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**COMEDY AND THE COUNTER-REFORMATION:
AN EXAMINATION OF THE EVOLUTION OF THE ITALIAN NON-
TRAGIC DRAMA AND ITS SUBSEQUENT EFFECT ON THE ENGLISH
THEATRE FROM SHAKESPEARE TO SHIRLEY WITH PARTICULAR
EMPHASIS ON THE ROLE OF THE GO-BETWEEN**

BY

ROBERT WILLIAM CHARLES LESLIE

**A THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE UNIVERSITY OF GLASGOW FOR THE
DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY**

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JOINT SUPERVISION OF THE ENGLISH LITERATURE AND ITALIAN
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ABSTRACT OF THESIS

Comedy and the Counter-Reformation: an examination of the relationship between the changing moral ambience of Cinquecento Italy and the evolution of the non-tragic erudite drama relating this to the forms taken by English Renaissance comedy. This is divided into six areas broadly presented chronologically: the Humanist comedy - bawdy in tone and language and centred on the Go-Between; mixed-genre experiments, e.g. *pastorale* and Giraldi's *tragedia di fin lieto*, and the gradual de-emphasising of the Go-Between's role to meet the changing moral climate of the Counter-Reformation; the *commedie gravi* of Sforza Oddi, with emphasis on the moral contrast between *attività* and *passività*, passionate but chaste heroines, and the marginalisation of the Go-Between; Shakespeare, his use of Italian forms, and his carrying-over of Counter-Reformation ideals; the use by Jonson and the Satirists of Italian sources and typology and their divergence from these models; and the continuation in the Fletcherian Tragicomedy of structures and morality typical of the comedies of Counter-Reformation Italy. The thesis highlights the influence of Italian literary culture, and thereby the influence of the Counter-Reformation, on the structures, typology and moral tone of the English comedy.

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INTRODUCTION:

1. Aims of This Thesis

The aims of this thesis are as follows:

- (1) to examine the evolution of the Italian non-tragic drama in the sixteenth century with particular emphasis on the character of the Go-Between;
- (2) to relate that evolution to the Counter-Reformation and the Post-Tridentine morality;
- (3) to examine the effects of 16th century Italian non-tragic drama on the English theatre as represented by Shakespeare, Jonson and the Satirical School, and the Fletcherian Tragicomedy;
- (4) to demonstrate that the mixed-genre comedy of the English Renaissance draws substantially on Italian models and therefore, to some extent, reflects the influence of Counter-Reformation ideology.

2. Dramatic Background: The Plauto-Terentian Comedy

The Italian vernacular comedy of the Renaissance was, in the first part of the Cinquecento, generally based on Plauto-Terentian models; that is to say a five-act structure incorporating the regular order of *protasis* (exposition), *epitasis* (complication), and *catastrophe* (resolution) wherein a normally not-overly-bright *innamorato* employs a cunning Go-Between to remove or circumvent the obstacles which prevent him enjoying his love. Following Terentian practice, the love intrigues were often doubled or tripled to furnish a greater complexity and a concomitantly larger number of opportunities for comic confusion.

The farce, initially a competing form, blended the native *contrastì* (a type of popular comical dialogue) and *maggi* (rustic or peasant plays performed at local festivals) with neoclassical elements from Plautus and Terence. It mingled mediaeval allegory with

classical mythology and frequently employed regional dialects to humorous effect. The farce generally became absorbed in the learned comedy, supplying the local colour that Plautus and Terence lacked. The bawdiness of Italian popular culture, mirrored in literature since Boccaccio, was very much part of this local colour and gave the Italian comedy a sexual content, both in language and deed, which frequently exceeded that present in its classical forebears.

Since the motor of the comic action was the Go-Between or *mezzano*, it was inevitable that the lax morality and obscene expression which came to characterise much of the genre became most closely identified with this character. While the classical *servus* or *parasitus* concerned himself primarily with his young master's romantic problems - normally in the hope of freedom or a good meal - the *mezzano* was just as likely to have an affair going himself with a cook or female attendant. His language, and that of the comic sub-cast in general, was, more often than not, larded with casual obscenity and innuendo; his endless scheming, aimed, as it generally was, at the confounding of a conventionally elderly *paterfamilias*, inevitably dramatically subverted ideas of filial respect - the more so when we consider the greater licence enjoyed by the Humanist dramatists compared to their Classical forebears; while the diminished importance of chattel slavery in Renaissance Italy meant that the rewards gained by the *mezzano* were frequently of a financial nature thus adding cupidity to the *mezzano's* catalogue of venality - a cupidity often identifiable, as in the case of Machiavelli's Frate Timoteo, with corruption.

Mezzani were not always successful in their endeavours, Lo errore (1555) by Giovan Battista Gelli,¹ for example, shows the bawd Pacifica mistaking an address and thus inadvertently revealing all to her client's wife; occasionally they deliberately mocked their employer's amorous intent by setting him up for a fall (after, normally, assuring themselves of their fee) - this occurs in Bernardo Dovizi da Bibbiena's La Calandria (1513)² wherein Fessenio convinces the elderly fool Calandro that the Necromancer Ruffo can make him temporarily die, he carried 'dead' into his beloved's home, and then be miraculously revived; and the *mezzano*, if cheated of payment, might also try to obstruct the lovers' union - as does Ariosto's Lena³ when her cash is not forthcoming. Nevertheless the logic of the plot depended on their presence, and they are central to its

comic aspects which, proceeding directly or indirectly from the *mezzano's* generally scurrilous speech and behaviour, were usually of a bawdy nature.

The combination of the double or triple plot, the much-decreased importance of slavery in Italian society, and the tendency to update the *milieu* of the *comedia* to present a Ciceronian 'mirror of the times' created dramatic space for a variety of *mezzani* based on traditional and current Types, the most common of which were: the Parasite, the Nurse/Governess, the Male Servant, the Female Servant, the Porter or *facchino*, the Corrupt Parent, the Witch-Bawd (sometimes presented in male form, e.g. Ruffo - see above) and the Corrupt Priest. In the light of this typology, it is evident that the *mezzano's* activities frequently implied breaches of trust: a Nurse or Servant would connive against their mistress's chastity; a Parent would put material security before a daughter's virtue; a Priest would abuse the power of the Church to abet the seduction of a virgin.

Other *mezzani* were disreputable by definition. The Bergamask Porter or *facchino*, for example, was based on a real-life character from the Venetian underclass whom contemporary account reveals to be as lax in hygiene as in sexual morality:

As panders they are only too accomplished; you will hardly find one who is not a *ruffiano*....Their dress is utterly uncivilised and you can smell their sacking miles away.

4

While the Parasite, maintained by his patron's table, was as contemporary and as amoral as his Roman forebear. One only has to look at the career of Aretino, financed by a combination of literary talent, blackmail and flattery, to see a Parasite *par excellence* in whom it is tempting to see the original of Jonson's Volpone.

The Bawd's frequent appearance on the Humanist stage was due in part to Classical precedent and in other part to the runaway success of the play *La Celestina* (1499) by the Spanish author Fernando de Rojas. Published in Italy in 1506, *La Celestina* featured a bawd, eager for gold, fond of wine, steeped in magic and false piety, and nostalgic for her vanished youth. While the Type, with or without overtones of witchcraft, appears or is cited frequently in Classical literature, e.g. Aristophanes's "Thessalian witch" in his *Clouds*,⁵ Horace's Canidia in his *Epode* V, or Acanthis in Propertius IV.5, a general

social contrast can be made between the *lenae* of the Roman comedy and the *ruffiane* of the Italian.

The Roman bawd had an accepted role in society as a courtesans' intermediary, selling the services of her slaves or (as in Plautus's *Cistellaria*) of her daughters. As such she posed no threat to the Roman family since the two institutions were well-defined and separate. The *ruffiana* however, while having a similar position as *mezzana* for courtesans, could also be asked to facilitate acts of adultery or to aid in the seduction of a young woman. In the more austere moral climate of the English drama, this would be the stuff of tragedy. It is indicative of the theatrical morality of the Italian Humanist Renaissance that, when such adulterous plans are laid, the Bawd is normally acting within a comic framework. Like her Graeco-Roman predecessors and the more contemporary Celestina, the *ruffiana* can also wear her witch's hat, while authorial cynicism *vis-à-vis* the reality of witchcraft generally assures her a comic function. The Witch as a purely comic figure is a phenomenon largely peculiar to the Italian theatre and parallels the comparative immunity of the Italian Cinquecento to the witch-hunt fever which blighted so much of Northern Europe.

The relatively relaxed society of the Humanist Renaissance permitted this Neo-Plauto-Terentian comedy to flourish but it is evident that any hardening of moral attitudes would put pressure on the depiction of *mezzani* in general while a Church sensitised to criticism by the Protestant Reformation could hardly be expected to look kindly on such as the Witch-Bawd and the Corrupt Priest. The dawning of the Counter-Reformation therefore had a noticeable effect on the structure and presentation of comedies.

3. Historical Background: The Counter-Reformation

The Council of Trent, in session discontinuously from 1545-63, was designed to counter the successes of the Protestant Reformation through a purgation of the evils from which the Church and Roman Catholic society were deemed to suffer. Apart from organisational questions, such as the re-assertion of Papal control in the nomination of benefices, the scandalous traffic in indulgences, simony, and licentiousness within the Church, one of the major consequences of this Counter-Reformation was the turning of a

morally critical eye on the literature of the Renaissance.

The general lack of attention given to Christian theology by Renaissance humanists went hand-in-hand with the attitudes of the feudal magnates who were their patrons and public. Classical humanism was the order of the day, as epitomised by the career of the founder of the Naples Academy, Jovianus Pontanus (1426-1503) who despite (or perhaps because of) being almost a neo-pagan was much respected and given high state office. Much of his poetry was of a licentious nature, with scant regard for Christian morality, but the spirit of the times was such that he was acclaimed by kings and princes.⁶

In a bid to stem the tide of this neo-paganism, Pope Paul IV instituted the Index of Prohibited Books (1559), the compilation of which was approved and confirmed as a papal responsibility at the twenty-fifth session of the Council of Trent (3rd to 4th December, 1563):

The holy council in the second session, celebrated under our most holy Lord, Pius IV, commissioned some Fathers to consider what ought to be done concerning various censures and books either suspected or pernicious and to report to this holy council.. Hearing now that they have put the finishing hand to this work, which, however, by reason of the variety and multitude of books the holy council cannot distinctly and easily estimate, it commands that whatever has been done by them be given over to the most holy Roman pontiff, that it may by his judgment and authority be completed and made public.⁷

The first Index, by its severity, produced such howls of protest from the literary establishment that a revised Index was published in 1564. This did away with the blanket prohibitions on writers such as Erasmus and Boccaccio and substituted a policy of selectivity. The ruling ethos was that literature be primarily instructive. Nevertheless this did not, and was not intended to, completely do away with the classical influences which permeated literature. Pierre Janelle describes the determining principle:

...the literary theorists of the Catholic Reformation...reject that ideal of "art for art's sake," which was that of the pagan Renaissance. In their eyes, poetry...is meant "to teach while it delights, but to teach more than it delights." Men, however are weak; they must be enticed to righteousness by literary beauty, by the literary beauty which their present-day tastes lead them to prefer. Their partiality for Renaissance standards should therefore be gratified. Antiquity will remain the model to be imitated par excellence, but in its outward form only, not in its inward spirit of sensuousness. Thus a classical garb will be made to clothe religious truth.⁸

This compromise with the past was not, however, acceptable to all. The theatre in particular came under attack from moral zealots within the Church of whom perhaps the most important was Carlo Borromeo. Later to have his services to the Counter-Reform posthumously rewarded with sainthood, Borromeo was Cardinal Archbishop of Milan from 1565-1584. Appalled by the Protestant Reformation, his response was to mount what might nowadays be termed a fundamentalist purge of his Archdiocese. His attempts to reform Milanese society often brought him into conflict with the civil authorities and quarrels over jurisdiction were common. Almost alone among his Italian colleagues, he ordered mass persecutions and burnings of witches. While the witch-hunt raged in Northern Europe, the 16th century Church of Italy and Spain tended to regard the practice of witchcraft as meriting, at most, a flogging and often witches were required only to recant and perform a nominal penance. Saint Carlo Borromeo however is recorded as an active persecutor of witches as early as 1569 when the severity of his actions was criticised by the Roman Inquisition. In 1583, the same year in which he tried to throw the *Gelosi* theatre company out of Milan, he burned ten alleged witches.⁹ The content of many Neo-Plautine comedies in which the *mezzana* character was based on De Rojas's Spanish witch-bawd *Celestina* could hardly, therefore, have been expected to excite his approval while his distaste for the lifestyle of the professional companies is evident in an edict issued in 1565:

We have deemed it necessary that the magistrates and their officers be exhorted to remove from their territory any actors, mimes, and all other similar vagabonds and rascals, and that they watch over and reprove innkeepers and anyone else who shelters them.¹⁰

For many theologians however, and for Carlo Borromeo in particular, the principal reason to condemn theatrical performance was precisely because it set out to divert and entertain.

Borromeo saw the theatre as the embodiment of worldliness, of wasted time, a distraction from the true spiritual life:

Every day belongs to the Lord...but while we live the day is ours...in that day we can attend the churches and often receive the sacraments...but we can also entertain ourselves, curse and swear, attend comedies, dance and waste time in taverns....But beware, my children, our life is but a day which passes, as yesterday did, and all that we have done is infinitesimal and will not endure...in truth the days of eternity will soon come and they will belong totally to the Lord and not to us. In those days our freedom to act shall be stripped from us.¹¹

A letter of instruction written by him in 1573 adequately communicates his feelings of revulsion towards worldly spectacle:

The preacher will ever abhor and execrate spectacles, performances and things of that ilk which have their origin in pagan customs and are contrary to the rules of Christianity; he will point out the harm and the public woe caused thereby to the Christian populace.¹²

While he saw a special danger in the visual attraction of live performance:

What use are the decrees of the Council of Trent at which such diligent provisions were made against obscene books, ordering them burnt, extirpated from men's memories, and ordering that whoever read them be punished with the full force of the law?

For how much further into the soul does that which the eye sees penetrate than what you can read in such books! How much more seriously are youthful minds wounded by the living voice than by the dead words printed in books! (1578)¹³

The professional theatre came into existence almost simultaneously with the Counter-Reformation and constituted a new class of evil to be fought by the Church. The presentation of plays had previously been the almost exclusive province of dilettante groups and literary academies. As such it had little effect on the public in general and, in any case, during the humanist Renaissance the theatre was deemed a legitimate part of one's education. Thus even important Churchmen like Cardinal Bibbiena (*La calandria* 1513) were writing comedies in the first half of the century. The professional players came on the scene at the end of the humanist Renaissance and had to face the opposition of a Church trying to re-establish its moral ascendancy. The continued existence, throughout the Cinquecento, of both the dilettante and professional theatres indicates that the anti-

theatre lobby, represented by Borromeo *et al.*, did not prevail.

For some churchmen continued to approve of or even protect the theatre. Like the authors of the Counter-Reform period, who emphasised a symbolic, Christian interpretation of Classical mythology as having morally instructive qualities, some leading divines argued an ethical role for the drama. Cardinal Zaccaria Delfino, for instance, wrote to the Pope in 1566 stating his opinion that "suitably amended comedies ought to be permitted", and as late as 1606 a Monsignor Savelli was requesting permission to build a theatre at Orvieto and affirming that even the apparent indecencies of some comedies housed a moral purpose. A growing tendency among authors to imbue their comedies with a morality more attuned to the ideals of the Counter-Reformation undoubtedly strengthened the hand of the theatre's defenders.¹⁴

4. The Dramatists' Response

This debate within the Church did not go unnoticed by the *litterati*. The moral climate of the Counter-Reformation imposed a new responsibility on authors who, unlike the professional comedians, felt the need to give their work a sound instructive basis. A didactic morality therefore slowly became prominent in the *commedia erudita* displacing the Plautine emphasis on the resolution of troubled love affairs by an often obscenely mannered Go-Between. The Plautine model in fact is ill-suited to moral didacticism of the Christian variety and the evolution of the *controriformista* comedy inclined more and more to varieties of mixed-genre productions which enabled authors to deal with issues of punishment, repentance and Providential concern. Instead of the main focus of the action being the ingenious overcoming of obstacles by the *mezzano*, the later plays tended to increase rather than diminish the obstacles to a successful union of the Lovers. This gave dramatists an opportunity to highlight the constancy of love-in-adversity - usually given a dramatic voice elevated in tone but full of passionate emotion - and to invoke Providence as the final unifying force which rewards the submission of the Lovers to its rule.

The professional *commedia dell'arte* troupes ignored the Classical conventions barring the presence onstage of young free women and, perhaps conceding the inevitable and trying to give the innovation a moral cast, the *controriformista* authors followed them

in this. Thus we see the birth of the heroine-as-protagonist on the *erudita* stage. She came to embody a Counter-Reformation ideal of womanhood: chaste, self-effacing and submissive to Christian orthodoxy but far from passive in her spirited defence of these ideals. As a strong central character she provided a moral exemplar thoroughly consonant with the instructive aspects of this new kind of comedy which, instead of the often frenetic activity of the *mezzano*, directed purely at gratification, displayed a didactic function counselling passivity and renunciation. Within this moral pattern, the mixing of genres and the obstacles placed in the way of the union of the Lovers contributed to a plot structure often as complex as any in the Terentian school of comedy while the concentration on the moral dilemmas faced by the *innamorati* created a concomitant psychological complexity.

The Neo-Aristotelian intellectual climate persisting from the Humanist Renaissance however demanded that theoretical justification for these innovations be made and one of the earliest of the Counter-Reformation's dramatic pioneers to do so was Giovanni Battista Giraldi Cinthio. In his Discorso sulle comedie e sulle tragedie (1543), he advocated a *tragedia mista* wherein good characters would be rewarded and the bad punished. Unlike orthodox tragedy, Giraldi's was to have a *fin lieto* - a happy ending. He justified this on the Horatian grounds that it was both didactic and entertaining - grounds which would later be cited by Tasso in his defense of the theatre.

And in this sort of play [*tragedia mista*] the audience will often find more contentment and more instruction when those characters who were the cause of the turbulent events, whereby the characters of middling virtue were vexed in the play, are made to die or to suffer great evil...This is a wonderful delight to the spectator, when he sees the crafty caught napping and deceived at the end of the play, the very unjust and the wicked finally overcome.¹⁵

Scarcely had the Council of Trent come to a close when Torquato Tasso, in his Discorsi (first composed circa 1566), expressed the moral impetus of the new literary age:

Poetry, then, is an imitation of human actions, fashioned to teach us how to live. And since every action is performed with some reflection and choice, poetry will deal with moral habit and with thought...And although such imitation affords immense pleasure, one cannot say that the purposes are two, one being pleasure, the other utility, as Horace seems to have suggested in the line,

"Poets aim either to benefit, or to amuse" [Aut prodesse volunt aut delectare poetae - Ars Poetica 333]

for one single art cannot have two purposes, one independent of the other...The poet then is to set as his purpose not delight...but usefulness, because poetry...is a first philosophy which instructs us from our early years in moral habits and the principles of life...We should at least grant that the end of poetry is not just any enjoyment but only that which is coupled with virtue, since it is utterly unworthy of a good poet to give the pleasure of reading about base and dishonest deeds, but proper to give the pleasure of learning together with virtue.¹⁶

Both Giraldi and Tasso were instrumental in popularising another form of mixed-genre drama which gradually assumed a didactic function and adopted the happy ending typical of comedy: the *pastorale*. An important factor in the reconciliation of this form to the *controriformista* morality was the development of the Providential ending in which the lovers, having been tried by adversity, are united, not by a *mezzano*, but by circumstances which can only be ascribed to divine intervention.

