

THREE TRAGEDIES

BY

JOHN FORD

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PREFACE

No play, or number of plays, by any writer can properly be treated in isolation from the total body of material written by that person. To do so prevents the tracing of any development in the artistry and interests of the particular writer. I have chosen to write on only three of John Ford's plays, however, excluding thereby the bulk of his writings, both dramatic and non-dramatic. My decision to do so was based on a number of considerations: first, and most obviously, the scope of this thesis does not allow a many-sided treatment of Ford; second, Ford's tragedies, particularly 'Tis Pity and The Broken Heart, are the best known of his works; third, much of Ford criticism, until recently, has been based on a very shallow reading of the plays, the resulting interpretations often being forced into a pre-conceived theory about Ford's thought and morals; fourth, I wish to demonstrate a relationship between Ford's tragedies which may well hold true for the entire body of his dramatic works; and lastly, I am continually fascinated, and sometimes appalled, by the variety of plays which we arbitrarily lump together under the heading of "tragedy" and my treatment of Love's Sacrifice may seriously question the inclusion of that play in this particular genre.

There may be valid objections to my not including Perkin

Warbeck among Ford's tragedies. Undoubtedly, the play has much of the tragic in it. Critics, however, are divided in their opinions as to whether it should be termed a tragedy or a history play. Because of the diversity of opinion, as well as several of the considerations noted above, I have chosen to exclude it from my study.

When reading the chapter on Love's Sacrifice, some may begin to suspect that I am merely paraphrasing much of the material contained in Mark Stavig's excellent book on Ford.* To this charge, I can only answer that many of my own observations were already formulated prior to my reading of his book. Fortunately or unfortunately, we agree on many points in regard to the play. In writing the chapter, my practice has been to quote Stavig where he has perhaps been more precise an interpreter than I. In general, however, the observations and comments which come before and after any quotation are my own, the majority of them not being found in Stavig's text.

I have sought conformity in my references to the three plays without being totally successful, since no modern edition of Love's Sacrifice is yet in print. Consequently, for this play, I have used Havelock Ellis' edition, John Ford (London, T. F. Unwin; New York, C. Scribners sons, 1888). The other two plays are available in the Regents Renaissance Drama Series, 'Tis Pity She's A Whore edited by N. W. Bawcutt (1966), and The

*John Ford and the Traditional Moral Order (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1968).

Broken Heart edited by Donald K. Anderson (1969). In quoting from the latter two plays, I have included Act, scene and line references, putting them in parentheses immediately following the quotation. In quoting from Love's Sacrifice, I have indicated only the Act and scene, line references not being included in Ellis' edition.

I wish to express my thanks to my supervisor, Mr. R. Vince, and to my classmates in English 703 (Elizabethan and Jacobean Drama) who, through discussion and argument, led me to this topic and to many of the conclusions found in the following pages.

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I

INTRODUCTION

Our knowledge of the life of John Ford is extremely scanty. Even the exact date of his birth is unknown, though he was baptized on April 17, 1586, at Illesington, Devonshire, the second son of Thomas and Elizabeth Ford. He was admitted to the Middle Temple of the Inns of Court on November 16, 1602, but whether he actually practiced law is impossible to ascertain. From 1606 (the publication date of Fames Memorial and Honour Triumphant, or the Peers' Challenge) until 1620 (publication of A Line of Life) he was apparently intermittently engaged in non-dramatic writing, none of which is to be too highly valued except for its contribution to the total picture of Ford's thought and poetic development. During the next few years (c1620-c1625) he worked in collaboration with a number of dramatists -- Dekker, Rowley, and Webster, in particular -- in the production of tragi-comedy, comedy, masques and domestic tragedy. After 1625, however, Ford seems to have worked independently. During the years 1625-1638, he wrote three tragedies, The Broken Heart, 'Tis Pity She's a Whore, and Love's Sacrifice; a history play, Perkin Warbeck; and at least three tragi-comedies, The Lady's Trial, The

Lover's Melancholy, and The Fancies, Chaste and Noble (a fourth, The Queene, is also generally attributed to Ford). These plays are all that remain of Ford's dramatic work, though it is probable that he wrote others as well. The date of the dramatist's death is also unknown: he may have died as early as 1639 or he may have lived until sometime after 1655-56.¹

The chronology of Ford's independent work cannot be positively ascertained. The Lover's Melancholy was licensed on November 24, 1628, The Lady's Trial on May 23, 1638, but no evidence is available to indicate when, or in what order, Ford's remaining six plays were written. All three of the tragedies were published in 1633. G. E. Bentley provides the following approximate dates during which each may have been written: The Broken Heart (c1627-1631?), Love's Sacrifice (1632?), and 'Tis Pity She's a Whore (1629?-1633). Based on the evidence about the production of the plays, it is Bentley's hypothesis that Ford wrote The Lover's Melancholy, Beauty in a Trance, and The Broken Heart for the King's Company, "then, at least a year or so before 1633 . . . he made some sort of agreement with Christopher Beeston and wrote all the rest of his plays for the management of the Phoenix."² Despite the thoroughness of Bentley's research and the logic of his conclusion, this matter of chronology remains controversial at best. Since it is of no direct concern to this study, I will leave further mention of the dating of the plays

until the concluding chapter.

What is of concern to this study is the wide variety of kinds of drama in which Ford was involved in the course of his dramatic career: they include tragedy, tragi-comedy, comedy, the history play, and the masque. One inference that can be drawn from this variety is that Ford was an experimenter in dramatic form. Indeed, H. J. Oliver makes just this conclusion after examining all of Ford's works. He sees Ford as a "constant experimenter . . . who, because he never quite cast off the shackles of Elizabethan and Jacobean drama, did not find the new form he was seeking."³ Whether or not Oliver's suggested reason for Ford's failure to find a satisfactory form is valid, it seems apparent that, as Oliver suggests, Ford was dissatisfied with the forms which he had inherited. 'Tis Pity and The Broken Heart are perhaps representative of the heights of Ford's dramatic achievement: significantly, however, he abandoned tragedy after 1633, attaining modest success with Perkin Warbeck in the almost-forgotten genre of the history play, but failing noticeably in his attempts at tragi-comedy. The fact that Ford never again returned to tragedy (unless, of course, in some play which is no longer extant) suggests that he may have been seeking new forms for dramatic presentation.

This notion that Ford was experimenting in dramatic genres leads to yet another hypothesis: that Ford may have been experimenting with style and technique within the par-

ticular genre of tragedy. With this hypothesis in mind, I have approached the three plays, The Broken Heart, 'Tis Pity She's a Whore and Love's Sacrifice with the idea of examining them for significant differences in technique, rather than for similarities. I hope to demonstrate that Ford was a conscious artist, a manipulator of dramatic tools, and that when a critical interpretation of one of his plays is based on consideration of the dramatist's evident intent, we may more correctly estimate the extent of the dramatist's skill.

II

THE BROKEN HEART

Much has been said in Ford criticism of the peculiar static quality of The Broken Heart. Clifford Leech speaks of the play as "like a frieze" which has the "effect of a sculptured stillness"¹; Havelock Ellis, in the introduction to his edition of Ford's plays, calls it "a Niobe group of frozen griefs"²; George Sensabaugh refers to it as a "tableau"³; while Donald K. Anderson writes of the "preternatural calm" of the drama.⁴ Yet while these terms and phrases may adequately describe the lack of plot movement (approaching immobility at times) in the play, they reveal nothing of Ford's technique, his careful shaping of plot, dramatic structure, characterization, and even language, so that each of these elements contributes, directly or indirectly, to the realization of a particular dramatic effect. By constantly reflecting the theme, or the dominant tone of that theme, Ford achieves a final effect which is remarkable for its totality.

Perhaps the most revealing statement regarding Ford's technique in the construction of the plot of The Broken Heart is made by Robert Ornstein:

[Ford] develops a tragic situation, not a tragic sequence of events; he dramatizes the mounting, unendurable pressure of remembered wrongs that explodes at last in a spasm of violence.⁵

This emphasis on a particular situation, a situation which remains unchanged through much of the play, contributes much to the feeling of stasis in the play. This static quality in The Broken Heart sets it apart, not only from Ford's other tragedies, but from the other major tragedies of the period.

The play opens with the situation which Ford wishes to examine already established. With his characteristic economy and simplicity of language the dramatist rapidly supplies the details of the past action which has brought the the present set of circumstances. In a concise eighty lines we are given the pertinent details of the past events and brought up to the present which is the consequence of these events. We learn of the feud which had existed between Croton, father of Orgilus and Euphranea, and Thrasmus, father of Ithocles and Penthea. Amyclas, king of Sparta (Laconia), had eventually brought about a peaceful settlement of this feud and, to ensure a lasting peace, the families had proposed the marriage of Orgilus and Penthea, who were subsequently betrothed. The "untimely death" (I,i,35) of Thrasmus, however, had left his son Ithocles as head of the family and he, seeking to improve the position and fortune of the family, had broken the Orgilus-Penthea contract, despite the "holy and chaste love" (I,i,30) between them, and had forced Penthea to marry Bassanes, an old but rich man. Bassanes, having gained Penthea as his wife, has subsequently developed a severe case of jealousy and Penthea:

. . . is now so yok'd
 To a most barbarous hralldom, misery,
 Affliction, that he savors not humanity
 Whose sorrow melts not into more than pity
 In hearing but her name.

(I,i,53-57)

We find Orgilus, her lover and the character who gives us this account of past events, preparing to flee from a situation in which he can exist only in frustration. Ford has established a set of circumstances which promise some interesting and potentially violent developments -- Orgilus and Penthea are in a state of love, which, though thwarted, still continues both strong and deep; the figure of Bassanes, Penthea's legal husband, stands firmly in the way of the two young lovers; and Ithocles, ambitious and self-seeking (or so we have been told), is the ostensible villain of the play. The expectations that are raised by this description of the circumstances, the anticipated desperate actions of passion, are not realized, however, in the play, at least in the manner which we expect in a play of this literary period.

In fact, Ford quickly dispels some of the assumptions which we might have entertained after the opening scene. Ithocles is introduced (I,ii), not as a sinister Machiavel or a heartless scoundrel, but as a courageous soldier fresh from victory who displays a most becoming humility and grace. The general opinion of the Spartan court is that he is "A miracle of man" (I,ii,48). As the play progresses, we discover that he has thoroughly repented of his treatment of Penthea and Or-

gilus, which, he says, was the result of

. . . the heat
Of an unsteady youth, a giddy brain,
Green indiscretion, flattery of greatness,
Rawnness of judgement, willfulness in folly,
Thoughts vagrant as the wind and as uncertain
(II,ii,44-48)

Ford emphasizes Ithocles' change of heart in other instances,⁶
finally stressing his helplessness in the present situation:

I did the noble Orgilus much injury,
But griev'd Penthea more. I now repent it;
Now, uncle, now. This "now" is now too late.
So provident is folly in sad issue
That after-wit, like bankrupts' debts, stand tallied
Without all possibilities of payment.
(IV,i,8-13)

Ithocles, like Penthea and Orgilus, is trapped in the situation, though the difference is that it is one of his own making. His recognition of his responsibility for the unhappiness of Penthea and Orgilus brings him an agony nearly comparable to that felt by the unhappy lovers:

Ithocles must suffer the consequences of a course of action which once set in motion cannot be averted . . .
The tragedy of Ithocles is that of man's inability to atone for sin; his penance is of no avail⁷

Bassanes, too, is revealed as a not entirely reprehensible character. Ford, utilizing the scientific thought which Burton had expressed in his Anatomy of Melancholy (1621), portrays the old man as a victim of a disease, one which he finally recognizes (IV,ii,1-39) and endeavours to cure. As a sick man, he evokes a slight pity in us; as a result, we cannot entirely despise him for his rash words and actions. Neither does he emerge as a sinister figure, for his verbal vio-

lence never suggests a capability for destructive physical action. In his blustering obnoxiousness he can only provoke the scorn of his fellow-characters and of the reader. Yet he, like Ithocles, also repents of his actions and feels a measure of painful guilt for his past behaviour. His decision to seek out a cure for Penthea's illness (IV,ii,160-67) is well-intentioned even though it is the remedy of a foolish old man. Bassanes' major short-coming is his inability to understand the seriousness of Penthea's heart-sickness. Too, he is perhaps overly-concerned with his own need for cure: but since control of self is one of the requirements of the society portrayed in the play, and one of Ford's themes, we cannot completely condemn him for his self-concern. The significant fact is that neither he nor Ithocles can alter the situation, no matter how well-intentioned they are after repenting of past actions: the time when Orgilus and Penthea could have found happiness and fulfillment of their loves has long since receded into the irrecoverable past.

Until well into Act IV, Ford's depiction of Orgilus is also calculated to emphasize the inability of the protagonist to discover a remedy for his ills and those of Penthea. During this part of the play, Orgilus, whom we would normally expect to be engaged in some plot of revenge against Ithocles, or at least seeking ways and means of access to Penthea, is instead playing the role of passive victim of thwarted love and observer of events. His single attempt to woo Penthea into adultery

(II,iii) is completely blocked by her determination to adhere to her vows of marriage to Bassanes, even though this act has brought about, as she says, "Divorce betwixt my body and my heart" (II,iii,57).

Penthea's attitudes must be clearly understood so that her determination to abide by her marriage vows does not seem mere obstinacy, an unreasonable resolve to continue in a situation which is clearly unbearable. She has been the victim of Ithocles' youthful rashness and, in keeping with the social code of the Spartan society, she has decided to accept her fate with a resignation which forbids any outward expression of her suffering. Though conscious of the wrong which has been done to her, she is determined to prevent the spread, to other, perhaps uninvolved, people, of the consequences of her situation. She considers herself to have committed a sin, for, loving Orgilus, she has allowed herself to be pressed into a marriage which is repugnant to her. Consequently, her marriage is an act of "adultery with Bassanes" (III,ii,74) and she feels herself to be "at best a whore" (III,ii,75). Her rejection of Orgilus' passionate suit (II,iii), while based partly on the conventional moral tenets against adultery, is motivated even more by her consciousness of her soiled purity. She can no longer offer Orgilus the spotless innocence which originally was hers to give and she refuses to offer him anything less:

The virgin-dowry which my birth bestowed
Is ravished by another; my true love
Abhors to think that Orgilus deserved
No better favours than a second bed.
(II,iii,99-102)

When Penthea says, "Honour,/ How much we fight with weakness to preserve thee" (II,iii,130-31), she is referring as much to Orgilus' honour as to her own. Penthea's desire to stifle her passion, to suffer in silence, is consistent with the Spartan moral code. Like Calantha, however, she is unable to contain her emotion successfully: the attempt to do so leads her to madness and the desperate decision to starve herself to death.

Orgilus departs from this scene in frustrated rage, stating, "Action, not words, shall show me" (II,iii,126). Yet the promise of these words, ostensibly revealing a resolve to embark on either a plan of revenge or some act of despair, is never fulfilled. Instead, we become more and more aware of the fact that Orgilus is in a state of complete inaction. He remains in this state of passivity until Act IV, scene ii, when, in his desperation and with a powerful sense of guilt concerning Penthea's madness ("I, I have seen it, and yet live" (IV, ii,50)), he interprets Penthea's raving words as instructions to revenge:

She has tutor'd me;
Some powerful inspiration checks my laziness.
.....
If this be madness, madness is an oracle.
(IV, ii, 124-25, 133)

At last, Orgilus has decided on a course of action -- revenge. His acceptance of Penthea's words as an "oracle" is highly questionable. For Penthea, unable to contain her passion, unable to stifle her sense of having been wronged by Ithocles,

lashes out against him in her madness -- "That's he, and still 'tis he". Such an outburst, however, motivated as it is by the passion which now dominates her mind, is contrary to the Spartan ideas of socially-acceptable behaviour, as is her decision to commit suicide. Her passionate accusations, so contrary to her earlier reasoned forgiveness of Ithocles, merit condemnation, just as Bassanes' outbursts were condemned as "megrimms, firks, and melancholies" (III,ii,155). Orgilus' acceptance of her ravings as directions to revenge is in complete disregard of her distracted state. Penthea is no longer responsible for what she says and Orgilus displays a like irresponsibility by taking heed of her words. In fact, Orgilus' inability to correctly respond to Penthea's madness is indicative of his own weakening restraint. He, too, is nearing the point where passion will burst the bonds of reason and spur him to a senseless revenge. His interpretation of Penthea's words is more the result of his own inability to discover a remedy for his frustrated passion and his grief than it is a logical reaction to the ravings of a woman gone mad.

