says, "Alphonso is, and will be the scourge of Aragon" (III.ii.1974-5). Reacting predictably, the queen dismisses this as "Rank treacherous searching poison" (line 1978). It takes Alphonso's threat of executing the queen to rouse the courtiers to some kind of defensive action. But even then they cannot but follow her injunction "Never to levy arms against the king" (III.iii.2272) and are forced to hire a champion to defend her.

Given the absolutist character of government, the events of the play move inexorably towards tragedy. Taken in conjunction, Alphonso's neurosis, the queen's disproportionate love, and the debilitating loyalty of their courtiers are found to determine the course of the action of the play. Even more than Alphonso's misogyny, the queen's love for him brings about her suffering. Alphonso's subjection to passion leaps to the eye

because of the vehemence of its expression. Doubtless this is why no critic seems to have noticed the queen's surrender to Alphonso as the act that initiates the chain of events in the play. Not only does the queen uncage Alphonso's venomous misogyny, she feeds it by deferring to every new and progressively harsher demand he makes, and so allows the development of each stage of the play's action. It is therefore only partly true that the play is built around the successful treatment of Alphonso's malady, as claimed by several critics, notably Ewing and Davril.<sup>12</sup> Sensabaugh states the Burtonian pattern with confidence: "Alphonso is the patient, Muretto the doctor, and the Queen the instrument of cure."<sup>13</sup> Leech and Anderson have tacitly accepted the same point of view.<sup>14</sup> The truth is rather that in its analysis of the subversion of reason by passion the play includes the queen as definitely as Alphonso and goes on to present a parallel, of mental state rather than situation, in the subplot of Velasco and Salassa.

This assessment of the characters' pervasive neuroses calls attention to Ford's structural exploitation of the play's theme. Structurally, the relevance of neurosis does not stop with Alphonso's misogyny but gathers greater force from the queen's submission to love which is echoed in the subplot by Velasco's submission to Salassa. If we take the action of the play as a whole, comprising the main as well as the subplot, then it becomes evident that Ford has built it as a three part illustration of man's subjection to passion. Of the three cases of mental imbalance in the play, the main plot deals with two,

the surrender of the queen and Alphonso to passion, while the subplot shows Velasco's equal vulnerability. The three cases are brought together and dovetailed with each other not merely because the three characters concerned are inhabitants of the same world but more urgently because the stability of that world rests upon the health of these three personages--the king, the queen, and the general. At the beginning of the play the state has just been saved from ruin by the valour of its general. But Velasco's military achievement and the resultant peace of the realm are neutralised by the queen's unsettling love for Alphonso. The queen's love accomplishes for Alphonso what his rebellion had failed to do. This understanding of the situation is clearly enunciated in the play when Pynto exults in the accuracy of his prognostication of success for Alphonso's venture. His prediction had been mocked by Muretto earlier: "Poor gentleman, he's sure to leave his head in pawn for giving credit to thy prognositcating ignorance" (I.i.126-9). After the queen's surprise pardon for Alphonso, Pynto exclaims, "now, now, now, am I an ass, now my Masters, hang your selves, 'sfoot, I'll stand to't; that man whoever he be, (better or worse, all's one) who is not star wise, is natures fool" (I.i. 506-10).

From this point the action necessarily turns towards tragedy, because the queen's abdication, supplemented by Velasco's renunciation of valour leaves Alphonso ruling the state over which his control is ratified at each subsequent

stage by the queen's submission to him. As Alphonso's power grows, so does his taste for it. Consequently, he begins to hate Velasco for having defeated him, although in the first scene he had seemed to accept Velasco's superiority with dignity. The decline of the queen's fortune parallels the decline of Velasco's status until in the third act the lowest point for both is reached. Velasco is reviled and actually kicked on Alphonso's orders while the queen is accused of adultery and imprisoned. Again, it is the neuroses of the three major characters that determine the course of the action at this point. By the time this point is reached, the initial relationship between the queen, Alphonso, and Velasco has been totally inverted. In the beginning the queen was the monarch in power and Alphonso was one of her subjects. Velasco was the victor, Alphonso the vanquished. Now Alphonso as the monarch rules over the submissive queen and triumphs over the apparently emasculated Velasco. In Act I, scene i, the course of the play's action had been determined by the queen but now it is Alphonso who originates action, the queen playing only a passive role of support. But a further reversal is to come. Just as in the beginning it had been Velasco's bravery and might that had saved the queen from overthrow at Alphonso's hand, so at the end it is Velasco's sword that once more leaps to the queen's defence against Alphonso and initiates the latter's disciplining. Although two other champions, Petruchi and Muretto appear, they do so after Velasco, and after Alphonso and Velasco have contracted themselves to a duel. Alphonso and Velasco clearly

understand their relationship as one of essential opposition. They are enemies because Alphonso threatens the queen, and through her, the state, while Velasco defends the queen and her possessions. That Velasco and Alphonso assume these opposed roles consciously throughout the play is indicated by their frequent allusions to combat with each other. In the opening scene Alphonso admits being "reduc'd/By the best man at arms" (I.i.286), but in the scene that follows he asks sardonically,

Velasco, thou wert he didst conquer me,  
 Didst take me prisoner? wert in that the means  
 To raise me up thus high. I thank thee for't;  
 I thought to honour thee in a defence  
 Of the Queen's beauty;

(I.ii.706-13)

His deep enmity surfaces again in Act III, scene i: "I hate him mortally. 'Twas he/Slaved me to th'hangman's axe" (III.i.1609-11). Alphonso's ascendancy is marked by his growing confidence in his superiority over Velasco. He charges Velasco with "pride and malice" and the "rage of thy malicious heart to us" (III.i.1832, 1841). When Velasco eventually reasserts himself (in Act V) he refers back to his triumph over Alphonso:

Past times can tell you sir, I was no coward,  
 And now the justice of a gallant quarell  
 Shall new revive my dulness.

. . . . .

We come not here to chide, my sword shall thunder  
 The right for which I strike.

(V.ii.3444-59)

The enmity between them is a contention between fundamentally opposed characters. They remain so until Alphonso's character changes later on in this scene. His conversion is as wholesale

as his misogyny had been. The "monstrous enchantress" of Act II now becomes an "Angel," the "Glory of Creation" (line 3644).