In a parallel development, an urban equivalent of the *pastorale* evolved. The *commedia grave* has a sentimentality alien to the world of the Plauto-Terentian comedy and, as its name implies, a seriousness in the main action which can border on the tragic. In its earlier manifestations, the setting is the bourgeois world of the Neo-Classical comedy, the protagonists being of the merchant class. The expectation of tragic consequences is heightened in much of the later *commedia grave* by the use of a court setting and a noble principal cast. In both cases the high sentimentality of the lovers is balanced by an openly comic sub-cast who are, as a general rule, much less bawdy in speech and action than their humanist predecessors. The removal of apparently insoluble obstacles to the lovers' unity is, as in the later *pastorale*, clearly of Providential origin and the *mezzano*, if present, is given a much-reduced role to play and normally contributes to a happy resolution only inadvertently if at all. The Perugian author and jurist Sforza Oddi most clearly incorporates the didactic and moral concerns of the Counter-Reformation in his *commedie gravi* and, like Giraldi and Tasso before him, he has his manifesto to explain the movement in his plays from circumstances which might justify despair to a felicitous *dénouement*. The Second Prologue to his Prigione d'amore (examined in more

detail in Chapter III) presents a dialogue between Tragedy and Comedy in which he takes issue with the Neo-Aristotelian separation of the two and justifies their mingling on morally didactic grounds, for

From the two extremes of fortune we recall the citizenry to acceptance of the civilised mean.¹⁷

The above briefly summated history of the Pre- and Post-Tridentine non-tragic drama in Italy will be examined in detail in the main part of this thesis, as will its consequences for the English drama from Shakespeare to the Caroline Theatre.

¹ In Opere de Giovan Battista Gelli ed. Ireneo Sanesi (Torino 1964)

² In Commedie del Cinquecento Vol.I ed. Ireneo Sanesi (Bari 1979).

³ In Ariosto's Commedie ed. Angela Casella *et al.* (Verona 1974).

⁴ Garzoni, quoted by K.M. Lea, Italian Popular Comedy (Oxford 1934), p.56.

⁵ All Classical references are derived from the Loeb series of translations.

⁶ See Pierre Janelle, The Catholic Reformation (London 1971) p.137.

⁷ Canons and Decrees of the Council of Trent English translation by Rev. H.J. Schroeder, O.P. (Rockford Illinois 1978) pp.254-255.

⁸ Janelle, p.138

⁹ Giovanni Romeo, Inquisitori, esorcisti e streghe nell'Italia della Controriforma (Sansoni, 1990) p.47

¹⁰ Ferdinando Taviani La commedia dell'Arte o la società barocca. La fascinazione del teatro (Roma 1991) p.11.

De his etiam principes et magistratus commonendos esse duximus. Ut histriones et mimos, coeterosque circulatores, et eius generis perditos homines e suis finibus eiiciant; et in caupones et alios, quicumque eos receperunt, acriter animadvertant.

[Abbiamo reputato che i magistrati andassero ammoniti anche intorno a costoro, e che cioè allontanino dai loro territori istrioni, mimi, e tutti gli altri girovaghi ed uomini perduti di questo tipo, e sorvegliino e riprendano gli osti e chiunque altro dia loro ricetto.]

¹¹ Taviani, p.liv - from a homily dated 30 July 1583.

Tutti i giorni sono del Signore...ma finché viviamo è il nostro giorno...in questo giorno possiamo frequentare le chiese, ricevere sovente i sacramenti...ma possiamo anche divertirci, bestemmiare, frequentare le commedie, ballare, perdere il tempo nelle taverne...Ma fate attenzione, o figli, la nostra vita è un solo giorno, è come il giorno di ieri, che passa, e tutto ciò che abbiamo fatto è brevissimo e temporaneo...infatti verranno improvvisi i giorni dell'eternità che saranno tutti del Signore, non nostri, nei quali ci sarà tolta la possibilità di operare.

12 Taviani, p.13.

Spectacula, ludos ludicrosque res id generis, quae ab ethnicorum moribus originem ducunt, disciplinaeque christianae adversantur, perpetuo detestabitur, execrabitur: demonstrabit incommoda, publicasque aerumnas inde in christianum populum dimanare.

[Il predicatore detesterá ed esecrerá continuamente gli spettacoli, le rappresentazioni e cose di questo genere che traggono origine dagli usi pagani e sono contrari alle regole cristiane; dimostrerá i danni e le pubbliche calamitá che da ciò derivano al popolo cristiano.]

13 Taviani, pp.32-3

Quid Concilii Tridentini Decreta profuerunt, quibus tam diligenter in libros obscenos est cautum, ut comburi praecipiantur, atque ex hominem memoria eradicari, et illos legentes severissimis penis plectantur. Quanto magis in animas quae oculis ipsi aspiciamus penetrant, quam quae in libris huiusmodi legimus? Quam gravius adolescentium mentes viva illorum vox ferit, quam mortua, libris insculpta?

[A che sono serviti i decreti del Concilio Tridentino con i quali si presero cosí diligentemente provvedimenti contro i libri osceni da comandare che vengano bruciati, estirpati dalla memoria degli uomini, da comandare che venga punito con gravissime pene chiunque li legga?

Ma quanto piú penetra nell'anima ciò che gli occhi vedono di ciò che si può leggere in libri di quel genere! Quanto piú gravemente la viva voce ferisce le menti degli adolescenti di quanto non lo faccia morta, stampata nei libri!]

14 Taviani, p.xliii

15 Quoted in Marvin Herrick's Tragicomedy (Urbana 1955) p.72.

16 Torquato Tasso, Discourses on the Heroic Poem trans. Mariella Cavalchini and Irene Samuel (London 1973) pp.10-11.

17 Le commedie di Sforza Oddi an unpublished Laureate Thesis by Maria Bianca Tortorizio (Firenze 1973) p.482

...voi dall'uno, et io dall'altro estremo di fortuna, richiamando i cittadini al contentarsi della mediocritá civile.

MEZZANI IN THE EARLY CINQUECENTO

In this chapter I propose to examine four plays which I regard as representing important aspects of the pre-Counter Reformation attitude to sexual morality in the *commedia*: La mandragola by Niccolò Machiavelli, La Lena by Ludovico Ariosto, La cortigiana by Pietro Aretino, and La venexiana whose author is unknown. I have selected these plays on the basis that the eight main types of go-between which are identifiable within them are best represented by these works. These types are: the Parasite; the Corrupt Priest; the Corrupt Parent; the Nurse/Governess; the Male Servant; the Female Servant; the Witch-Bawd; and the Porter.

The principal focus of this analysis will be the *mezzani* and their relationships with the lovers. While I shall attempt to give each play equal attention, the number of *mezzani* present in each play varies. Thus the analysis of La mandragola, in which the hapless Lucrezia is pursued by a whole pack of go-betweens, will, of necessity, occupy more space than other works.

I shall indicate plot and character sources and, where possible and appropriate, shall effect a comparison between said sources and the *commedie*. The contemporary success of each play will, where possible, be noted. Characterisation will be examined for what it may reveal of the authors' moral intent, and each section will conclude with a discussion of the general moral tone and language employed. I have translated all quotations from Italian sources (originals are given in footnotes). Given that the overall theme of the thesis deals with the effects of a censorious moral ambience on the development of comedy, I have made no attempt to mince words. Thus "potta!", for example, is translated literally as "cunt!" wherever it appears instead of the more usual euphemistic "the pox!".

1. The Parasite/Corrupt Priest/Corrupt Parent/Male Servant: La mandragola by Niccolò Machiavelli (c. 1516)¹

Callimaco has returned to his native Florence after spending some years in Paris. His return has been motivated by a fellow Florentine's boast that his kinswoman, Lucrezia Calfucci, is the most beautiful woman in France and Italy. Callimaco falls in love with Lucrezia but she is already married to the foolish Nicia - an older man. Nicia and his wife have no children and the parasite, Ligurio, suggests that Callimaco pose as a doctor and offer to cure Lucrezia's childlessness with an infusion of mandrake root. They tell Nicia that the first man who sleeps with Lucrezia after this treatment will die and therefore she is persuaded by her confessor, Friar Timoteo, her mother, Sostrata, and her husband, that she must sleep with a stranger. That night a 'stranger' (really Callimaco disguised with a huge false nose) is kidnapped and introduced into Lucrezia's bed. Callimaco confesses his true identity and his love, and Lucrezia, although angry at being forced into this situation, decides that it is God's will that she continue to deceive her husband. The blindfolded 'stranger' is released in the morning and a grateful Nicia gives Callimaco a key to his apartments to use as he wishes since he has shown himself such a friend of the family.

1.1 Sources of La mandragola:

As Sanesi points out,² characters of similar aspect to Callimaco are to be found in Boccaccio's Decameron I.5 and VII.7. In the first of these, a knight at the court of the King of France recounts the charms of the marchesana di Montferrato - the outcome being that the King immediately falls in love. The second example provides a closer parallel in that its protagonist, Lodovico, is of similar rank to Callimaco, travels from Paris to Italy (in this case to Bologna), and employs a false identity to gain access to his beloved madonna Beatrice Galluzzi. Lucrezia's surname, Calfucci, apart from consonantal voicing and the inclusion of an 'f', resembles Beatrice's and it is tempting to see the similarity as indicating that this was indeed Machiavelli's source material.

Callimaco, at first sight, appears to be nothing more than the contemporary equivalent of the classical *adulescens* - the youth in pursuit of a girl who, until the intervention of a parasite or a wily servant, proves unattainable. Precedents for this basic type abound - Terence, for example, in his Phormio³ has a pair of them, Phaedria and Antipho; and Plautus, in Pseudolus, shows the lachrymose Calidorus who, without the machinations of the slave who gives the play its name, would never possess his beloved Phoenicium. The medical charlatan's character adopted by Callimaco, however, is derived directly from a contemporary type: the magician. Donno Gianni in Decameron IX.10 is one such who similarly uses a pretence of miracle-working to achieve his adulterous aims, and the magician's other avatars - alchemist, necromancer, astrologer - appear frequently

in the drama of the Cinquecento. e.g. Ruffo in Bibbiena's Calandria, Giaccholino in Ariosto's Il negromante et al.

Like Callimaco, Ligurio too is drawn from Boccaccio as well as from the classical *parasitus*. Machiavelli, for example, has him repeat the trick played by the jokers Bruno and Buffalmacco, of Decameron VII.6, who persuade their dupe, Calandrino, to consume a highly unpalatable confection of dog-droppings and bitter aloes. Ligurio, under the pretence of disguising Nicia's voice, persuades the latter to a similar action:

NICIA: What is it?

LIGURIO: A ball of wax.

NICIA: Give it here...aagh, poo, aagh, (*coughs and spits*)... I hope you die of drought, you villainous rogue!

LIGURIO: I'm so sorry, I've given you the wrong one without realising it.

NICIA: Aagh, aagh, poo, poo... Wha...wha...what was in it?

LIGURIO: Bitter aloes.⁴

1.2 Success of La mandragola:⁵

The play was written sometime between 1512 - the year of Machiavelli's exile from the city of Florence - and 1520. In that year, a letter from Rome, written by Battista della Palla, attests that the play was in rehearsal for a performance in front of Pope Leo X. In 1522 it was staged twice in Venice, on the 13th and 16th of February, but both performances were interrupted by excessive crowds who could not be accommodated. In the Venetian Carnival of 1526 the play was performed in conjunction with Plautus's Menaechmi. La mandragola emerged as the clear favourite in this battle of the theatres, ancient and modern. The first edition bears neither date nor place of publication. The second appeared in Venice in 1522 published by Alessandro Bindoni; and a third edition was published in Rome, by Francesco Calvo, in 1524.

1.3 Characterisation in La mandragola:

The melancholic (not to mention defeatist) outlook of Plautus's Calidorus is a distinguishing feature of the *adulescens* which Callimaco, despite the wonder-working efforts of Ligurio, shares to some extent. Thus, when waiting to hear the outcome of the parasite's efforts, Callimaco is voluble in the expression of his woe and uncertainty:

CALLIMACO: My spirits have been left in such a state of agony! How true it is that Fortune and Nature keep their accounts balanced; whenever one helps you out the other

throws you a problem. My hopes and fears grow side by side. Oh, the misery of it! How can I possibly live with so much worry, plagued by these hopes and fears? I'm like a ship that's tossed by two contrary winds and feels herself in more danger the closer she gets to port.⁶

Callimaco is, however, a much more motivated lover than the *adulescens* ever is. Phaedria, Antipho, Calidorus, and their many Plautine and Terentian brethren are basically incapable of lifting a finger to help themselves. Bereft of the faculties of initiative and decision, they can only trust to the ingenuity of their parasites and slaves. Machiavelli's protagonist is however "a real man, a true lover, who desires ardently, loves strongly, and acts with resolution."⁷ Before Ligurio has formulated his schemes, Callimaco has already identified the weak points in Lucrezia's defences:

CALLIMACO: ...firstly, the simplicity of Master Nicia who, although he may have been to university, is the biggest simpleton and fool in Florence; secondly, they both want to have children - they've been married six years and there's still no sign of any. They're rolling in money and desperate to have kids. A third point is that her mother used to be a bit of a good-time girl.⁸

It is Callimaco's wit and knowledge of Latin which causes Nicia to pronounce him "the best man you could find for the job."⁹ And, when it comes to the crunch, it is Callimaco who (false nose and all!) has to face Lucrezia and persuade her to continue with the deception of her husband. His ingenuity and persistence thus confirm him as the "true lover" Sanesi claims him to be.

Callimaco's moral standards also owe little to the world of classical drama where, despite the lewdness of Aristophanic dialogue and the brothel-frequenting youths of Terentian and Plautine comedy, the institution of the family itself is never at risk of dramatic subversion. While a lover may sow his wild oats with a music-girl, he must marry her if she turns out to be free-born (a common *topos*, e.g. the music-girl, Pamphila, in Terence's Eunuchus is discovered to be Athenian by birth and is therefore married off to her lover, Chaerea); and no-one (with the notable exception of Jupiter in Plautus's Amphitruo) ever seduces a married woman in classical comedy. Callimaco, on the other hand, manoeuvres Lucrezia into a situation where she has to acquiesce in something which has as much of rape as of seduction about it. Such instances of sexual frankness are

frequent in the bawdy tradition of the *novellieri* (e.g. Decameron III.10, IX.10; Bandello's Novelle IV.28¹⁰; and Pietro Fortini's Novelle dei Novizi I,II,IV)¹¹ and sexual libertinage was not restricted to the world of literature. A society in which Pope Alexander VI was believed to have committed incest with his illegitimate daughter, Lucrezia Borgia,¹² was not going to be greatly exercised (at least in private) by Callimaco's doings. The ethical viewpoint of the *innamorato* seems therefore a reflection of contemporary and not of classical *mores*.

Ingenuity and persistence are also the watchwords of Ligurio. Phormio is perhaps the only classical parasite who comes close to matching his assiduous wit but even he is stuck for words on occasion (e.g. when he forgets the name of the fictitious relative he has invented for the *senex* Demipho, III.p.44 Phormio). And, like all his classical brethren,¹³ Phormio's overwhelming preoccupation is his stomach - with his penultimate words, "me ad cenam voca" (V.p.118), he makes sure that he does not miss out on the dinner which conventionally follows on the action of the play. While Ligurio's role is essentially that of the Roman *parasitus*, his motivation is heavily coloured by a master-conniver's delight in his own ingenuity - as can be seen when he boasts of his handling of Nicia:

LIGURIO: He's one of those fellows, you know the type, with hardly any sense and even less courage - so he's not very keen to leave Florence. However, I egged him on a bit and he finally agreed to do whatever I said.¹⁴

And it is only Callimaco's statement that Ligurio "has turned to scrounging suppers and dinners"¹⁵ which links his appetite with that of his classical predecessor, "one who had...guzzled and gobbled away all his inheritance."¹⁶ Ligurio himself seems refreshingly oblivious of such matters, appearing more a creature of his wits than of his belly:

Ligurio is perhaps the only parasite in either ancient or Renaissance comedy who never grows tedious, for he wastes no time harping on his hunger and thirst. He is all intelligence and dispatch.¹⁷

In his total dedication to the successful prosecution of his patron's affairs, he appears a comic rendition of Machiavelli's ideal adviser in Il Principe/The Prince:

...he who has responsibility for another's State must never think of himself, but always

- a possible identification also noted by D. Radcliff-Umstead:

If Callimaco can be thought of as a princely figure, then Ligurio ought to be considered his prime minister, who restrains the youth's emotional outbursts.¹⁹

A link with his classical forebears may be seen in the delight which Ligurio takes in mocking Nicia's absurd pretentiousness. But where Phormio openly mocks Demipho and Chremes (Phormio V.p.106/7), and a frustrated Peniculus insults his patron (Menaechmi pp.123-127²⁰), Ligurio displays a more subtle intelligence, saving outright criticism for his own private musings, and directly employing a gentler irony all too visible to the informed audience but imperceptible to the foolish Nicia:

LIGURIO: Did you see the sea at Leghorn?

NICIA: Of course I saw it!

LIGURIO: How much bigger is it than the River Arno?

NICIA: Than the Arno? Oh, it's about four times...six times...seven times bigger if you want to know. And you can't see anything but water, water, water.²¹

It is evident that Ligurio does not believe this man of "hardly any sense or courage" has ever travelled beyond the safety of the city walls.

Nicia himself represents a blending of two dramatic types, one classical, one contemporary. In terms of his relationship to Callimaco and Ligurio, he is the classic Roman *senex*. The difference of age is one obvious indicator of this although, as Callimaco points out, Nicia is not completely past it - "although he's not young, he's not quite as old as he looks."²² Chremes, in Terence's Phormio, is also, however, not quite the staid old fellow he seems. His bigamous marriage (in itself an exception to the normal Roman emphasis on the sanctity of the institution) betrays a liveliness at odds, like Nicia's, with his appearance. Stinginess is also common to both the *senex* (e.g. Euclio in Plautus's Aulularia) and Nicia, while the latter's deception at the hands of the younger men also follows classical precepts - it being almost a law of nature in classical comedy that young men should deceive old. But although that dramatic relationship exists, the consanguinity which typifies its classical form is absent from La mandragola. Whereas the

classical deception of old by young normally features a son, through his parasite or wily slave, deceiving his father, or a nephew similarly tricking his uncle, the only blood relationship in Machiavelli's play is that of Lucrezia to her mother.