Other than through his attempt to persuade Penthea to an act of illicit love and, finally, his decision to take positive action against Ithocles, the only way in which Orgilus controls the action of the play is through his power of decision in the marriage of Prophilus and Euphranea. The attention given by Ford to the development of the love between these two characters seems disproportionately large unless we see their

love, as we are undoubtedly meant to, as an example of the bliss and harmony which Penthea and Orgilus would have attained had not Ithocles thwarted their love. Orgilus describes this happiness in a bridal song:

Comforts lasting, loves increasing,
Like soft hours never ceasing;
Plenty's pleasure, peace complying
Without jars or tongues envying;
Hearts by holy union wedded
More than theirs by custom bedded;
Fruitful issues; life so graced
Not by age to be defaced,
Budding, as the year ensu'th,
Every spring another youth
(III, iv, 70-79)

The exquisitely beautiful, harmonious love which this song describes takes on an additional poignant sadness when considered as a description, not only of what Euphranea and Prophilus will enjoy, but of what Orgilus and Penthea will never know.

It is significant also, that the joining of these two -- Euphranea, daughter of Crotolon, and Prophilus, member of the faction originally led by Thrasmus, father of Ithocles -- indirectly establishes the bond between the two families which the union of Orgilus and Penthea was to have effected. Once again, however, this action, promising harmony, has occurred too late. The damage has been done and all of the actions in the play are futile attempts to rectify the present unbearable situation. Consequently, Ford has ignored the political ramifications of the Prophilus-Euphranea union: he uses it instead as a contrast to the unhappy situation of the central

characters. He also uses this minor action as a unifying factor throughout the play. He has constructed structural parallels which serve this purpose: first, the tender courtship scene of Euphranea and Prophilus in Act I, scene iii, serves as a contrast to the stormy meeting of the ill-fated lovers, Orgilus and Penthea, in the same garden in Act II, scene iii; second, the initially joyous celebration of their marriage in Act V, scene ii (accompanied by "loud music") provides strong dramatic and visual contrast to the dignified funeral-wedding ritual of that other pair of ill-fated lovers, Ithocles and Calantha, in Act V, scene iii (accompanied by the "music of recorders" succeeded by "soft music").

It is only a slight digression to here consider Ford's use of music in this play. The timing of the various songs is frequently, if not always, ironic. While the lyrics are usually appropriate to the scene, the use of this particular art form is somewhat paradoxical. By its very nature, music implies balance, unity and, above all, harmony, but Ford juxtaposes his music with situations which are far from harmonious. The first song, "Can you paint a thought . . ." (III, ii, 1-16), is followed by Bassanes lewd suspicions of an incestuous relationship between Penthea and Ithocles; the second, "Comforts lasting, loves increasing . . ." (III, iv, 70-81), while seemingly celebrating a harmonious situation (the betrothal of Euphranea and Prophilus), at the same time emphasizes, through comparison, the frustration of the love between

Pentheia and Orgilus; the third, "Oh, no more, no more, too late . . . " (IV,iii,142-53), heralds the death of Pentheia, an event which compels Orgilus to an act of revenge; the fourth and final song, "Glories, pleasures, pomps, delights, and ease . . . " (V,iii,81-94), masks with its harmony the catastrophe of the breaking of Calantha's heart. On two other occasions, the sound of music is similarly misleading: the loud music of Act V, scene ii, joyfully celebrating the nuptials of Prophilus and Euphranea, simultaneously accompanies the arrival of the messages of death and sorrow; the soft music of Act V, scene iii, contrasts with the violence occurring within Calantha which climaxes in the verbally-presented "Crack, crack" of her heart-strings. Like the surface impression of the society pictured in the play, the use of music creates an illusion of harmony, whereas, in reality, the passions of the characters are wreaking violence on their minds and hearts. While the surface of the drama remains untroubled and tranquil, the depths are filled with the throes and agonies of thwarted passion.

There is a continual pressure in the play for the establishment of lasting unity. Along with the Euphranea-Prophilus sub-plot, there are a number of movements in the plot of the play toward social and political harmony. King Amyclas' settlement of the Thrasus-Crotolon feud is the first of these movements and, even though Ithocles thwarts the marriage union, peace between the two families is effected. Then, in

Act I, scene ii, we learn that the Spartan army, under the command of Ithocles, has conquered Messene:

Death-braving Ithocles, brings to our gates
Triumphs and peace upon his conquering sword.
Laconia is a monarchy at length.

(I,ii,11-13)

This last line, in fact, suggests that the submission of Messene is but the last step in a long process to bring about Spartan political unification. The arrival of Nearchus, prince of Argos, suing for the hand of Calantha in marriage (III,i), promises further political unity through the union of Argos and Laconia: and even when Nearchus discovers that he is not Calantha's choice, he is determined to promote harmony in the court, even though somewhat deviously: "To be jealous/ In public of what privately I'll further" (IV,ii,210-11). Ithocles, also, strives hard to bridge the gulf between himself and Orgilus, though the latter regards his overtures of friendship with some suspicion.

Nearchus' clear division between public and private appearances raises once again the issue of the constant conflict in The Broken Heart between illusion and reality. It is a conflict which has definite thematic importance, for it stresses the fact of the limitations of man's knowledge. There is considerable discussion throughout the play of the difficulty of really knowing a person. Tecnicus is wary of Orgilus' motive for taking on a scholarly disguise and warns him that, though he, Tecnicus, cannot see "the secrets of . . . [his] soul" (I, iii,4), the stars, or fates (or gods) can. Bassanes is tor-

mented by the thought that Penthea may be practising the dissimulation of "the city housewives" who "set all at a price/ By wholesale; yet . . . wipe their mouths and simper,/ Cull, kiss, and cry, 'sweetheart', and stroke the head/ Which they have branched" (II,i,23-27). Penthea, though not acting in the manner feared by Bassanes, is actually hiding her true feelings behind a mask of passive acceptance of the situation: she acts the role of perfect wife, while feeling herself to be an adulterous whore. Ithocles, too, for politic reasons, hides his love for Calantha and reveals it to Penthea only after much insistence and because he is obligated to her. Armostes at one point questions the authenticity of the behaviour of both Ithocles and Orgilus and actually articulates the main difficulty in communicating with one's fellow man:

Yet, nephew, 'tis the tongue informs our ears;
Our eyes can never pierce into the thoughts,
For they are lodged too inward
(IV,i,16-18)

It is hardly necessary to refer to the further examples of this use of deception in the play, those which lead to the violent climax and which are culminated in the ultimate example, Calantha's calm at the reception of the news of tragedy and the restrained dignity of her subsequent actions, concealing, as they do, the destructive emotional turmoil within her which eventually causes her death. Ford has the oracle to point out the limits of man's knowledge of the future; he relies on the illusion-reality motif to constantly keep before his audience the difficulty of accurately interpreting actions of the

present. Is it any surprise, therefore, that individuals, such as those presented in The Broken Heart, find themselves in insoluble personal dilemmas? No person can accurately gauge his social situation at any given moment. In Ford's Sparta, one is fooled by the illusion of harmony: only when it is too late does one discover beneath the surface both smouldering passion and threatening chaos.⁸

Parallelling the desire in the play for political and social harmony is a distinct emphasis on the importance of familial duty and unity. Euphranea's easy acquiescence to Orgilus' request for final say in the choice of her marriage-partner reveals her deep trust in her brother's feeling for her; a confidence that he will only do that which will ensure her happiness. Penthea's confrontation with Ithocles stresses the fact that his crime has been as much against their family as against Orgilus: when Ithocles expresses the wish that he had died in child-birth, Penthea replies,

You had been happy.
Then had you never known that sin of life
Which blots all following glories with a vegeance [sic]
For forfeiting the last will of the dead,
From whom you had your being.

(III,ii,38-42)

A few lines later, she again emphasizes this aspect of his crime:

The ashes of our parents will assume
Some dreadful figure and appear to charge
Thy bloody guilt, that hast betray'd their name
To infamy in this reproachful match.

(III,ii,76-79)

Finally, her forgiving of her brother stems from recognition

of how unnatural is bitterness between brother and sister:

We are reconcil'd:
Alas, sir, being children, but two branches
Of one stock, 'tis not fit we should divide.
(III,ii,111-13)

The sanctity and power of the family bond is revealed again in Orgilus' decision, despite his personal objections, to approve the marriage of Euphranea to Prophilus, largely because his father desires it (as does Euphranea, of course). His speech, granting his approval, is in the form of a vow:

I will rather
Be made a sacrifice on Thrasmus' monument,
Or kneel to Ithocles his son in dust,
Than woo a father's curse. My sister's marriage
With Prophilus is from my heart confirm'd.
May I live hated, may I die despis'd,
If I omit to further it in all
That can concern me.

(III,iv,46-53)

The third parent-child relationship, that between King Amyclas and the princess Calantha, is depicted, like that between Crotolon and his children, to be one of mutual love and affection. Amyclas refuses to tyrannize his daughter in the matter of a husband:

. . . since we have ever vow'd
Not to enforce affection by our will,
But by her own choice to confirm it gladly.
(III,iii,10-12)

The king's reaction to Calantha's request for the hand of Ithocles in marriage is marked by a similar demonstration of their closeness:

Still th' art my daughter,
Still grow'st upon my heart. -- [To Ithocles.] Give
me thine hand;

Calantha, take thine own. In noble actions
 Thou'lt find him firm and absolute. --- I would not
 Have parted with thee, Ithocles, to any
 But a mistress who is all what I am.
 (IV,iii,80-85)

The effect of this emphasis on the wide-spread harmony in this society is largely pictorial. It provides a background, or framework, of harmony and unity upon which Ithocles' act of disharmony, and also the discord between Bassanes, Ithocles, Penthea and Orgilus stands out in exaggerated relief. There is, in this general movement toward harmony, a corresponding sense of growing immobility as perfection is approached. Yet, perhaps ironically, until the death of Penthea it is the central situation which remains stationary while much of the movement of the play takes place among the people and events which make up the framework within which the central characters are displayed. With the death of Penthea, however, the violence which is contained in the discord of the primary characters breaks out with destructive consequences, extending itself even into the background to Calantha, with whom Ithocles has forged a link of love. Significantly, after the tragedy has played itself out, unity and harmony are again restored, though the value of these elements and the ability of man to maintain them has been seriously questioned.

Also in connection with the desire for harmony and peace is the rigid code of social behaviour which emerges in the play. Self-control is stressed as the most important element of individual conduct. In the case of Bassanes, a

lack of control over self causes him to become an object of scorn and ridicule:

How 'a stares,
Struts, puffs, and swears. Most admirable lunacy!
(III,ii,136-37)

Bassanes, however, seems not to pose any threat to the society. Though Orgilus charges Bassanes with the responsibility for Penthea's madness -- "Penthea, Bassanes, / Curs'd by thy jealousies -- more, by thy dotage -- / Is left a prey to words" (IV,ii,42-44) -- we can hardly accept the thought that Penthea might have been happy had Bassanes been a more loving husband. Circumstance is the villain, not one particular person. Still, perhaps Bassanes must bear some share of the blame simply for allowing himself to fall victim to passion: for it is this same error which makes first, Ithocles culpable for the creating of the situation we have in the play, and second, Orgilus similarly culpable for extending the scope of the consequences of that situation by murdering Ithocles. As a result of this latter action, Calantha, who is neither guilty of any wrong-doing nor the object of anyone's vengeance, must also suffer.

She is a poignant example of that human suffering which Ford sees in the very nature of things, a suffering which need not be attributed either to one's own act, or to the malice of any external agent.⁹

Her death, however, is necessary to complete, and to point out the viciousness of, the chain of events begun by Ithocles. The society presented by Ford is one based on control of the passions, but the fragility of this society is clearly re-

vealed by the destructive consequences of even a momentary outburst of passionate action:

. . . we are made to feel how vulnerable are the walls -- the political, religious, legal and familial institutions -- which seek to check or contain the uncivilized fury of civilized man.¹⁰

It is necessary to point out, however, that even self-control does not prevent tragedy. Penthea, able to control her love and perhaps physical desire for Orgilus, is nevertheless forced, by the enormity of her contained emotion, to a passionate despair which leads her to an act of suicide, an action morally condemned by her fellows:

Nature
Will call her daughter monster. -- What! not eat?
Refuse the only ordinary means
Which are ordain'd for life? Be not, my sister,
A murd'ress to thyself.

(IV,ii,155-59)

Calantha, who emerges as the embodiment of restraint, dies of a broken heart which is the result of the very control which the play seems to extol so highly. Thus, though the release of passion through action is condemned as leading to destruction, the containment of passion leads to the same end. Perhaps this is the impasse which Ford sees in life and which he seeks to reflect in his play.

F. P. Wilson has described a characteristic of Jacobean drama which perhaps is well exemplified in The Broken Heart. He writes:

What distinguishes the Jacobean age from the Elizabethan is its more exact, more searching, more detailed inquiry into moral and political questions and its interest in

the analysis of the mysteries and perturbations of the human mind.¹¹ (*italics mine.*)

Exhibiting in this play a number of characters, some under severe emotional stress caused by circumstance, others infected by various kinds of melancholy,¹² Ford often neglects plot development and event in his desire to "illuminate . . . character and thought"¹³ Other than the arrival of Near-chus, and Orgilus' putting-on and taking-off of the disguise, the situation in the play remains essentially the same until it finally explodes into violence: the dramatist does not rely on the introduction of new elements into the plot. Instead of external plot complications, Ford concentrates on internal developments. He presents us with the gradual build-up of emotional pressure within the various characters, pressure which results from the frustration inherent in each individual's situation and which increases because the social code necessitates that the individual keep his passion constantly in check. The play is actually composed of a series of climaxes as first Penthea, then Orgilus, and finally Calantha are destroyed, directly, or, as in the case of Orgilus, indirectly,¹⁴ by the explosion of passion within them. An analogy may perhaps be drawn between Ford's technique in The Broken Heart and a scientific experiment in which materials are treated in such a manner that a build-up of heat occurs within them which eventually breaks into open flame -- that is, an example of internal combustion. Ford's audience witnesses no fuel being

added to the situation, being asked instead to watch the steady increase in heat and to await the inevitable conflagration.

Ford, however, makes skillful use of contrast in this play: climaxes, major and minor, are marked by a curious immobility. Miss Ellis-Fermor notes the pattern of movement leading to the stillness characteristic of *The Broken Heart*:

Rapidity of dispatch . . . marks his initial revelation of plot and character, a swiftness only possible to his packed phrasing; there is often speed too in the early parts of a scene, curtailing the necessary but preliminary adjustments of the mind before the phase to be examined in detail is reached. But when this is touched, there is a cessation of action . . . and the scene changes to the slow tempo essential to the revelation of the processes and experiences most significant to him.¹⁵

This pattern of movement is further emphasized by the staging of the play in which many of the important scenes find the characters seated in chairs -- the meeting of Ithocles and Penthea (III,ii), Penthea at death (IV,iv), the murder of Ithocles (IV,iv), the execution-suicide of Orgilus (V,ii) and the exhibition of the body of Ithocles in the last scene of the play. These stoppages of movement at such crucial times prevent the encroachment of stage action on the carefully low-pitched, yet important speeches of the characters. More than any other technique in the play, this deliberate cessation of stage movement reveals the extent of Ford's subordination of plot movement to the revelation of character.

Language is the means by which character is revealed in drama. Ford, however, has a particular style which also en-

hances the theme of restraint and dignity. Clifford Leech observes that ". . . Ford could not have achieved his characteristic effect of sculptured stillness if his language were not of the simple and direct kind"16 Though this is perhaps an over-estimation of the importance of Ford's language, especially in view of the effects of the other elements in the play, Leech's statement rightly points out the powerful contribution which language makes to the total effect of The Broken Heart. There is, in the play, a definite correspondence between the emotion felt, and the language used by the central characters: as the emotion becomes more intense, the language becomes proportionately more subdued and restrained. "At the moment of great feeling, the tone is at its quietest, and the [expression of] emotion is held back."17 Bassanes' speeches, for example, motivated by a gross passion, and often insincere, are full of figurative language and the rhythm is fast-paced:

She comes, she comes. So shoots the morning forth,
Spangled with pearls of transparent dew.
The way to poverty is to be rich;
As I in her am wealthy, but for her
In all contents a bankrupt. -- Lov'd Penthea,
How fares my heart's best joy?
(II, i, 68-73)

In contrast, the speeches of the main characters during moments of great emotional stress are considerably subdued -- compare Ithocles' death speech:

Nimble in vegeance [sic], I forgive thee. Follow
Safety; with best success, O, may it prosper! --
Penthea, by thy side thy brother bleeds,
The earnest of his wrongs to thy forc'd faith.

Thoughts of ambition, or delicious banquet
 With beauty, youth, and love, together perish
 In my last breath, which on the sacred altar
 Of a long-look'd-for peace -- now -- moves -- to heaven.
 (IV,iv,63-70)

Here is no protest, no anger, no justification -- only a calm acceptance of death. The movement of the speech is slow and dignified. There are a number of pauses in the lines and the words used necessitate a slower speaking-pace until, in the last line, the words are drawn out in the final exhausted breath which ends in death. The same kind of restrained language, bare of ornamentation, is found in Calantha's last long speech:

O, my lords,
 I but deceiv'd your eyes with antic gesture,
 When one news straight came huddling on another
 Of death, and death, and death. Still I danc'd
 forward;
 But it struck home, and here, and in an instant.
 Be such mere women, who with shrieks and outcries
 Can vow a present end to all their sorrows,
 Yet live to vow new pleasures, and outlive them.
 They are the silent griefs which cut the heartstrings;
 Let me die smiling.