The final confrontation between Velasco and Alphonso shows the resumption of Velasco's original role of the defender of the kingdom. However, it is debatable how well he succeeds in actually serving the queen, for she finds his presumption in challenging Alphonso so unbearable that she faints. It is true that Velasco's championship of the queen signals the beginning of the regenerative process, at the end of which she gains greater power through the conversion of Alphonso from enemy to worshipper. But Velasco is not the contriver of that process. His role-reversal is only the prelude to another. This is Muretto's turnabout from accuser to defender of the queen, which is what brings about the happy ending. With considerable skill, Ford shifts the emphasis from Velasco's bravery to Muretto's psychotherapy, so that it becomes plain to what the queen owes her safety and happiness. Ford turns our attention from Velasco, and at the same time prevents him and Alphonso from fighting, by bringing in Petruchi. Petruchi claims, quite logically, to be the right person to defend the queen since he alone can attest the queen's innocence beyond doubt. Having in this way prepared the audience to recognize that Velasco is not alone in defending the queen, Ford goes on to produce the least likely person as her most effective defender, the surprise of the event locking the audience's attention on Muretto's method of curing Alphonso. Muretto enters to take up arms against Alphonso at the very moment that Alphonso, feeling encircled by enemies,

calls upon him as an ally. Alphonso's reaction reveals his shock at Muretto's metamorphosis:

Are all conspir'd against me? what thou too?  
 Now by my father's ashes, by my life  
 Thou art a villain, a gross rank'rous villain.  
 Did'st not thou only first inforce my thoughts  
   to jealousy?  
   (V.ii.3555-60)

Alphonso's sense of shock is appreciated by that of the audience who have been unaware of Muretto's purpose. In this respect this play differs radically from The Lover's Melancholy in handling the therapeutic process. In that play Corax's therapeutic undertaking is plain, indeed much advertised. From beginning to end it lends to the cure of Palador and Meleander an air of a gradual process. In The Queen Muretto works alone until the treatment is complete and successful, and thus turns Alphonso's cure into something of a miracle. To Anderson "These differences suggest that The Queen, if Ford's, is earlier, and that he profited from it in The Lover's Melancholy."<sup>15</sup> This chronological reasoning seems doubtful, for time does not necessarily guarantee improvement, and the superiority of The Lover's Melancholy--of which there can be no question--is more likely due to the different problem it tackles. The Lover's Melancholy shows a dramatic progress from loss to restoration. Palador's love for Eroclea is one of the given factors and all that is required for a happy ending is that Eroclea be brought back to Palador. As Burton puts it, the "best cure of Love-Melancholy is, to let them have their desire."<sup>16</sup> Corax's task is to make sure that love exists and then to supply the obvious cure. On

the contrary, Muretto has to arouse love in a mind infected by the very opposite emotion. He achieves this by administering a severe shock to Alphonso. It is to underscore for the audience this intensity of that shock that Ford makes Muretto conceal his purpose.

However, it is not entirely true that Muretto's action is utterly unforeseen. The play does throw out occasional hints that Muretto is not what he seems to be. As early in the play as Act II, Muretto begs the queen, "If your excellent Majesty please to repose confidence in me; I will not only deliver him your commendations, but think my self highly dishonoured, if he return not his back to you by letter." (II.ii. 1300-5). For the moment this is discounted by our impression of Muretto as an unscrupulous parasite which is later reinforced by his insinuations of adultery against the queen. In the first scene of Act III in particular, Muretto seems to be the twin brother of D'Avolos in Love's Sacrifice, a parallel noted by Anderson.<sup>17</sup> But Muretto's harping on the queen's beauty is not altogether the work of a villain, especially as he extracts Alphonso's promise in the first scene of Act IV, as the queen and Petruchi are brought in, to "use extremity to neither" (line 2490). A clearer hint that Muretto may be working on Alphonso for some definite purpose of his own is thrown out midway through the encounter between Alphonso and the queen and Petruchi, when Alphonso finds himself dazed by the queen's beauty. As Alphonso exclaims, "Let me ever look/And dwell upon

this presence" (IV.i.2541-2), Muretto says in an aside, "Now it works" (line 2544). We are not sure what it is that works because we know nothing of Muretto's plans and we know him only as a would-be Iago, but that he does have some plan and an honest one at that is suggested by the brief soliloquy with which Muretto concludes this scene:

Fare ye well King, this is admirable,  
I will be chronicled, all my business ripens  
to my wishes. And if honest intentions thrive  
so successfully; I will henceforth build  
upon this assurance, that there can hardly be  
a greater Hell or Damnation, than in being a  
Villain upon earth.

(IV.ii.2677-84)

The revaluation of Muretto forced upon us by this speech is strengthened in the last scene when Alphonso leads the queen into the duelling ground. Looking at them Muretto exclaims, "What a royal pair of excellent creatures are here both upon the castaway" (V.ii.3338-40) and assures the queen, "I dare promise, his love to you is so unfained, that it will relent in your humility" (line 3344-6). On the queen protesting her innocence he tells her, "By any means, for your honour's cause do not yield then one jot. Let not the faint fear of Death deject you before the royalty of an erected heart. D'ee hear this my Lord, 'tis a doubtful case, almost impossible to be decided. Look upon her well, as I hope to prosper, she hath a most vertuous, a most innocent countenance" (lines 3349-57). Hardly the accents of villainy, these.

These are light touches indeed and noted more in retrospect than in the press of developing events. This is

properly so in order that the surprise of Muretto's revelation may not lose its force. That is why the explanation comes after the event which leaves all present gaping in wonder. But having secured his dramatic effect Ford goes on as surely to underline the nature of the therapy. Muretto tells his audience, "Wonder not my Lords, but lend me your attentions" (V.ii.3583-4). He reminds Alphonso: "I ever whispered so much in your ears my Lord," and demands ratification of this: "Did I not tell you so from time to time?" (lines 3633-4, 3639). Such a retrospective recognition is very much in Ford's manner as we may see in Love's Sacrifice when Bianca pays her midnight visit to Fernando and reminds him of his protestation: "Remember this, and think I speak thy words" (II.iv.1380). A more striking example is Calantha's recapitulation of her dance when in response to Nearchus' query (which itself goes back to her words) "Madam, what means that word neglected husband?" (V.iii.61), Calantha reminds him and her counsellors of her fortitude in receiving the news of so many deaths with such equanimity.

Muretto's role as manipulator is not obvious from the beginning like that of Corax, Rhetias and Sophronos in The Lover's Melancholy. Since Alphonso's venomous misogyny poses an incomparably greater menace than the melancholy of Palador or Meleander, it presages a tragic issue, seen not merely as a retreat from life in the manner of Palador and Meleander but as a violent, bloody catastrophe. The sense of impending violence is a dramatic necessity for achieving the tragicomic effect of happiness barely snatched from the grasp of disaster. Any relief through prior revelation of modifying factors would, given the

peculiar force of Alphonso's malady, snap the suspense and destroy the tension of the plot-structure.

The surprise resolution of this play shows that despite its close and obvious kinship with The Lover's Melancholy it is distinguished by aspects of form not found in that play. The central concern is clearly the same in both plays. Both plays study the overthrow of reason by passion and at the same time illustrate the cure of the resultant neuroses by means of deliberate human action. More significantly, both agree that each restorative action takes the form essentially of opening up diseased minds to new ideas and opinions. In The Lover's Melancholy we have seen how Rhetias and Corax prepare the ground for the final reclamation of Palador and Meleander by compelling them to voice their anguish and share it. In The Queen Muretto adopts a similar mode of re-educating Alphonso by turning him away from his consuming hatred to the appreciation of beauty. But the techniques used in the plays to relate character and action are different, not to say contradictory. The main subjects of study in The Lover's Melancholy, Palador and Meleander, are wholly passive, doing nothing towards the development of the action but carried away by it. On the contrary, the action of The Queen is formed decisively by the central characters, Alphonso and the queen. As we have noted earlier, the queen is as much a slave to passion as Alphonso, despite the different--and amiable--nature of her passion. Alphonso's responsibility for the action is obvious. As for the queen,

even though she initiates no action beyond the first act, she is just as accountable because of her submission to Alphonso and her paralysing interdictions upon her counsellors. In The Lover's Melancholy it is the periphery of the playworld that moves. In The Queen the peripheral group remains virtually immobile while the nucleus whirls about with potentially explosive force.