One contemporary aspect of his characterisation is made clear, almost from the beginning, when the prologue identifies him as "a Doctor Littlewit."²³ The type of the doctor is a frequent feature of Italian comedies, e.g. Ruzzante's *Pastoral* and Ariosto's *I Suppositi*, and may derive ultimately from *Decameron* II.10.²⁴ Nicia is confirmed in the role by his pretentious stupidity and his Autumn/Spring marriage. Another feature tying Nicia to his times is his depiction as a *borghese*, a *nouveau riche*. His desperation to have a family, the desperation which makes possible the plot, may arguably have its basis in the dynasty-founding pretensions of that social group. Their snobbish desires to ape the aristocracy are also reflected in Nicia, and Callimaco skilfully plays on this to bend the "dottor" to his will:

CALLIMACO: ...This is something I've tried quite a few times now and I've always found it works. In fact, if it wasn't for this, the Queen of France and a great many other princesses of that country would be sterile.²⁵

Dramatically, his enthusiastic involvement in his own deception goes beyond Roman convention. Where the *senex* is gulled through verbal means only,²⁶ Nicia actually puts on an absurd disguise (IV.viii.p.44) and takes an active part in making certain that he is successfully cuckolded. Pietro da Tressanti, tricked by Donno Gianni in *Decameron* IX.10, is an ancestor of his in vernacular literature, while a younger contemporary of Machiavelli, Giustiniano Nelli, also tells a tale wherein a husband is duped into physically bringing his wife's lover into her bedroom.²⁷

The wife herself, Lucrezia, is an interesting amalgam of the Roman *matrona* and the lover of the *adulescens*. As the former, she would be theoretically inviolable and thus allowed to appear and speak on-stage. As the latter, classical notions of decency would, since she is not of the servant class, require her to be an off-stage presence. This convention continued to be widely observed by Machiavelli's contemporaries - even Aretino, notwithstanding his personal disregard for orthodox sexual morality, never lets

the audience see Livia and Camilla in La cortigiana. Some concession to classical decency is observed in the depiction of Lucrezia. Her appearance is restricted to four short scenes (III.x,xi,V.v,vi) in none of which is she shown in an amorous situation, and we first learn of her character and later of her words and actions by Callimaco's report. The device of the one-sided conversation, suggesting an off-stage presence, is also used (II.v) to minimise the need for her to appear in the flesh. In her relations with Nicia she is also very much the *matrona*, the caricature of a termagant wife.²⁸ Thus we learn from Callimaco not only of her virtue but also of who rules in the Calfucci household when the *innamorato* enumerates the difficulties implicit in her seduction:

CALLIMACO: Firstly, her character's against me - for she's honest as the day is long and never gives a thought to lovers. She's also got a husband who's rolling in money and does whatever she tells him to do.²⁹

The argument Nicia has with his off-stage wife recalls that of Menacchmus with his shrewish spouse (who is similarly off-stage and inaudible):

NICIA: I've done everything to please you: this time I want you to do things my way.³⁰

MENAECHMUS: ...And if you weren't such a mean, stupid, obstinate, and impossible female, you wouldn't want to do anything that you see your husband dislikes...(Menaechmi I.p.106)³¹

Callimaco reproves Nicia for being unable to control his own wife:

CALLIMACO: ...I wouldn't want to be her husband any longer, if I couldn't get her to do what I wanted.³²

And, after Callimaco has had his way with her, Lucrezia is notably short with her husband - who is only too eager to escape her sharp tongue:

NICIA: Lucrezia, I think we shouldn't do things without thinking about them. We should do them in the fear of God.

LUCREZIA: Now, where does he come into it?

NICIA: Do you see how she answers. She's just like a fighting cock!

SOSTRATA: Don't worry about it. She's just a bit upset.

LUCREZIA: What are you trying to say?

NICIA: I'm saying that it would be better if I go on ahead and speak to the friar and tell

him to meet you at the church door. Then he can take you in for the churching ceremony - for, after all, it's just as if you'd been reborn this morning.

LUCREZIA: Well, get a move on then!

NICIA: You're very brisk today! (*Aside*) She seemed half-dead yesterday.

LUCREZIA: All thanks to you!³³

Of course the fact of Nicia's cuckoldry is totally at odds with classical norms. The lengths to which Machiavelli goes to establish Lucrezia's basically moral character and then subvert it are perhaps designed to illustrate his enormous cynicism about the human capacity for nobility:

...one can say this about men in general: they are ungrateful, faithless, deceptive, cowardly and greedy...³⁴

And the success which rewards Callimaco's audacity directly reflects the author's views on fortune, women, youth, and boldness:

I judge this to be true: it is better to be forward rather than respectful. For Fortune is a woman, and, if you want to keep her under control, you have to push her and beat her. It is evident that she lets herself be won more often by that type of man than by those who proceed coldly. Furthermore, being a woman, she's always a friend to the young, for they are less respectful, more ferocious and command her with more audacity.³⁵

Thus Lucrezia, her moral resolution assailed on all sides, surrenders to Callimaco but places all the responsibility for her actions squarely on the shoulders of the bold youth. The terms of her submission also contain an element of vengefulness against her foolish husband which reflects her resentment over the consequences of doing things Nicia's way for once:

LUCREZIA: [reported by Callimaco]..."Since your wit, my husband's foolishness, my mother's simplicity, and the wickedness of my confessor have led me to do what I would never have done by myself, I must conclude that this is what Heaven has decreed for me - and I am not one to refuse what Heaven wishes me to accept. I will therefore take you for my lord and master, my guide, my father and my defender. I wish you to be all that is good for me and what my husband wanted for one night, I want him to have always."³⁶

Lucrezia's mother, Sostrata, derives her name, and very little else, from the comedies of Terence. Of the three Romans who bear the name, two, in Heauton

Timorumenos³⁷ and Hecyra,³⁸ are eminently respectable married ladies. The third, in Adelphoc,³⁹ is a widow - like Machiavelli's character - and of an easy-going disposition - although not so much as to closely resemble the "good-time girl" of La mandragola. She is however quite content to sanction her daughter Pamphila's affair with the *adulescens* Aeschinus of whom, it is clear, she manifestly approves:

SOSTRATA: He's my only stay in my troubles.

CANTHARA: Considering the circumstances things are as well as they could be, Ma'am. It's well the lover was a man like that, such a character and such a good heart, and of such a high family too.

SOSTRATA: Indeed he is what you call him: Heaven preserve him to us! (Adelphoc III.p.249)

As the play makes clear, however, this approval is contingent upon Aeschinus eventually marrying Pamphila and the mother is outraged when it appears that this might not take place. It is difficult to imagine Machiavelli's Sostrata, "not a bad woman, but broad-minded with few scruples",⁴⁰ expressing similar disquiet if she were to discover the truth about Lucrezia and Callimaco - and Ligurio's statement, "I know that her mother is of our opinion,"⁴¹ seems to indicate that she does already know. Her agreement to persuade her daughter is obtained with ease (III.i.pg.25) and it is with almost indecent enthusiasm that she makes her promise to Fra Timoteo "I'll put her to bed myself tonight."⁴² Nevertheless, on the credit side, we have some indication that it is not just her past as a "good-time girl" which inclines her to this course of action but a genuine concern for her daughter's future based on contemporary social *mores*:

SOSTRATA: Change your mind, my girl. Don't you see that a woman without children has no home? Once her husband dies, she's left like a beast, abandoned by everyone.⁴³

And her joy, when it becomes apparent that the whole scheme has passed off without a hitch, could be interpreted as relief that her daughter's future has been secured:

TIMOTEO: Madame Sostrata, you look years younger today!

SOSTRATA: Who wouldn't be happy on a day like this?⁴⁴

Siro, Callimaco's servant, corresponds more closely to his Terentian archetype. His name is derived from that of the *servus* Syrus - a name used by Terence to represent

the type of the wily slave in the plays Heauton Timorumenos and Adelphoe. Siro's essential nature, like that of his predecessors, is to be "well mischievous"⁴⁵ and he works together with Ligurio to secure his master's ends. In this he bears a greater resemblance to Geta in Phormio who similarly co-operates with the eponymous parasite than to the two Syri who are essentially solo workers. If Siro's character has a contemporary element, other than the sheer universality of the servant type, it may be found in that of Tirsi, the servant of Aristeo in Poliziano's Fabula di Orfeo,⁴⁶ who expresses his unquestioning fidelity to his master in very similar terms to those chosen by Siro:

SIRO: I am your servant and servants should never question their masters about anything nor meddle in their business. But when their masters tell them anything, they should serve them faithfully. I've always done so and I'm ready to do so again.

TIRSI: ...it's a servant's job to obey and anyone who thinks he can order his master about is crazy. Our master's much wiser than we are.⁴⁷

And, of course, the quotation from Il Principe which I have applied above to Ligurio can be related to Siro, while its wording too echoes almost exactly the sentiments expressed by Callimaco's servant.

The remaining two characters in the work are purely contemporary: the Donna, who appears in only one scene, and Fra Timoteo. The first of these, in her short interchange of words with the priest, shows that we are back in the bawdy territory of the *novelle* with her references to her late husband's unsavoury sexual practices,

DONNA: Well, you know what he used to do to me sometimes. Oh, the number of times I've complained about it to you!⁴⁸

and her all-too-contemporary fear of the Turks couched in language full of *double entendre*:

DONNA: ...God save us from their devilish ways! That impaling scares me stiff.⁴⁹

The fact that she is addressing a priest who does not blink an eye at such rough language, and who cheerfully assures her that her erring (sodomite?) husband is certainly in Purgatory, gives us some idea of the character of Fra Timoteo. His acceptance of money to say mass for the almost-certainly-damned husband's soul is our first indication of his

cupidity. This short dialogue masterfully sets the tone of all that is to follow.

Timoteo himself is a refinement of the type of the corrupt priest - a figure familiar to English readers as Chaucer's Pardoner. His Italian antecedents can be discerned in the *novelle*. Masuccio Salernitano tells of two priests, Fra Ieronimo and Fra Mariano, who declare the arm of a long-dead gentleman to be that of Saint Luke. Using this fake relic they fabricate miracles and gull the people of Sorrento out of money, pearls, silver and jewellery.⁵⁰ Decameron I.2 testifies to the cupidity of the type as seen through the eyes of a pious Jew visiting Rome:

On looking more closely, he saw that they were all so greedy and grasping for money that they would buy and sell human, Christian blood as readily as they traded divine objects, gifts and benefices. With these they did more business and employed more agents than the Parisian cloth market - or any other market for that matter. They had given the name 'procurement' to their obvious simony and 'sustenance' to their gluttony as if God, leaving aside the meaning of these words, wouldn't be aware of their black-hearted intentions and would let himself be deceived, as men are, by the names given to things.⁵¹

And Decameron I.6 portrays an avaricious inquisitor whose greed leads him to prey on his fellow-citizens. That this priest may not simply have been a literary or folkloric invention is indicated in an editorial footnote:

...this friar may have been either Mino from San Quirico, Inquisitor at Florence from 1332 until 1334 when he was dismissed for his venality and ill-discipline, or Pietro dall'Aquila, Inquisitor from 1334 until 1347.⁵²

It is perhaps a sign of a more general priestly immorality that not one but two candidates suggest themselves as sources for this corrupt priest. The prevalence of the figure in other literatures, e.g. Chaucer, Rabelais, and the Buldero (Pardoner) in the anonymous 16th century Spanish picaresque novel Lazarillo de Tormes, would certainly argue wide-spread ecclesiastical corruption even without documented historical corroboration.

Having established Fra Timoteo's line of descent, an examination of the way in which Machiavelli effects his character is in order.

The primary difference between Timoteo and his literary forebears is that his

venality is of a much more discreet nature. This priest does not go out to gull the multitude, he reposes his confidence in the outer forms of the Church on which he is aware he can depend to bring in enough to satisfy his avarice. He is not keen on venturing outwith the range of corrupt activities he knows can be safely carried out under a mantle of holiness. Thus it is that he bitterly resents Ligurio's trickery which has involved him in a business whose potential consequences are too public for his liking:

TIMOTEO: Those who say that bad company leads you to the gallows are right. You end up in trouble as often for being too easy-going and good as for being really bad. God knows I never wanted to hurt anyone. I stayed in my cell, I said my office, I looked after my flock. Then this devil Ligurio turned up and got me to dabble my fingers in error. Now I've dabbled my arm in it - if not my whole body. I don't know where I'll end up. Well, at least I can take comfort in this: when something matters a lot to a lot of people, then it's in all their interests to make it work out right.⁵³

While his reflections, emphasising his customary observance of all duties and devotions, could be taken as implying a change of character, a closer examination of his words reveals a complete absence of moral conscience. What is worrying Timoteo is being on the streets, in disguise, and in danger therefore of public exposure. It is not God's law which is worrying him but man's - the "gallows". His reference to the attention he normally gives his priestly duties is merely a list of the outward formalities he practises to cozen the public out of their cash. Timoteo's final words about 'safety in numbers' represent an extension of his attitude to the Church wherein he finds his safety. This is not to say that the priest has no conscience. He is conscientious about his religious duties, although not about the spirituality which should underlie them. He first clears his own conscience (according to his lights) before venturing to criticise his fellow priests:

TIMOTEO: I haven't slept a wink all night, I'm so anxious to know how Callimaco and the others got on. I tried to while away the hours with various tasks: I said matins, I read the lives of the Holy Fathers, I went to the church and lit a lamp that had gone out, I changed the veil on a Madonna that works miracles - the number of times I've told those friars to keep her looking neat! And they wonder why attendances are dropping. I can remember when we had 500 images and now there are only twenty. It's all our fault for we didn't know how to keep up a good reputation.⁵⁴

As an incidental aside, it may be noted that his opening lines about being awake all night

provide a continuity consonant with the school of thought which holds the classical unities preserved if the action runs into night - this being the time when nefarious deeds such as Callimaco's would naturally occur.

It is interesting to note the cynicism of Machiavelli's attitude to the Church as represented by Fra Timoteo. The author's interest in efficiently-run systems is very apparent here. We are privy to the priest's avarice but also made aware that that avarice is best served under the conventional formality of religious observance. It is not the Fra Ieronimos who most successfully deceive their flocks but the Timoteos!

One final, slightly puzzling, detail about the priest links him with Ligurio. While the parasite pursues his patron's interests without a single mention of his belly, similarly Timoteo seems to love avarice for its own sake:

Does Timoteo love money? We are not aware that he has any vices which money would help him indulge. We may infer from this that it is the art of making money and not money itself which he loves. In order to do this, he adopts various stratagems: keeping the church and the sacred images clean, and using the confessional to further his intrigues. These tactics are, however, far removed from the lustful gluttony of other friars which has forced Lucrezia to change confessors. And Ligurio loves the game for its own sake...⁵⁵

And this is surely what constitutes one of the principal attractions of the main characters: a driving enthusiasm which transcends the basic typology. Machiavelli, as a student of the classics, might have been expected, like so many of his contemporaries, to simply confine himself to the delineation of standard types. That this is not the case is a testament to his own creative vitality:

Machiavelli really intended to portray a type rather than a character; but it was always a happy flaw in his passionate nature to breach the defining limits of a category and to substitute brilliant characterisation for methodical definition. Even the Prince becomes a hero and an emblem rather than a political formula and intellectual symbol.⁵⁶

1.4 Moral tone and language in La mandragola:

The moral cynicism of the plot is, by itself, sufficient to demonstrate that Machiavelli is not overly concerned with reproaching marital irregularities. Indeed his

Prologue, referring to Lucrezia, tells the female members of the audience, "I wish that you might be tricked just like her."⁵⁷ If he is portraying vice in order to expose it, then his targets are not the antics of sexual miscreants, but the vices of cupidity, hypocrisy, snobbery and vanity. Lucrezia would hardly be allowed to adduce God's will as her justification for accepting Callimaco into her bed if the author had intended to censure such behaviour. Timoteo and Sostrata's materialism, the former's greed, and Nicia's foolishness and puffed-up self-importance, are the butts of Machiavelli's literary arrows.

Although the tone of the play is bawdy, the characters do not generally add to this through obscene language. A major exception to this rule is Nicia who is frankly crude both in manner and in speech. This accords well with his characterisation as a vulgar *borghese* trying unsuccessfully to ape his 'betters' and, given Machiavelli's republican sympathies, may be a veiled criticism of the de'Medici family. Thus he insists that Ligurio address 'Doctor' Callimaco using a title of respect "and if he [Callimaco] doesn't like it then he might as well drop his pants in public!";⁵⁸ he tells Siro that "everybody in this place is a tight-arse";⁵⁹ when Callimaco discourses in Latin on Lucrezia's urine sample, a cry of "By Saint Puccio's cunt! This fellow shows more class by the minute!"⁶⁰ escapes the admiring Nicia; and when Ligurio tells Timoteo that Nicia wants to give hundreds of ducats to the Church, the miser protests "Bloody shit!"⁶¹ A distinctly prurient note is added to Nicia's vulgarity when he tells Ligurio that, after placing the disguised Callimaco in Lucrezia's bed, he "wanted to feel around just to see how things were going."⁶²

2. The Nurse cum Governess: La Lena by Ludovico Ariosto (1528 rev. 1529)⁶³

Lena, a sometime prostitute, lives rent-free with her worthless husband, Pacifico, in a house which belongs to her stingy lover, Fazio. As well as catering to Fazio's amorous whims she also acts as governess, giving what are basically domestic science lessons to his daughter, Licinia, who is loved by a young gentleman called Flavio. To avenge herself for what she considers shabby treatment by Fazio, and also because she is not getting any younger, Lena agrees to act as Flavio's bawd for the sum of 25 florins. Flavio's servant, Corbolo, tries to raise the money both by pawning his master's clothes and by deceiving Ilario, the lad's father. Fazio decides to frighten his complaining mistress by threatening to sell the house and bringing round a surveyor to measure it. The partially-clothed Flavio is hidden in a barrel to avoid discovery by Fazio and the barrel is seized by bailiffs in part-payment of Pacifico's debts. Fazio suggests that a dispute over the ownership of the barrel be resolved by placing it in his house while proofs are assembled. Nature takes its course and Fazio, presented with a *fait accompli*, agrees to let Flavio and Licinia marry. He is reconciled with Lena and invites her and her cuckold husband to a wedding feast.