(V,iii,67-76)

Once again, the simplicity of expression is in direct contrast to the intensity of the emotions felt by the character. In this latter example, the emotion is so intense that the effort of restraining it is sufficient to break Calantha's heart

An extension of Ford's restraint in moments of strong feeling is his use of silence in the play. Robert Davril observes that "when he became aware of the possibilities of silence on the stage, Ford made it one of the basic elements of his dramatic technique and psychology."¹⁸ Miss Ellis-Fermor

also comments on the clear understanding which Ford demonstrates of "the immensity of feeling that finds few words or none."¹⁹ It is remarkable, yet perfectly consistent with Ford's aims, that he should take us through the stage in which action stops and the drama is carried by the language alone to that point where silence itself is more expressive of tragedy than are mere words. The "horrid stillness" (IV,iii,153) following Penthea's death song, and the lack of reaction displayed by Calantha on learning of the deaths of Amyclas, Penthea, and Ithocles, effectively arouse our apprehensions of tragedy; for these two are victims of "afflictions/ Above all suff'rance" (II,iii,44-45). They are blasted by "the silent griefs which cut the heartstrings" (V,iii,75).

With this concentration on a single situation, this tendency toward immobility and the corresponding restraint in the language and the mood, what, then, is Ford trying to say? What is the major theme of the play? To answer this question with statements like the rather glib, "The Broken Heart is a thorough argument for the freedom of choice in love",²⁰ or the equally facile, "[it] is actually concerned . . . with the problem of frustrated love and the reactions of various people to the emotion of love . . .",²¹ is to be guilty of greatly under-estimating Ford's understanding of life and the universality of the truths which he discloses in this play. In The Broken Heart he has demonstrated the limitations of man's know-

ledge, the fact that at no time can we be sure of the consequences of any individual action. Neither can we avoid or nullify actions which will lead to tragedy: we are prisoners of time. Surely this is the significance of the oracle. It may reveal a truth about the future, but man is incapable of seeing that truth until the future becomes the unavoidable present:

. . . the pith of oracles
Is to be then digested when th' events
Expound their truth, not brought as soon to light
As utter'd; truth is child of time, and herein
I find no scruple, rather cause of comfort
With unity of kingdoms.

(IV,iii,35-40)

It is also made clear that present joy and happiness is no guarantee of future felicity. Looking back on her life, Pen-thea has become very aware of this fact:

. . . on the stage
Of my mortality, my youth hath acted
Some scenes of vanity, drawn out at length
By varied pleasures, sweeten'd in the mixture,
But tragical in issue.

(III,v,15-19)

With a calm simplicity, Ford admits that the only certainty in life is the inevitable arrival of death:

Those that are dead
Are dead; had they not now died, of necessity
They must have paid the debt they ow'd to nature
One time or other.

(V,ii,89-92)

Life itself is a process of dying which begins at birth:

When feeble man is bending to his mother,
The dust 'a was first fram'd on, thus he totters.
(V,ii,148-49)

It is the stoic acceptance of these truths, regardless of their unpleasantness, which is urged in the play. Ford echoes the calmness of his own recognition of these aspects of life in the calm immobility of The Broken Heart. His may be a pessimistic view of life, but we cannot deny the simple truth of his observations:

The counsels of the gods are never known
Till men can call th' effects of them their own.
(V, iii, 105-6)

In writing a play intended to demonstrate the mortality and failings of human beings, Ford seems to have endeavoured to have every element of that play expressive of the dignified stoicism with which he would have his characters face life, and, eventually, death. His ultimate achievement, and perhaps most important contribution to English drama, is the fusion of his dramatic materials with a particular poetic restraint to create an emotional tone and pictorial effect never seen previously on the Elizabethan or Jacobean stage.

If there is a countering optimism in the play, it resides in the conclusion that, regardless of the suffering and sorrow in life and of the death of individuals, life goes on. Thus, Calantha, prior to her death, reorganizes the kingdom so that order is re-established and chaos is prevented. While so many have suffered in the play, while death has asserted its inevitable presence, Prophilus and Euphranea yet live: the celebration of their marriage, overshadowed though it is by the tragedy of others, is a reaffirmation of life and a

symbol of regeneration. Man's existence is a mixture of good and evil, joy and tragedy. Though Ford has chosen to deal in The Broken Heart with the tragic side of life, he has not negated the possibility of achieving happiness. Death does not detract from the miracle of life. Ford's characters, in their acceptance of the vagaries of life and the inevitability of death, demonstrate the courage and even magnificence of the creature called Man.

III

'TIS PITY SHE'S A WHORE

When we move from The Broken Heart to 'Tis Pity She's A Whore, we enter a world which is totally removed from that which we have left. In contrast to the stoical Spartan, or "pseudo-Grecian"¹ setting of the former play, the events outlined in 'Tis Pity occur in the violent setting of renaissance Italy. To Elizabethan play-goers, the use of this Italianate setting would mean that a play would be full of desperate passions and bloody and violent intrigue: thus, for a tale of incest, adultery and revenge, such a setting was traditionally appropriate. In utilizing this type of setting, Ford is much nearer in 'Tis Pity to his Jacobean contemporaries -- compare, for instance, Webster's Duchess of Malfi and The White Devil, Middleton's Women Beware Women, and even Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet, to the latter of which Ford is undoubtedly indebted for several aspects of 'Tis Pity.² The choice of setting is obviously of great importance to Ford in his efforts toward a total effect in his plays. Significantly, the pseudo-Grecian settings of The Broken Heart and The Lover's Melancholy seem more or less original to Ford: the originality of setting is paralleled by the original and strikingly individual tone which Ford achieves in the first of these two plays.

While Ford remained traditional in his choice of setting for 'Tis Pity, his use of an incestuous situation, while not entirely original,³ is singular in that he has made it the central theme of his play. 'Tis Pity is the only extant play which fully explores the "nature and consequences of . . . [such a] relationship".⁴ Unfortunately, the theme has had a serious effect on criticism of the play. Too many critics have condemned the play entirely because of Ford's painting the incestuous love of Giovanni and Annabella "in too beautiful colours".⁵ Even modern critics find themselves unable to escape their moral bias against Ford's treatment.⁶ There can, of course, be little doubt that Ford intends us to sympathize with both Giovanni and Annabella. His characterization of the two lovers elevates them to a position of nobility, and attributes to them a purity of soul which is far beyond that exhibited by the subordinate characters of the play. To conclude, however, that by seeking our sympathy for the lovers Ford is attempting to justify incest is as uncritical and unjustified as would be the similar conclusion that because Shakespeare presents Macbeth sympathetically, he, the dramatist, is advocating regicide. With both dramatists such unlawful and immoral actions are means by which great social stress and emotional strain can be brought to bear on the characters under study. Both dramatists are aware of the difference, as we should be, between sympathy for a character and approval of that character's actions: sympathy need not imply approval. Ford does not at-

tempt to persuade his audience to approve of the incestuous situation; he does, however, ask us to understand the lovers.

'Tis Pity opens with a discussion between Giovanni and Friar Bonaventura that "simultaneously sets the mood and the thought and introduces the main theme and the necessary explanation."⁷ This opening, distinguished by Ford's characteristic economy of words, establishes Giovanni as a deeply troubled young intellectual, a man who is fully aware of the objections to his gratifying his desires, while at the same time desperately aware of the force of his love for his sister:

It were more ease to stop the ocean
From floats and ebbs than to dissuade my vows.
(I,i,64-65)

Giovanni has confessed all to the Friar --

Gentle father,
To you I have unclasp'd my burdened soul,
Emptied the storehouse of my thoughts and heart,
Made myself poor of secrets; have not left
Another word untold, which hath not spoke
All that I ever durst or think or know; (I,i,12-17) --

and awaits counsel:

. . . tell me, holy man,
What cure shall give me ease in these extremes.
(I,i,41-42)

The Friar, however, can offer only the traditional advice:

Repentance, son, and sorrow for this sin:
For thou hast mov'd a Majesty above
With thy unrank'd-almost blasphemy.
(I,i,43-45)

Giovanni's reply to this -- "O do not speak of that, dear confessor" -- is difficult to interpret: while it suggests impatience with the conventional religious reply, it also con-

tains a hint of horror at the thought, and threat, of divine anger. At this point, Giovanni has not repudiated Christian doctrine and morality, yet he feels strongly the distance between religious teaching and human action. He accepts the Friar's advice, however, as a possible remedy for the passion which he realizes is leading him into an irrevocable course of action, into undoubted mortal sin:⁸

Friar. Yet hear my counsel.

Giovanni.

As a voice of life.

Friar. Hie to thy father's house, there lock thee fast
 Alone within thy chamber, then fall down
 On both thy knees, and grovel on the ground:
 Cry to thy heart, wash every word thou utter'st
 In tears, and (if't be possible) of blood:
 Beg Heaven to cleanse the leprosy of lust
 That rots thy soul, acknowledge what thou art,
 A wretch, a worm, a nothing: weep, sigh, pray
 Three times a day, and three times every night.
 For seven days' space do this, then if thou find'st
 No change in thy desires, return to me:
 I'll think on remedy. Pray for thyself
 At home, whilst I pray for thee here. -- Away,
 My blessing with thee, we have need to pray.

(I,i,68-82)

This elaborate attempt at removing passion from the mind and cleansing the soul fails, however, and the very failure of it confirms Giovanni's conviction that his love for Annabella is justified. He does not return to the Friar for further "remedy"; in fact, it is questionable whether the Friar can actually offer any cure other than the ritual cleansing which Giovanni has already undertaken unsuccessfully. When he and the Friar next meet (II,v), the incestuous love has been consummated and Giovanni, having capitulated to his desires, has put aside all religious and moral objections. Since he has found his love

for Annabella to be stronger than his religion, he has concluded, rather unreasonably perhaps, that his love is right and religion wrong.

Annabella, meanwhile, has not gone through any such intellectual and spiritual struggle. She has recognized and accepted her love for Giovanni, even though fearing social and religious condemnation if she reveals it. Faced with Giovanni's desperate avowal of love, however, she quickly surrenders her heart and soul:

Live: thou hast won
The field and never fought; what thou hast urg'd
My captive heart had long ago resolv'd.
I blush to tell thee --- but I'll tell thee now ---
For every sigh that thou hast spent for me
I have sigh'd ten; for every tear shed twenty:
And not so much for that I lov'd, as that
I durst not say I lov'd, nor scarcely think it.
(I,ii,240-47)

A. C. Swinburne, in his treatment of Ford's plays, accurately noted the differences between Giovanni and Annabella:

Nothing can be finer than the touches which bring out the likeness and the unlikeness of the two; her fluctuation and his steadfastness, her ultimate repentance and his final impenitence. The sin once committed, there is no more wavering or flinching possible for him, who has fought so hard against the daemonic possession; while she who resigned body and soul to the tempter almost at a word remains liable to the influences of religion and remorse.⁹

By the end of Act I, Giovanni has determined to love and remains in defiance of society and God until his death: Annabella, on the contrary, though her love for Giovanni is no less powerful than is his for her, continues to be buffeted by the struggle within her between passion and conscience. Given her varying

states of mind, her susceptibility to the Friar's persuasions, on the one hand, and her taunting defiance of Soranzo, on the other, become reconcilable. She is, as Aristotle demands, "consistently inconsistent".¹⁰

That Annabella should choose to love Giovanni (that "blessed shape/ Of some celestial creature") is not so very remarkable when we examine the three suitors from whom she is to select a husband. Bergetto is a fool, though naively child-like and not eminently distasteful. Grimaldi is a braggart and an incompetent whose "honor" ("got . . . with expense of blood") reveals much about the standards of the society. Soranzo, the third suitor, is of the higher nobility of Parma, but Hippolita's confrontation with him (II,ii) and his hypocritical attitude toward the vows of love which he had made to her prevents us from feeling any admiration for the man:

The vows I made, if you remember well,
Were wicked and unlawful: 'twere more sin
To keep them than to break them; as for me
I cannot mask my penitence.

(II,ii,84-87)

Even did Soranzo demonstrate a penitent attitude, which he does not, we should still pronounce the logic of this denial as somewhat contemptible, particularly since he has obviously enjoyed the bed of Hippolita after first expressing the vows he now rejects just as he rejects Hippolita herself. Even the villainous Vasques is compelled to comment on Soranzo's perfidy -- "This part has been scurvily play'd" (II,ii,100).

The mention of these vows, brief as it is, serves as a

significant comment on the vows exchanged by Giovanni and Annabella. Their vows (I,ii,249-55) are not to be treated as lightly as Soranzo treats his. Annabella, though she repents of their incestuous behaviour, never denies or renounces her love for her brother: Giovanni, in his near-madness (V,v), feels that Annabella has betrayed her vow of love to him and carries out the appropriate sentence, forcing us to recall the words of the sister:

On my knees,
 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.

(I,ii,249-52)

The prophesy contained in these lines is a token of the seriousness of such a ritual promise: Giovanni's love becomes, first, a jealousy, and ultimately, a near-hatred as he increasingly loses all control of his passions.

The remainder of the characters in the play serve merely to emphasize the corruption and sordidness of the Parman society in which the story takes place. Richardetto, cuckolded husband of Hippolita, returns in disguise to Parma after giving out rumours of his own death, and seems to take a perverse pleasure in observing the actions of his wife:

Now would I see with what impudence
 She gives scope to her loose adultery,
 And how the common voice allows hereof

(II,iii,11-13)

There is little honor in his behaviour on this occasion; neither has he courage enough to brave Soranzo himself, but must

urge Grimaldi to murder him, supplying him with poison to ensure success. That the plot rebounds and causes distress to Philotis, Richardetto's niece, provides a pathetic piece of irony.

Bergetto, the victim of Richardetto's bungled plot, serves a dual function in the play, as do most of the characters in the sub-plots of Ford's tragedies. Bergetto is a fool, but his foolishness hurts no one -- except, perhaps, Donado, whose pride is damaged by the embarrassment and ignominy which he feels at having to acknowledge Bergetto as a kinsman. Bergetto, however, parades his folly and wishes the world well. His very naiveté heightens considerably the callousness of characters like Soranzo, Richardetto and Grimaldi. In another way his actions contrast with the behaviour of others: in his unsophisticated, open, uncensurable affection for Philotis he differs from both Soranzo and Giovanni. Perhaps, in this society, only a simpleton can love openly and with a refreshing candour. Naturally, also, in this society of intriguers, innocents must suffer. Bergetto dies at Grimaldi's hands, mistaken for Soranzo, the intended victim, and the pathos of his death is Ford's tribute to the senselessness and cruelty of it:

Bergetto. Is all this mine own blood? Nay, then, good night with me. Poggio, commend me to my uncle, dost hear? Bid him for my sake make much of this wench. O! -- I am going the wrong way sure, my belly aches so. -- O, farewell, Poggio! -- O! -- O! --

Dies.

(III, vii, 30-34)

Poggio's grief for his master and play-fellow is genuine and

touching: "O my master, my master, my master!" (III,vii,38)

The wantonness of Bergetto's murder serves to point out the injustice of the Cardinal's granting Grimaldi, the murderer, sanctuary, an injustice which even the ordinary citizens, Florio and Donado, recognize:

Donado. Is this a churchman's voice? Dwells
justice here?

Florio. Justice is fled to Heaven and comes no nearer.

Soranzo! Was't for him? O impudence!
Had he the face to speak it, and not blush?
Come, come, Donado, there's no help in this,
When cardinals think murder's not amiss.
Great men may do their wills, we must obey;
But Heaven will judge them for't another day.
(III,ix,61-68)

In a manner strangely paralleling Giovanni's decision, Florio recognizes the vast gulf between the moral law which is preached by society and the church, and that by which men actually live. In this society, the successful and the strong are right -- individuals make their own laws and morality. We must, of course, condemn them for it, as does Ford.

The perversion of justice demonstrated by the Cardinal is shown to be widespread by the public approval of the murder of Hippolita. She is poisoned by Vasques while herself attempting to poison Soranzo, her betrayer. To Vasques' explanation of his actions, in which he reveals Hippolita's plottings and the death she will quickly suffer, all present cry out, "Wonderful justice!" (IV,i,88). Ford, with a heavy irony, has Richardetto proclaim, "Heaven, thou art righteous" (IV,i,88). Surely the heavens would want no praise for the despicable intrigues

which have led to Hippolita's death -- these are man's sor-did plottings, not God's.