Another structural aspect by which The Queen is distinguished from The Lover's Melancholy is the Velasco subplot which offers, thematically, both a parallel to the theme of the main plot and a variation upon it. Like the queen and Alphonso, Velasco is a slave to passion, he and the queen surrendering to love while Alphonso is ruled by hate. The parallel between the queen and her general stretches farther. The queen submits to the trials imposed upon her by Alphonso as does Velasco to Salassa's test. The queen consciously accepts Alphonso's cruelty as a test of her love in Act II, scene ii, where she first assures the courtiers, "Why la now, Lords, I told you that the King/Made our division but a proof of faith" (II.ii.1162-4) and later announces that,

A wife must bear  
Withal what likes her Lord t'upbraid her with,  
And yet 'tis no injustice.

(II.ii.1251-3)

The excess of love that so warps her judgment remains unchanged to the end and she plays unflinching the role of submissive wife. Velasco does indeed surrender to his passion and submits to Salassa's whim but the parallel with the queen stops with his

vow of submission to Salassa. His realization of the capricious nature of the woman he loves breaks the hold of passion over him, in marked contrast with the case of the queen whose love no cruelty of Alphonso can destroy. After Velasco takes his vow he remains through the rest of the play the queen's peer in noble sufferance but not in submission to love. What holds him in bondage is no longer love but constancy, like that of Giovanni, Orgilus and Perkin Warbeck, as a self-sustaining ideal. In the last scene of Act IV he soliloquises,

Too late I find,  
How passions at their best are but sly traitors  
To ruin honour. That which we call love,  
Was by the wisest power above forethought  
To check our pride.

(IV.iii.2726-34)

Scorning Salassa's offer to release him from his vow, he admonishes her, "look, look up, up there/My oath is bookt, no human power can free me" (IV.iii.2841-3). When finally he saves Salassa by offering to fight as the queen's champion, he still rejects her love, telling her, "I set thee free, and for it pawn a soul" (V.i.3222). The grip of such an ideal of constancy is no less cruel than that of any other passion, as proved by the tragic outcome of the inalienable vows that bind Orgilus and Penthea in The Broken Heart. Velasco's case runs parallel to the main plot insofar as he surrenders to passion, but that surrender proves the fearful nature of its hold by killing the passion itself. It is in this way that the subplot offers an extended understanding of the theme of bondage.

This understanding reinforces the tragic potential of The Queen. As a study of noble natures unbalanced by passion but saved by a therapeutic reawakening of reason this play is doubtless similar to The Lover's Melancholy. But tragedy is a closer possibility here because Alphonso's neurosis has an active malevolence which thrives in the climate of the queen's blind love. The basic structural difference between The Lover's Melancholy and The Queen is that The Lover's Melancholy begins with a crisis as a given condition from which it moves steadily towards its resolution. A further difference is that the world of The Lover's Melancholy is not taken over by slaves of passion as is that of The Queen. It is Alphonso who has the most active part in the play, not the queen or anyone in her party. On the other hand, in The Lover's Melancholy both Palador and Meleander are presented as helpless and passive victims of their grief and incapable of action; action originates solely with their friends and followers. Consequently, while The Lover's Melancholy depicts a steady movement towards reunion and triumph over loss, a movement created through the format of therapeutic experiment, it is the suspension of the action between happiness and disaster that distinguishes The Queen.

## Chapter VII

### FORD'S ACHIEVEMENT

In view of the fact that Ford deals in his plays with extraordinary areas of experience, it is not surprising that critical discussions of Ford should mainly center around his themes and should take particular note of his interpretation of conduct. Incest, illicit love and violence mark his tragedies and his comedies too are strongly coloured by violent passion. Recent criticism acknowledges that in portraying these extremities of passion and suffering Ford was moved rather by a spirit of enquiry than an opportunistic purpose of capturing a sensation-loving audience, as earlier critics of Ford claimed. His consistently serious purpose of understanding the nature and process of suffering is hinted at by Ford himself in his prologues and epilogues.<sup>1</sup> Ford thinks of his plays as "studies" in "truth" and addresses them exclusively to thinking men. His search for truth leads him to portray, in tragedies and in comedies alike, men challenged from within their own natures, by overpowering passions. But whereas in Ford's tragedies we see the subjugation of reason by passion, in his comedies we see the ultimate triumph of reason by means of which disaster is averted. Ford's interest can therefore be generally

defined as a concern with the destructive situations in which men find themselves, and with their manner of facing disaster.

The calamities that threaten a man and his world set the tone of Ford's plays. While studying The Lover's Melancholy we have seen how insistently Ford draws the spectator's attention to the dangers threatening the world of Palador, Meleander and Eroclea. An even more oppressive atmosphere of menace is created in The Queen. The world of The Broken Heart is similarly threatened; Sparta is clearly named by Tecnicus the sage, as the "plot" of the tragic events. In Perkin Warbeck the fate of entire nations is thrown in the balance. The scale is smaller in 'Tis Pity She's a Whore but the context of imminent disaster is established from the very first scene by the Friar's warnings to Giovanni in his incestuous passion. Similar admissions are made by Fernando in Love's Sacrifice, strengthening the sense of impending ruin that his love for Bianca communicates to the audience.

This concern with disaster cannot by itself account for Ford's particular genius, however, because such a concern characterizes most of his contemporaries. A heightened awareness of crisis pervades Jacobean drama and expresses itself through the portrayal of a world weakened by moral and political ambiguities. Mark Stavig has argued, considerably developing Hardin Craig's theory of renaissance ethical identities being products of Aristotelian, Stoic and Christian ideals, that Ford and his contemporaries tried in their works both to account for

catastrophe and to portray man's conduct in such situations.<sup>2</sup> H.J. Oliver has similarly suggested, following F.P. Wilson, that the chief distinction of Jacobean dramatists lies in their interest in inquiry and analysis, which is sharper and more urgent than that of their Elizabethan predecessors.<sup>3</sup> Ford's individuality lies in defining the crisis perceived in his time as the alienation of noble-minded individuals from their world, individuals whose intellect, imagination and moral integrity--qualities that identify them as natural leaders--make their alienation grievous not only for them but for their world as well.

Since it is obvious that no alienation is possible in a social void, a vital part of Ford's strategy is to create an environment for his protagonist which provides the ethical norm against which all action in that world is judged. The necessity for conforming to the ruling code of conduct is clearly stated in the plays. In 'Tis Pity and The Broken Heart the ethical requirements of the playworld are stated unambiguously by the Friar and Tecnicus. No such obvious mouthpiece of the social will is present in Ford's other plays, but Perkin Warbeck brings up the question of kingly duty and continually places King Henry's practical wisdom and King James' emulation of it against Warbeck's solitary defiance of the established order. Social expectations are strong in Love's Sacrifice and act so powerfully as deterrents to the individual wills of Fernando and Bianca that they are forced into fidelity to wedlock and friend-

ship, and at the same time driven to question the validity of social restrictions, of the "iron laws of ceremony" (V.i.2354). Conformity with social expectations is a major requirement again in The Lover's Melancholy and The Queen. The whole endeavour of Palador's counsellors is to awaken him to his social responsibilities. In The Queen, the loyalty of the courtiers and the wifely submissiveness of the queen stand as examples of right conduct. It is true that the social framework of conduct is never anatomized by Ford as it is by Ben Jonson or Middleton but when Ford presents to the audience the inhabitants of his dramatic world, he makes sure that he also presents the moral requirements of their world.