2.1 Sources of La Lena:

First written for the Ferrara Carnival of 1528, the play was revised, with the addition of two scenes to the final act, in 1529. This second version is the one which survives. In terms of its component incidents, La Lena is derivative both of classical and Boccacesque sources. The opening scene, wherein Flavio and his servant go to Lena's house just before dawn, is drawn directly from Plautus's Curculio wherein the lover, Phaedromus, bribes the doorkeeper, Leaena, not with money but with wine; the deceptions practised on Ilario by Corbolo are of a kind, both in manner and motivation, with those practised on Nicobulus by Chrysalus in Bacchides; while the choice of a barrel as hiding place for Flavio comes from Boccaccio's Decameron VII.2 in which Peronella and her lover are forced to a similar recourse. Angela Casella, in her *Presentazione* to the Commedie, gives a breakdown of the number of scenes containing such elements (which I reproduce below as a footnote).⁶⁴

While the play has therefore a firm basis of Latin and vernacular precedent, its dialogue and characterisation are firmly contemporary and contain many references to real-life persons, places and customs. A number of persons mentioned (or, in the case of the bailiff, appearing) in La Lena do in fact refer to real people who would have been familiar to the Ferrarese audience. The surveyor, Torbido, for example, is based on a Domenico Torbidi of the same occupation, while other examples from real life are the bailiff, Magagnino; the Ferraresi drunkards Ciuculin, Sabbatino, and Mariano; the court dwarf Santino; and the Jewish money-lenders Isaac and Beniamin de' Sabbioni.⁶⁵ The dialogue of La Lena is full of satirical jibes at the expense of corrupt court officials - in fact, there are so many of these that they challenge the main plot for our attention. While a standard *topos* in Ariosto's work, and probably regarded as a harmless common-place by his patron, Duke Alfonso, this satirical emphasis may have been coloured by personal experience. A legal case involving land inheritance was brought by the Ariosti against the Duke's *fattore generale*, Alfonso Trotti, who harboured a personal dislike against the poet. When the family appealed to the Duke he simply referred them back to the *fattore* who had dispossessed them of the land in the first place. Ariosto's early biographers testify to the bitterness of his feelings regarding the matter.⁶⁶ This is perhaps the origin of the scene in

La Lena where Ilario resists Corbolo's suggestion that he take up the 'theft' of his son's clothing with the authorities:

ILARIO: Let's just say I go to the Duke, and I tell him about this business. What will he do but refer me back to the Chancellor? And the first thing the Chancellor will want to know about is his bribe.⁶⁷

In fact, as Angela Casella points out, while La Lena is Ariosto's only comedy which may be said to have corruption as a main theme, the avarice of government officials is a constant feature of his plays.⁶⁸ As well as having a basis in his personal experience, Ariosto's descriptions of governmental venality can also be seen as coming from a literary and social tradition which saw his own father burlesqued by an anonymous sonneteer (possibly Antonio Cammelli da Pistoia) for his extortionate behaviour while holding the post of Judge of the Twelve Sages.⁶⁹

2.2 Success of La Lena:

First presented at the Carnival of 1528, La Lena, in its expanded version, was again staged for the Ferrara Carnivals of 1529 and 1532. Three years later, in 1535, four printing houses published editions: Sessa, Vidali, Zopino, and Francesco Bindone and Maffeo Pasini of Venice. In 1551, Gabriel Giolito de Ferrari published, again in Venice, an edition which included the Prologue to the 1528, unrevised, version.⁷⁰

2.3 Characterisation in La Lena:

Lena's role as a bawd, her unexpectedly sympathetic depiction, and her realisation that her best years are behind her give a clue to a possible literary derivation of the character. These are traits which she shares with the Spanish bawd in de Rojas' Celestina, which had been translated into Italian as early as 1506. In a strange literary twist, Lena may also have had a reciprocal effect on Spanish literature given that the protagonist of the anonymous Lazarillo de Tormes (1554) lives in exactly the same kind of *ménage à trois*.

Ariosto shows Lena as having been forced into acting as Flavio's bawd. Her situation argues for desperate measures: married to a wastrel, and mistress of an elderly miser who, if he does not keep her in style while he lives, can hardly be depended on to

leave her anything when he dies - especially with a daughter's dowry to consider. Lena, as the only bread-winner in her house, is resigned to the inevitability of her transition from what is effectively prostitution to bawdry.

LENA: If I could always stay young, then keeping both of us as I have done up to now would be easy. But, just as the ants make provision for the winter, it's only fair that poor women like myself should provide for their old age and learn a trade while they have the time. That way, when the day comes, they won't have to start from scratch - they'll already know what's what. And what trade could I practise that would be more profitable and easy to learn than this one? Or do you want me to hold off learning it until the last minute, when I'm really in trouble?⁷¹

Her reaction to the news of Licinia's wedding makes it evident that, if not for Fazio's refusal to support her properly, she would never have considered compromising his daughter - for whom, indeed, she holds some affection:

LENA: Even though I hate that old miser worse than poison, I'm still pleased that some good has come out of this for Licinia.⁷²

Her plans for Licinia have in fact been dictated only by what she perceives as necessity. When Pacifico, evidently fearful of losing his precious rent-free accommodation, has the gall to reproach her moral conduct, she explodes with anger and resentment. Her adulterous liaison with Fazio has not been the only indignity she has had to suffer, for Pacifico has repeatedly prostituted her to get himself an easy life.

LENA: It's your insatiable gluttony that's brought us to this pass. If I hadn't let a hundred rascals ride me like a donkey, you'd be dead of hunger. Now, you lazy wretch, after all the good I've done you, you criticise me for being a whore?

PACIFICO: I'm criticising you because you should do it with a bit more moderation.

LENA: A great cuckold like you speaks of moderation? If I'd wanted to satisfy all those you've proposed for me every hour, I don't know of any prostitute in the whole of the Gambaro who'd be better-known than me today. When you thought the front entrance wasn't capable of handling them all, you wanted me to get the back passage working as well.⁷³

The name Ariosto gives his protagonist has a multiplicity of resonances. 'Lena' is Latin for 'bawd'; the old woman who keeps the door in Plautus's *Curculio* is called 'Leaena'; and 'Lena' is a common abbreviation of the Italian forms of Magdalene and

Helen, wantons eventually reconciled with, respectively, religion and husband - a reconciliation parodically rendered in Lena's reconciliation with her elderly paramour, Fazio.

Marvin Herrick sees Corbolo as "Ariosto's attempt to modernize the ancient *servus*."⁷⁴ Unlike his Roman counterpart, Corbolo experiences great difficulty in carrying out his young master's wishes. This is a novel touch of realism to which, in an ironically theatrical reference, he draws our attention:

CORBOLO: Now I'd need the sharpness of one of those slaves I've sometimes seen in the comedies. They'd know what kind of fraud and trickery would milk the cash out of the old boy's purse. Oh well, even if I'm not Davus or Sosia, if I wasn't born among the Getac or in Syria, don't I have a few tricks left in this old head of mine? Can't I start weaving a plot and get Fortune to give me a hand - for they say she usually favours the bold. But what will I do? After all, I'm not dealing with an old man as foolish as Plautus and Terence used to show Chremes and Simon as being.⁷⁵

Although Corbolo is thus, rather self-consciously, brought up-to-date, his young master, Flavio, is very much in the classical mould as a lover-with-a-problem who depends totally on others to resolve his difficulties. He exists only to provide an explanation for the action, which is then set in motion by the *mezzani*, Corbolo and Lena, and he disappears from the stage, although not from the plot, after Act I. Licinia, in accordance with classical precepts, is always off-stage.

Fazio is an Italian rather than Roman figure. While it is not uncommon for old men to be cast as foolish lovers in Roman comedy, they are generally deprived of their paramours by their wives or by a younger man (*Casina*, *Asinaria* et al.). Although Fazio believes himself to be thus threatened by Flavio, it transpires that this is simply part of Corbolo's trickery: Fazio retains the upper hand at the end as in the beginning. He is wealthy, arrogant, an inattentive parent, and a lover whose jealousy, combined with the links of mutual necessity which bind him and Lena together, constitutes, in the view of Angela Casella, "the most original aspect" of the comedy.⁷⁶ It is indeed richly comic to observe Fazio's response on being informed that Lena has taken Flavio as a lover. He abruptly changes from self-assured manipulator to a *vecchio innamorato* whose jealousy

and vulnerability regarding his age are poignantly revealed by the stunned incredulity of his response:

FAZIO: I can't and I won't put up with it, Hario. After all I've done for her, and all I was going to do for her, the slut's betrayed me. Well I'll have my revenge....
She's chosen a wanton boy, young enough to be her own son. The only reward she can expect for that is that he'll boast about it and blacken her name.⁷⁷

2.4 Moral tone and language in La Lena:

Both the subject matter and tone of La Lena are overtly bawdy and, while it might be argued that Ariosto is employing the traditional *topos* of depicting vice in order to warn against it, it seems unlikely given that Ariosto, for the 1529 performance, added the last two scenes which contain Lena's obscene diatribe against Pacifico and her agreement to reconciliation with Fazio. Ariosto would hardly sanction the reconstitution of the *ménage à trois* if his intention were to warn against sexual impropriety. Indeed, in the Prologue to the 1529 version, he boasts that his play now imagines itself more beautiful because it has had a coda tagged on behind.⁷⁸ 'Coda' can have a triple significance here: literally meaning 'tail', it can refer to an addendum, to an extension on a woman's dress, or (as in Decameron IX.10 wherein the priest Gianni 'puts a tail on the mare') to the male organ. It is fairly clear that Ariosto has more than an extra frill for a dress in mind:

Lena is like all the other women who would like to feel a tail behind them. They sneer at those who don't want one behind them - or rather who can't get one behind them - as though they were nothing but vile rough peasants; for no woman, rich or poor, who can get one stuck on her will turn it down.⁷⁹

The language of the play is also bawdy, although Ariosto respects decorum to the extent that it is only the lower orders who indulge in outright obscenity - and then only in the absence of their 'betters'. Thus Corbolo maintains a comparatively elevated tone in the presence of his master, Flavio, but, immediately the latter has entered Lena's house, Corbolo lets us know what he really thinks of Lena:

CORBOLO: The cunt! I nearly gave her what-for. In my time I've known a thousand whoremongers, harlots and such-like women who earn their living dishonestly, but I've never seen one like her before.⁸⁰

And his conversation with the bawd is peppered with sexual *double entendre*:

LENA: Have you got the money, Corbolo?

CORBOLO: It's coming later.

LENA: I'd rather not hear about things that come later.

CORBOLO: You're not much like other women then, for they all love things that come late.

LENA: I like presents in the present.

CORBOLO: And here they are: I present to you a capon, pheasants, bread, wine and cheese. Take 'em inside. I didn't bother getting you any pigeons - there didn't seem much point seeing as how you've already got a fine fat pair nestling on your chest.

LENA: Oh, go to Hell.

CORBOLO: Let me just check to see how tender they are.

LENA: Oh, I'll give you such a thump. Listen, what about my money?...

CORBOLO: And how about a little reward for my troubles, Lena? After all, it's fu...fu...fundamentally through my hard work that you're getting those twenty-five florins.

LENA: What do you want?

CORBOLO: Do I have to spell it out? I want something that you could give to me or to a hundred others and still have it to give.

LENA: I don't understand.

CORBOLO: Then I'll give it to you straight.

LENA: Just bring me the money. I can't understand a thing without it. ⁸¹

3 The Witch-Bawd: La cortigiana by Pietro Aretino (1525 rev. 1534)⁸²

The play has a double plot whose characters are only loosely connected through acquaintance.

Parabolano, a Neapolitan gentleman resident in Rome, is in love with Livia. She however is married to Luzio and has neither interest in nor awareness of her admirer. Parabolano's servant, Rosso, overhears his master calling out Livia's name in his sleep and hatches a plot with a bawd, Alvigia, to take advantage of his master's obsession. Alvigia pretends to be Livia's nurse and offers to act as go-between. Parabolano is told that Livia is madly in love with him and it is arranged that they will meet, in a darkened room, to consummate the relationship. The woman awaiting Parabolano, however, is Togna, part-time prostitute and wife of the baker, Arcolano. Believing her husband drunk, Togna has donned his clothes and made her way through the streets to the place of assignment. Arcolano, for his part, puts on her clothes and follows her. Parabolano discovers the trick that has been played on him but decides to take it in good part as a reproach to his foolishness - his good humour perhaps because his discovery has been post- rather than pre-coital? He forgives and reconciles all parties and invites them to dinner.

Maco, a foppish Siennese, has come to Rome, home of his father's old friend, Parabolano, with the foolish idea of becoming a cardinal and obtaining the favour of the King of France. He falls in with a trickster, Maestro Andrea, who tells him that one must first become a courtier in order to obtain such preferment. Andrea offers his services as Maco's instructor and proceeds to gull him mercilessly. Maco is finally persuaded that a dose of purgatives and parboiling in a cauldron will magically transform him into a courtier. After undergoing this treatment, he confidently presents himself at the door of Camilla, a courtesan with whom he is infatuated, and demands entry by right as a courtier. He is beaten and chased away by "Spaniards" who are, in reality, Andrea and his cronies. He runs into Parabolano who restores peace and invites the cast to dinner at his house.

3.1 Sources of *La cortigiana*:

La cortigiana was first drafted in Rome in 1525, before Aretino's departure from that city after a near-fatal assassination attempt instigated by the Papal Datary, Giberti. A re-worked version was published in Venice in 1534. The play is full of contemporary reference to characters and incidents known to Aretino through his time at the Papal court - Maestro Andrea, for example, was a real-life Venetian painter, resident in Rome and famed for his practical jokes,⁸³ while Guillaume Apollinaire identifies Rosso as Cardinal Ippolito de' Medici's jester.⁸⁴ The prevailing tone is bitterly satirical with regard to the social mores of the court - reflecting Aretino's own insecurities and anger at his lack of preferment. Christopher Cairns⁸⁵ and Giorgio Petrocchi⁸⁶ indicate the Maco plot as giving a specific focus to this through its burlesque of Castiglione's book of courtly behaviour, *Il cortegiano/The Courtier*.

The Parabolano plot, whether or not it has a specific satirical butt in Cardinal Bembo (Cairns suggests this as a possibility),⁸⁷ is the standard *topos* of the misguided lover, presumably elderly - although this is not directly stated - who is made aware of his foolishness through a comic deception and substitution. Plautus's *Casina* is sufficient to demonstrate the antiquity of the device while his *Miles Gloriosus*, like *La cortigiana*, specifically satirises its protagonist's vain 'humour'. It is interesting to note that Aretino was to make specific use of the former play's male/female substitution in the resolution of his later work *Il marescalco/The Stablemaster* (which itself was to serve as the basis of Jonson's *Epicoene*).⁸⁸

3.2 Success of *La cortigiana*:

Editions of *La cortigiana* were published in Venice in 1534, 1535, 1539, 1545, 1550, and 1553. A Milanese printer, G. Antonio da Castelliono, also brought out an

edition in 1535. Aretino's distaste for the Papal court was apparently selective since the first edition was dedicated to the Cardinal of Lorraine, and subsequent editions to Cristoforo Madrucci, Cardinal of Trent.⁸⁹ Mazzuchelli opines that Aretino's works would not have been regarded as particularly scandalous in their time, basing this assertion on the fact that La cortigiana was performed at Bologna during the first week of Lent in 1537.⁹⁰

3.3 Characterisation in La cortigiana:

Since the substance of the Maco plot is outwith the ambit of this present study, I shall give it only passing consideration, examining principally the characterisation within the more traditionally Plautine Parabolano plot. Aretino, as might be expected from the author of the Sonetti lussuriosi/Lustful Sonnets, does not concern himself with moral comment on sexual dalliance as such. He does however adopt the traditional practice, within the play, of mirroring vice in order to admonish it. The vices admonished in La cortigiana are those of foolishness, drunkenness and neglect. It is not that Aretino wishes to condemn Parabolano for lusting after a married woman - Togna, after all, is just as much a married woman as Livia - but, as Herrick points out, for his vanity: "all of his troubles in the play arise from his silly vanity, which leads him to believe that all women must find him irresistible."⁹¹ Rosso's lying and cheating and Alvia's pimping escape serious rebuke in the play because they are simply comic devices used to expose this weakness in the character of the essentially good-natured and forgiving Parabolano. Similarly, Togna's deception of her husband is provoked "because the great drunkard deserves all that's coming to him."⁹² Parabolano magnanimously confesses his fault but, at the same time, gives himself the moral credit for this act of *noblesse oblige*: "It is no small thing for one of my standing to admit to an inferior that he has done wrong."⁹³

Although Parabolano and Arcolano stand thus admonished, Aretino, through the former, displays a thoroughly fatalistic attitude to vice in general:

PARABOLANO: You, baker, take back your wife as good and beautiful; for the wives of today, the more they are whores, the more they are reckoned chaste...

I pardon you, Alvia, because I shouldn't have believed you, and because you were only doing your job...

I also pardon you, Rosso, because you're Greek and have done a typically Greek thing with typically Greek cunning.⁹⁴

Parabolano, although he turns down Alviafia's offer of a woman who, apart from her face (!), is much superior to Livia,⁹⁵ does not seem to have mended his ways very much. His final argument, designed to placate Arcolano, praises the latter's cuckold's horns, "the horns of men which save them from poverty."⁹⁶ In saying this, he appears to be suggesting that he is prepared to put Arcolano's cuckoldry on a continuing financial basis - as in the *ménage à trois* of Ariosto's La Lena. We may perhaps see confirmation of this in the strength of Togna's reaction when it is proposed that she and Arcolano kiss and make up:

ARCOLANO: Come on, give's a kiss.

TOGNA: You know where you can stick it, you rotten bastard. Don't touch me.⁹⁷

It is evident that this play holds no brief for the sanctity of marriage and, given its author, it would be surprising if it had. The mother of Arcino's two daughters, Caterina Sandella, was the wife of Polo Bartolo, a Venetian nobleman;⁹⁸ Aretino specifically counselled his secretary, Ambrogio degli Eusebi, not to marry saying that the marriage bed was "an aid to arguments and a breeding-place of quarrels" and to "leave [wives'] complaints to the ears of stall-holders and their whims to those who can either support them or who know how to wield a stick";⁹⁹ and Christopher Cairns's hypothesis that Aretino remained unmarried because of his ambitions for a Cardinal's red hat suggests no great regard for the institutions of matrimony and priestly celibacy.¹⁰⁰

The character of the bawd, Alviafia, owes more to Fernando de Rojas' Celestina (translated into Italian in 1506) and to Boccaccio than to her Roman predecessors. Alviafia's list of witch's paraphernalia establishes her kinship with the spell-casting Spanish procuress:

ALVIGIA: Alembics for distilling herbs gathered at the New Moon, waters to remove freckles, ointments to remove facial blemishes, a phial of lovers' tears, oil to resuscitate...the flesh.

ROSSO: What flesh?

ALVIGIA: Under the... you know what I mean.

ROSSO: Under the fly-buttons?

ALVIGIA: Yes.

ROSSO: Ha, ha!