The question of the true meaning of "justice" is of some importance at the climax of the play; the ambiguity of the term as used throughout the play allows varying interpretations of Giovanni's attitude in death. There is a definite paradox in Giovanni's reply to the Cardinal's pious counsel:

Cardinal. Think on thy life and end, and call
for mercy.
Giovanni. Mercy? Why I have found it in this justice.
(V,vi,102-103)

From the conventional moral standpoint, the justice awarded to Giovanni is that which the Friar prophesied in Act I, scene i:

Then I have done, and in thy willful flames
Already see thy ruin; Heaven is just.
(66-67)

Yet it is also very clear that Giovanni's statement is a cry of triumph, and it therefore implies a very different concept of justice in his mind. To him it is a merciful justice, but to what exactly is he referring? His killing of Soranzo he would undoubtedly consider an act of justice, since Soranzo had meant to kill him, but in no way would Soranzo's death imply mercy for Giovanni. Perhaps he considers his execution of Annabella to be a just act, as she has been, to some extent (at least in Giovanni's mind), a faith-breaker and a "treacherous" sister and lover: but neither is this a satisfactory conclusion. There are really two satisfactory interpretations, but there

is some conflict between them. The first possibility is that Giovanni meets death while yet an atheist, confident that he, as he asserted to Annabella earlier, is master of his own fate -- "I hold fate/ Clasp'd in my fist" (V,v,11-12) -- and that he has ensured Annabella's constancy to him by taking her life: then, by taking his own life (wilfully going to the assassins), he has kept the vows he pledged to her. By ending their lives together, Giovanni may feel the mercy which attends the double death, that one need not live without the other. This interpretation of his statement seems consistent with his growing arrogance and egotism and the proud near-madness of his behaviour during the action in which he kills Annabella. But such an interpretation does not evoke much sympathy from the reader. I am therefore inclined to favour the following explanation, that Giovanni's triumphant cry is due to the final realization that in death he and Annabella will somehow be reunited, that wherever one goes after death, he will receive greater understanding and pity than can ever be found on earth. The question of incest aside, the love shared by Annabella and Giovanni has been a powerful force and a beautiful thing in its inception: it merits an understanding judge. This interpretation seems much more consistent with Giovanni's eloquent plea for the sympathy of posterity --

Kiss me; if ever after-times should hear
Of our fast-knit affections, though perhaps
The laws of conscience and of civil use
May justly blame us, yet when they but know
Our loves, that love will wipe away that rigor
Which would in other incests be abhorr'd. (V,v,68-73) --

and Annabella's quiet faith in an after-life:

Giovanni. . . . could I believe
 This might be true, I could believe as well
 There might be hell or Heaven.
 Annabella. That's most certain.
 Giovanni. A dream, a dream! Else in this other world
 We should know one another.
 Annabella. So we shall.
 Giovanni. Have you heard so?
 Annabella. For certain.
 (V,v,33-38)

As H. J. Oliver points out, "What Giovanni says . . . is not that love is a justification [of incest] but that it is an alleviation, an alleviation of a sin which can justly be condemned."¹¹ While Giovanni goes only so far as to concede the sinfulness of their actions, Annabella completely repents and her final appeal is directly to God:

Forgive him, Heaven -- and me for my sins; farewell.
 Brother unkind, unkind! -- Mercy, great Heaven --
 O! -- O! --
 Dies.

(V,v,92-93)

Giovanni, though unable to believe in a religion which denies his love for Annabella, can quite conceivably come to believe, at the point of death, in a Heaven which is more understanding and merciful than its earthly representatives.

Since the injustice of the Cardinal is so clearly illustrated in the play, it is also necessary to examine the second and more important religious figure, Friar Bonaventura. A. C. Swinburne took note of the reprehensible aspects of his character:

. . . the sanctity of Giovanni's confessor . . . has something of the compliant quality of Bianca's virtue; it sits

so loosely and easily on him that, fresh from the confession of Annabella's incest, he assists in plighting her hand to Soranzo, and passing off on the bridegroom as immaculate a woman whom he knows to be with child by her brother;¹² and this immediately after that most noble scene in which the terror and splendour of his rebuke has bowed to the very dust before him the fair face and ruined soul of his penitent.¹³

Swinburne reached the wrong conclusion regarding this action, however: feeling that the Friar was "designed on the whole for a type of sincere and holy charity",¹⁴ he blames Ford's craftsmanship for the moral discord sounded by the Friar's inconsistent behaviour, missing the obvious point that "moral discord" is exactly what Ford is striving to portray. The Friar's questionable suggestion that Annabella should marry (why not insist that she, like Philotis (IV,ii), enter a convent to escape the corruption of the world?) is consistent with the complete absence of any other sympathetically-presented character in the play.

Even Florio, the father of the lovers, must be condemned for his actions, though his punishment (V,vi) is perhaps over-severe. Though he at first appears to respect the wishes of Annabella in the choice of a husband, echoing the familial affection which we find so prevalent in The Broken Heart --

My care is how to match her to her liking:

I would not have her marry wealth, but love (I,iii,10-11)

-- it soon becomes evident that this attitude is a pose maintained by Florio so as not to insult Donado, his old friend. Florio's first words to Soranzo betray prior negotiations:

My lord Soranzo, this is strange to me,

Why you should storm, having my word engag'd:
 Owing her heart, what need you doubt her ear?
 Losers may talk by law of any game.
 (I,ii,52-55)

A later conversation between Philotis and Richardetto reveals Florio's complete disregard of Annabella's feelings:

Rich. . . . what, you learn'd for certain
 How Signor Florio means to give his daughter
 In marriage to Soranzo?
Philotis. Yes, for certain.
Rich. But how find you young Annabella's love
 Inclined to him?
Philotis. For aught I could perceive,
 She neither fancies him or any else.
 (II,iii,17-22)

Florio himself admits his deception to Giovanni after Annabella has refused Bergetto:

Giovanni. 'Twas no match for her.
Florio. 'Twas not indeed, I meant it nothing less;
 Soranzo is the man I only like --
 Look on him, Annabella.
 (II,vi,122-24)

Finally he takes steps to arrange the marriage without any consultation with his daughter:

Florio.
 And once, within these few days, will so order 't
 She shall be married ere she know the time.
Rich. Yet let not haste, sir, make unworthy choice:
 That were dishonor.
Florio. Master Doctor, no;
 I will not do so neither; in plain words,
 My Lord Soranzo is the man I mean.
Rich. A noble and virtuous gentleman.
Florio. As any is in Parma.
 (III,iv,10-17)

Florio has intended all along that Soranzo should be Annabella's husband; he is no respecter of the girl's wishes. Nor does his opinion of Soranzo's nobility and virtue say much for his own

concepts of honour and morality. Like all but the two central characters (and Bergetto), Florio displays touches of deceit and cruelty in his behaviour.

In yet one more traditional symbol of moral and social order is perversion demonstrated. In the despicable behaviour of Vasques, all of which he justifies in the name of loyalty to Soranzo, Ford depicts the corruption of the servant-master relationship. In Shakespeare's King Lear, Kent, though a devoted servant of the king, still exercises his own conscience; in Webster's Duchess of Malfi, Bosola finally recognizes the evil in Ferdinand and rejects the ties of loyalty: Vasques, however, recognizes no morality, no universal good other than that which benefits his master, Soranzo. His deception and subsequent poisoning of Hippolita, and his questioning and intolerably cruel treatment of old Putana betray a pitilessness which is only becoming to a servant of Satan himself. His constant return to deception and intrigue reveals his willingness to use any means to achieve the desired end. Once again, only individual will and desire determines right from wrong: no law or morality is recognized which is applicable to all. A loyalty which ignores vice and cruelty can only be contemptible. Who can join with Vasques in his wish for the dead Soranzo? --

The reward of peace and rest be with him, my ever
dearest lord and master.

(V, vi, 94-95)

Ford, stressing the corruption of the Parman society

the end of the wooing scene by their "passionate kiss and their not-too-subtle declaration that they are off to an incestuous bed:"¹⁶

Come then,
After so many tears as we have wept,
Let's learn to court in smiles, to kiss, and sleep.
(I,ii,261-63)

When they again appear (II,i) they are no longer sister and brother, but lovers, the incestuous act having taken place. The enormity of their act is revealed by Putana's crudely casual commentary:

Anna. O guardian, what a paradise of joy
Have I pass'd over!
Putana. Nay, what a paradise of joy have you pass'd
under! Why, now I commend thee, charge: fear nothing,
sweetheart; what though he be your brother? Your
brother's a man, I hope, and I say still, if a young
wench feel the fit upon her, let her take anybody,
father or brother, all is one.
(II,i,43-49)

Putana's answering pun correctly establishes the basis for the brother-sister love. The quality of their love has quickly descended from the spiritual to the physical. Giovanni, desiring to be the sole possessor of Annabella's physical beauty, soon displays signs of jealousy in his fear that she will someday marry. Immediately after their initial physical union, Giovanni subtly extracts a promise of faith from his sister:

Giov.
But I shall lose you, sweetheart.
Anna. But you shall not.
Giov. You must be married, mistress.
Anna. Yes? To whom?
Giov. Someone must have you.
Anna. You must.
Giov. Nay, some other.
Anna. Now prithee do not speak so: without jesting,
You'll make me weep in earnest.

Of pleasure in this formal law of sports.
 She is still one to me, and every kiss
 As sweet and delicious as the first
 I reap'd, when yet the privileges of youth
 Entitled her a virgin. . . .

.
 A life of pleasure is Elysium.

(V,iii,1-16)

The love that Giovanni had originally hailed as a total union -- "to be ever one,/ One soul, one flesh, one love, one heart, one all" (I,i,33-34) -- has now clearly become a selfish desire in him for the sole ownership of Annabella's physical attributes, a desire which completely overcomes reason and morality and ignores the perversion exhibited in his total disregard of the religious and social prohibitions against incest and adultery.

Obsessed as he is by his jealousy, Giovanni approaches a state of complete madness when Annabella informs him of her repentance. The only reason for her action which he can comprehend, because of his preoccupation with the physical, is that Soranzo has proven the better man in bed:

What, chang'd so soon? Hath your new sprightly lord
 Found out a trick in night-games more than we
 Could know in our simplicity? Ha! Is't so?
 Or does the fit come on you, to prove treacherous
 To your past vows and oaths?

(V,v,1-5)

For a moment in this scene, Annabella's obvious sincerity and deep feeling for him restore some of the nobility and purity which characterized their love originally, and their discussion of the possibility of an after-life is touching in its simplicity (V,v,30-41). However, when Annabella recalls the con-

versation to the present (V,v,42-44), Giovanni's madness again reappears, signalled by his "Distraction and . . . troubled countenance" (V,v,46). There is only irony and perverted ideals at work in his murder of Annabella -- "Revenge is mine; honor doth love command" (V,v,86). That Giovanni should feel that Annabella's repentance and defection from him calls for revenge reveals the complete irrationality of his behaviour. His resorting to an act of vengeance, declaring it necessary for the upholding of honour, serves to establish the fact that he has at last reached the moral level of the society around him. Ford has previously shown the corruption of those who rely on "revenge" and who justify its use in the maintenance of "honour" -- Giovanni is now an equal member of this society rather than a superior to it.

Giovanni's depravity is clearly shown in the final scene.

In his deluded concern with dying a glorious death, Giovanni sacrifices all decency. First he breaks the heart of his father and shames the memory of Annabella by revealing [and boasting of] his incestuous love; then he is much more impressed by the appropriateness of his father's death than he is with his own guilt in causing it; finally he glories in his "brave revenge" on Soranzo even though what Soranzo has actually done hardly justifies such gloating language. In his final welcome of death Giovanni is concerned only with seeing Annabella again; the romantic grandeur of his death is more important to him than the state of his own soul. If we allow ourselves to be impressed by 'passionate but vacuous rhetoric we can perhaps see even these final actions as noble, but to do so we must ignore Giovanni's twisted logic, self-conscious role-playing, and lack of concern for others.¹⁷

I would differ with Stavig's interpretation of Giovanni's ac-

tions on two points, one of which is minor, the other, rather significant. First, Stavig finds no justification for Giovanni's "gloating language" in regard to his "brave revenge" on Soranzo: the critic seems to have forgotten that Giovanni is aware of Soranzo's plot to kill him, a plot which he has thwarted. Soranzo, after all, was prepared to luxuriate in his revenge; Giovanni's mad exultance is a result of his knowing that he has frustrated Soranzo's preparations. What is more important, however, is that Stavig seems to have disregarded the abrupt change in Giovanni's language which occurs when he receives his death-wound. There is a distinct break in his speech at this point:

Welcome, come more of you whate'er you be,
 I dare your worst ---
 O, I can stand no longer! Feeble arms,
 Have you so soon lost strength?
(V, iv, 81-84)

The weakness of his body, a reminder that he is only human, brings Giovanni down from his flight of defiant madness. From this point until his death, his language is calm and dignified, no longer characterized by the "passionate but vacuous rhetoric" which he displays prior to receiving the wound. Though he has dominated the dialogue throughout the whole scene prior to being wounded, he utters only a brief ten lines (five lines of which are devoted to his death speech) in the twenty-three lines following the speech quoted above. Rhetoric has disappeared from his speech; simplicity of utterance takes its place. In his welcome of death, that "guest long looked for", Giovanni demon-

strates, along with recognition of his sin, the awareness that only death will release him from the tortures of his depravity. Moreover, freed from the bonds of life, he can, without reproach, anticipate a reunion with Annabella. The obstacle to their love was purely physical, an accident of birth which created them brother and sister. Death's separation of body and soul, its relegation of the former to the grave, removes this obstacle and, at the same time, removes the taint of perversion from their love. Giovanni neither asks nor expects heavenly reward for his life on earth: he only asks understanding and a single boon:

Where 'er I go, let me enjoy this grace,
 Freely to view my Annabella's face.

(V,vi,107-108)

It is significant, also, that Giovanni expresses this last wish in the form of a plea to God (or, at least, since he is even now not entirely convinced of the existence of God, to whatever power might determine the manner of life after death), and that he asks for "grace". It is also important to recognize that, in his calmness and restored sanity, Giovanni dies well: since "a brave facing of death . . . was one of the essentials for a 'good' Elizabethan character",¹⁸ his manner of dying perhaps partly redeemed him in the eyes of Ford's audience, as it does in mine:

O, I bleed fast.
 Death, thou art a guest long look'd for; I embrace
 Thee and thy wounds; O, my last minute comes!
 Where 'er I go, let me enjoy this grace,
 Freely to view my Annabella's face.

(V,vi,104-108)

Irving Ribner writes, "[t]he tragedy of Ford's heroes and heroines is in their inability to find a satisfactory alternative to sin. They can only die with courage and dignity."¹⁹ Stavig, on the other hand, implies throughout his criticism that Ford is presenting characters who are themselves culpable, since they ignore the proper moral response to their dilemmas. The correct conclusion must surely lie somewhere between these two opinions: though Ford condemns the actions of those swayed by passion and the processes of mental and moral disintegration, at the same time he realizes the weaknesses of human nature for which the individual cannot be held responsible. When the pressures of a certain situation become unbearable, or when a character falls victim to a disease of the mind, irrational and passionate behaviour, though contemptible, is unavoidable. As Ribner indicates, however, Ford has his characters (those, at least, who display the requisite nobility of mind) return to sanity and a recognition of the final peace which is offered by death. Giovanni, in his courageous facing and welcoming of death, is (like Orgilus, Calantha and Annabella) restored to a position of esteem among Ford's character elite.

Annabella's character undergoes a deterioration which parallels that taking place in Giovanni. She, too, is guilty of irrationally idolizing the object of her love:

This noble creature was in every part
 So angel-like, so glorious, that a woman
 Who had not been but human, as was I,
 Would have kneel'd to him, and have begg'd for love.
 (IV,iii,36-39)

She, too, seeks to avoid responsibility by blaming the fates:

Would thou hadst been less subject to those stars
That luckless reign'd, at my nativity
(V,i,19-20)

She, too, exults madly in her sin: it is hard to reconcile the Annabella who tauntingly flaunts her adultery and pregnancy in the face of her husband (IV,iii) with the Annabella who blushingly admits her love to Giovanni (I,ii). There is a hardness in the confrontation scene which deepens into brutality:

[t]he ferocious nakedness of reciprocal invective in the scene where Soranzo discovers the pregnancy of Annabella has no parallel in the works of [Ford's] great compeers.²⁰

The severity of this scene, paralleled nowhere else in Ford's other plays, is remarkably appropriate as a measure of the moral depravity of both Soranzo and Annabella at this point in the action.

Unlike Giovanni, however, Annabella has never convinced herself of the rightness of their incestuous union. She has remained open to attacks of conscience: as a consequence, her final repentance (V,i) is not entirely unexpected. She has even been able, while in the heat of passion, to feel pity for Soranzo's plight:

I must confess I know you lov'd me well
These words wound deeper than your sword could do.
(IV,iii,121,130)

Troubled so much by her conscience, she cannot be expected to continue long in depravity. We are sure that her final repentance is genuine, since it comes of her own free will, unpro-

voked by the Friar's threats of damnation as was her earlier verbal admission of sin and her earlier plea for mercy (III, vi). Having sincerely repented she displays a greatness of mind which has previously been hidden from us (though Giovanni has worshipped it): she sees their relationship as a mortal sin and insists on breaking it off; she demonstrates sympathy for Giovanni in his distracted state and easily forgives him.