The estrangement of some of the most notable individuals of that world is at the centre of the catastrophe that Ford studies in play after play. His statements of purpose, to which we have referred above, are important not only because they express the earnestness with which he approached his art but also because they lead us to expect a deliberate strategy for illustrating his experience of man's predicaments. Stated simply, his method of doing so is that of building a syllogistic sequence of events that shows, in the tragedies, the rising barrier between the protagonist and his world, or, in the comedies, the bridging of the gulf that isolates the protagonist. As event follows event, the process either of estrangement or of reintegration becomes clearer, not only because we have the evidence of concrete action but, more significantly, because

the events are causally interrelated and at the same time seen to be stemming from psychological forces. Ford's understanding of these forces seems so deep that his technique of expressing them in terms of events is sometimes overlooked. Clifford Leech, for instance, finds in Ford's plays "a comparative indifference to event," and H.J. Oliver deprecates the fact that Ford did not altogether abandon incident in favour of inquiry, and regrets that Ford did not create "a new tradition, of purely psychological drama."<sup>4</sup> The present study, on the other hand, is grounded in the belief that in renaissance drama, as indeed in all drama, incidents constitute the primary mode of communication between dramatist and spectator. Whatever issues the spectator comprehends, psychological or sociological, are inferences drawn from the events taking place on the stage.

No apology therefore seems needed for Ford's having admitted incidents into his plays, especially as despite Ford's small skill in inventing dramatic fiction the events in his plays are organized into well-knit structures. His plots may not be rich in the number or variety of incidents but they progress with logical consistency. Quite obviously, there can be little difference of opinion with Oliver, Ewing or Sensabaugh in identifying psychological analysis as one of Ford's major strengths. But there is no getting past the fact that Ford's "inquiry and analysis" rests upon a framework of events built carefully as a marshalling of data that allows psychological inferences. If Ford specializes in portraying human predicaments, then it is the structure of the physical world of his

plays, which is a composition as much of events as of human nature, that promotes his particular view of human nature.

When we devalue incident as a dramatic element, we devalue the plot. It is a major error of critical judgment to do so because the perception of disaster that forms the core of dramatic interest is expressed in material terms as a constriction of the protagonist's action, which can be understood only through plot-development. This atrophy of action serves as an objective indication of the helplessness of Ford's central figures. It has a special tragic force in the context of Ford's Stoic affiliations, affiliations that led him in his ethical treatise, The Line of Life, to endorse the dictum that "action is the crown of virtue."<sup>5</sup> The decline of the power to act is therefore an adversity that presages not only physical suffering but moral torment. Such impotence may evolve out of the defiance of society as in Giovanni's case, out of an exclusive commitment to an ideal as we see in the lives of Ithocles and Penthea and Perkin Warbeck or out of the knowledge of an irremediable loss as in the instances of Calantha and Palador. Whatever reasons bring it about, this constriction of action becomes Ford's sharpest tool for the development of the tragic potential. It can therefore be seen as a major dramatic situation in the plays. In the tragedies it is to this situation that events lead and the one out of which the final holocaust proceeds. It is this situation that the comedies seek to avert. Its centrality becomes evident when we examine the basic plan on which Ford builds his plays, a plan used consistently in the tragedies and with some variation in the comedies.

The common pattern of the tragedies is this: the action arises out of a decision of the central character (which is brought about by some powerful passion), a decision that goes counter to the purposes, interests, and moral values of his world. The strength of his passion compels total fidelity to his choice and prevents him from reversing his decision, so that there arises a clash between psychological and social necessities. This conflict increases the distance between the protagonist and his world and eventually leads to a rejection of each by the other. Since the world is more powerful than the protagonist, he is both cut off from it and encircled by it, with a resultant constriction of action. He lives only with his chosen purpose and solely for it. He perceives this fidelity as a proof of nobility, but being cut off from his world he can affirm what he believes to be his virtue in none of the ways of that world and has to point it out by some notable act, usually violent, that compels attention and--he hopes--elicits admiration.

This plan is followed by Ford even in his comedies, though with some variations. There is still the individual guided by some strong passion which keeps him imprisoned in his fidelity to a course to conduct that is not acceptable to his world, and by separating him from his world it creates a potentially destructive relationship between the two. Thus far the comedies follow the tragic pattern. However, the world of comedy devises means to curb passion by persuading the protagonist to examine it self-consciously, or sometimes--in addition--

by repairing the loss which engendered the passion.

The basic scheme of the plays shows that Ford focuses our attention squarely on the constriction of the protagonist's action in each play and presents plot-development as a movement either to or from the immobilization of the central figure. In 'Tis Pity, for instance, Giovanni and Annabella have in the beginning the choice of moving in more than one direction: Giovanni already has an academic or a theological career in the making and Annabella has the choice of any one of several rich marriages. However, the revelation of Giovanni and Annabella's love for one another at once puts constraints on their future actions. But even after they execute their compact, they have the choice of retracing their steps, of capitulating to the admonitions of the Friar who proposes in Act II, scene v that they renounce their passion and start life all over again. But the sexual experience reported by Annabella in Act II, scene i, as a "paradise of joy" (line 43) precludes reconsideration. The sexual event exerts a more compelling power than love, for it culminates in Annabella's pregnancy which destroys what little choice of action they had and forces them to accept Annabella's marriage to Soranzo. Her pregnancy and the marriage it necessitates thus illustrates their essential vulnerability which is soon proved by the revenge plot of Soranzo and Vasques. No options remain open for Giovanni and Annabella and they are carried irresistibly to their deaths, having been brought to a state of impotency in which the acceptance of doom becomes the

only action permitted them. This means for Annabella, the passive consort, surrender to death, and for Giovanni, the active partner, a violent and theatrical assertion of their love.

The case of Orgilus in The Broken Heart is more complex because he is both free to act out his revenge and incapable of doing anything else. In the first scene he is free to stay in Sparta or to go to Athens, but his obsession with his loss and with constancy curtails his choice by keeping him bound to Sparta, which, he says, will let him observe "Penthea's usage and Euphranea's faith" (I.iii.35). This decision conclusively narrows down his options by leading, first, to his discovery of the love between Euphranea and Prophilus, and next, to his encounter with Penthea. The fact that Prophilus is Ithocles' protégé fans Orgilus' anger against Ithocles, which burns the more fiercely for Penthea's reminder to him that her "divorce" from him (II.iii.57) is irreversible. From observation and commentary he is driven to the decision to plan action. The Euphranea-Prophilus match increases his bitterness and drives him even more against Ithocles; since his insistence on Euphranea's constancy makes his assent to her marriage essential, he finds himself compelled to appear at the royal court. This in turn constrains him to accept Ithocles' friendship, which he does outwardly though smarting under the necessity, as he makes plain to his father in Act III, scene iv. His sole occupation from this point on becomes an endeavour to snare

Ithocles in one way or another, as proved by his spiteful attempt in Act IV, scene i, to provoke Ithocles' anger against the powerful Nearchus. Orgilus is now capable of no action except that of taking revenge. Once that revenge is accomplished, Orgilus finds his occupation gone and welcomes death as the only choice left, agreeing with Tecnicus' dictum, "Revenge proves its own executioner" (V.ii.147).