ALVIGIA: She's left me supports to pull up floppy paps,... an elixir to cause impregnation or abortion... a flask of virgin's urine... a parchment made from the skin of an unborn beast ... a rope which hanged an innocent, powder to kill the jealous, incantations to bring about madness, spells to bring sleep and prescriptions for rejuvenation. She's left me a spirit trapped... in a pisspot.¹⁰¹

Her false piety is shared not only by Celestina but by a bawd in the Decameron who, in Sanesi's opinion, partially inspired the character:

... she derives rather from that old woman whom Boccaccio briefly depicted in the tenth story of the fifth day of the Decameron - but only in the basic sense of being inspired by that idea... Let's see what Boccaccio in fact says: "...she made friends with an old woman who seemed just like Saint Viridiana, the one who fed the serpents, for she went to all the services of forgiveness with her rosary in her hand and spoke more than anyone else about the lives of the Holy Fathers and the wounds of St. Francis. Nearly everyone thought her a saint."¹⁰²

Alviglia's pretended devotion is therefore generic and is further identified as such when it is revealed that her mistress, recently burnt at the stake for poisoning and infanticide, also paid lip-service to Christian mores:

ALVIGIA: And what a conscience she had! On the eve of Pentecost she wouldn't eat meat. On Christmas Eve she fasted on bread and wine and at Lent, apart from the occasional fresh egg, she behaved like a hermit.¹⁰³

Despite the hypocrisy of her professions of faith, it would appear that Alviglia does retain some degree of religious conviction, albeit at the level of pure superstition. When she buttonholes the Guardiano d'Araceli - a casuistic priest who closely resembles Machiavelli's Fra Timoteo - her concern for the fate of her mentor's soul shows that she at least believes in Heaven and Hell. The priest is anxious to get to his meal and fobs off Alviglia with a most unlikely description of the older witch's fate post-mortem:

GUARDIANO: ... your mistress will stay about twenty-five days in Purgatory. Then she'll go to Limbo for five or six days. And then she'll be off to the highest Heaven to sit at God's right hand.

ALVIGIA: But they're saying the opposite - that she's damned.

GUARDIANO: Wouldn't I know if she was?

ALVIGIA: Tongues of serpents!¹⁰⁴

The other half of the go-betweens' partnership, Rosso, is the typical cunning servant - an enduring type as ancient as Greek New Comedy and as contemporary as the Zanni in the piazza. He is full of wit and malice, and if he has an original feature it is that these qualities, like Parabolano's vanity, are essentially 'humours' which operate at times independently of any real motivation; in this and in his derivation from a real court jester he possibly prefigures Jonson's Carlo Buffone. When he first appears, for example, he derides not only his master's vanity - real enough as we have seen - but also his stinginess and his bad treatment of his servants. As Valerio, the faithful chamberlain, points out, Parabolano "gives him [Rosso] more clothes in a year than the fellow's worth himself",¹⁰⁵ and Parabolano's ready forgiveness of Rosso's deception hardly argues a cruel master. Nevertheless, when the equally malicious footman, Cappa, suggests that they put a hatchet in their boss's head one night, Rosso is quick to justify such an action as a rebuke to the foolishness of masters in general: "Let's do it, so that all those like him may learn how to live properly."¹⁰⁶ The components of satire, jest and malice in Rosso's character are very much in evidence in Jonson's buffoon and it is tempting to believe that Ben copped rather more than Epicocene from the "dull Aretine."

3.4 Moral tone and language in La cortigiana:

The tone of La cortigiana is bawdy, and Rosso's conversation is frankly scatological. When Alvigia agrees to help him deceive his master, he 'compliments' her thus: "For what I have in mind, you're worth more than a jakes to a man who's swallowed a dose of salts",¹⁰⁷ and when Parabolano asserts that "gently-born ladies have a different savour", he replies "that's true, for they don't piss like other women."¹⁰⁸ Casual obscenity, in this play as in the others we have examined, is characteristic of the lower orders, e.g. a Jewish peddler, mocked by Rosso, cries "May your prick get the pox!",¹⁰⁹ and the decidedly ungentlemanly Arcolano calls Alvigia "this brazen piece of shit."¹¹⁰ Aretino's desire for revenge against the Papal Court is also evident in his recurring references to priestly homosexuality. Thus Rosso mentions "the one-time prior of Capua who, when he pissed, had one page undo his flies while another pulled out his

'nightingale' for him";¹¹¹ a fish-vendor, seized by priests who believe him possessed, calls out "Oh no! Buggers!";¹¹² and Maestro Andrea promises the foolish Maco that in his second lesson in how to be a courtier "we'll talk about the Col-arse-eum" which he explains is "the treasure and consolation of Rome."¹¹³

4 The Porter/Female Servant: *La venexiana* (anon.) (c. 1536)¹¹⁴

The play is not written in standard (i.e. Tuscan) Italian. Each character is given a dialect appropriate to his origins and social class. Thus, for example, Bernardo is a Bergamask peasant and speaks accordingly, while Iulio speaks an educated Milanese.

Iulio, a stranger in Venice, becomes infatuated with Valeria, a married woman. Believing her to be single, he sends her a message through her maidservant, Oria. Valeria, in her turn, falls for him and arranges that he come to her apartments. A rich widow, Angela, has also fallen for Iulio and urges her maid, Nena, to act as go-between. Nena lacks daring and instead asks Bernardo, a porter, if he will do it for her. Bernardo takes Iulio in a gondola, in darkness, to Angela's home, and Iulio spends the night making love to her. She presents him with a chain as a gift. The next day Iulio visits Valeria who recognises Angela's chain and throws him out. Iulio is about to return to Angela when Valeria repents of her hastiness and is reconciled with him. Oria goes off to tell Valeria's husband that his wife has a headache and the lovers retire.

4.1 Sources of *La venexiana*:

The theme of the rich widow who takes her pleasure with a young stranger may be seen as having a Boccaccesque origin (cf. Decameron II.2), as may that of woman-as-initiator making use of a female servant as go-between (Decameron VII.9). Giorgio Padoan¹¹⁵ however, while not denying that literary traditions have had their hand in shaping the play, argues convincingly that *La venexiana* depicts real Venetian characters and, if not a true story, may be intended as an anti-Venetian libel probably written by Ruzzante's friend and emulator, Girolamo Zanetti. The badly copied Latin subscript to the codex (discovered in 1928 by Emilio Lovarini) states that "*Hieronymus Zarellus scripsi*"; although no author of this name is known to us, Hieronymus translates into Girolamo in Italian, and Padoan indicates that the same careless copyist who wrote "*scripsi*" instead of "*scripsit*" may well have misread "*Zanettus*" as "*Zarellus*." Through a magisterial analysis of internal references, Padoan deduces the time and place of the action as November 1535 or 1536, in the adjoining Venetian districts of San Trovaso and San Barnaba; he further names the female protagonists as (a) Valiera Valier di Ottaviano (Valeria, although thus named in the *Dramatis Personae*, is called Valiera in the text) a noblewoman who in 1535 married Giacomo Semitecolo, a noted jurist considerably older than herself, and (b)

Anzola Valier di Marino (again the play gives both "Angela" and "Anzola"), widowed in 1535, rich, noble, somewhat older than Valiera Valier, and related to her by marriage. If this is the case, La venexiana must be regarded not only as "a most beautiful work of art",¹¹⁶ but also as a calculated libel against the noble Venetian family of Valier.

4.2 Success of La venexiana:

Padoan sees the play as proceeding from a fashion for pasquinades and libels (perhaps itself owing something to the arrival of Aretino in Venice) which provoked, on the 26th of May 1540, the passing of a libel law backed up by the severest penalties.¹¹⁷ This would help to explain why the only copy of the play which is known to have survived is a codex originally in the private collection of a Venetian patrician, Stefano Magno (rediscovered, by Lovarini, in the Marciano Library). If the play was suppressed, voluntarily or otherwise, it is interesting to note that it was probably as much, if not more, because of its libellous nature as for its overt depiction of sexuality. There appears to be no evidence of contemporary production or printing. The play has however attained a certain measure of modern-day success having been filmed (with only minor plot changes and Italianised dialogue) by Italy's leading 'soft' pornographer, Tinto Brass, with Jason Connery in the role of Iulio. This film was televised on Italy's commercial Canale 5 in 1991.

4.3 Characterisation in La venexiana:

Benedetto Croce identifies the strength of La venexiana as lying in the "sober and incisive depiction of all its characters"¹¹⁸ and it is certainly not its rather simplistic plot which has gained it the critical attention of such as himself, Gramsci¹¹⁹, Sanesi,¹²⁰ and Padoan. The use of the aristocracy as protagonists in a comedy is an original touch, probably given added zest for its intended audience by the identifiability of the subjects, and the mirror-image of theatrical normality represented by the female lovers using female go-betweens permits not only a greater dramatic focus on the *innamorata* but also a degree of passionate expression unknown to the Plauto-Terentian *adulescens*. Where an uncertain Callimaco shows only despair, Anzola/Angela instead proclaims her love/lust for Iulio. Looking for her maidservant, Nena, to act as her *mezzana*, she finds her trying to sleep and joins her in bed where she projects her passion for the man onto the maid. This must

lay claim to being the first Lesbian scene in Italian theatre and is a fine balance between ironic comedy and eroticism:

ANGELA: My flesh is burning. I'm dying of sorrow.

NENA: Have you got a fever? Let me just check.

ANGELA: The fever's inside here, in my heart.

NENA: We'll call Master Antonio, our doctor, first thing tomorrow.

ANGELA: There's only one doctor in the whole of Venice who knows how to cure Angela.

NENA: Apart from those who aren't castrated.

ANGELA: You don't understand. I mean just one man.

NENA: Like this you mean: a big, handsome, powerful man?

ANGELA: I mean just one who's got the face of an angel, a golden face, who's come here from Heaven....

NENA: Just tell me what you'd like to do to him.

ANGELA: Throw my arms around his neck like this, suck on those sweet lips and hold him as tight as tight can be.

NENA: And then what?

ANGELA: Get his tongue in my mouth.

NENA: I could do that better than him.

ANGELA: Oh, to have that sweet mouth all to myself, just like this, forever and ever!

NENA: Hold on there! You're suffocating me!

ANGELA: Oh, my darling! You're sweeter than sugar!

NENA: You're forgetting that I'm a woman....

ANGELA: I want to stay here. And if you want me to go to sleep, put your arms around me like this. Then I'll close my eyes and pretend you're him.

NENA: You mean like this?

ANGELA: Yes, my darling girl.

NENA: Now do you think I'm him?

ANGELA: Not yet. Come a bit closer.

NENA: I want to go to sleep. Careful! Don't squeeze so hard!

ANGELA: Will you do something for me?

NENA: What?

ANGELA: My sweet darling, just stay like this for a bit. Now start to swear and I'll imagine you're a man.

NENA: I don't know what to say.

ANGELA: Just curse. Say 'by the body of Christ', say dirty words just like men do.

NENA: What words? Tell me.

ANGELA: The foul language they use in brothels. Don't you know any?

The implication that Nena is no stranger to brothels suggests where she may have learned to put her tongue in men's (and women's) mouths. Of the two female servants she is the more experienced in the ways of the world and therefore knows how to arrange things with the least risk of scandal accruing to her mistress. This explains her coyness when it comes to actually setting up the meeting between her mistress and Iulio: "It's a tough job. Getting the young fellow there, doing it in secret...And anyway, a woman can't do such things."¹²² Hence she decides to seek help from Bernardo, a porter and a trusted friend of the house.

In accordance with the reversed-role pattern, Bernardo is the outside expert brought in to help do the job. Thus he may be seen as a male Alvia with Nena as a female Rosso. His age reinforces the parallel as do his nostalgic references to the vigorous sexuality of his youth. Thus, when he and Nena eavesdrop on Iulio and Angela's lovemaking, he confesses his incapacity:

BERNARDO: Didn't you hear them? I'd be doing the same, old as I am, if I had some way of getting it up.¹²³

When Nena asks him if his gondola is in a good state of repair, he replies:

BERNARDO: If I were in such good condition, I'd have tossed you tonight like the winnowers toss chaff.¹²⁴

And when she remarks that "needles couldn't make it move" he answers:

BERNARDO: Do you know why? It's because so much was squeezed out of it when I was young that now the stubborn thing only wants to sleep.¹²⁵

As a type he is based on the *facchino*/porter from Bergamo who was a common sight in Northern Italy. Bernardo would accordingly be a natural choice for the job of *mezzano*, for the Bergamask original often supplemented his porter's earnings by acting as a pimp (see Introduction, p.2). A contemporary account confirms the theatrical potential of the *facchini*:

Their speech is so grotesque that the Zanni who are like magpies to mimic a pronunciation or any other characteristics have adopted it in their comedies to entertain the crowd.¹²⁶

The reference to the Zanni, originally a comic presenter in the Cinquecento's version of the travelling medicine show, also indicates Bernardo as a theatrical forerunner of the *commedia dell'arte's* Zanni in whom the original parody of the Bergamask porter was to evolve into the principal *mezzano* of the improvised theatre. Bernardo, however, transcends the typology in that his *facchino* is not a simplistic burlesque. His portrayal is entirely naturalistic and, while he contributes to the comic aspects of the play, his rough humour is entirely consonant with the level of badinage one would expect from an uneducated countryman forced to live on his wits in the city. Padoan comments on the depth of his characterisation:

In fact it is characters who inhabit the Venexiana and not types. Even the Bergamask porter - in itself the role most prone to stereotyping (and therefore leading to the Mask),¹²⁷ which is exactly what happens in many Cinquecento comedies - has his character precisely defined here as a self-confident man, who knows how to handle his own affairs and who can be trusted to expedite those of other people. This characterisation is also shaped directly through his dialect, his quoting of proverbs, his obscene allusions, his continuous blending of the sacred and profane, and the frankly coarse materialism of his conversation which reflects that of his ideals: tangible profits in the form of money, food and clothing. These identifying features belong to the character and not vice versa - no small thing in a Cinquecento comedy.¹²⁸

Consequently, when he searches for an image to symbolise the sexual act, it is the typically rural idea of the winnower's rake which comes to his mind; his materialism is shown when Nena first encounters him as he is going to the stores to load up with goods, he has no wish to interrupt his business - "I'll speak to you when it's a holiday";¹²⁹ unlike the normal *mezzano*, who generally acts first and claims his reward afterwards - cf. Ligurio - he requires that Nena advance him a ring as pledge of payment;¹³⁰ and his disregard for the proprieties of religion is revealed when he tells Iulio, "tonight I'll lead you to *gloria in excelsis*."¹³¹ A particular individualising feature is his admission to Iulio that, like the young Milanese, he is of the Ghibelline or Imperial party¹³² - one of the factors which helps Padoan date the play to 1535/6 when an uneasy peace existed between

Emperor and Doge. This further suggests that the play emanates from a faction inimical to the Venetian aristocratic establishment.

Oria, like Nena, fulfils a role normally expected of a male servant in the *commedia*. While it may be argued that Iulio, by confessing to her his love for Valeria, has engaged her as go-between, it is evident that Valeria knows immediately of whom Oria is speaking and her impatience betrays the fact that she has only been awaiting an opportunity to make contact with him.

VALERIA: Is he a young stranger with black hair?

ORIA: Yes, Ma'am. Black and worn in a queue at the back.

VALERIA: And what did he say?

ORIA: Well, I didn't want to listen.

VALERIA: Oh, these bloody people who go deaf when it suits them!¹³³

Oria differs from Nena in that she lacks the latter's experience and cunning. Therefore, when Valeria wishes her to contact Iulio, Oria gives no thought to appearances and goes directly to the Peacock Inn (*Ostaria del Pavon*) to find him. Despite her ingenuousness, she is obviously a snob: Nena calls the porter "brother Bernardo",¹³⁴ but when Oria is accosted by Bernardo, the young maidservant prissily tells him, "On your way! I wish nothing to do with porters!".¹³⁵ Oria also has a much less intimate relationship with her employer, a relationship based moreover on material considerations. Where Nena offers her own ring to Bernardo as a pledge of Angela's good faith, Oria's first thought is of how much her mistress will pay for her services:

ORIA: Madame Valeria, what will you pay me if I tell you some news?...

ORIA: Madame Valeria, what would you pay now if that fellow who's strolling up here were Master Iulio?¹³⁶

Valeria, living a tedious life as the wife of the headache-provoking "Master of the House",¹³⁷ has a fierce temper - as she demonstrates when Oria interrupts her with the announcement that she has some news to tell,

VALERIA: What about, birdbrain? The arrival of the first swallow of Spring?¹³⁸

and I have already noted her outburst when the maidservant says that she did not listen to

Iulio. Her imperious disregard for her husband is also manifest when she gives Oria a message for Iulio:

VALERIA: If you see him, curtsy and say, "My Lady thanks you." Got it?

ORIA: I don't want the Master to shout at me afterwards.

VALERIA: Don't bring the Master into it. Just do what I say, then keep your mouth shut. Do you understand?

ORIA: Yes, Ma'am.¹³⁹

Despite her own desire for an extra-marital affair, her recognition of Angela's chain around Iulio's neck provokes a tirade against infidelity culminating in a typically furious threat of revenge:

VALERIA: ...tell Angela that, one of these days, Valeria will turn the tables on her!¹⁴⁰

It is a measure therefore of the strength of her desire for Iulio that this strong-minded autocratic woman can finally humble herself before him in the final reconciliation scene:

IULIO: My Lady, I wish no more than to have gained Your Ladyship's favour, since you have deigned to have me as your servant.

VALERIA: And I say you are my lord. You well know the pain you have given me since I wished to be greater than you. But, from now on, I wish to be your inferior in all things.¹⁴¹

There can be no doubt that the centrepiece of La venexiana is to be found in scenes ii-vii of Act III: the night which finds Iulio and Angela together in her house. After an initial exchange of courtesies, no time is wasted in getting to the business at hand.

ANGELA: ...Take off your weapons. Have a glass of something, and then we'll lie down.

IULIO: In this place, I am completely at Your Ladyship's disposal. As for drink, I've already had a little and have no need of any more.¹⁴²

They undress each other and embrace, at which late point the stage directions state "*Alquantulum postea*" / "A little later." Given the explicitness of other scenes, one may well wonder if a wordless consummation, feigned or otherwise, herein ensues - especially since the participants' subsequent remarks make it clear that they are ready for more:

ANGELA: My sweet soul, I thought that you had brought water to douse the fire in my

breast, but instead you've brought wood and coal to make it burn more brightly.

IULIO: I came to Your Ladyship a free man; now I am tied more securely than any wrongdoer here in your prison, the prison of your sweet little breasts.

ANGELA: Ah, you little glutton, so you're kissing them now, eh? Watch out you don't squeeze them too hard for they'll squeal!

IULIO: I want this little apple all to myself; the other one can be yours.

ANGELA: I'm content, for that's the one which covers my heart.

IULIO: Do you want me to say a few words to them?

ANGELA: Alright, say what you want. Ha, ha! You're making my heart flutter. Stop it. Now it's my turn to bite you....

IULIO: My Lady, you have embraced me: now let me embrace you and we'll dance another measure.

ANGELA: Alright, but let me have your tongue.

IULIO: I want that nice tit you gave me.

ANGELA: I won't let you unless you give me your tongue. I'll hug you with my teeth. Oh, yes.

IULIO: Is this how you want it?

ANGELA: All the way. All the way. Yes. ¹⁴³

Iulio himself does little more in the play than react to circumstances. Although the first character on stage, he is far from being the main protagonist and has done little to merit his good fortune - as his opening lines tell us.