But significantly there is no romanticizing of their love and no thought in her mind of a counter-revenge against Soranzo. She wants to find a way of avoiding the catastrophe that she knows is being prepared for them, but she is insistent that the most important factor is their relationship to God.²¹

Most noticeable is her resolution in the face of approaching death, though she expects it at the hands of Soranzo rather than Giovanni:

And know that now there's but a dining time
'Twixt us and our confusion: let's not waste
These precious hours in vain and useless speech . . .
This banquet is an harbinger of death
To you and me; resolve yourself it is,
And be prepar'd to welcome it.

(V, v, 17-19, 27-29)

The hours are "precious" because they allow her but little time to ask the mercy and forgiveness of God. In her concern for her brother, she wants him, too, to "be prepar'd". Her solemnity and quietude contrast strongly with Giovanni's chaotic mental state and, as mentioned above, serve to restore sanity in him, even if only momentarily. Like Ford's heroines in The Broken Heart, she faces death with courage. Her last

words ask mercy of Heaven, not only for herself, but for the
as yet unrepentant Giovanni:

Forgive him, Heaven -- and me my sins; farewell
Brother unkind, unkind!²² -- Mercy, great Heaven --
O! -- O! --

Dies.

(V, v, 92-93)

Her nobility and greatness of soul restore her, as I think
Giovanni is later restored at death, to a position well above
the moral level of the society presented in the play.

Ford, to restore dignity to both Giovanni and Anna-
bella, relies once again on the language. Much of their re-
newed dignity comes as a result of their return to the use of
simple and direct speech. As in The Broken Heart, "[w]hen
Ford's characters speak from the heart, with no need to ca-
mouflage and conceal their feelings, they always do so with a
remarkable directness. There is a scarcity of imagery, even
of adjectives; and a high proportion of words become . . .
monosyllabic":²³

O, I bleed fast.
Death, thou art a guest long looked for; I embrace
Thee and thy wounds; O, my last minute comes!
Where 'er I go, let me enjoy this grace,
Freely to view my Annabella's face.

(V, vi, 104-108)

Throughout most of 'Tis Pity, however, I believe one will find
a preponderance of passionate and figurative speech in direct
contrast to the characteristic calm of The Broken Heart. This
is not inappropriate since Ford's incestuous story deals with
characters who give in to passion and become victims of it,

whereas much of the tragedy of The Broken Heart stems from characters who stifle their emotions: as Donald Anderson observes, "in 'Tis Pity . . . the banquet is eaten; in The Broken Heart . . . it is not."²⁴ I have noted Swinburne's comment on the brutality of the Annabella-Soranzo confrontation (IV,iii): the invective and hatred found in the language of this scene are appropriate to the play as marks of the degeneration into passion which Annabella and even Soranzo have undergone:

Soranzo.
 Harlot, rare, notable harlot,
 That with thy brazen face maintainst thy sin,
 Was there no man in Parma to be bawd
 To your loose cunning whoredom else by I?
 Must your hot itch and pleurisy of lust,
 The heyday of your luxury, be fed
 Up to a surfeit, and could none but I
 Be picked out to be cloak to your close tricks,
 Your belly-sports? Now I must be the dad
 To all that gallimaufry that's stuffed
 In thy corrupted bastard-bearing womb,
 Say, must I?
 Anna. Beastly man! Why, 'tis thy fate.
 I sued not to thee; for, but that I thought
 Your over-loving lordship would have run
 Mad on denial, had ye lent me time,
 I would have told 'ee in what case I was.
 But you would needs be doing.
 Soranzo. Whore of whores!
 (IV,iii,4-20)

It is impossible to conceive of language such as this being used in The Broken Heart.

As in The Broken Heart, Ford has built 'Tis Pity largely as a contrast between the central figures and the society around them. We cannot avoid being impressed by, and sympathetic to, these two, Giovanni and Annabella, who stand out as so much better than their fellows. 'Tis Pity, however, calls

for a much more complicated response by the audience or reader than does The Broken Heart. Much more so than the latter play, the former is "a tragedy of spiritual disintegration".²⁵ Whereas the central situation of The Broken Heart remains static throughout much of that play, the degeneration of the brother-sister love in 'Tis Pity begins almost immediately the dramatist has established it. Increasingly we see the corruption and sordidness of the surrounding society being reflected and echoed in the behaviour of the hero and heroine. In The Broken Heart, the tragedy spills outward into the background society; in 'Tis Pity, tragedy results largely from the erosion of virtue and nobility caused by the intrusion of the values of the society into the central situation. In the final scenes of the play, we can still be impressed by the passion and violence of Giovanni and Annabella's love, but we can no longer be as sympathetic as we once were. Only when the hero and heroine meet death does Ford again ask our sympathy and understanding and, in tribute to his dramatic genius and poetic skill, we do, I believe, give of both.

IV

LOVE'S SACRIFICE

Thou cheat'st us Ford, mak'st one seeme two by Art
 What is Love's Sacrifice, but The Broken Heart.¹
 (Richard Crashaw)

Crashaw's couplet, while in all probability written merely as a pun on the titles of Ford's two plays, has often been alluded to, in all seriousness, as a clue to the chronological ordering of the two works.² While the inconclusiveness of Crashaw's ordering of the plays in the couplet has been pointed out,³ the comparison of the two by the poet merits further consideration. It is true that the plays both deal with the same themes -- the nature of love, honor, justice, order, etc. -- but, since almost all of Ford's dramatic energy was devoted to exploring these particular themes,⁴ this similarity alone indicates little. There are, however, other similarities between them: the use of the eternal triangle of husband-wife-lover (the husband, in both plays, being old and somewhat foolish, and a victim of varying degrees of melancholy; the wife and lover both being young and attractive); the use of the Platonic love code in contrast to physical lust, and the restraint shown by the lovers in respect of that code; the use also of the funeral ritual in the last scene of both plays. There are no doubt other points of similarity.

Love's Sacrifice, however, while demonstrating an affinity with The Broken Heart, also displays a marked resemblance to 'Tis Pity She's A Whore. Both make use of the Italianate setting, both deal with the question of adultery (actual and intended), both have a larger share of passion and violence, in action and language, than does The Broken Heart, both give greater importance to the theme of revenge than does the quieter play, both display a lover driven to near, or complete, madness in his degeneration, and, finally, both possess comic sub-plots, while The Broken Heart is singular for its lack of comedy.

Despite these likenesses between Love's Sacrifice and Ford's other two tragedies, it has long been regarded as much the less successful as tragic drama; some critics, in fact, consider it an outright failure.⁵ Among the many objections to the play, the following are most frequently noted: the inconsistency of the characterization, the irrelevance of the sub-plots, the incompetence demonstrated by Ford in the comic bits, the absurdity of the final act with its tendency toward bathos, the frequent incursions of melodrama, and, finally, the complete lack of a unity of tone. Many of these objections, however, seem to stem from the too-common scholarly practice of attempting to force the many widely-diversified plays of Elizabethan and Jacobean England into convenient and narrow categories. What seems most incomprehensible is that so many critics and scholars have judged Love's Sacrifice to be a fail-

ure as serious tragedy, while completely overlooking an element in the play which completely alters any possible reading of it -- that is, the pervading presence of satire.

Mark Stavig, the one critic who has sought to outline the satirical aspects of the play, writes:

In Love's Sacrifice Ford deals almost exclusively with love and seldom suggests larger dimensions. . . . The satiric impulse dominates, and the audience would probably have come away from the play as much amused by the foolishness of love as appalled by the tragedy of it. Fernando, Bianca, and the Duke are combinations of the passionate sinner and the rationalizing fool, and the stress in Love's Sacrifice is as much on exposing their folly as on developing sympathy for them. Because the characters represent less, their tragedies imply less, and the audience could relax and enjoy the satire and the melodrama without being forced to consider the more profound questions posed by 'Tis Pity.⁶

Stavig's appreciation of the satirical elements in the play necessitates an entirely new consideration of Ford's dramatic art, and demands that we discard our preconceptions about what qualities Love's Sacrifice does or does not display. We can no longer decide that the play is a failure as a tragedy since we can no longer apply to it the standards (if there are such) by which we approach the conventional Elizabethan tragic drama. I hope to show that, as a consequence of this new approach to Ford's play, many of the typical objections to it are no longer valid.

G. F. Sensabaugh, in his books and articles on Ford,⁷ has led the school of critical opinion which sees the dramatist as an exponent of the Platonic love cult ideals which flourished in the court of Charles I and his queen, Henrietta-

Maria, initiator of the cult. Sensabaugh has argued that Ford, and probably the members of the cult, used Platonic doctrine to justify perversions of the moral order:

He would have his characters constant in love, yet allows them to shift their affections if they so desire; he would have them love with their souls only, yet they tasted carnal delights; he would make adultery and incest pure if his lovers are beautiful.⁸

Unfortunately, Mr. Sensabaugh, in his search for evidence of this tendency in Ford, has been content to lift lines and phrases from the plays with a total disregard for their context. He has frequently ignored the characters who utter the words he selects, thereby missing the qualifications which Ford, in his attitude toward that particular character, would expect his audience to apply. For instance, to demonstrate Ford's "belief" that "Beautiful women are saints to be worshipped",⁹ Sensabaugh refers to The Broken Heart:

Bassanes, regretting the former jealousy he held for Pen-thea, makes her an idol and implores the gods to forgive him for dragging in the dust "That Temple built for adoration onely"; and after she has declared her innocence concerning her love for Orgilus, he asks permission to "kneele" before his "goddesse".¹⁰

Surely it is an insensitive criticism which holds up the attitudes held by Bassanes, that foolish old melancholic, as representative of Ford's personal belief. There is little doubt that we are meant to condemn Bassanes' excessive idolatry of Penthea at least as much as we condemn his excessive jealousy. Sensabaugh, however, repeats this error of accepting a character's utterances for the dramatist's personal declaration time and time again. Consequently, his conclusions regarding Ford

and the Platonic doctrines of the court must be seriously questioned.

It may be granted that the Platonic doctrines which Sensabaugh enumerates¹¹ were frequently misapplied and perverted for licentious purposes: Ford himself supplies evidence of this in the characters of Giovanni, Bianca and Fernando. Admission of this, however, does not deny the fact that the central tenet of the Platonic love coterie was, in Sensabaugh's own words, the "insistence that true love is of the soul only"; as a consequence, to use Platonic doctrine to justify incest and adultery is to debase and pervert the Platonic ideals. Thus, Stavig attributes the bewilderment of scholars as to the intention of Love's Sacrifice to their "failure to understand the play's relationship to the Platonic love cult":¹²

The view of the cult are quite different from those of Fernando and the other Platonists in Love's Sacrifice, and what happens to the court in Love's Sacrifice is the direct opposite of what the queen intended for the English court. The utilization of Platonic doctrines to glorify passionate love would have been viewed by Henrietta Maria's group with aghast disapproval or more likely with amused superiority. In all of his plays, but particularly in Love's Sacrifice, Ford illustrates the effects of using such twisted arguments. Far from glorifying passion, Ford ridicules it by showing its absurd, but unfortunately also tragic, effect on individual lives.¹³

Stavig's clarification of the attitudes with which the audience would have viewed Love's Sacrifice makes possible the realization of the satiric potential in the play. To demonstrate this potential is my intent in the remainder of this chapter. Such

a study will perhaps eliminate many of the so-called flaws in Ford's dramatic presentation.

Unlike the economical introductions with which Ford introduces the situations in both The Broken Heart and 'Tis Pity, the opening of Love's Sacrifice contains much which seems irrelevant. Roseilli's opening words, "Depart the court?", echoing as they do Lodovico's "Banished?" in Webster's The White Devil, appropriately lead to a discussion of the corrupted state of the court. It is cut off rather abruptly, however, by Fernando's humorous description of the respective merits of the countries of Spain, France and England. This lightening of the mood of the opening scene is perhaps meant to imply that the action which is to follow will be considerably less serious than Webster's play. Fernando's flagrant disregard of the sentence imposed on Roseilli and the subsequent suggestions of intrigue seem almost to be a deliberate parody of the Italianate plays of Webster:

Fern. And whither are you bent?

Ros. My lord, for travel;
To speed or England.

Fern. No, my lord, you must not:
I have yet some private conference
T' impart unto you for your good; at night
I'll meet you at my Lord Petruchio's house:
Till then be secret.

Ros. Dares my cousin trust me?

Pet. Dare I, my lord! yes, 'less your fact were greater
Than a bold woman's spleen.

(I,i)

The secrecy and seriousness of this plotting is later shown to be a mockery: the "private conference" is apparently called

only to plan Roseilli's disguising himself as a fool, the purpose of which is not immediately clear.¹⁴ To make matters even more confusing, we learn at the end of Act I that the Duke's banishment of Roseilli was but for "a day or two at most" (I,ii). D'Avolos is put into a position of some embarrassment by the exposure of his guile, and the scene is not without some humour. That Ford has Roseilli continue in disguise until Act V, scene iii, with no need for doing so, may be one means by which he seeks to stress the parodic nature of the play.

In yet other respects, Act I serves to set the satiric tone of the play. The Duke, Philipppo Caraffa, since coming to power, has apparently allowed the court to degenerate. He himself is "Much altered from the man he was before" (I,i) and, in his dissipation ("To soothe him in his pleasures" [I, i]) has collected a group of licentious parasites of Ferentes' kind. The Duke shuns the advice of his counsellors and follows his own whims. His wooing of, and marriage to Bianca is depicted as a result of his unwise behaviour:

Fortune -- queen to such blind matches --
Presents her to the duke's eye, on the way,
As he pursues the deer: in short, my lord,
He saw her, loved her, wooed her, won her, matched her;
No counsel could divert him.
(I,i)

It is Bianca's beauty which attracts the Duke: he ignores her real virtues. The Platonic love adherents would perhaps approve of Caraffa's tribute to her beauty, but Ford also makes

it clear that the basis of the Duke's love is physical: "the image of the deer hunt can be taken as an icon of the search for a bestial love."¹⁵ Caraffa's physical passion is emphasized by his first words:

Come, my Bianca, revel in my arms;
 Whiles I, wrapt in my admiration, view
 Lilies and roses growing in thy cheeks.
 (I,i)

His excessive use of Platonic conventional speech betrays his foolishness in love. His words to Fernando and Bianca, inviting them to share with him a Platonic union of souls, are highly ironic in light of the developments to come in the play:

I am a monarch of felicity,
 Proud in a pair of jewels, rich and beautiful, ---
 A perfect friend, a wife above compare.

 Philippo and Fernando
 Shall be without distinction. --- Look, Bianca,
 On this good man; in all respects to him
 Be as to me: only the name of husband,
 And reverent observance of our bed,
 Shall differ us in person, else in soul
 We are all one.
 (I,i)

Bianca's obedient answer only stresses the irony of the scene:

I shall, in best of love,
 Regard the bosom-partner of my lord.
 (I,i)

One can imagine Ford's audience, seeing the two young people together on the stage, whispering, "Oh, oh! Watch out now!" Ford's insertion, at this point, of an aside between Fiormonda and Ferentes exposes the unreality of the Platonic conventions as used by Caraffa (and later by Fernando):

Fior. [Aside to FERENTES] Ferentes, ---
Feren. [Aside to FIORMONDA] Madam?

Fior. [Aside to FERENTES] You are one loves courtship
 He hath some change of words, 'twere no lost labour
 To stuff your table-looks; the man speaks wisely!
 (I,i)

These two characters "see the fallacies but they also see that Platonic arguments can serve as a useful mask for libertinism."¹⁶ Ford will demonstrate throughout the play that his characters use the conventions of the Platonic love cult only as a means to achieve eventual sexual gratification or, at least, for further titillation of their physical desires.

The sub-plots of the play, rather than being totally irrelevant as so much criticism has labelled them,¹⁷ serve admirably to point out the distortion which the Platonic ideals receive in the play, and the chaotic moral order which results. The story of Ferentes' deception of the three women (Colona, Julia and Morona) through the use of the elaborate courtship rituals borrowed from the coterie has been termed repugnant and disgusting -- and rightly so. Undoubtedly, Ford intends us to have such a reaction, to condemn these persons, Ferentes for his duplicity and misuse of Platonic arguments, the women for the ease with which they succumb to his honeyed words. I must disagree with H. J. Oliver, who sees the "wanton Ferentes" as a contrast to the noble Fernando:¹⁸ I would suggest, instead, that Ford means us to see that they differ, not in kind, but only in degree. Just as Ferentes uses arguments of "constancy of mind" and his "unworthiness" to gain his physical conquests, so, too, does Fernando speak of his "vassalage" and

urge Bianca to have "pity" on him. That he, like Ferentes, seeks physical consummation is made clear by his surprise when Bianca vows to commit suicide should he possess her. His disbelieving "Pish! do you come to try me?" (II,iv) reveals his incredulous reaction to Bianca's serious regard for her chastity. He is sure that she is joking:

Come, come; how many women, pray,
Were ever heard or read of, granted love,
And did as you protest you will?
(II,iv)

Only her persistence in her threat causes him to consider a relationship in which consummation will not occur. It was certainly not his original intention.