The lives of Ithocles and Calantha are other examples of constricted action in the play. At its beginning Ithocles stands as the cynosure of all eyes, victorious over his country's enemies and free to do as he pleases. Yet, as the plot unfolds we discover that his ambition, as he admits (II.ii.1-5) and as his uncle Armostes points out (IV.i.69-73), is limited as much by social and political constraints as by his past ill-treatment of Penthea and Orgilus, an action originating in his pride. Though a man of action, Ithocles is singularly powerless to achieve his ends. In his relationship with Calantha, the initiative is first Penthea's and then it passes on to Calantha herself who secures her father's approval for appointing Ithocles her personal follower (IV.iii.77-80), while Ithocles, for all his vehemence is rendered by political necessities incapable of retaliating against Nearchus. Finally, he is literally immobilized by Orgilus in his deadly chair. Ithocles' incapacitation is thus expressed in the most explicitly material and theatrical terms. Calantha too is cut off by Ithocles' death from participating actively in life. Although

she is seemingly in command, her options are really limited to her love for Ithocles. Having tied up her life with his, she finds that circumstances militate against all action except that of withdrawal into the immobility of death.

In the life of Perkin Warbeck too, the atrophy of action is seen as the waning of opportunities. The events in Perkin Warbeck are designed to progressively circumscribe Warbeck's actions, driving him from one defeat to another. As Warbeck himself informs King James, his life is a tale of incarcerations of one kind or another; he was "hurried/Unto the sanctuary" from the nursery, and then "from the sanctuary/Forced to the prison, from the prison haled/By cruel hands to the tormentor's fury" (II.i.49-52). This description also fits his career as depicted in the play. So long as he is supported by James he has a choice of military action against King Henry, but his inability to hold James' friendship forces him into the one venture left for him, the insurrection in Cornwall, and when that fails, no action is left for him. He is encircled--"bought and sold," according to Dalyell (V.i.68)--and ends up in actual chains.

The constriction of the protagonist's action is a major feature also of the comedies we have studied. But as we have noted earlier, the comedies reverse the process of development that characterizes the tragedies, and go from a crisis to its resolution. Thus The Lover's Melancholy begins rather than ends with the atrophy of its protagonist's actions. It shows Prince Palador reduced to inactivity by his grief; he will "lend an

eare to business, deale in none" (I.i.99). His cure brings on a re-engagement with his princely "business" as we begin to see from Act IV, scene iii, where he at last takes his life in his own hands and, affirming that he has a "masculin, a stirring spirit" (line 2052) he sets about to search for Parthenophil. This new activity develops into a more thoroughgoing and decisive ordering of his life and that of his kingdom in the last scene of the play where it is he who determines the lives of his subjects. From the figurehead that he is at his first appearance he thus evolves into the true ruler that we see in the last scene.

The Queen, as we have noted in our study of that play, goes much closer to tragedy than The Lover's Melancholy. For this reason the process of its development is different and it depicts the growing constriction of the action of two of its main characters, the queen and Velasco. The queen's disproportionate love for Alphonso compels her to surrender to him her powers of acting as the ruler of her kingdom and this not merely makes her a prisoner of her passion in a figurative sense but leads her into an actual prison. Her recession into passivity is matched by Velasco's reduction from valiant warrior to feeble pacifist. It is not till late in the play that this process is reversed, which happens when Velasco reverses his decision to be unyielding in his constancy to a vow rather than to a human being. He regains the freedom of action he had lost through that vow by renouncing it. The queen regains her free-

dom in a more literal sense, but her greater triumph is that by yielding her authority as ruler she secures a more cherished authority as wife when she is acknowledged by Alphonso as the "Soveraign of my heart" (V.ii.3658).

The constriction of action is then a structural device that Ford uses in tragedy and comedy alike to bring to our attention through plot-development the helplessness of the central characters. This technique of objectively indicating the predicaments of those characters is supplemented by a powerful instrument of the rhetoric of the theatre, the medium of the visual image. In every play Ford leads the action up to moments at which the flow of action on the stage is arrested in order to produce an image held in time and so made memorable, a tableau vivant created by placing the central character in a deliberate spatial relationship with others on the stage. Speaking of such moments Leech tells us that these are times when "Ford aims at a form of spatial perception," and that each play highlights "a series of static groupings." The movement in each play, says Leech, is towards these "moments of stillness."<sup>6</sup> Eugene M. Waith has similarly noticed in The Broken Heart a visual emphasis on immobility, which he thinks matches the emphasis in that play on stoical calm in the presence of grief.<sup>7</sup> But neither critic has examined the dramatic value of these images: Leech indeed warns us against Ford's "fascination with the spatial picture" for they may blind us to his "deeper capacities" of presenting experience as a timeless totality.<sup>8</sup>

The truth however is that these images do give us an insight into those deeper capacities of Ford's imagination and understanding, for they are not merely striking pictures but symbolic statements summing up the experience presented in the play.

These images are not randomly scattered through a play but placed at climactic points of the action. In 'Tis Pity, for instance, Giovanni's love and his estrangement from his world are summed up as he stands encircled by a horror-stricken and inimical world, holding up Annabella's heart as his most precious possession. We may think similarly of Orgilus standing encircled by the court that has sentenced him, blëeding, to death. That this picture of death is intended as an index to his nature is suggested by his own invitation to the world to "look upon my steadiness" (V.ii.118). No less deliberately contrived is the image of Ithocles caught in Orgilus' chair, placed carefully by the side of the dead Penthea, also "in a chair," a composition that not only sets off Ithocles' physical powerlessness but also gives a concrete point to Orgilus' subsequent adulation: "Sweet twins, shine for ever" (IV.iv.74). The final moment of the play, when all action comes to an end, is marked by the image of Calantha's death. Through half of the last scene she acts the energetic monarch, but having done her duty to the kingdom she rejects her estate, and moves deliberately towards the dead Ithocles: "Now I turn to thee, thou shadow/Of my contracted lord" (V.iii.62-3). She goes to

him, printing "One kiss on these cold lips" (line 77) and this is the tableau with which the play ends.

A similar picture is presented at the end of Love's Sacrifice where Fernando appears within the tomb of Bianca, claiming sovereignty over the tomb of his beloved (V.iii). This presentation of a noble character compelled to choose death rests upon the composition created on the stage, a picture composed of the open tomb, the "blessed bones inhearth within" (V.iii.2745) and Fernando "in his winding sheet" (S.D. 2764).

The action of Perkin Warbeck leads to one of the most expressive stage-images in Ford. We have earlier seen that Warbeck's life is one of continually diminishing freedom. Through the series of mishaps that dog Warbeck, the chain of events in the play shows his ever-dwindling capacity for action until he is stripped of all opportunities. This inexorable process of destitution is gathered into the image of Warbeck literally held immobile in King Henry's stocks. Since this moment is demonstrably the culminating point of plot-development, the image of Warbeck appears as a necessary distillation of events into spectacle as well as a statement of Warbeck's essentially alien nobility.