IULIO: May God be praised for leading me, young as I am, at the mercy of Fortune, and with little money, to a most noble and worthy city like this where I am known and respected more than my condition merits. ¹⁴⁴

In the role-reversed structure of La venexiana he is the love object not the pursuer. Just as the female pursuers bring a greater intensity of passion to the role, so the male love object, being immune from any classical restrictions on his appearances, is free to participate fully in the on-stage action. This, nevertheless, does no more than make visible what is an essentially passive character. Even in bed he is told to lie back and let Angela get on with it:

ANGELA: Close your eyes as if you were sleeping. I want to do this my way.

IULIO: Provided I don't die first, I'm all yours.

ANGELA: Put your arms like this.

IULIO: Your Ladyship won't be comfortable.

ANGELA: Keep quiet. You're asleep. I want to do this my way. ¹⁴⁵

And even Valeria's final humbling of herself before him is done so that she may get what she wants rather than to accommodate his wishes - after all, he can still return to Angela. Furthermore, his awareness of the dangers implicit in an affair with a married woman do not exactly present him as a dedicated lover:

IULIO: This affair's turned out worse than the other one; for that one was safe and this is dangerous. The first was unexpected and turned out splendidly; this one, pre-arranged, will probably end in tears. ¹⁴⁶

Having decided to continue his affair with Valeria, the essentially reactive Iulio finally rejects his advantage and restores the female-dominant status quo of La venexiana:

IULIO: Command me and say "I want it like this" - for I am yours. ¹⁴⁷

4.4 Moral tone and language in La venexiana:

Given the probability that the play was conceived as much as a libel as an entertainment, it is not surprising that its only internal references to moral norms reflect the characters' desire not to be found out. Consequently Nena has recourse to a trusted go-between; Iulio is ferried blindfold and in dead of night to Angela; and Valeria cannot wait to hurry him inside in the final scene. If vice is being reproached here, it can only be that of a real-life scandal. If that scandal did not exist, then the play exists as a mud-slinging exercise, or as a bawdy Boccaccesque diversion, or as both.

The tone employed by all the characters is quite uninhibited in terms of sexual reference. While the principals, as we have seen, use explicit language to describe their actions - the only euphemism being Iulio's remark about dancing "another measure" - and the prissy Orta carefully refrains from comment on such matters, Bernardo laces his conversations with sexual metaphor and obscenity much to the amusement of the indulgent Nena. Thus the *facchino* punctuates his speech with cries of "the devil" and "the pox!", ¹⁴⁸ and never misses an opportunity for a not-very-heavily-veiled sexual reference, e.g.

BERNARDO: You write the letter 'i' with a different pen from the one you keep in the

BERNARDO: They're chiming! Chiming two in the morning. They [Julio and Angela] can't hear them; but I can hear them loud and clear locking the sheep in their pen. 150

BERNARDO: Right! Now's not the time to be abed. Those two would never finish stirring the porridge. 151

The dramatic predominance of female roles in this play is atypical of its time and prefigures the importance which such roles were to have in the later *commedia dell'arte*. The overt sexual behaviour depicted would seem to argue that the actresses were of the courtesan class. Taken together, these two phenomena indicate *La venexiana* as supporting Ferdinando Taviani's hypothesis that the relatively sudden appearance of professional actresses in the *commedia* troupes in the mid-Cinquecento, and the subsequent expansion of their repertoires, were both related to an influx of courtesans, better educated than most women at the time, into the theatre. Counter-Reformation morality would of itself tend to pressure such women into finding alternative employment and, on the evidence of *La venexiana*, it would seem that some of them at least were already part-time actresses.

¹ Niccolò Machiavelli, *La mandragola* in the collection *La mandragola/Belfagor/Lettere* ed. Mario Bonfantini with a critical essay by Gabriella Mezzanotte (Milano, 1991)

² Ireneo Sanesi, *La commedia* Vol. I (Milano 1944) p.209.

³ All references to works by Plautus and Terence relate to the Loeb Classical Library editions unless otherwise stated.

⁴ (IV.ix.p.45)

NICIA: Che è ella?

LIGURIO: Una palla di cera.

NICIA: Dalla qua... ca, pu, ca, co, co, cu, cu, spu... Che ti venga la seccaggine, pezzo di manigoldo!

LIGURIO: Perdonatemi, che io ve ne ho data una in scambio, che io non me ne sono avveduto.

NICIA: Ca, ca, pu, pu... Di che, che, che era?

LIGURIO: D'aloe.

⁵ Information on the contemporary success of *La mandragola* comes from the critical essay by Gabriella Mezzanotte in the edition of the play cited. (pp.129-132)

6 (IV.i.p.37)

CALLIMACO: In quanta angustia d'animo sono io stato e sto! Ed è vero che la fortuna e la natura tiene el conto per bilancio; la non ti fa mai un bene che all'incontro non surga un male. Quanto più mi è cresciuta la speranza, tanto mi è cresciuto el timore. Misero a me! Sarà egli mai possibile che io viva in tanti affanni e perturbato da questi timori e queste speranze? Io sono una nave vessata da dua diversi venti, che tanto più teme quanto ella è più presso al porto.

7 Sanesi, pp.208-9.

...un uomo vero, un innamorato vero, che desidera ardentemente, vuole fortemente, agisce risolutamente.

8 (I.i.p.11)

...l'una, la semplicità di messer Nicia, che benché sia dottore egli è el più semplice e el più sciocco omo di Firenze; l'altra, la voglia che lui e lei hanno di avere figliuoli, che sendo stata sei anni a marito e non avendo ancor fatti, ne hanno, sendo ricchissimi, un desiderio che muoiono. Una terza ci è, che la sua madre è stata buona compagna.

9 (II.ii.p.80)

...el più degno uomo che si possa trovare.

10 Matteo Bandello, Novelle ed. Ferruccio Ulivi (Milano 1978) pp.229-236.

11 Included in the collection Novelle del 500 ed. Giambattista Salinari (Torino 1976) pp.417-78.

12 See Jeffrey Pulver's Machiavelli (London 1937) p.127.

13 e.g. Plautus's Ergasilus in Captivi ("The Prisoners"), Peniculus in Menaechmi ("The Brothers Menaechmus"), Terence's Gnatho in Eunuchus ("The Eunuch").

14 (I.iii.p.14)

Egli è uno uomo della qualità che tu sai, di poca prudenzia, di meno animo: e partesi mai volentieri da Firenze. Purc io ce l'ho riscaldato, e mi ha detto infine che farà ogni cosa.

15 (I.i.p.11)

s'è dato a mendicare cene e desinari.

16 Terence, Eunuchus II.p.257, Loeb trans. John Sargeant.

17 M. Herrick, Italian Comedy in the Renaissance (Urbana 1960) p.82.

18 Niccolò Machiavelli, Il Principe ed. L. Arthur Burd (Oxford 1968) Ch.XXII.p.348.
...quello che ha lo Stato di uno in mano non debbe pensare mai a sè, ma sempre al principe.

19 D. Radcliff-Umstead, The Birth of Modern Comedy in Renaissance Italy (London 1969) p.132.

20 In Plautus, The Pot of Gold and Other Plays ed. E.F. Watling (Penguin 1987).

21 (I.ii.p.13)

LIGURIO: A Livorno vedesti voi el mare?

NICIA: Ben sai che io li vidi!

LIGURIO: Quanto è egli maggiore che Arno?

NICIA: Che Arno? Egli è per quattro volte, per più di sei, per più di sette mi farai dire: e non si vede se non acqua acqua acqua.

22 (I.i.p.11)

...se non è giovane non è al tutto vecchio, come pare.

23 Prologo p.6.

...un dottor poco astuto.

24 See Radcliff-Umstead, p.132.

25 (II.vi.p.22)

CALLIMACO: ...Questa è una cosa esperimentata da me dua paia di volte e trovata sempre vera, e se non era questo, la reina di Francia sarebbe sterile, e infinite altre principesse di quello Stato.

26 e.g. Simo in Plautus's Pseudolus and Chremes in Terence's Heauton Timoroumenos who are both tricked out of money by their sons' agents.

27 Included in the collection Novelle del 500 ed. Giambattista Salinari (Torino 1976) pp.271-85. The editor's statement (p.269) that Nelli's tales "riprendono vecchi soggetti" [reprise old themes] suggests that other precedents existed from which Machiavelli may have drawn inspiration for the character of Nicia.

28 e.g. Menaechmus' wife in Plautus's Menacchmi, and Nausistrata in Terence's Phormio.

29 (I.i.pp.11-12)

CALLIMACO: In prima mi fa la guerra la natura di lei che è onestissima e al tutto aliena dalle cose d'amore: avere el marito ricchissimo e che al tutto si lascia governare da lei...

30 (II.v.p.21)

NICIA: Io ho fatto d'ogni cosa a tuo modo: di questo vo' io che tu facci a mio.

31 In Plautus, ed. E.F. Watling.

32 (II.vi.p.23)

CALLIMACO: ...io non vorrei innanzi essere marito, se io non la disponessi a fare a mio modo.

33 (V.v.pp.52-53)

NICIA: Lucrezia, io credo che sia bene fare le cose con timore di Dio e non alla pazzeresca.

LUCREZIA: Che s'ha egli a fare, ora?

NICIA: Guarda come ella risponde! La pare un gallo!

SOSTRATA: Non ve ne maravigliate, ella è un poco alterata.

LUCREZIA: Che volete voi dire?

NICIA: Dico che egli è bene che io vadia inanzi a parlare al frate, e dirli che ti si facci incontro in sullo uscio della chiesa per menarti in santo, perché gli è proprio, stamane, come se tu rinascessi.

LUCREZIA: Che non andate?

NICIA: Tu se' stamani molto ardita! Ella pareva iersera mezza morta.

LUCREZIA: Egli è la grazia vostra!

34 Il Principe ed. L.Arthur Burd (Oxford 1968), Ch.XVII,p.292.

...degli uomini si può dire questo generalmente, che sieno ingrati, volubili, simulatori, fuggitori de' pericoli, cupidi di guadagno...

35 Il Principe, Ch.XXVI.p.365.

Io giudico ben questo, che sia meglio essere impetuoso che rispettivo, perchè la fortuna è donna, ed è necessario, volendola tener sotto, batterla ed urtarla; e si vede che la si lascia più vincere da questi, che da quelli che freddamente procedono. E però sempre, come donna, è amica de' giovani, perchè sono meno rispettivi, più feroci, e con più audacia la comandano.

36 (V.iv,pp.51-52)

...«Poi che l'astuzia tua, la sciocchezza del mio marito, la semplicità di mia madre e la tristizia del mio confessoro mi hanno condotta a fare quello che mai per me medesima avrei fatto, io voglio iudicare che e' venga da una celeste disposizione che abbi voluto così, e non sono sufficiente a recusare quello che 'l cielo vuole che io accetti. Però io ti prendo per signore, padrone, guida: tu mio padre, tu mio difensore, e tu voglio che sia ogni mio bene; e quello che 'l mio marito ha voluto per una sera, voglio ch'egli abbia sempre....»

37 "The Self-Tormentor"

38 "The Mother-in-Law"

39 "The Brothers"

40 Sanesi, p.210.

...una donna non cattiva ma di manica larga e di pochi scrupoli.

41 (II.vi,p.24)

...io so che la madre è della opinione nostra.

42 (III.xi.p.34)

Io la voglio mettere stasera al letto io.

43 (III.xi.p.34)

SOSTRATA: Lasciati persuadere, figliuola mia. Non vedi tu che una donna che non ha figliuoli non ha casa? Muorsi el marito, resta com'una bestia, abbandonata da ognuno.

44 (V.vi.p.54)

TIMOTEO: Voi, madonna Sostrata, avete, secondo mi pare, messo un tallo in sul vecchio.

SOSTRATA: Chi non sarebbe allegra?

45 (IV.iii.p.41)

...cattivo bene.

46 Angelo Poliziano, Stanze Orfeo Rime ed. Sergio Marconi (Milan 1981)

4 7

(I . i . p . 9)

SIRO: Io vi son servitore, e' servi non debbono mai domandare el padrone d'alcuna cosa, né cercare alcuno loro fatto, ma quando per loro medesimi le dicano, debbono servirgli con fede: e così ho fatto e sono per fare io.

Fabula di Orfeo ll.121-123.

TIRSI: ...al servo sta bene ubbidire
e matto è chi comanda al suo signore:
io so ch'egli è più saggio assai che noi.

48 (III.iii.p.27)

DONNA: Voi sapete pure quel che mi faceva qualche volta. Oh, quanto me ne doisi io con esso voi!

49 (III.iii.p.27)

DONNA: ...Dio ci aiuti, con queste diavolerie! io ho una gran paura di quello impalare.

50 Included in the collection Novelle del 400 ed. Giuseppe G. Ferrero & Maria Luisa Doglio (Torino 1975) pp.337-48.

51 Boccaccio, p.59.

E più avanti guardando, in tanto tutti avari e cupidi di denari gli vide, che parimente l'uman sangue, anzi il cristiano, e le divine cose, chenti che elle si fossero, o a' sacrifici o a' benefici appartenenti, a denari e vendevano e comperavano, maggior mercatantia faccendone e più sensali avendone che a Parigi di drappi o di alcun'altra cosa non crano, avendo alla manifesta simonia «procureria» posto nome, e alla gulosità «sustentazioni», quasi Iddio, lasciamo stare il significato de' vocaboli, ma la 'ntenzione de' pessimi animi non conoscesse, e a guisa degli uomini a' nomi delle cose si debba lasciare ingannare.

52 Boccaccio, p.69, fn.1.

...questo frate potrebbe essere Mino da San Quirico, inquisitore a Firenze dal 1332 al 1334, quando fu destituito per la sua venalità e le sue sregolatezze; o Pietro dall'Aquila, inquisitore dal 1344 al 1347.

53 (IV.vi.p.104)

E' dicono el vero quelli che dicono che le cattive compagnie conducono gli uomini alle forche, e molte volte uno càpita male, così per essere troppo facile e troppo buono, come per essere troppo tristo. Dio sa che io non pensavo ad iniurare persona, stavomi nella mia cella, dicevo el mio ufizio, intrattenevo e mia devoti; capitommi inanzi questo diavolo di Ligurio, che mi fece intignere el dito in uno errore, donde io vi ho messo el braccio e tutta la persona, e non so ancora dove io m'abbia a capitare. Pure mi conforto che quando una cosa importa a molti, molti ne hanno a avere cura.

54 TIMOTEO: Io non ho potuto questa notte chiudere occhio, tanto è il desiderio che io ho d'intendere come Callimaco e gli altri l'abbino fatta. Ed ho atteso a consumare el tempo in varie cose: io dissi matutino, lessi una vita de' Santi Padri, andai in chiesa ed accesi una lanpana che era spenta, mutai un velo ad una Madonna che fa miracoli. Quante volte ho io detto a questi frati che la tenghino pulita! E si maravigliano poi se la divozione manca. Io mi ricordo esservi cinquecento imagine, e non ve ne sono oggi venti; questo nasce da noi, che non le abbiano saputa mantenere la reputazione.

55 Mario Apollonio, Storia del Teatro Italiano Vol.II (Firenze 1951) p.75.

Timoteo ama il denaro? Noi non gli conosciamo alcun vizio per cui il denaro gli serva: possiamo indurne che ama l'arte di far denaro, non il denaro. Per farlo, adotta vari modi: tener pulita la chiesa e le immagini sacre, e intrigar dal confessionale; ma par lontano da quella ghittoneria lussuriosa d'altri frati, che ha costretto Lucrezia a cambiar confessore. E Ligurio ama il gioco per il gioco...

56 Apollonio, p.73.

Machiavelli credeva davvero di tracciare non un personaggio, ma un tipo; ma è sempre il felice errore della sua appassionata natura quello di varcar i limiti dell'accertamento di una categoria e di sostituire l'individuazione geniale alla definizione metodica: anche il Principe diventa un eroe ed un emblema, piuttosto che una formula politica ed un simbolo intellettuale.

57 Prologo, p.6.

...ed io vorrei
che voi fussi ingannate come lei.

58 (II.i.p.17.)

e s'c'ha per male, scingasi!

59 (II.iii.p.20.)

In questa terra non ci è se non cacastecchi.

60 (II.vi.p.21.)

...potta di san Puccio! Costui mi raffinisce tra le mani.

61 (III.iv.p.28.)

Cacasangue!

62 (V.ii.p.50.)

...volfi toccare con mano come la cosa andava.

63 Ludovico Ariosto, Commedie ed. Angela Casella, Gabriella Ronchi and Elena Varasi, (Verona, 1974).

64 *Ibid.*, p.xxxviii fnn. (I have adapted the classical writers' names to their Anglo-Latin forms, e.g. Plauto>Plautus)

Plautus:

Bacchides (3), *Asinaria* (2), *Pseudolus* (2), *Curculio* (1), *Mostellaria* (1), *Rudens* (1).

Terence:

Phormio (4), *Adelphoe* (2), *Andria* (1), *Hecyra* (1), *Heautontimorumenos* (1)

Boccaccio:

Decameron II.10 (1); IV.7 (1); V.10 (1); VII.1 (1); VII.2 (1); VII.7 (1); VIII.2 (1); VIII.9 (1); IX.3 (1); IX.5 (1); X.10 (1).

65 Casella, *op.cit.* p.XL.

66 Edmund G. Gardner, The King of Court Poets (London 1906) pp.144-5.

67 (III.ii.716-19.)

ILARIO: Or sia ancor ch'io vada al Duca, e contigli
Il caso; che farà, se non rimettermi
Al podestade? E 'l podestade subito
M'avrà gli occhi alle mani.

68 Casella, p.xl.

69 Gardner, The King of Court Poets pp.19-20.

⁷⁰ For the information regarding the Sessa, Vidali and Zopino printings, I am indebted to Prof. Richard Andrews of Leeds University. All other details of the success and printing history of the play are taken from La commedia del Cinquecento Vol.II ed. Guido Davico Bonino, (Torino, 1977) pp.152-153.

⁷¹ (V.xi.1670-82.)

LENA: S'io avessi a star tuttavia giovane,
Il mantener amendue col medesimo
Modo usato fin qui, mi saria agevole;
Ma come le formiche si proveggono
Pel verno, così è giusto che le povere
Par mie per la vecchiezza si proveggano;
E che, mentre v'hanno agio, un'arte imparino,
Che, quando sia il bisogno, pi non abbiano
Ad imparar, ma vi sian dotte e pratiche.
E ch'arte poss'io far, che più proficua
Ci sia di questa, e che mi sia più facile
Ad imparar? Che vuoi ch'io indugi all'ultimo,
Quand'io sarò nel bisogno, ad aprenderla?

⁷² (V.xii.1706-1708.)

LENA: Anco che questo misero
Vecchio mi sia più che le serpi in odio,
Pur ho piacer d'ogni ben di Licinia.

⁷³ (V.xi.1644-1659.)

LENA: Anzi la tua insaziabile
Golaccia, che ridotti ci ha in miseria;
Che, se non fossi stata io che, per pascerti,
Mi son di cento gaglioiffi fatta asina,
Saresti morto di fame. Or pel merito
Del bene ch'io t'ho fatto, mi rimproveri.
Poltron, ch'io sia puttana?