Ferentes and Fernando are similar in other respects, also. Both are favorites of the Duke, though Fernando's relationship to the man is much more personal. Both meet catastrophe as a result of their blunt rejection of a member (or members) of the opposite sex, Fiormonda being the prime mover, indirectly, of Fernando's unhappy end. Ferentes' violent death demonstrates the lamentable folly of subjugating oneself to passion and sexual indulgences. His fate foreshadows the eventual destruction of both Fernando and Bianca as they increasingly move toward the physical consummation demanded by their passionate desires.

In the figure of Mauruccio, Ford indulges in some double-edged satire. In his excessive behaviour and his elaborate conceits, Mauruccio is set forth as a parody of the

Platonic lover. He is, in his extravagance, a source of humour to the whole court:

Fernando, hadst thou heard
The pleasant humour of Mauruccio's dotage
Discoursed, how in the winter of his age
He is become a lover, thou wouldst swear
A morris-dance were but a tragedy
Compared to that: well, we will see the youth.
(I,ii)

Yet Mauruccio, ironically, despite his foolishness, is the one lover in the play who does not seek physical consummation. He is evidently content, as the Platonic lover should be, to exchange gifts with Fiormonda, to compose poetry in praise of his beloved, and to receive only the slightest sign of favour from her. He is a ludicrous figure, undoubtedly, but he is also most true to the Platonic tenets. The perversion of the love demonstrated by Fernando and Bianca, as it becomes increasingly physically-motivated, is stressed by the innocent nature of Mauruccio's foolish antics. I might add that I do not believe that Ford, in the figure of Mauruccio, is ridiculing Platonic love itself. Stavig notes that the Platonic love cult "emphasized that rationality and spirituality were essential if love were to escape contamination".¹⁹ Obviously, Mauruccio is far from rational in his dotage. Consequently, he himself, rather than the idea of Platonic love, is the butt of the satire.

Throughout Acts I and II Ford continues to expose the folly of the love declared by Fernando and the Duke. Through the careful juxtaposition of scenes, Fernando is compared first

with Ferentes (I,ii) and then with Mauruccio (II,i-iii). The latter's plan to present Fiormonda with a picture of himself, complete with an elaborate conceit, "provides a satiric parallel to the later scene involving Fernando and the picture of Bianca".²⁰ Both Mauruccio and Fernando are strongly affected by the appearance of beauty. Fernando's reaction to Bianca's portrait is highly satiric and, in light of the danger should his love for her be exposed, extremely foolish. D'Avolos, already suspicious of Fernando's behaviour, carefully notes his reaction to the pictures -- "How constantly he dwells upon this portraiture!" (II,ii) -- and correctly assumes that Fernando loves Bianca ("Blessed, blessed discovery!"). Fernando himself realizes the powerful effect the sight has had on him: "I'm lost beyond my senses . . . I fear I spoke or did I know not what;/ All sense of providence was in mine eye" (II, ii). Ford's audience would undoubtedly have condemned Fernando for his inability to temper his love with reason.

Earlier in this same scene Ford provides the opportunity for a deliberate caricature of the courtly lover: as D'Avolos enters the stage, he sees Fernando standing alone:

Alone? reading a
letter? good; how now! striking his breast! what, in the
name of policy, should this mean? tearing his hair!
passion; by all the hopes of my life, plain passion! now
I perceive it. If this be not a fit of some violent
affection, I am an ass in understanding; why, 'tis plain,
-- plainer and plainer; love in the extremest.
(II,ii)

This pantomime would, of course, depend on the actor's interpretation of the action described by D'Avolos. It would not be

inconsistent, however, for the actor to over-play the bit, stressing the ludicrous aspects of Fernando's actions, thereby making him an object of satire. In fact, this over-playing might continue throughout the entire scene with Bianca's picture, imparting, perhaps, not just a little humour to the scene.

There are moments, too, in the second Act when the line between theatrical illusion and the reality of actors and audience almost disappears. While observing Mauruccio's antics, Caraffa asks Fiormonda for her opinion of the old man's heroical rant:

What think you of this language, sister?
Fior. Sir,
 I think in princes' courts no age nor greatness
 But must admit the fool; in me 'twere folly
 To scorn what greater states than I have been.
 (II,i)

Though tactful, she is plainly scornful of this kind of language. The audience must surely have agreed. Ford has subtly prepared his audience: when, only a few lines later, Fernando breaks into extravagant speech, those listening would have undoubtedly felt the same scorn for his posturing:

Please but to hear
 The story of a castaway in love;
 And, O, let not the passage of a jest
 Make slight a sadder subject, who hath placed
 All happiness in your diviner eyes!
Bianca. My lord, the time --
Fern. The time! yet hear me speak
 For I must speak or burst: I have a soul
 So anchored down with cares in seas of woe,
 That passion and the vows I owe to you
 Have changed me to a lean anatomy:
 Sweet princess of my life, -- . . .
 (II,i)

The audience cannot have failed to respond with ridicule of this hero. In his next attempt to seduce Bianca, Fernando employs some highly hyperbolic language:

Forgive me; let my knees for ever stick
 Nailed to the ground, as earthy as my fears, [Kneels.
 Ere I arise, to part away so cursed
 In my unbounded anguish as the rage
 Of flames beyond all utterance of words
 Devour me, lightened by your sacred eyes.
 (II,iii)

Bianca's response is ours: "What means the man?" It is so unlike Ford to have a character whom he admires, and whom he wants us to admire, speak in this manner that it seems difficult to avoid the conclusion that he is inviting ridicule of Fernando's passion.

Neither does this elaborate language fool Bianca. She is very much aware of the physical basis of Fernando's love:

Look on our face:
 What see you there that may persuade a hope
 Of lawless love? Know, most unworthy man,
 So much we hate the baseness of thy lust,
 As, were none living of thy sex but thee,
 We had much rather prostitute our blood
 To some envenomed serpent than admit
 Thy bestial dalliance.
 (II,iii)

Her reaction to Fernando's advances, though somewhat excessive in its vehemence, is, morally, the proper one. She condemns not only his improper lust, but also his betrayal of the Duke, his "disease of friendship" (II,iii). Fernando, chastened by her violent rebuke, vows never again to speak his love to her,

yet even in the act of swearing restraint, he reveals his lack of it:

. . . yet, 'by this hand,
 This glorious, gracious hand of yours, -- [Kisses her hand.

 I swear,
 Henceforth I never will as much in word,
 In letter, or in syllable, presume
 To make a repetition of my griefs.
 Good-night t'ye! If, when I am dead, you rip
 This coffin of my heart, there shall you read
 With constant eyes, what now my tongue defines,
 Bianca's name carved out in bloody lines.
 For ever, lady, now good-night!
 (II,iii)

There is a touch of irony even in this moment of seriousness. Fernando's extravagant outburst -- "This glorious, gracious hand of yours" -- belies his statement that she has "schooled" him. Once again, the actor could make much of the line by placing emphasis on its lavishness. The conceit with which Fernando vows restraint would perhaps be impressive did it not parallel so closely Mauruccio's absurd conceit of the glass heart in the picture (II,i). Since the parallel is so clear, however, it seems evident that Ford wishes the connection to be made and Fernando's folly recognized.

Throughout this same scene, Ford plays with the contrast between illusion and reality. D'Avolos, secretly watching Bianca and Fernando but apparently unable to hear their words, concludes, quite mistakenly it seems, that "the match is made" (II,iii). He informs Fiormonda of what he has witnessed:

I saw
 him kneel, make pitiful faces, kiss hands and fore-
 fingers, rise, -- and by this time he is up, up, ma-

dam. Doubtless this youth aims to be duke, for he is gotten into the duke's seat an hour ago.

Fior. Is't true?

D'Av. Oracle, oracle! Siege was laid, parley admitted, composition offered, and the fort entered; there's no interruption

(II,iii)

Obviously, D'Avolos has misinterpreted what he has seen. Or has he? Bianca enters but four lines later (II,iv) and proceeds to tell Fernando that she has loved him all along. Those who recall the violence of her rejection of him in the previous scene could not help but note the ironic juxtaposition of these scenes. Moreover, D'Avolos' interpretation of the previous scene turns out to have been correct: illusion has become reality; reality, illusion. Fernando has won the battle; Bianca has surrendered.

The very important fourth scene of Act II, important as a gauge to the tone of the entire play, is a curious mixture of serious drama, comedy, melodrama and satire. There is a continual discordant tone throughout the entire scene. A strong contrast is apparent in the behaviour of the two principals until very near the end of the scene: Bianca displays a desperate solemnity, while Fernando adopts a much less serious stance. Fernando's slow recognition of Bianca is comical, I think, considering the protestations of anguished love which he has formerly been uttering. Bianca herself notes the incongruity of his ability to sleep soundly. Fernando's astonishment at Bianca's vow to kill herself clearly points out the physical basis of his love and the absurdity (he thinks) of

her taking all this so seriously. Actually, one cannot keep from almost agreeing with Fernando: Bianca's desperate threat and the extravagant passion of her language are just a little excessive. After Fernando has been convinced of her seriousness, however, the conversation becomes somewhat incongruous. Bianca, to prove that she is not mocking Fernando, swears, "by the faith I owe my bridal vows". This is neither the time nor the place to speak of her marital promises: she has come to Fernando resolved to break them. Almost as ludicrous is Fernando's statement, "In you my love as it begun shall end", meaning, apparently, that he will maintain his love in its Platonic state. This would be appropriate if such had formerly been the basis of his love for her, but Ford has made it clear that Fernando's goal has been physical consummation. The ambiguity of this statement is ironic and raises the supposition that their love will yet demand sexual fulfillment. Finally, Bianca's paraphrasing of Fernando's elaborate conceit must again call forth a satirical response in the audience or reader. All together, these incongruities and ambiguities suggest that Ford is writing something other than a totally serious tragedy.

One critic, however, -- Peter Ure -- contends that Fernando is not guilty of desiring physical union with Bianca.²¹ He argues that, in the period of time between Fernando's first overtures of love to Bianca (II,ii) and the second (II,iii), Fernando's love changes from passionate desire to Platonic wor-

ship and remains in this elevated state throughout the remainder of the play.²² Ure draws attention to Fernando's speech in the second seduction scene:

Bianca. What means this man?

Fern. To lay before your feet

In lowest vassalage the bleeding heart
That sighs the tender of a suit disdained.
Great lady, pity me, my youth, my wounds;
And do not think that I have culled this time
From motion's swiftest measure to unclasp
The book of lust: if purity of love
Have residence in virtue's breast, lo here,
Bent lower in my heart than on my knee,
I beg compassion to a love as chaste
As softness of desire can intimate.

(II,iii)

Ure points out "the exalted tone, the attitude of adoration toward the mistress-deity, the assurance that the love is chaste": this does not deny the possibility, however, that Fernando is using the conventions. Ure ignores the rather significant attitude of Fernando in the following scene (II,iv) where his incredulous disbelief at Bianca's treating her chastity so seriously contradicts the assumption that he no longer seeks physical consummation. Again in the play, there is also a significant juxtaposition of scenes here. Nibrassa's comments, following immediately after the scene in which Bianca and Fernando have pledged their vows of Platonic love, must be regarded as applying to everyone who masquerades passion behind Platonic arguments: and, consequently, the audience is invited to recognize the failure of both Fernando and Bianca to keep physical passion out of their relationship:

. . . canst thou imagine luxury is observant of religion?
no, no; it is with a frequent lecher as usual to for-
swear as to swear; their piety is in making idolatry a

worship; their hearts and their tongues are as different
as thou, thou whore! and a virgin.
(III,i)

At this point in the play, Ford begins to develop the revenge theme. The exposure of Ferentes' duplicity and the subsequent decision of the three victims of his falseness to seek "revenge . . . [to] redeem/ Our loss of honour by a brave exploit" (III,ii), is paralleled by D'Avolos' Iago-like playing on the jealousy of the Duke and the latter's subsequent desire for revenge on the lovers (IV,i). Fernando, meanwhile, is becoming more and more irrational: when warned by Roseilli of D'Avolos' machinations, he replies in words reminiscent of Giovanni's boast in 'Tis Pity (V,v,11-12):

Pish! Should he or hell
Affront me in the passage of my fate,
I'd crush them into atomies.
(III,iii)

Ford's laughter at this foolishness is almost audible when Roseilli answers, most incongruously, "I do admit you could." Satirical touches like this, however, are rare in Acts III and IV compared to their prevalence in Acts I and II. The suspense and tension builds steadily throughout the central acts as Fiormonda and D'Avolos continue to incite the Duke to vengeance; while Bianca and Fernando grow more and more careless in their passion. Ford shifts from humorous to dramatic irony. After having been tortured by the goad of D'Avolos' suspicions to a state of near-distraction, the Duke's behaviour to Fernando is sinister in its sweetness: "Come,

mine own best Fernando, my dear friend" (III,iv).

Even in these central scenes of intrigue, revenge and murder, however, Ford cannot resist the temptation to poke fun at these characters. For instance, the murder of Ferentes is brutal even if somewhat justified, and true justice demands that the murderers be punished. How can we then explain the absurdity of the final part of this scene, if it is not Ford's satire again at work?

Duke. He is dead.

To prison with those monstrous strumpets!

Pet.

Stay;

I'll answer for my daughter.

Nib.

And I for mine. --

O, well done, girls!

Fern. I for yon gentlewoman, sir.

Mau. Good my lord, I am innocent in the business.

Duke. To prison with him! Bear the body hence.

Abbot. Here's fatal sad presages: but 'tis just

He dies by murder that hath lived in lust.

(III,iv)

Caraffa, Fernando and even the Abbot are all made to appear ridiculous as Ford reveals the lunacy of a moral order which sends the foolish Mauruccio to prison, for a crime of which only he was entirely innocent. Some critics would undoubtedly argue that this action of the Duke merely reveals the corruption of his authority and the accompanying sordidness of the society over which he governs. However, I find this imprisonment of Mauruccio just too ludicrous to accept as a genuine comment on the state of the society. I cannot imagine Ford writing this in all seriousness.

There is no lack of seriousness in the following

scene, however. Ford's depiction of the Duke being taunted by the scathing tongues of Fiormonda and D'Avolos is remarkably well-drawn. The weak Duke, distraught and unable to act decisively of his own volition, is pitilessly battered by the abusive arguments of his tormentors:

Fior. What is she but the fallow-coloured brat
 Of some unlanded bankrupt, taught to catch
 The easy fancies of young prodigal bloods
 In springes of her stew-instructed art? --
 Here's your most virtuous duchess! your rare piece!
D'Av. More base in the infiniteness of her sensuality
 than corruption can infect: -- to clip and inveigle
 your friend, too! O, insufferable! -- a friend! how
 of all men are you most unfortunate! -- to pour out
 your soul into the bosom of such a creature as holds
 it religion to make your own trust a key to open the
 passage to your own wife's womb, to be drunk in the
 privacies of your bed! -- think upon that, sir.
 (IV,i)

The pliable receptiveness of the Duke's nature is emphasized by the excessive heights of jealousy and rage to which he is persuaded:

Bear witness that if ever I neglect
 One day, one hour, one minute, to wear out
 With toil of plot or practice of conceit
 My busy skull, till I have found a death
 More horrid than the bull of Phalaris,
 Or all the fabling poets' dreaming whips;
 If ever I take rest, or force a smile
 Which is not borrowed from a royal vengeance,
 Before I know which way to satisfy
 Fury and wrong, -- nay, kneel down [They kneel], --
 let me die
 More wretched than despair, reproach, contempt,
 Laughter, and poverty itself can make me!
 (IV,i)

Like Fernando, the Duke has been moved, because of the violence of his passion, beyond reasonable thought. There is yet wisdom in his madness, however: his greeting to Bianca and Fernando --

"welcome, dear wife, sweet friend!" -- drips with a venomous irony. His banishment of Mauruccio, a harsh sentence, reveals his newly-awakened antipathy to any one associated with sexual indiscretion:

We'll have no servile slavery of lust
Shall breathe near us; dispatch, and get ye hence.
(IV,i)

His disgust and bitterness is made abundantly clear. Ford reminds us again, however, of the loss of rationality involved in excessive passion: Mauruccio, the target for Caraffa's anger, is, it must be remembered, completely innocent of any wrong.