In the comedies we find similar pictures but they are placed differently because there the process of crisis is reversed to lead to reunion. The Lover's Melancholy presents the picture of Palador immersed in a book, keeping apart from

his courtiers. This image is an obvious manifestation of the central problem of the play, that is, Palador's withdrawal from life. The Queen is richer in images. It opens with a portrait of Alphonso standing bound in chains in front of the executioner's block. Later we see Velasco's patient fortitude figured in the image of the brave general bearing silently the abuse and blows of cowards. The next picture is that of the widow Salassa on the scaffold, her hair loose, cast out by the world by her presumption. All these images express fundamental psychological qualities and at the same time indicate the progress of personal destinies.

But a much more elaborate picture is presented in the last scene of The Queen. The action of the play leads the protagonists to the duelling-lists where Alphonso deliberately places the queen on a throne, setting her apart from all, from himself as well as from her followers. When eventually Alphonso is cured of his neurosis, he sets about consciously to create a tableau of adoration in front of the queen. He commands everybody to emulate him: "Lay by your arms, my lords, and join with me./Let's kneel to this (what shall I call her?) woman?/No, she's an angel" (V.ii.3640-4). Thereupon "ALL kneel," as the stage direction has it.

It is essential that in examining these images we note that they are placed carefully to match with the development of the action. The action leads up to them and is condensed into them. They occur at moments of heightened emotions on

the part of the characters in the plays, emotions that demand a heightened awareness on our, the audience's, part. It seems as though the experience of passion becomes too overpowering to be contained by verbal communication alone and requires the additional support of a non-verbal mode, thereby gaining for itself an immediacy of meaning. These speaking pictures are therefore not decorative frills, offering forms without substance, but are integral elements of Ford's language of the theatre.

Given Ford's committed interest in the crisis of the alienated man, one can understand the need for a special instrument to communicate a sense of that crisis. Giovanni, Orgilus, and Warbeck, as also Palador and Alphonso before their regeneration, are strangers in their worlds because they have contracted themselves to values that do not belong to the prevailing ethical system. It is because this alienation is the staple of Ford's dramatic imagination that he excels in tragedy. For Ford's tragic figures this essential estrangement presents not only the anguish of rejection but poses the problem of self-definition. If they are so very different from the usual human being, how can natural actions express the essential substance of their inner being? That they possess that substance is the faith that sustains them, as we find from their confident assertions of self approbation. The world in which they live may lack meaning for them but their own existence does not. Their perception of their crises thus verges on an existentialist view of life.

This is why Ford's tragic figures are driven to express themselves through unusual and deliberately planned acts and to cast these acts into careful forms as definitive statements of identity. Appropriately, these are acts of violence, for it is violence that can best wrench the sensibility of the world and engage its attention. The moments at which such acts occur, necessary moments to which the force of causally linked events drives the protagonist, must be held frozen not only in our minds, but in our vision, for it is by unifying the word and the image that the theatre as an art-form must live. The ethical ideas and psychological understanding that inseminate the climate of feelings in Ford's plays constitute the basic matter of dramatic experience; but the experience itself can be gained in the theatre not conceptually alone but physically. It is therefore in designing an instrument of communication, a composite structure of idea, action and spectacle that Ford's identity as a playwright consists.

## NOTES

### Chapter I

<sup>1</sup>M. Joan Sargeant, John Ford, Oxford: Blackwell, 1935. A detailed and conveniently ordered account is given by Gerald E. Bentley, The Jacobean and Caroline Stage, Oxford, Clarendon, 1941-56, III, pp. 433-64.

<sup>2</sup>F. E. Pierce, "The Sequence of John Ford's Plays," The Nation, XCII(January 1911), 9-10, and "The Collaboration of Dekker and Ford," Anglia, XXXVI(1912), 141-68, 289-312.

<sup>3</sup>Charles Lamb, Specimens of English Dramatic Poets, London: Routledge, n.d., p. 216.

<sup>4</sup>William Hazlitt, Lectures Chiefly on the Dramatic Literature of the Age of Elizabeth, London: Stoddart, 1820, p. 186.

<sup>5</sup>Henry Havelock Ellis, ed. John Ford, London: Vizetelly, 1888, p. xvii.

<sup>6</sup>G.F.Sensabaugh, The Tragic Muse of John Ford, Stanford: Stanford U., 1944.

<sup>7</sup>See Clifford Leech, John Ford and the Drama of his Time, London: Chatto & Windus, 1957, pp. 26, 49; Mark Stavig, John Ford and the Moral Order, Madison: U. of Wisconsin, 1968, pp. 20-35; N.W.Bawcutt, "Seneca and Ford's 'Tis Pity She's a Whore,'" Notes & Queries, XIV(June 1967), 215.

<sup>8</sup>S.Blaine Ewing, Burtonian Melancholy in the Plays of John Ford, Princeton: Princeton U., 1940.

<sup>9</sup>George Saintsbury, A History of Elizabethan Literature, London: Macmillan, 1887, p. 409; Felix Schelling, Elizabethan Drama, London: Constable, 1908, II, p. 331; Ashley H. Thorndike, Tragedy, New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1908, p. 229.

<sup>10</sup>Stuart P. Sherman, "Forde's Contribution to the Decadence of the Drama," in John Fordes Dramatische Werke, ed. W. Bang, Louvain: Uystpruyst, 1908, pp. vii-xix.

<sup>11</sup>J.A.Bastiaenen, The Moral Tone of Jacobean and Caroline Drama, Amsterdam, 1930, pp. 102-3.

<sup>12</sup>T.S.Eliot, Elizabethan Essays, London: Faber, 1934, p.151.

<sup>13</sup>T.B.Tomlinson, "Decadence: the Hollowness of Chapman and Ford," A Study of Elizabethan and Jacobean Tragedy, Cambridge: Cambridge U., 1964, p. 268.

<sup>14</sup>Robert Ornstein, The Moral Vision of Jacobean Tragedy, Madison: U. of Wisconsin, 1960, pp. 200-21.

<sup>15</sup>John Ford and the Moral Order.

<sup>16</sup>Cyrus Hoy, "'Ignorance in knowledge': Marlowe's Faustus and Ford's Giovanni," Modern Philology, LVII(February 1960), 145-54.

<sup>17</sup>John Ford and the Drama of his Time.

<sup>18</sup>Florence Ali, Opposing Absolutes: Conviction and Convention on John Ford's Plays, Salzburg: U. of Salzburg, 1974; Tucker Orbison, The Tragic Vision of John Ford, Salzburg: U. of Salzburg, 1974.

<sup>19</sup>H.J.Oliver, The Problem of John Ford, Carlton, Victoria: Melbourne U., 1955.

<sup>20</sup>Glenn H. Blayney, "Convention, Plot, and Structure in The Broken Heart," Modern Philology, LVI(August 1958), 1-9.

<sup>21</sup>R.J.Kaufmann, "Ford's Tragic Perspective," Texas Studies in Literature and Language, I(winter 1960), 522-37.

<sup>22</sup>R.J.Kaufmann, "Ford's 'Waste Land': The Broken Heart," Renaissance Drama, n.s. III(1970), 167-87.

<sup>23</sup>Juliet McMaster, "Love, Lust, and Sham: Structural Pattern in the Plays of John Ford," Renaissance Drama, n.s. II(1969), 157-66.