PACIFICO: Tì rimprovero,
Che lo dovresti far con più modestia.

LENA: Ah, beccaccio, tu parli di modestia?
S'io avessi a tutti quelli che propostomi
Ogn'ora hai tu voluto dar ricapito,
Io no so meretrice in mezzo il Gambaro,
Che fusse a questo dì di me più publica.
Nè questo uscio dinanzi per riceverli
Tutti bastar pareati, e consigliavimi
Che quel di dietro anco ponessi in opera.

⁷⁴ Marvin Herrick, Italian Comedy in the Renaissance (Urbana, 1960) p.70.

75 (III.i.578-591.)

CORBOLO: ...Or l'astuzia
Bisognaria d'un scrvo, quale fingere
Vedut'ho qualche volta in le comedie,
Che questa somma con fraude e fallaccia
Sapesse del borsel del vecchio mungere.
Dch, se ben io non son Davo né Sosia,
Se ben non nacqui fra i Geti né in Siria,
Non ho in questa testaccia anch'io malizia?
Non saprò ordir un giunto anch'io, ch'a tessere
Abbia Fortuna poi, la qual propizia
(Come si dice) agli audaci suol essere?
Ma che farò, che con un vecchio credulo
Non ho a far, qual a suo modo Terenzio
O Plauto suol Cremete o Simon fingere?

76 Casella, p.xxxix.
...l'aspetto più originale.

77 (V.viii.1550-1554/1558-61.)

FAZIO: Non posso, né possendo mai vo', Ilario,
Patir che dopo tanti benefizii
C'ha ricevuti et era per ricevere
Da me questa gaglioffa, così m'abbia
Tradito. Son disposto vendicarmene....
D'un fanciul volubile
Ha fatto elezion, che potrebbe essere
Suo figliuolo, e sperar non ne può merito,
Se non che se ne vanti e le dia infamia.

78 Prologo.10-12.

79 Prologo.17-24.

La Lena è simile
All'altre donne, che tutte vorrebbero
Sentirsi dietro la coda, e disprezzano
(Come sian terrazzane, vili e ignobili)
Quelle ch'averla di dietro non vogliono,
O per dir meglio, ch'aver non la possono:
Perché nessuna, o sia ricca o sia povera,
Che se la possa por, niega di porsela.

80 (I.iii.282-286.)

CORBOLO: Potta! che quasi son per attaccargliela.
Ho ben avute a' miei di mille pratiche
Di ruffiane, bagasce e cotal femine
Che di guadagni disonesti vivono;
Ma non ne vidi a costei mai la simile.

81 (II.iii.512-523/531-537.)

LENA: Hai tu i denari, Corbolo?

CORBOLO:

Io li avrò.

LENA: Non mi piace udir rispondere
in futuro.

CORBOLO: Contraria all'altre femine
Sei tu, che tutte l'altre il futuro amano.

LENA:

Piaceno a me i presenti.

CORBOLO:

Ecco, presentoti

Cappon, fagiani, pan, vin, cacio: portali

In casa. Parmi che saria superfluo

Aver portati piccioni, vedendoti

Averne in seno due grossi bellissimi.

LENA:

Deh, ti venga il malanno.

CORBOLO:

Lascia pormivi

La man, ch'io tocchi come sono morbidi.

LENA:

Io ti darò d'un pugno. I denar, dicoti.

CORBOLO:

Ma le fatiche mie, Lena, che premio

Hanno d'aver? ch'io son cagion potissima*

Che i venticinque fiorin ti si diano.

LENA:

Che vòl tu?

CORBOLO:

Ch'io tel dica? Quel che dandomi,

E se ne dessi a cento, non pòl perdere.

LENA:

Io non intendo.

CORBOLO:

Io 'l dirò chiaro.

LENA:

Portami

I denar, ch'io non so senz'essi intendere.

[* Given the context and general tone, I have taken "potissima" as intended to carry some of the sense of "potta" and, accordingly, have attempted to reflect that in my translation.]

82 In La commedia del Cinquecento Vol.I ed. Guido Davico Bonino, (Torino, 1977)

83 *Ibid.* p. 195 fn.

84 In an essay included as an introduction to Aretino's Sonetti lussuriosi e pasquinati (Roma 1980) p. 30.

85 Christopher Cairns, Pietro Aretino and the Republic of Venice (Firenze, 1985) Chapter II.

86 Giorgio Petrocchi, "La fortuna europea dell'Aretino" in Le théâtre italien et l'Europe XV^e - XVII^e Siècles (Paris, 1983) p. 102.

87 Cairns, p. 36.

88 Oscar James Campbell, "The Relation of *Epicoene* to Aretino's *Il Marescalco*," in PMLA 46 (1931), pp.752-762.

89 Giammaria Mazzuchelli, Vita di Pietro Aretino (Milano, 1830) p.218.

90 *Ibid.*, p.218.

91 Herrick, Italian Comedy p.89.

92 La cortigiana in La commedia del Cinquecento *op.cit.*

(Iv.vii.p.278.)

TOGNA: ... ché merita ogni male lo imbriacone.

93 (V.xxv.p.313.)

PARABOLANO: ... non è poco che un mio pari confessi a un suo minore aver mal fatto.

94 (V.xxv.p.312.)

PARABOLANO: Tu, fornaio, ripigliati la tua moglie per buona e per bella; perché le mogli d'oggi di son tenute più caste quando elle son più puttane...

Io perdono a te, Alvigia, perché non ti dovea credere, e per aver fatto ciò che s'appartiene a la tua professione...

Perdono anche a te, Rosso, perché tu sei greco, e hai fatto tratto da greco, e con astuzia di greco.

95 (V.xxv.pp.313-4.)

96 (V.xxv.p.313.)

PARABOLANO: ... le corna degli uomini che sono contra la povertà.

97 (V.xxv.p.313.)

ARCOLANO: Basciami, sú.

TOGNA: Fatti in costà, fradiciume, non mi toccare.

98 James Cleugh, The Divine Aretino (London, 1965) p.160.

99 Pietro Aretino, Lettere Vol.I (Bari, 1913) Letter No.CXXXVI.

"...servo de le lite e spedale de le querele."

"...Lascia i lor lamenti a le orecchie dei mercanti; lascia i lor ghiribizzie a chi sa bastonarle e a chi può comportarle."

100 Cairns, p.97.

101 (II.vii.p.227.)

ALVIGIA: Lambiche da stillare erbe colte a la luna nuova, acque da levar lentigini, unzioni da levar macchie del volto, una ampolla di lagrime d'amanti, olio di risuscitare...la carne.

ROSSO: Qual carne?

ALVIGIA: De la... tu m'intendi.

ROSSO: De la brachetta?

ALVIGIA: Sí.

ROSSO: Ah, ah!

ALVIGIA: Ella mi lascia strettoie da ritirar poppe che pendeno...il lattovaro da impregnare e da spregnare...un fiasco d'orina vergine...carta non nata, lune d'impiccati a torto, polvere da uccider gelosi, incanti da far impazzire, orazioni da far dormire e ricette da far ringiovanire: mi lascia uno spirito costretto... In un orinale.

102 Sanesi, I:pp.234-5

... essa deriva piuttosto da quella vecchia che brevemente rappresentó il Boccaccio nella novella decima della quinta giornata del *Decamerone*. Ma ne deriva solo per ciò che si riferisce all'idea iniziale...Si veda, infatti, che cosa dice il Boccaccio: <<...si domesticó con una vecchia che pareva pur santa Verdiana che dà beccare alle serpe, la quale sempre coi paternostri in mano andava ad ogni perdonanza, né mai d'altro che della vita dei santi Padri ragionava, o delle piaghe di san Francesco, e quasi da tutti era tenuta una santa>>.

103 (II.vii.p.228.)

ALVIGIA: E che coscienza era la sua! La vigilia de la Pentecoste non mangiava carne. La vigilia di Natale digiunava in pane e in vino, la quaresima da qualche uovo fresco in fuore si portava da romita.

104 (III.xii.p.365.)

GUARDIANO: ...la tua maestra stará venticinque giorni in purgatorio circum circa, e poi andrà per cinque o sei di nel limbo, e poi dextram patris, celi celorum.

ALVIGIA: Egli s'è detto pur di no, e ch'ella è perduta.

GUARDIANO: Noi saprei io?

ALVIGIA: Lingue serpentine!

105 (I.viii.p.203.)

VALERIO: Sono piú i drappi che gli dona l'anno, che non vale egli.

106 (I.vii.p.203.)

ROSSO: Diamogli, acciò che gli altri suoi pari imparino a vivere.

107 (II.vii.p.229.)

ROSSO: Tu vali piú al mio intendimento, che un destro a chi ha preso le pillole.

108 (III.viii.p.261.)

PARABOLANO: Altro sapore hanno le gentil madonne.

ROSSO: E' vero, perché non pisciano come l'altre.

109 (IV.xv.p.284.)

GIUDEO: Cancaro a la falfa.

110 (IV.ix.p.279.)

ARCOLANO: ...questa baldanzosetta di merda.

111 (I.vii.pp.202-3.)

ROSSO: ...il quondam prior di Capua, che, quando orinava, da un paggio si faceva snodar la brachetta, e da un altro tirar fuora il rosignuolo.

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- 112 (I.xviii.p.211.)
PESCATORE: Ahi, sodomi!
- 113 (I.xxii.p.215.)
MAESTRO ANDREA: ...ne la seconda tratteremo del Culiseo ... Il tesoro e la consolazion di Roma.
- 114 La venexiana in La commedia del Cinquecento Vol.I ed. Guido Davico Bonino (Torino, 1977)
- 115 Giorgio Padoan, "La venexiana: <<non fabula non comedia, ma vera historia>>" in Lettere italiane Jan.-March 1967, pp.1-54.
- 116 Antonio Gramsci, Letteratura e vita nazionale (Torino, 1955) p.70.
...una bellissima opera d'arte.
- 117 Padoan, pp.52-53.
- 118 Benedetto Croce, "Intorno alla commedia italiana del rinascimento" in La critica (1930) p.98.
...sobrio e incisivo disegno di tutti i caratteri.
- 119 *op. cit.*
- 120 Ireneo Sanesi, "La Venexiana" in Nuova Antologia LXIV (1929) pp.273-281.

121 (I.iv.pp.337/339/341.)

ANGELA: Le mie carne brusciano. Moro de doia.

NENA: Avèu frebe? Lassème un puoco tocar.

ANGELA: La frebe xè qua entro, nel cuor.

NENA: De la bon'ora, ciameremo misser Antonio, el nostro medico.

ANGELA: No xè, in tuta Veniesà, si no un medico che sàvesse medigar Anzola.

NENA: No, si no quei che no xè castroni.

ANGELA: Ti no intende. Digo un sol omo.

NENA: Cussì vollo dir: un om grande, belo, possente?

ANGELA: Digo un sol, che xè un viso de anzolo, un musin d'oro, vegnuo qua dal Paradiso....

NENA: Disè un puoco zò che volè far.

ANGELA: Butarghe cussì le braze al colò, zicar quele lavrine e tegnirlo stretto stretto.

NENA: E po no altro?

ANGELA: La linguina in boca.

NENA: Meio lo saveràe far mi, ca esso.

ANGELA: Quela bochina dolçe pì che no xè el zùcaro!

NENA: Vu no v'arecordè che sun dona....

ANGELA: Voio star qua, E, se ti vul che dorma, gètame cussì le to brazze; e mi sererò gi oci e te crederò el fio.

NENA: Volèu cussì?

ANGELA: Sì, cara fia.

NENA: Me credèu mo?

ANGELA: No ancora. De qua un pezeto.

NENA: Vogio dormir, mi. Guardè, non me strenzè...

ANGELA: Vostu farne un piàser?

NENA: Che?

ANGELA: Cara, dolçe, sta'cussì un poco; e po comenza a biastemar, azò che ti creda omo.

NENA: Non sciò zò che dir, mi.

ANGELA: Biastema el Corpo de Cristo; menzona le parole sporche, co fa i òmeni.

NENA: Disè: che parole?

ANGELA: Quele sporcàrie che se dise in bordelo. No sastu?

NENA: Se no dormo, le dirò...

122 (II.i.p.343.)

NENA: La cossa xè difiçile: condur el fio, farlo secreto...E po una dona no puol.

123 III.iv.p.369.

BERNARDO: N'het sentiát? Oì farèf da mi icsf, vicio com a'so', s'a'gh'avess ordèn da podf drizà la novela.

124 III.vii.p.375.

BERNARDO: Foss icsf a l'ordem mi, che t'arèf stramesiat in sta not com s'fa li sèmoli.

125 III.vii.p.377.

NENA:...li aghi no'l movaràe.

BERNARDO: Set perché? Perché me l'ha tant strucàt in zoventut, ch'adess a'l vol dormf d'ostinazió.

126 Garzoni, quoted by K.M. Lea, *Italian Popular Comedy* (Oxford 1934), p.56.

127 i.e. the Mask of the *commedia dell'arte's* Zanni.

128 Padoan, p.43.

Nella Veniexiana infatti vivono personaggi, e non tipi. Persino il facchino bergamasco - per sè il più facile a cadere nella tipizzazione (e quindi nella maschera), come accade appunto in numerose commedie cinquecentesche - appare qui definito in una precisa fisionomia di uomo sicuro, che sa fare i fatti suoi ed è fidato nello sbrigare quelli degli altri: fisionomia che prende forma anche proprio dal suo dialetto, dal suo parlar proverbiale, dalle sue allusioni oscene, da quel suo continuo mescolare sacro e profano, dalla rozza ma schietta materialità delle sue immagini che si adegua alla materialità dei suoi ideali, che sono di guadagno concreto, di denaro, di cibo, di vesti: particolari che sono essi in funzione del personaggio, e non viceversa; e non è poco, in una commedia del Cinquecento.

129 II.ii.p.343.

BERNARDO: A't'parlarò po, una festa.

130 II.ii.p.347.

131 II.v.p.353.

BERNARDO:...af menarò sta not in *gloria in eselcis*.

132 II.v.p.353.

133 I.iii.pg 335.

VALERIA: Xèlo un zovene forestier co i cavèi negri?

ORIA: Madona sí: negri, trezzolài.

VALERIA: Che díselo?

ORIA: No l'ho volesto scoltar, mi.

VALERIA: O che maladeta zente che xè sorda a i besogni!

134 II.i.p.343.

NENA: Bernardo frar...

135 V.ii.p.393.

ORIA: Andè al vostro viazo, che non voglio niente da facchini.

The tone of this statement carries rather more than it does in translation since Oria here employs a very formal mode of address and moreover, uncharacteristically, speaks almost pure Tuscan Italian - for one of her rank, a snobbish affectation.

136 I.iii.p.335./V.vi.p.399.

ORIA: Madona Valeria, che volèu pagar? ché ve dirò de gnovo....

ORIA: Madona Valiera, che pagassè mo, che questo che vien cussì pesteando fosse Missier Iulio?

137 V.vi.p.401.

VALERIA: ...Misser Grandò...

138 I.iii.p.335.

VALERIA: Che? bestia! De la çizeta che xè vegnua?

139 I.iii.p.337.

VALERIA: Se ti'l scontre, fai reverenzia e di': <<La Madona ve reingrazia>>: sastu?

ORIA: No voio che Missier me çiga, po.

VALERIA: No çercar de Missier. Ti fa ciò che te dico mi, e tasi. Hastu inteso?

ORIA: Madona sí.

140 IV.vi.p.389.

VALERIA: ...disè a Anzola che Valiera ghe renderà el cambio, col tempo.

141 V.vi.p.399.

IULIO: Signora, non volio aver guadagnato piú che la grazia de Vostra Signoria, ché Quella se degna avermi in servitore suo.

VALERIA: Digo in mio mazor. Vu savè ben che pena m'avè dà, perché ho volesto esserve mazora. Ma da qua avanti voio esserve menora in ogni canto.

142 III.iii.p.365.

ANGELA: ...Spoia queste arme. Bevi un giozo, e reposàmo.

IULIO: Qui sun de Vostra Signoria tutto. Di beber, ho bevuto un poco; piú non mi comporta.

143 III.iii.pp.367-369.

ANGELA: Anima mia dolçe, credea che ti avessi portao aqua per amorzar el foco del mio peto, ma ti ha portao legna e carbon per farlo pi arder.

IULIO: Io venni libero a Vostra Signoria; ora sun legato piú che malfattore: vostro pregion, pregion de queste mammelline dolce.

ANGELA: Ah, giotonzelo, ti le base, sf? Guarda no le strucar, ché le cìgarà.

IULIO: Questa pomenina voglio per me; l'altra sii la vostra.

ANGELA: Sun contenta, perché la xè quella dal coresín.

IULIO: Volete che gli dica quattro parole?

ANGELA: Sf, di'zò che ti vul. Ah, ah! te me squassi el cor. Lassa che ti vogio morder in questa volta...

IULIO: Madonna, me avete abbrazzato: lassate che ve abbrazza ancora voi; et faremo le brazze.

ANGELA: Sí, ma dàmè la linguina.

IULIO: Voglio la tettina, che me avete donato.

ANGELA: No voio, se no ti mi dà la linguina. Ti strucarò con i dente, sí, a la fe'.

IULIO: Volete cussí?

ANGELA: Tuta tuta, sí.

144 I.i.p.333.

IULIO: Lodato Iddio che, giovene abbandonato a la fortuna cun puochi danari, me ha condotto in tal città com'è questa, nobile e dignissima, cognosciuto et reverito piú che non merita mia condicione.

145 III.vi.p.373.

ANGELA: Dormi; sírali, gi oci; ché volio far a mio modo.

IULIO: Pur che io non mora, sun qua per voi.

ANGELA: Meti cussí le braze.

IULIO: Vostra Signoria starà disconza.

ANGELA: Tasi e dormi, ché voio far a mio modo.

146 IV.iv.p.383.

IULIO: Peggior andata è questa de l'altra; ché quella era sicura, questa pericolosa. Quella non sperata è stata optima, questa ordinata serà tristissima.

147 V.vi.p.401.

IULIO: Comandàtime e dicète: <<Voglio cussí>>, ché vostro so'io.

148 "diavol" & "cancar!"

149 II.ii.p.345.

BERNARDO: A'l se scrif *i* con una altra pena, che col penarol da l'ingiostri.

150 III.iv.p.369.

BERNARDO: Al sona! sono oto ori. Color non gli a'sent: ma sent bé mi, ch'a'i sera su li p'gor in la stala.

151 III.vi.p.373.

BERNARDO: Orbé! A'n'è plu tep da poltronezà. Costor no fomaràf ma'de menà la polenta.