The atmosphere of the play grows darker throughout the remainder of Act IV as thoughts of revenge and presages of violence become stronger. Fernando's savage refusal of Fiormonda's final offer of love resolves her to revenge (IV,i). D'Avolos is shown ingratiating himself to Julia, to further thereby his plan to catch Fernando and Bianca in the act of passion. The Duke, telling Bianca of his dream, reveals to her his suspicions and his insane jealousy:

Were both of you hid in a rock of fire,
Guarded by ministers of flaming hell,
I have a sword -- 'tis here -- should make my way
Through fire, through darkness, death, and hell, and
all,
To hew your lust-engendered flesh to shreds,
Pound you to mortar, cut your throats, and mince
Your flesh to mites: I will, -- start not, -- I will.
(IV,ii)

Bianca is still under the delusion that her love is Platonic, however, and defends her purity:

. . . did such a guilt
 Hang on mine honour, 'twere no blame in you,
 If you did stab me to the heart.
 (IV,ii)

Fernando, informed by Roseilli that Fiormonda, D'Avolos and the Duke have certain knowledge of his meetings with Bianca, reveals again his irrational attitude. Moreover, he indirectly acknowledges that their love is dissolving into the physical passion which has always been its basis, though they have so far avoided consummation:

Let him know it; yet I vow
 She is as loyal in her plighted faith
 As is the sun in Heaven: but put case
 She were not, and the duke did know she were not;
 This sword lifted up, and guided by this arm,
 Shall guard her from an armed troop of fiends
 And all the earth beside.
 (IV,ii)

Roseilli's rejoinder -- "You are too safe in your destruction" -- adequately sums up Fernando's madness: his passion has reached such heights as to make his destruction inevitable yet the excessiveness of this love makes him blind to any danger. Roseilli recognizes the approach of disaster:

I see him lost already.
 If all prevail not, we shall know too late
 No toil can shun the violence of fate.
 (IV,ii)

Act V brings catastrophe, the deaths of Bianca, Fernando and the Duke; at the same time, interwoven among the tragic events of the act, there is a marked resurgence of the satirical tone. The first scene opens with a speech by Fiormonda which emphasizes the approach of violence:

Now fly, Revenge, and wound the lower earth,
 That I, insphered above, may cross the race
 Of love despised, and triumph o'er their graves
 Who scorn the low-bent thralldom of my heart!
 (V,i)

Oblivious to danger, and to the error of their conduct, Fernando and Bianca discuss their love. It is soon evident that their self-control is breaking down. In fact, the scene "is designed to emphasize the excessive physical attraction of the lovers for each other."²³ Bianca is "discovered in her night-attire, leaning on a cushion at a table, holding Fernando by the hand" (V,i). She questions the moral law which prohibits their love, obviously nearing the decision to succumb to her passion for Fernando:

Why shouldst thou not be mine? Why should the laws,
 The iron laws of ceremony, bar
 Mutual embraces? What's a vow, a vow?
 Can there be sin in unity?
 (V,i)

A lacuna in the text makes it difficult to interpret correctly Fernando's reply, but "his vow to bury himself alive in Bianca's coffin if she dies before he does is not the approach of a rational man."²⁴ Neither do his words in regard to the use of a kiss to seal a vow sound like the utterances proper to a Platonic lover:

. . . for whiles your lips
 Are made the book, it is a sport to swear,
 And glory to forswear.
 (V,i)

Given Bianca's weakening adherence to moral law, and Fernando's delight in her physical charms, this kissing seems but

the prelude to complete physical union. It is prevented, however, by the sudden entrance of the Duke, and disaster.

Fernando, on being discovered, resorts once again to the posturing of the heroical lover -- "duke, I dare/ Thy worst, for murder sits upon thy cheeks:/ To't man!" (V,i). The Duke's passion equals Fernando's in its excessiveness, though he, too, seems to be consciously playing a role -- "I am too angry in my rage/ To scourge thee unprovided" (V, i). Left alone with Bianca, Caraffa launches forth with violent speeches appropriate to a passionate revenger. Rather significantly, however, he continues in a long conversation with Bianca, unlike a determined revenger, and finally dispenses with the idea of revenge altogether:

Not this; I'll none of this; 'tis not so fit. ---
Why should I kill her? she may live and change,
Or ---

[Throws down his sword.
(V,i)]

Only the admonishing taunts of the watching Fiormonda make him carry out his revenge. Notwithstanding the violence of his verbal abuse of Bianca, the Duke is basically too weak-willed and indecisive to conclusively play the role of revenger. He seems rather shocked by Bianca's death -- "Sister, she's dead" -- and Fiormanda's guidance is required again to indicate to him his next course of action:

Then, whiles thy rage is warm
Pursue the causer of her trespass.

Duke.

Good:

I'll slack no time whiles I am hot in blood.

[Takes up his sword and exit.
(V,i)]

It is not unlikely that Ford is here satirizing the revenge tradition, through the person of the revenger himself, and through the realization of the Duke (and probably the audience) that revenge in itself is quite senseless. There can be no doubt, also, that the murder of Bianca is a punishment which far exceeds the crime.

Act V of Love's Sacrifice contains the argument concerning the purity of the lovers which has provoked the vehement disapprobation of the critics on moral grounds. The essence of the objections to Ford's characterizations in this play is found in Swinburne's comments:

. . . nowhere else . . . shall we find within the large limits of our early drama such a figure as Ford's Bianca set up for admiration as a pure and noble type of woman.²⁵

In a similar vein, Havelock Ellis, in his introduction to Ford's plays, "we can only smile when we hear these lovers --

Hid in a rock of fire,
Guarded by ministers of flaming hell --

celebrated as miracles of chastity and truth. [This is a] . . . complete . . . moral collapse . . . (unless we choose to regard it as intentional irony)" ²⁶ Ellis' aside (in parentheses) is one of the extremely rare instances in which the possibility of a less-than-serious playing of Act V is recognized. Ellis himself does not seem to be aware of the possible ramifications of his remark. The traditional critical attitude has been that Ford is here trying to seduce his audience into believing in the innocence of Bianca and

Fernando. More recent critical examinations of Ford, however, have brought out evidence, most of it internal, that Ford is not the vigorous proponent of immorality which earlier criticism had made him out to be. H. J. Oliver's comment in connection with his study of The Broken Heart should perhaps be applied to all of Ford's works, including Love's Sacrifice:

The more one examines Ford's allegedly daring assaults on conventional morality, the more absurd the charge becomes.²⁷

Now if Ford, in his other plays, particularly 'Tis Pity and The Broken Heart, is not attacking traditional morals, we should be extremely cautious before assuming that he is in Love's Sacrifice, even though the play, on the surface, appears to be a flagrant violation of dramatic propriety. Unless we therefore admit the possibility that Ford is, instead of praising these characters, satirically exposing them to our ridicule, the morality of Love's Sacrifice remains totally inconsistent with that of Ford's other two tragedies.

Ford quite likely intends us to recognize Fernando and Bianca as incompetent Platonic lovers: they are so blinded by their passion that they cannot see the sordidness of their relationship. Their elaborate attempts to justify their love as pure and chaste are distortions of the truth. Ford's audience, many of whom were likely members of Henrietta-Maria's group, would have been quick to recognize the perversion of Platonic ideals in the utterances of all three of the central characters.

Ironically, the Duke kills Bianca for the wrong reason. Despite her assertions that she was unable to persuade Fernando to physically possess her, the Duke remains convinced of her adultery:

Adultery, Bianca! such a guilt
As, were the sluices of thine eyes let up,
Tears cannot wash it off: 'tis not the tide
Of trivial wantonness from youth to youth,
But thy abusing of thy lawful bed,
Thy husband's bed;

.
When thou shalt find the catalogue enrolled
Of thy misdeeds, there shall be writ in text
Thy bastarding the issues of a prince.

(V,i)

On the one hand, Caraffa demonstrates a total ignorance of the possibility of a Platonic love free from lust: Bianca is, significantly, innocent of the particular crime he charges her with. On the other hand, his accusations are somewhat justified: Fernando and Bianca are guilty of adulterous thoughts. Furthermore, Fernando has violated his friend's trust and Bianca has betrayed the spirit of her marriage vows; both, therefore, are guilty of aberrations for which they must be morally condemned.

Bianca's vehement defiance of the Duke reveals the extent of her degenerations into passion. She freely admits her desire for Fernando:

Yet be assured, my lord, if ever language
Of cunning servile flatteries, entreaties,
Or what in me is, could procure his love,
I would not blush to speak it.

(V,i)

The folly of masquerading passion behind Platonic ideals is

revealed when Bianca draws a parallel between the Duke's love for her and her love for Fernando. The Duke had indeed earned her gratitude for elevating her social station:

But why? 'twas because you thought I had
A spark of beauty more than you had seen.
To answer this, my reason is the like;
The self-same appetite which led you on
To marry me led me to love your friend, . . .

(V,i)

Ford's use here of the word "appetite" reveals the misconceptions in both Bianca and the Duke's ideas of the nature of Platonic love. The Duke, in fact, really has no belief that such a love is possible: he cannot disassociate love from lust. Bianca, though she understands the Platonic theory of love, is simply unable to practice the restraint which should go along with such a relationship between a man and a woman. Her weakness is perhaps of the flesh rather than the spirit; consequently, she invites, not only ridicule, ~~but~~ also pity.

Her praise of Fernando's behaviour, however, is a complete distortion of the facts:

I must confess I missed no means, no time,
To win him to my bosom; but so much,
So holily, with such religion,
He kept the laws of friendship, that my suit
Was held but, in comparison, a jest;
Nor did I offer urge the violence
Of my affection, but as oft he urged
The sacred vows of faith 'twixt friend and friend

(V,i)

As Stavig notes, "significantly her assertion of what Fernando did is very close to what Fernando should have done . . . The passage puts the actual behaviour of Fernando in a decidedly

bad light."²⁸ Ironically, Fernando initially had been greatly troubled by this aspect of his love for Bianca:

. . . she's the duke's wife;
Who knows not this? -- she's bosomed to my friend;
There, there, I am quite lost
(II,ii)

Previously he had recognized the enormity of the breach of faith which his love would occasion: the lack of compunction with which he apparently put this objection aside, however, never to raise the issue again in the play, reveals the falseness of Bianca's account of his behaviour.

Obviously, Bianca's account of her love for Fernando is intended to provoke the Duke into killing her. The problem of the critic is to decide how Ford means us to react to her display of defiance in death. If we regard her to be noble in death, we to some extent exonerate her from blame for the tragedy. Surely Ford is not suggesting that a noble death is sufficient to make amends for one's sins during life. I think we must assume that Ford is being intentionally ambiguous, though he probably expects his audience to recognize his intent. While Bianca's courage evokes some admiration, we cannot help but be aware of her irrationality and the destructiveness of her passion. Even her words are lacking in logic:

. . . but, in the latter act
Of thy revenge, 'tis all the suit I ask
At my last gasp, to spare thy noble friend;
For life to me without him were a death.
(V,i)

Bianca makes this request with her "last gasp" yet does so be-

cause to her "life . . . without him were a death": this is a curiously illogical argument. The last line, however, does reveal why she desires death: her passion for Fernando has become so strong that it cannot be contained. Since the discovery of their relationship means separation from him, only death can ease her mind and body. Tortured by desire, life for her is no longer bearable. In willing and provoking the Duke to take her life, she is morally culpable and, like the suicides of Fernando and the Duke, hers is a "Most desperate end!" (V,iii).

Like Bianca, Fernando wrongly considers their relationship to have been free from sin.

Neither of them will admit that dalliance, kissing and fondling, lustful desires, and improperly placed love are an indication of the weakness and sin that accompany heroical love. Fernando and Bianca have not consummated their love, but they have done and said much more than innocent lovers would.²⁹

Contrary to all the evidence in the play, and even to Bianca's own admission of her guilty desire, Fernando continues to proclaim her innocence:

Unfortunate Caraffa, thou hast butchered
An innocent, a wife as free from lust
As any terms of art can deify.
(V,ii)

He lapses again into Platonic admiration of Bianca:

If ever I unshrined
The altar of her purity, or tasted
More of her love than what without control
Or blame a brother from a sister might,
Rack me to atomies.
(V,ii)

In his idolatry he elevates her to sainthood:

Glorious Bianca,
Reign in the triumph of thy martyrdom;
Earth was unworthy of thee!

(V,ii)

Again, the excesses to which a character is moved reveal his irrationality: Fernando's account of Bianca's virtue should properly be regarded as utter nonsense. His misrepresentation of their relationship, the alacrity with which the Duke accepts this account, and the distorted view of Bianca which the two men share, all demonstrate that both of them are victims of an unreasonable, self-blinding heroical love.

The final scene of the play emphasizes the irrationality of the two men. Between them, they make a mockery of the formal ritual of Bianca's funeral. Fernando, whom we have seen in the previous scene gently restraining the Duke's suicidal urge, now emerges from the tomb, fantastically fulfilling the vow which he had made to Bianca to "incoffin" himself in her supulchre. The vehemence of his speech is that of a man no longer completely sane:

Forbear! what art thou that dost rudely press
Into the confines of forsaken graves?
Has death no privilege? Com'st thou, Caraffa,
To practice yet a rape upon the dead?
Inhuman tyrant! --
Whats'ever thou intendest, know this place
Is pointed out for my inheritance;
Here lies the monument of all my hopes:
Had eager lust intrunked my conquered soul,
I had not buried living joys in death.
Go, revel in thy palace, and be proud
To boast thy famous murders; let thy smooth,
Low-fawning parasites renown thy act:
Thou com'st not here.

(V,iii)

His final death speech, in decided contrast to the quiet language of the central characters of either 'Tis Pity or The Broken Heart, remains disjointed and devoid of the characteristic Fordian dignity:

Farewell, duke! once I have outstripped thy plots;
 Not all the cunning antidotes of art
 Can warrant me twelve minutes of my life:
 It works, it works already, bravely! bravely!
 Now, now I feel it tear each several joint.
 O royal poison! trusty friend! split, split
 Both heart and gall asunder, excellent bane!
 Roseilli, love my memory. -- Well searched out,
 Swift, nimble venom! torture every vein. --
 I come, Bianca -- cruel torment, feast,
 Feast on, do -- Duke, farewell. -- Thus I -- hot flames! --
 Conclude my love, -- and seal it in my bosom!
 O!

[Dies.]

(V,iii)

Fernando's death is marked by that same characteristic which so strongly distinguished the progress of his love -- a passionate, immoral irrationality.

Caraffa's behaviour in this last scene is as erratic as Fernando's. While having previously vowed renewed friendship with Fernando, -- "come friend, now for her love,/ Her love that praised thee in the pangs of death,/ I'll hold thee dear" (V,ii) -- the appearance and words of his rival lead to a resurgence of the Duke's hate for the man:

Fernando, man of darkness,
 Never till now, before these dreadful sights,
 Did I abhor thy friendship

(V,iii)

Incongruously, however, the Duke's rage stems from a rather inappropriate concern for his own reputation -- "thou hast

robbed/ My resolution of a glorious name" (V,iii). With Fernando's death, however, the Duke returns to his former stance:

And art thou gone, Fernando? art thou gone?
 Thou wert a friend unmatched; rest in thy fame. ---
 Sister, when I have finished my last days,
 Lodge me, my wife, and this unequalled friend,
 All in one monument.

(V,iii)

This stand is a complete reversal of the Duke's anger a few lines earlier. Apparently he senses that with Fernando dead, the "glorious name" he covets is again a possibility.³⁰

Caraffa's attempt to gloss over the sordidness of the whole affair fails miserably: no audience could possibly accept his prophecy that "Children unborn, and widows whose lean cheeks/ Are furrowed up by age, shall weep whole nights,/ Repeating but the story of our fates" (V,iii). We may pity Caraffa, Fernando and Bianca for their weaknesses, but we cannot admire their folly in persisting in this masquerade of perverted Platonic love and honour. Because they never know themselves, their tragedies are less than those in Ford's other tragic stories, 'Tis Pity and The Broken Heart.

Significantly, the Duke dies, like Fernando, after a speech full of figurative language:

Fools, why, could you dream
 I would outlive my outrage? -- Sprightful flood,
 Run out in rivers! O, that these thick streams
 Could gather head, and make a standing pool,
 That jealous husbands here might bathe in blood!
 So! I grow sweetly empty; all the pipes
 Of life unvessel life. -- Now heavens, wipe out
 The writing of my sin! -- Bianca, thus
 I creep to thee -- to thee -- to thee, Bi-an-ca.

[Dies.]

(V,iii)

Caraffa's use of an elaborate poetic conceit in this passage is contrary to the kind of language which is characteristic of Ford's heroes at the point of death. There is too much suggestion in the speech of conscious self-glorification -- of role-playing, one might even say. Caraffa's insistence (particularly through the thrice-used "to thee" in the last line) that he expects reunion with Bianca is gross self-delusion in light of the abuse and ridicule which she had heaped on him previously during her confession that she no longer loved him. To meet death in this manner is not typical of the Fordian hero, he or she whom Ford wants us to admire. Because the dramatist denies dignity to Fernando and Caraffa at the final moment of life we can perhaps assume that he is not seeking our admiration for the characters in this play. Disapproval is our response, rather than sympathy. Consequently, the play fails to achieve a tragic effect which compares favorably with those created in Ford's other two tragedies. Nor, indeed, do I think Ford desired such a result.