<sup>24</sup> An exhaustive history of the staging of 'Tis Pity She's a Whore is given by Lucette Andrieu, Dommage qu'elle soit une P ... ('Tis Pity She's a Whore) de John Ford, Salzburg: U. of Salzburg, 1975. The best known production of The Broken Heart in recent times was Sir Laurence Olivier's at the Festival Theatre, Chichester, England, in 1962.

<sup>25</sup> Kaufmann, "Ford's 'Waste Land'."

<sup>26</sup> Sargeaunt, pp. 142-54.

<sup>27</sup> W. Gifford, The Dramatic Works of John Ford, London: John Murray, 1827, I, p. xxiii.

<sup>28</sup> Sargeaunt, p. 143.

<sup>29</sup> Sargeaunt, p. 145.

## Chapter II

<sup>1</sup> Endeavors of Art, Madison: U. of Wisconsin, 1954, p. 24.

<sup>2</sup> Ben Jonson, Selected Works, ed. David McPherson, New York: Rinehart, 1972, p. 150, lines 108-10.

<sup>3</sup> Themes and Conventions of Elizabethan Tragedy, Cambridge: Cambridge U., 1957, pp. 30-1.

<sup>4</sup> "The Shackling of Accidents: A Study of Elizabethan Tragedy," Philological Quarterly, XIX (January 1940), 1-19.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., p. 15.

<sup>6</sup> Another scholar in the period, E.M.W. Tillyard, tells us that he uses the word Elizabethan to mean "anything within the compass of the English Renaissance, anything between the ages of Henry VIII and Charles I," The Elizabethan World Picture, London: Chatto & Windus, 1960, p. vii.

<sup>7</sup> Counter-Statement, Los Altos, California: Hermes, 1953, p. 124.

<sup>8</sup> George C. Herndl, The High Design, Lexington: U. of Kentucky, 1970, p. 230.

<sup>9</sup>M.M.Reese notes that renaissance historiographers saw history as a structure of cause and effect, "the historical 'plot' being shaped to have a beginning, middle and end." The Cease of Majesty: A Study of Shakespeare's History Plays, London: Arnold, 1961, pp. 65-6.

<sup>10</sup>According to Aristotle, "an action implies personal agents, who necessarily possess certain distinctive qualities both of character and thought; for- it is by these that we qualify actions themselves, and these -- thought and character-- are the two natural causes from which actions spring." The Poetics, 1450a, in Samuel H. Butcher, Aristotle's Theory of Poetry and Fine Art, 4th ed., London: Macmillan, 1907.

<sup>11</sup>The Tragic Muse of John Ford, pp. 35-46. Sensabaugh weakens his thesis on Ford's acceptance of the pathological basis of mental states and his use of the theory in his plays, by quoting a passage from The Sun's Darling. This passage is from the second act of the play, which is not "generally conceded to be from Ford's pen" (p. 42) but categorically given to Dekker by Pierce and Sargeaunt, and so accepted by Oliver. See Pierce, "The Collaboration of Dekker and Ford "; Sargeaunt, p. 58; Oliver, p. 39.

<sup>12</sup>Jonson tells us that the notion of the humours is a physiological concept but "It may, by metaphor, apply itself/ Unto the general disposition," Induction to Every Man out of his Humour, in Selected Works, p. 367, lines 103-4.

<sup>13</sup>Lily B. Campbell examines this conception of character in Shakespeare's Tragic Heroes: Slaves of Passion, Cambridge: Cambridge U., 1930.

<sup>14</sup>Cyrus Hoy, "'Ignorance in knowledge'."

<sup>15</sup>This recognition of necessity was likely to be familiar to Ford as a stoic concept. For the concept, see Gilbert Murray, Stoic, Christian and Humanist, London: Allen & Unwin, 1940, pp. 104-5.

<sup>16</sup>The explanations provided within the play are backed by the stoic doctrine of the movement of the passions, according to which one passion might replace another "as one liquid might replace another in the emptying and filling of a cup," as Hardin Craig phrases it in The Enchanted Glass, Oxford: Blackwell, 1952, p. 116.

<sup>17</sup>In the preface to Annabella, Maurice Maeterlinck's French adaptation of 'Tis Pity, Maeterlinck considers Ford to be "at times almost like Racine" : Annabella, Paris, 1895, p. xii, cited and translated by Derek Roper in his edition of 'Tis Pity, p. 138.

### Chapter III

<sup>1</sup>In his edition of 'Tis Pity Derek Roper refers to the view (without citing his source) that the order for "this woman" to be burnt, applies to Annabella's corpse, not to Putana. This conjecture disregards the staging of the play. Annabella's corpse is not on the stage and cannot be the subject of "this."

<sup>2</sup>Hoy, "'Ignorance in knowledge'."

<sup>3</sup>In G.P.Griffi's film version of the play (1973), Annabella betrays Giovanni by allowing herself to be sexually aroused by Soranzo. There is not the slightest evidence for this in what Ford wrote.

<sup>4</sup>Alan Brissenden, "Impediments to Love: A Theme in John Ford," Renaissance Drama, VII(1964), 95-102; Sidney R. Homan, "Shakespeare and Dekker as Keys to Ford's 'Tis Pity She's a Whore," Studies in English Literature, VII(Spring 1967), 269-76; A.P.Hogan, "'Tis Pity She's a Whore: The Overall Design," SEL, XVII(Spring 1977), 303-16.

<sup>5</sup>Maurice Charney, "The Persuasiveness of Violence in Elizabethan Plays," Renaissance Drama, n.s. II(1969), 59-70.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid., p. 70.

<sup>7</sup>This and the quotation that follows are from the Selected Works, ed. David McPherson.

<sup>8</sup>Hoy; Ornstein, p. 205; Stavig, pp. 98-101.

<sup>9</sup>A pattern of sin with which Ford had to deal also in The Witch of Edmonton.

<sup>10</sup>Ernest W. Baughman, Type and Motif-Index of the Folk-tales of England and North America, The Hague: Mouton, 1966, no. G 303.12.6(c).

# Chapter IV

<sup>1</sup>Sherman, "Stella and The Broken Heart," PMLA, XIV(1909), 274-85.

<sup>2</sup>Sargeaunt, pp. 144-6.

<sup>3</sup>Kaufmann, "Ford's 'Waste Land'."

<sup>4</sup>See Leech, pp. 90-1; Ornstein, p. 202.

<sup>5</sup>Kaufmann, "Ford's 'Waste Land'," p. 178.

<sup>6</sup>For Ford's interest in sketching character-types as embodiments of psychological or ethical qualities, see Robert Davril, "John Ford et les Caracteres Overburiens," Etudes Anglaises, VI(1953), 122-6.

<sup>7</sup>Gifford, ed. The Dramatic Works, p. 246.

<sup>8</sup>Anderson, ed. The Broken Heart, pp. 5-6.

<sup>9</sup>The name "Hemophil" is printed in the 1633 quarto as "Lemophil" in the list of characters and at two other places (V.iii.2515 and 2568 in Bang). Oliver accepts "Lemophil" as the correct form because he thinks it is derived from "lemos" ("famine"), and "philos" ("to love"), and means "lover of famine or hunger" which, Oliver thinks, is close to Ford's gloss, "glutton" (p. 70, n. 6). It is not clear why Oliver prefers this forced meaning instead of accepting the possibility of a misprint. Of misprints there are several examples, such as, "pen ons" for "persons" at line 2568 (in Bang) -- the very line that has "Lemophil" -- and line 1477, which has "Iihocles, Groueas."