The play ends with the restoration of order. Roseilli discards the role of fool in love, something which the central characters had not been able to do, and reasserts, within himself, the desired dominance of reason over passion. His sentencing of D'Avolos to death is just, for the latter has been largely responsible for the unnecessary deaths of Bianca and her passionate admirers. His rejection of Fiormanda is proper punishment for her lustful behaviour, a punishment appropriate-

ly fitting the crime. Fiormanda's sudden repentance, however, is rather implausible and seems to be a satirical hit, for to suggest that passion can be so quickly subdued makes a mockery of those who have died because of their passions. The Abbot's concluding lines are also ironic in suggesting that this tragedy surpasses all others:

No age hath heard, nor chronicle can say,
That ever here befell a sadder day.
(V,iii)

It is, of course, not possible to definitely conclude that all of the passages examined in the course of this chapter were meant to be satirical; neither is it suggested that they were necessarily played and spoken in the ways that I have sometimes outlined. I would contend, however, that possibilities for satirical presentation abound throughout the play. Whether or not the satirical potential of Love's Sacrifice was exploited on the stage would have depended largely on the players themselves. To deny the satirical content of the play, however, seriously impedes an appreciation of Ford's skill: as a serious tragedy, Love's Sacrifice has a number of irreconcilable flaws; as a satirical tragedy, the organization of the play displays a consistency much more commensurate with the artistic heights which Ford achieved in 'Tis Pity and The Broken Heart. Though Love's Sacrifice may perhaps be justifiably denied the esteem which Ford's other two tragedies merit, we should, however, be willing to consider the various possible interpretations of the play, particularly one which seems con-

sistent with the dramatic proficiency which Ford demonstrates elsewhere. To not show such consideration is to underestimate Ford's craftsmanship, and to perhaps demonstrate less sophistication in ourselves than may have been exhibited by Ford's seventeenth-century audience.

V

CONCLUSION

Ford's three tragedies demonstrate many similarities and many differences. Thematically, all of them are remarkably similar: all deal with the subject of thwarted and illicit love, all deal with the concept of honor, and all deal with the conflict between the desires of the individual and the laws of the society in which he lives. In this respect, Ford demonstrates a marked narrowness of vision. What is even more remarkable, however, is that Ford has created three distinctly different plays within this narrow focus and that, in at least two of them, 'Tis Pity and The Broken Heart, he has created a fresh vision of life and demonstrated the frequently tragic position of the individual.

Structurally, 'Tis Pity and The Broken Heart present us with the identical situation: two lovers whose love is somehow contrary to the laws of the society in which they live. In both plays, the fact that this love is not allowed (for varying reasons) to develop in the normal way is the cause of the tragedy. Here, in spite of the thematic similarities, the resemblance between the two plays ends. In tone, in language, in characterization, in setting, in pace, and in the working out of the tragedy, the two plays are almost diametrically op-

posed. In The Broken Heart, the tone is one of quiet restraint, the language is generally calm and disciplined, the characters (with the exception of Bassanes) are consistently refined and dignified, the Spartan society is one which recognizes a need for control and for strict adherence to the social and moral laws, the play moves deliberately from crisis to crisis, and the tragedy of the situation is that restraint and dignity are not sufficient to ensure individual happiness and social harmony: inevitably the tension contained within the dilemma of Penthea and Orgilus explodes outward with destructive consequences for them and for the society. In 'Tis Pity, the tone is one of unrestrained passion, the language is (for Ford) often feverish and occasionally brutal, the characters are emotionally inconsistent and tend to give free rein to their passions, the Parman society is one in which no universal law is recognized, each individual acknowledging no rule which does not contribute to his own good, the play moves swiftly to its violent climax, and the tragedy of this situation is that the individual is unable to escape the influence of the society in which they live: the corrupt and sordid values of the Parman society insidiously penetrate the relationship between Giovanni and Annabella until their degeneration and ruin is complete. In both plays, however, Ford restores his heroes and heroines to grace prior to their deaths and we are reminded of their essential goodness. Consequently, we are willing to grant them the respect and pity

due to those whose story is truly tragic.

Clifford Leech has pointed out the affinities of 'Tis Pity with the earlier, more virile Jacobean tragedies of Shakespeare, Chapman, Webster and Middleton, the major works of which are, in Leech's words, "characterized by an intellectual tension":

On the one side there is a feeling of exaltation in the nature of man, a delight in his dominance among created things, in his ambitions and potentialities, his daring, his readiness to assume responsibility for the pattern of his life, his capacity for understanding; on the other side there is a recognition of the limitations of man's power, his isolation in the universe, the isolation among his fellows that great gifts or unusual ambition or the inheritance of high place inevitably brings, the death that must come at the end.¹

This tension described by Leech implies a conflict in the drama which forms the basis of its action; it also implies a violent clash between the forces that create that tension. This clash is found in 'Tis Pity in a form unlike that which is in The Broken Heart: in the former play there is a conflict between characters representative of differing intellectual ideas (Giovanni and the Friar), whereas in the latter, all the characters are more or less aligned on the same side -- their adversaries, on the other side, are time, circumstance and human frailty. In The Broken Heart, defeat is inevitable and the response is stoicism. In 'Tis Pity, the end is shaped by events occurring within the play and, though defeat and destruction are eventually inevitable also, the protagonist meets death with a defiance which only at the last moment changes to calm acceptance.

In this respect, Giovanni resembles Chapman's Bussy D'Ambois and Webster's Duchess of Malfi as much as he resembles Orgilus or Ithocles. If we are looking for the traditional Elizabethan vitality, we can turn to 'Tis Pity; if we are looking for Ford's originality, we must turn to The Broken Heart.

Love's Sacrifice, however, is a play of a kind quite unlike either The Broken Heart or 'Tis Pity. With the emphasis being on the satire in the play, the characters fail to achieve tragic status. If my interpretation of the play, and of Ford's intentions, is correct, the play may perhaps be considered as a link between two dramatic eras: it retains the traditional characteristics of the Elizabethan drama, of which it is a late example, while, in its satiric look at the contemporary seventeenth-century scene (albeit a very restricted, narrowly-defined scene), it anticipates the more caustically satirical drama of the Restoration and after.

Contrary to the accepted critical view, Love's Sacrifice, if read as a satire of those who would pervert the ideals of the Platonic love cult, emerges as a very consistent and uniform play: the typical objections to the play are no longer valid. The inconsistent characterization becomes an essential part of the drama. The sub-plots become relevant also, though they are admittedly not as skillfully wrought as those in 'Tis Pity. It seems possible that Ford's comedy has suffered from nineteenth- and twentieth-century critics largely because it was highly topical and, as such, does not seem even remotely

funny to some readers of today. The absurdity of the final act and the numerous melodramatic situations in the play can now be seen as contributing strongly to the satirical effect of the play, rather than being serious flaws in the play's texture. Finally, the satire provides the essential unity of tone which so many critics have found lacking in Love's Sacrifice. The play may perhaps be a failure to twentieth-century readers, but it is my distinct impression that, to Ford's seventeenth-century audience, with their interest in the very topical issue of the Platonic love cult in the court, it may have been highly successful. Perhaps the comment on the title page of the quarto, that the play was "Received Generally Well" is truth as well as the publisher's propaganda.

Ford criticism is generally in agreement in regard to Ford's merit as a poet. There is little argument with T. S. Eliot's praise of "the slow solemn rhythm which is Ford's distinct contribution to the blank verse of the period."² At the same time, there are many who would yet refuse Ford any place of eminence as a dramatist. They only grudgingly admit that, despite the moral unpleasantness of its subject-matter, Ford's 'Tis Pity is a fine play. Clearly, Ford has not received the recognition which he deserves. Ford exhibits a desire to experiment with dramatic technique; he demonstrates the skill necessary to shape a play along the lines he has planned; and finally, in The Broken Heart, he gives ample proof of his individuality and originality, further evidence of which can be

found in the satire of Love's Sacrifice.

Ford had not the clear insight into the whole of life which Shakespeare had, nor do his plays display the strength and vitality of some of his contemporaries. Still, he demonstrates a clear understanding of the narrow piece of life of which he writes, and his is no little skill in the craft of play-writing. It is comparatively easy to be a critic: Ford knew this and left us his words of caution:

Where noble judgements and clear eyes are fixed
To grace endeavour, there sits truth, not mixed
With ignorance: those censures may command
Belief which talk not till they understand.

(Epilogue, The Broken Heart)

NOTES TO THE TEXT

Chapter I: INTRODUCTION

¹For a more complete discussion of Ford's life and works, see M. Joan Sargeant, John Ford (Oxford, 1935), pp. 1-31, 188-211; also, G. E. Bentley, The Jacobean and Caroline Stage (Oxford, 1941-56), Vol. III, pp. 433-64.

²Bentley, Vol. III, p. 442.

³The Problem of John Ford (Melbourne, 1955), p. 127.

Chapter II: THE BROKEN HEART

¹John Ford (London, 1964), pp. 34, 36.

²John Ford (London, 1960), p. xiii.

³"John Ford Revisited", SEL, IV (1964), 203.

⁴The Broken Heart (University of Nebraska Press, 1968), p. xiii.

⁵The Moral Vision of Jacobean Tragedy (Madison, 1960), p. 201.

⁶See Act III, sc. ii, 33-118; also, III, iii, 45-49.

⁷Irving Ribner, Jacobean Tragedy (London, 1962), pp. 160-61.

⁸This pattern of things occurring beneath the surface is echoed by the plot structure of the play itself: very little physical or observable movement occurs, yet developments and complications are constantly being initiated by the revelation (through speeches) of shifting attitudes in the thoughts of the characters.

⁹Ribner, p. 161.

¹⁰Ornstein, p. 31.

¹¹Elizabethan and Jacobean (Oxford, 1945), p. 20.

¹²For more information on the subject of Melancholy in Ford's works, see Elaine Ewing, Burtonian Melancholy in the

Plays of John Ford (Princeton, 1940); also, G. F. Sensabaugh, The Tragical Muse of John Ford (Stanford University Press, 1944), chap. 2.

¹³Una Ellis-Fermor, The Jacobean Drama (London, 1936), p. 227.

¹⁴I say "indirectly" in the case of Orgilus because his death is a punishment for his allowing passion to overcome him, rather than a direct consequence of restraint, such as are the deaths of Penthea and Calantha.

¹⁵Ellis-Fermor, p. 241.

¹⁶Leech, p. 36.

¹⁷Alan Brissenden, "Impediments to Love: A Theme in John Ford", Ren. Drama, VII (1964), 96.

¹⁸"Shakespeare and Ford", Shakespeare Jahrbuch, XCIV (1958), 129.

¹⁹Ellis-Fermor, p. 237.

²⁰Mary E. Cochnower, "John Ford", Seventeenth Century Studies, ed. Robert Shafer (Princeton, 1933), p. 147.

²¹Fredson Bowers, Elizabethan Revenge Tragedy 1587-1642 (Princeton, 1940), p. 213.

Chapter III: 'TIS PITY SHE'S A WHORE

¹I have borrowed the phrase "pseudo-Grecian" from Miss Sargeaunt, p. 147.

²For more information on Ford's debt to Shakespeare, see David L. Frost, The School of Shakespeare (Cambridge, 1968), pp. 156-160; S. Horman, "Shakespeare and Dekker as Keys to Ford's 'Tis Pity", SEL, VII (1967), 269-276; H. J. Oliver, pp. 86-88.

³Tourneur's Revenger's Tragedy and Atheist's Tragedy, Beaumont and Fletcher's A King and No King, Massinger's The Unnatural Combat, Middleton's Women Beware Women and Brome's The Lovesick Court also deal with the topic of incest to some extent.

⁴'Tis Pity She's A Whore, ed. Brian Morris (London: Ernest Benn Limited, 1968), p. x.

⁵Such was Gerard Langbaine's opinion in 1691, An Account of the English Dramatic Poets, p. 21.

⁶For condemnation of the play which stems largely from moral disfavour, see Wallace Bacon, "The Literary Reputation of John Ford", HLQ, XI (1947-48), 181-99, though Bacon strives hard to conceal his personal dislike for the incestuous theme.

⁷Ellis-Fermor, p. 37.

⁸As Oliver points out, "Giovanni may struggle against the inevitable with his:

O that it were not in Religion sinne
To make our love a God, and worship it
-- but the premise from which he starts is that it is a sin."
The Problem . . . , p. 97.

⁹Essays and Studies (London: Chatto and Windus, 1875), p. 279.

¹⁰The Poetics, chap. 15.

¹¹Oliver, p. 97.

¹²In fact, there is no indication in the text that the Friar is aware of Annabella's pregnancy. This does not completely absolve him from blame, however.

¹³Swinburne, p. 292.

¹⁴Ibid., p. 292.

¹⁵John Ford and the Traditional Moral Order (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1968), p. 109.

¹⁶Stavig, p. 103. Elsewhere, Stavig convincingly argues that what Ford reveals in 'Tis Pity and Love's Sacrifice are perversions of the Platonic love code, which would probably have been condemned by Ford's seventeenth-century audience. See pp. 36-45, passim.

¹⁷Stavig, p. 119.

¹⁸T. Spencer, Death and Elizabethan Tragedy (Cambridge, 1936), p. 257.

¹⁹Ribner, p. 155.

²⁰Swinburne, p. 281.

²¹Stavig, p. 118.

²²As in The Broken Heart (III, v, 105-6), the word "unkind" is used in the dual sense of 1) cruel, and 2) as not befitting a kinsman. In 'Tis Pity, however, the epithet is particularly appropriate and succeeds in recalling the entire progress of the brother-sister relationship. In both plays, it stands as an example of Ford's ability to pack his phrases with meaning.

²³Oliver, p. 128.

²⁴Donald K. Anderson, "The Heart and the Banquet: Imagery in Ford's 'Tis Pity and The Broken Heart", SEL, II (1962), 217.

²⁵Ornstein, p. 212.

Chapter IV: LOVE'S SACRIFICE

¹Published in Delights of the Muses, 1646.

²See Oliver, p. 48; also Ewing, p. 28.

³See Bentley, III, 441.

⁴See Stavig, pp. 188-92.

⁵See Oliver, pp. 76-85; Ribner, p. 162; Sargeaunt, pp. 134-39. These recent critics find the play a failure because of artistic inconsistency: nineteenth- and early twentieth-century critics, on the other hand, found it entirely reprehensible on moral grounds -- see, for example, Swinburne, pp. 287-91.

⁶Stavig, pp. 122-23.

⁷See The Tragic Muse of John Ford (particularly chap. 3); "John Ford and Platonic Love in Court", SP, XXXVI (1939); "John Ford Revisited", SEL, IV (1964), 195-216; "John Ford and Elizabethan Tragedy", PQ, XX (1941), 442-53.

⁸Sensabaugh, The Tragic Muse . . ., pp. 168-69.

⁹Ibid., p. 160.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 161.

¹¹Ibid., chap. 3.

¹²Stavig, p. 123.

¹³Ibid.

¹⁴Perhaps Roseilli's disguise as a fool is meant as a symbolic comment on those who allow themselves to be ruled by passion and an excessive idolatry of woman.

¹⁵Stavig, p. 124.

¹⁶Ibid., pp. 123-24.

¹⁷See, for example, Oliver, p. 81; Ribner, p. 162; Leech, p. 81; Swinburne, pp. 288-90; Ellis-Fermor, pp. 232, 244.

¹⁸Oliver, p. 81.

¹⁹Stavig, p. 38.

²⁰Ibid., p. 128.

²¹Peter Ure, "Cult and Initiates in Ford's Love's Sacrifice", MLQ, XI (1950), 298-306.

²²Ibid., 301-306.

²³Stavig, p. 135.

²⁴Ibid., p. 136.

²⁵Swinburne, p. 288.

²⁶Ellis, p. xii.

²⁷Oliver, p. 66.

²⁸Stavig, p. 137.

²⁹Ibid., p. 139.

³⁰Ibid., p. 142.

Chapter V: CONCLUSION

¹Leech, John Ford and the Drama of His Time (London, 1957), p. 41.

²T. S. Eliot, Selected Essays (New York, 1950), p. 195.

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Abbreviations Used in Periodical References:

CL	Comparative Literature
Eng. Stud.	English Studies
HLQ	Huntingdon Library Quarterly
MLQ	Modern Language Quarterly
MP	Modern Philology
NQ	Notes and Queries
PQ	Philological Quarterly
RES	Review of English Studies
SEL	Studies in English Literature
Shakes. Ass. Bul.	Shakespeare Association Bulletin
SP	Studies in Philology
Tex. Stud.	University of Texas Studies in Literature and Language

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