Brian Morris prints the name as "Lemophil" in his edition of the play (London: Benn, 1965) but suspects that it should read as "Lenophil," that is, "lover of the wine-vat." but admits that there can be "no certainty that this is what Ford intended" (p. 89).

<sup>10</sup>In his edition of the play Anderson notes: "Amyclas Ford may have obtained from the history of Pausanias (Bk. III, ch. I) . . . another possible source (pointed out by Sherman) is Sidney's Arcadia, which has a Spartan king named Amyclas" (p. 5).

<sup>11</sup>Perhaps Ford mistook the name "Amelus" for the

masculine form "Amelia," a Germanic name derived from "amal," "to work." "Amelus" by association might have been taken by Ford to suggest diligence and dependability.

<sup>12</sup>Attempts have been made to relate the "truth" of Ford's story to some actual instance of tragic love; see S.P.Sherman, "Stella and The Broken Heart," PMLA, XIV(1909), 274-85; G.M.Carsaniga, "'Truth' in John Ford's The Broken Heart," Comparative Literature, X(Fall 1958), 344-8; F.M. Burelbach, "Truth in Ford's The Broken Heart Revisited," Notes & Queries, XIV(June 1967), 211-12.

<sup>13</sup>Kaufmann, "Ford's 'Waste Land'," p. 183.

<sup>14</sup>Blayney, "Convention, Plot, and Structure"; Kaufmann, "Ford's Tragic Perspective."

<sup>15</sup>Blayney, p. 1.

<sup>16</sup>Amyclas is of course unaware of the true relationship between Calantha and Ithocles, and does not, as Ewing thinks (p. 55), "consent" to their betrothal.

<sup>17</sup>Gifford, ed. The Dramatic Works, p. 304, n. 6.

<sup>18</sup>Michael J. Kelly, "The Values of Action and Chronicle in The Broken Heart," Papers on Language and Literature, VII(1971), 150-8.

## Chapter V

<sup>1</sup>In The Monthly Review, probably by J.H.Merivale; quoted by Gifford, ed. The Dramatic Works, I, p. xxx, and Sargeaunt, p. 176.

<sup>2</sup>Gifford, p. xxx; Hartley Coleridge, ed. The Dramatic Works of Massinger and Ford, London: Moxon, 1848, p. xlvi.

<sup>3</sup>T.S.Eliot, p. 146.

<sup>4</sup>Havelock Ellis, ed John Ford, p. xii.

<sup>5</sup>Una Ellis-Fermor, The Jacobean Drama, 4th ed., London: Methuen, 1961, p. 233.

<sup>6</sup>Oliver, p. 100.

<sup>7</sup>Ure, ed. Perkin Warbeck, p. li.

<sup>8</sup>For the sources of Perkin Warbeck see Ure, pp. xxxv-xlv; Mildred C. Struble, A Critical Edition of Perkin Warbeck, Seattle: U. of Washington, 1926, pp. 27-30; John J. O'Connor, "A Lost Play of Perkin Warbeck," Modern Language Notes, LXX (December 1955), 566-8.

<sup>9</sup>Bentley, III, p. 455-6.

<sup>10</sup>Irving Ribner, The English History Play in the Age of Shakespeare, (rev. ed.) London: Methuen, 1965, pp. 305-12.

<sup>11</sup>Ribner, p. 300; Struble, pp. 30-7.

<sup>12</sup>Ure explains Henry's sarcasm by noting in his edition that "The point of Henry's metaphor is that the colossi were hollow pretences" (p. 19).

<sup>13</sup>Robert P. Adams, "Transformations in the Late Elizabethan Tragic Sense of Life: New Critical Approaches," Modern Language Quarterly, XXXV(1974), 353-63.

<sup>14</sup>Ribner, p. 300.

<sup>15</sup>Anderson, "Kingship in Ford's Perkin Warbeck," ELH, XXVII(1960), 177-93.

<sup>16</sup>Struble, p. 33.

<sup>17</sup>Bentley, III, p. 455.

<sup>18</sup>Jonas A. Barish, "Perkin Warbeck as Anti-History," Essays in Criticism, XX(1970), 151-71.

<sup>19</sup>Philip Edwards, "The Royal Pretenders in Massinger and Ford," Essays and Studies, n.s. XXVII(1974), 18-36.

<sup>20</sup>Ure, p. lix.

<sup>21</sup>Lawrence Babb, "Abnormal Psychology in John Ford's Perkin Warbeck," Modern Language Notes, LI(1936), 234-7; Ewing, pp. 92-116.

Chapter VI

<sup>1</sup>Anderson, John Ford, New York: Twayne, 1972, p. 119.

<sup>2</sup>As demonstrated by Ewing, chs. II and III.

<sup>3</sup>Leech offers a stimulating discussion, pp. 99-123; Stavig has an informative chapter in his book, pp. 68-94.

<sup>4</sup>Eliot, p. 137; Davril holds a similar view, p. 150.

<sup>5</sup>Oliver, pp. 47-58, 109-21.

<sup>6</sup>Bentley, III, pp. 450-1.

<sup>7</sup>See Oliver, ch. IV; Davril, pp. 203-4; Sensabaugh, pp. 35-42. The attitude of critics in general is indicated by Anderson's chapter on the play in his John Ford, which has the title, "Psychotherapy as Spectacle: The Lover's Melancholy."

<sup>8</sup>Sensabaugh, p. 37.

<sup>9</sup>Anderson, John Ford, p. 53.

<sup>10</sup>The similarity has been noted by Davril, pp. 201-3.

<sup>11</sup>Davril, pp. 151-2; Leech, p. 107; Anderson, John Ford, p. 49.

<sup>12</sup>Ewing, pp. 80-8; Davril, pp. 208-12.

<sup>13</sup>Sensabaugh, p. 78.

<sup>14</sup>Leech, p. 111; Anderson, John Ford, p. 44.

<sup>15</sup>Anderson, John Ford, pp. 45-6.

<sup>16</sup>The Anatomy of Melancholy, ed. Floyd Dell and Paul Jordan-Smith, New York: Tudor, 1927, p. 798.

<sup>17</sup>Anderson, John Ford, p. 44.

## Chapter VII

<sup>1</sup>See the present writer's "John Ford on Poetry," Visva Bharati Quarterly, (winter 1971-72), 52-8.

<sup>2</sup>Craig, "The Shackling of Accidents"; Stavig, pp. 59-62.

<sup>3</sup>Oliver, pp. 2-3.

<sup>4</sup>Oliver, p. 4; Leech, p. 74.

<sup>5</sup>The Works of John Ford, ed. W. Gifford and Alexander Dyce, London: James Toovey, 1869, III, p. 388.

<sup>6</sup>Leech, pp. 74-5.

<sup>7</sup>Eugene M. Waith, "Struggle for Calm: The Dramatic Structure of The Broken Heart," in English Renaissance Drama: Essays in Honour of Madeleine Doran and Mark Eccles, ed. Standish Henning et al., Carbondale: Southern Illinois U., 1976, pp. 155-66.

<sup>8</sup>Leech, p. 77.

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