II

"A SOLEMN JEST..." INNOVATION AND MIXED-GENRE

While the early dramatic Renaissance in Italy saw a comic theatre largely content with translations and re-cyclings from the Plauto-Terentian catalogue of plays, the vitality of Italian popular culture ensured that the Neo-Plautine drama exceeded its original in its broad, and often bawdy, typology. This, as the *commedia dell'arte* in particular was to demonstrate, had a lasting appeal for those who saw Comedy in a light more hedonistic than moral. Its simplistic *formulae*, however, necessitated much ingenuity on the part of the dramatists in order to retain any freshness and interest. Among the purist adherents of the Classical comedy, this led to a preference for the Terentian double plot over the more basic Plautine structure and to a modernisation of both scene and participants. The popular character of much of Cinquecento theatre made it natural for writers in search of greater dramatic novelty to turn to the well-known *novelle* collections for both plot elements and types while a humanist education provided them with exemplars in Graeco-Roman romance.

Railing from the pulpit by such as Cardinal Borromeo, coupled with the post-Tridentine literary ethos, brought pressure to bear on the writers of *commedie* to imbue their works with a morality basically incompatible with the presentation of a wily servant, legally, morally and sexually unscrupulous, as the prime mover in the plot. This led to a greater dependence on novellistic and romance elements and a corresponding movement away from Classical norms. In this way, the territory of Comedy was often subject to *contaminatio* from that of Tragedy. Simultaneously, aesthetic experiments were proceeding in the opposite direction driven by authors anxious to widen the strict Neo-Aristotelian interpretation of drama by seeking to include the Pastoral and Tragicomedy as valid genres. To justify themselves and satisfy the academicians, various *apologiae* were produced, most notably the *Discorsi* of Giraldi Cinthio and of Tasso, which attempted to provide a theoretical and moral basis for such practice (see Introduction). Thus, while the strict separation of genres continued, and has continued, to be observed by many, the mixed-genre drama, with its combination of risk, sacrifice and passion, became well established as an alternative to Plauto-Terentian comedy.

Its major strength in the Counter-Reformation *ambiente* was the diminution or absence of the morally-discredited *mezzano* as a principal player and the metamorphosis of Classical Fate into an acceptably Christian Divine Providence as the rewarder of lovers' constancy. The complex interweaving of tragic, comic, novellistic and romantic elements gradually became the dramatic form most typical of the Counter-Reformation - and thus the type of comedy most "ransacked to furnish the play houses in London."¹ by those English dramatists, particularly Shakespeare, who used Italian literary culture as a source of material. Its most complete realisation as an instrument of Counter-Reformation morality is arguably to be found in the works of Sforza Oddi which shall be discussed in the next chapter. In the present chapter, I shall first examine the development of the *pastorale* and then look at three non-pastoral comedies which, while falling short of what might be termed the Oddian "ideal", broadly represent the innovations typical of Counter-Reformation theatre.

1. Pagan Pastoral

The early *pastorale*, to a large extent, shares the lax sexual morality of the Plauto-Terentian comedy. Even Giraldi, whose *tragedia di fin lieto* emphasised divine compassion and a Providential outcome (see the discussion on Epitia which follows below), depicts a rather crude, if ultimately rebuked, sexuality in his Egle (1545). In this *pastorale* he attempts to recreate the satyr play of antiquity by fusing elements of the pastoral literary tradition, alive in the vernacular since Boccaccio's Ameto, with, from the Cyclops, Silenus and the satyr chorus, and the Ovidian Pan and Syrinx. Whereas Euripides emphasised the bibulous aspect of the satyric personality, Giraldi concentrates on its lustfulness.

1.1 Egle²

The plot centres around the desire of the satyrs for the chaste nymphs who inhabit their *scena boschereccia*, a desire which finds some little satisfaction in the mere contemplation of the nymphs' charms. This uneasy equilibrium is upset by the reported interest of the celestial gods in those whom the satyrs regard as their own. The truth of the gods' intentions is confirmed by the drunken Sileno and his consort, the nymph Egle.³

When Egle, as the satyrs' advocate, fails to sway the nymphs in their favour the satyrs, led by Satiro and Fauno, organise a trap. Egle considers the satyrs none-too-bright and is not optimistic about their chances of success. Nevertheless, the satyrs, citing the nymphs' cruelty, loudly feign abandonment of the forest leaving behind the junior Satirini to the nymphs' care. Egle will arrange that the little satyrs (who, rather comically, prefer their new domestic arrangements) ask the nymphs to dance with them thus ensuring that they put down their weapons, at which point the satyrs will ravish the nymphs. Pan, who has just been rebuffed by Syrinx, sees this as his opportunity and joins the satyrs' ambush.

Silvano subsequently describes how the satyrs seize the nymphs who escape by shrugging off their clothes and running through the woods. Pan enters lamenting the transformation of the satyrs' prey into flowers, trees, rivers and fountains. He shows Silvano the syrinx flute he has made and Silvano, as the moral spokesman, tells a somewhat unconvinced Pan to be thankful that he, unlike the poor satyrs, can at least console himself in the arms of his beautiful wife Ege. The mention of his wife causes Pan's distress to increase but his cry of "No more, Silvano!" goes unheeded by the pedantic ancient who rounds off the play with sententious moralising:

'What heaven forbids should not be desired; for no good end can come of it.'⁴

Despite this injunction to obey heaven, it is apparent that Giraldi's intent is, first and foremost, to reanimate a pagan cultural form rather than remodel it in accordance with Christian mores. On the very eve of the Council of Trent, Giraldi makes it plain that the *pastorale* has yet to acquire a distinctly Christian tone. His nuncio, Silvano, opens the play with a monologue lamenting modern humanity's lack of reverence for the sylvan gods. Since there are no non-mythological characters represented in the work, and since this lack of respect accordingly plays no part in the action, the most likely conclusion to be drawn from this statement is that it reflects authorial regret at the passing of an arguably more colourful age.

With regard to instructive qualities it might be argued that *Egle* represents the encrypted Platonism which Richard Cody identifies as a feature of the genre:

In its aesthetic rather than ethical or cosmological tradition, Platonism always seeks to comprehend in a single formula the dualism of a 'delight in the sensible universe' and a 'beatific vision of divine perfection'.⁵

The contrast between earthy satyrs and chaste nymphs would seem to corroborate this, but such a vision of the world is certainly not unique to Christianity. It is reasonable to assume that if the satyrs (and *Egle* herself) were conceived by the author as component parts of a world-view informed more by religion than philosophy, then the characters, however symbolic their function, would evince qualities inherent in that religion. This is not the case in *Egle*.

The satyrs' lustfulness is not presented in a condemnatory way and their final come-uppance displays more of the characteristics of a ritualised inevitability than of punishment. Their stupidity, remarked upon by *Egle* (II.iii), serves instead to make them rather endearing, almost cartoon-like characters and we are specifically asked to sympathise with them by

Silvano (V.v) who calls them "poor little fellows" ("*poverelli*").

The nymphs, throughout the play, remain untouched by the Christian compassion which is to be an important transformational element in the later pastorals. They only abandon the role of Diana's chaste votresses to take on that of equally chaste adoptive mothers to the Satiri Piccioli.

The one nymph who has as it were defected, Egle, has contracted an alliance with the permanently drunk Sileno. They seem perfectly happy, apart from the occasional drunken quarrel, and she shows herself completely in agreement with a philosophy which has little to do with the lofty ideals later expressed by Tasso⁶ and Guarini:

The more I look, the more I see that in the world there is no good without delight, and that only pleasure sweetens life's bitter moments. Thus the very life we live would directly turn to death if it were deprived of that pleasure which sustains it. And here I conclude: let him who lives take delight as his purpose, and among the delights let those of Venus and Bacchus be supreme. (II,i,p.15)⁷

Although she fails to sway the nymphs, Egle's arguments against their chastity are well-constructed and, at her citing of Diana/Selene's mythologically attested passion for Endymion (III,i,p.23), they can only rather pathetically reply, "We will not believe what you have said about our Diana."⁸ (III,i,p.23). As the only enjoyers of conjugal happiness in the piece, she and Sileno are the model which one half of the cast aspire to and the other half abhor. Insofar as they are sympathetically, if comically, depicted, and insofar as Egle displays more intelligence than anyone else in the play, it is difficult not to discern a degree of authorial approval of this tipsy couple very much at odds with the censorious attitudes of the dawning Counter-Reformation.

Agostino Beccari's *Sacrificio*⁹ (1554) takes a step away from Ovid and towards Virgil in its inclusion of shepherds and their loves.

1.2 Sacrificio

Three shepherds are, for differing reasons, unable to pair with their chosen nymphs: Erasto cannot persuade Callinome who wears a girdle, given her by her patroness Diana, which protects her against Cupid's arrows; Carpalio is loved by his Melidia but both fear the opposition of her brother, Pimonio; and Turico loves Stellinia but she has transferred her affections to an unwilling Erasto. Meanwhile a satyr lurks awaiting his opportunity to ravish a nymph.

Callinome is tricked by Stellinia into attending the rites of Pan - forbidden to Diana's followers - and is sentenced to fight a wild boar. Erasto saves her with an ointment which renders her invisible and he thus wins her love; Stellinia is abducted by the satyr but rescued by Turico; and Melidia is united with Carpalio when her tyrannical brother falls into an enchanted pond and is turned into a wolf.

There is no suggestion in this play that chastity is of any particular importance since Callinome's is only maintained by her magic girdle, Turico and Stellinia have already consummated their relationship (and Stellinia is contemplating another), and Melidia's elderly guardian, Ofelio, far from sharing her brother's concern for her virginity, suggests that Carpalio deflower her and, in the event that this is discovered (presumably through pregnancy), that she blame the deed on a passing satyr or, indeed, on one of the heavenly gods:

We will say that some satyr or faun or, even better, some disguised god from Heaven had her, taking from her that flower which another should have plucked.¹⁰ (I.iv.p.251)

This rather cynical suggestion reveals a lack of authorial concern for piety and sexual morality, pagan or Christian.

The stage is cleared for action by the attendance of the rest of the forest's population at Pan's sacrificial games, which give the play its title. The rites of Pan and the complexity of the plot prefigure the religious background and the contrasted pairs of lovers which we will see in Guarini's Pastor fido (1590).

The satyr, again simply Satiro, is rather wittier than his brethren in Egle and is much given to ironic comment on the deficiencies of his fellow forest-dwellers. Thus, when Melidia prays to the gods to take her troublesome brother from this world, Satiro is tut-tutting behind a tree,

MEL. Why do you not take my brother from this world to save two such faithful lovers?

SAT. Look, see how she wants her brother to die so that she can give herself as prey to some

common shepherd.¹¹ (II.iii.p.265)

and, when the Silenus-like figure of Orenio comes puffing and panting in search of his protégé, Erasto, it is Satiro who informs us that the old man is a drunkard. This is very much a case of the pot calling the kettle black since Satiro has earlier stolen Turico's wine which, in true satyric fashion, he drinks with gusto:

Oh, oh I smell wine there! Bacchus, Bacchus, father of joy may you be blessed. Oh how good it is!¹² (I.v.p.254)

Apart from his role as a commentator however, the satyr is a somewhat pathetic figure. Like Giraldi's Silvano he protests that the shepherds no longer have any respect for the satyrs' divinity,

Oh, how little revered are we Satyrs and Fauns now. No more are we held to be Gods, nor even Demigods!¹³ (I.v.p.253)

and Turico does in fact confirm that the satyr is regarded as a mere mundane pest:

He's usually the most cowardly, uncouth satyr to be found in Arcadia nowadays; and it's believed among us that he doesn't possess a trace of divinity, not a whit.¹⁴ (I.v.p.256)

When he manages to trap Melidia, she easily tricks the gullible fool and leaves him entangled in his own net - again woefully protesting the lack of respect accorded him, "Is there no respect for satyrs?"¹⁵ (II.iii.p.276).

The lack of moral perspective in the play is underlined by another incident which again results in the duping of the satyr. Carpalio comes upon the sleeping Stellinia and, as a comradely gesture to his friend, ties her up and goes off to fetch Turico so that he may do as he wishes with her. Satiro is persuaded by Stellinia that she will make love to him if he frees her but she demands that he be blindfolded to accommodate her modesty. Cunningly, as he thinks, the satyr insists that he hold onto her clothing to prevent her renegeing on the deal. When he is blindfolded she, like the nymphs in *Egle*, slips out of her outer garments, ties them to a tree, and flees leaving Satiro begging the empty air for a kiss. Since the satyr's intentions are precisely those with which Carpalio credits Turico it is difficult to feel that Satiro is doing anything particularly reprehensible given the *milieu* in which he is operating. Indeed the only

time Satiro is portrayed as anything other than pathetic or comic is when he once more traps Stellinia and reveals his lust and rage with a savage outburst,

I will strip you naked; then in your total nakedness I will make a wound which will cover you in blood.¹⁶ (V.II.p.326)

but this kind of statement from the comically gullible satyr is, to say the least, rather out of character, appearing more a gratuitously sensationalist line inserted by Beccari to titillate his audience and, perhaps, to lay a much-belated claim to moral contrast within the play. It is interesting nevertheless to note that Tasso, in his Aminta, employs very similar language, as we shall see, to define his Satiro as essentially the villain of the piece.

There is no ethical or allegorical perspective in the Sacrificio and it is difficult to treat it as other than a pastoral farce - especially at the final uniting of the couples when Ofelio reveals why Melidia's brother can no longer oppose her love for Carpalio: climbing a tree to escape a wild boar, he has fallen into a lake which turns people into wolves for nine years. Melidia's response to this is a less-than-sisterly, "Alas! Nine years isn't much!"¹⁷ (V.vi.p.335).

2 Christianised Pastoral

Torquato Tasso, as we have seen, intended his poetry to be morally instructive and thus imposed on his version of the satyr play a superstructure of contemporary Christian thought. The spiritual and animal principles, scarcely separated in Egle and the Sacrificio, are therefore, in Aminta (1573), more distinctly personified as Aminta and Satiro.

2.1 Aminta¹⁸

Aminta loves Silvia who is, however, sworn to chastity. Her friend Dafne tries to persuade her to reward Aminta's devotion but to no avail. A satyr has also been rebuffed by Silvia and decides to rape her. Dafne and Aminta's friend Tirsi decide to bring Aminta and Silvia together. Tirsi tells Aminta that the nymph is bathing at the goddess Diana's fountain and that he may surprise her there. Tirsi later recounts what happens. Aminta reluctantly lets himself be persuaded to go to the fountain where they find Silvia, naked and tied to a tree. The satyr is preparing to rape her. Aminta chases off the satyr and, with dutifully lowered eyes, unties Silvia who runs into the woods.

A shepherdess, Nerina, brings bad news: Silvia's veil has been found on a spot where a group of wolves were chewing some bones. Aminta, thinking that Silvia is dead, runs off in despair. Silvia, however, is alive. Dafne tells her that Aminta has probably killed himself for love of her and her heart begins to soften. Ergasto, another shepherd, reports that Aminta has in fact thrown himself from a cliff. Silvia repents totally and vows to give Aminta a decent burial before killing herself.

In a brief final act, an old man, Elpino, tells us that Aminta is alive. His fall was broken by bushes and now he and Silvia are united.

While each character contains both elements, and therefore possesses the free will so essential to the Catholic definition of humanity, the satyr has clearly succumbed to the animal side of his nature which, in keeping with the mythic setting, is manifest in his "Hairy chest" and "Velvet legs"¹⁹ (II,i,p.49). Indeed the satyr, as the physical symbol of moral deficiency, could almost be seen as a type of mediaeval Vice were it not for his discourse which ranges from the poetic to the bestial. On first acquaintance he is heard lamenting the pain of love in a decidedly lyrical manner:

Tiny is the bee and yet her tiny sting, wounds deep and sore: but what tinier than Love who enters each close space and hides himself therein? Now shaded by eyelashes, now in the minute turns of a blond lock, now in the dimples of a beautiful cheek's sweet smile: thus it makes such great and irreparably mortal wounds.²⁰ (II,i,p.48)

Satiro, unlike the conventional courtly lover, is not content to accept love's wounds as simply a spur to his poetic Muse. His 'beloved enemy', Silvia, engages his anger more than his love for her refusal of his advances. He correctly identifies his failure as due to a lack in himself but, like his dramatic predecessors, fails to see that it is the purely animal nature of his passion (reflected in his appearance) which repels the chaste nymph. Instead he ascribes it to his poverty, "Since only gold wins, only gold reigns."²¹ (II,i,p.50), and, seeing himself as the injured party, decides on a revenge expressed in a sexual metaphor which is, in its brutality (cf. the Sacrificio), completely at odds with his earlier lyricism:

If I can wrap this hand in her hair, it will not leave there before I take my revenge by bathing my arms [i.e. weapons] in her blood.²² (II,i,p.51)

This satyr, unlike his rather infantile brethren in Egle and Sacrificio, is clearly capable of elevated thought, but does not permit this to inform his actions which remain those of a beast. His rapid change of style from courtly lover to rapist also underlines the instability of his emotions which, being entirely self-centred, do not entertain Silvia's welfare as a

consideration. The fact that he is the sole representative of his tribe referred to in this play also indicates a down-playing of the satyric element in the genre and a tendency to place the satyr within the Christian canon as demonic rather than divine.

Aminta, on the other hand, is constant in his devotion, the unselfishness of which should preclude any such action as Satiro's. The advice he receives is designed to encourage him to boldness but, unlike Aristeo and the Satyrs, he will not pursue his unwilling nymph. He too uses the bee as a metaphor for the sweetness and the pain of love:

Not even the bee takes such sweet juice from any flower as the sweet honey which I gathered then from those fresh roses.

...that sweetness, mixed with secret poison, descended to my heart.²³ (I,ii,p.38)

His reaction to that pain is not the self-gratifying rage of the satyr but the self-denying resignation of the constant lover:

To please her it only remains for me to die: and I will die willingly.²⁴ (I,ii,p.39)

This resignation is given a severe test when he falls victim to the plotting of Tirsi (a character to some extent representing Tasso himself) and Dafne (a nymph who, like Egle, has abandoned the chaste life). When urged by Tirsi to confront the bathing Silvia at Diana's fount he is horrified (II,iii,p.65) and it is only with the greatest of difficulty that he is persuaded to go there. Tirsi admits this when telling of the unexpected outcome of his plans:

He therefore went there doubtful and uncertain, moved not by his own heart but by my demanding pressure: and often in doubt he would have turned round but I, against his will, then urged him on.²⁵ (III,i,p.74)

Thus Silvia's two lovers converge on the same spot for, apparently, the same purpose. It is evident however from Tirsi's comment and Aminta's later actions in releasing the nymph that Aminta is incapable of the action that Satiro contemplates. As it is, fortune gives him the chance to thwart the satyr's plans and drive him away. Aminta's response to his beloved's plight is the very mirror of her regard for her own chastity:

And she had no reason to fear, since she had noted Aminta's respect.²⁶ (III,i,p.77)

It is the very constancy of this "respect" which eventually wins Silvia, although at desperate

cost.

Given the post-Tridentine literary atmosphere and his own commitment to "moral habits and the principles of life", Tasso is perhaps sailing a little close to the wind in employing the *topos* of the naked nymph and it is clear that his hero's purity of mind is placed in doubt by even the most reluctant acquiescence with Tirsi's plan. But at least here we see the ultimate triumph of human idealism. It is Aminta's own idealism which makes him worthy of her love and it is idealism which makes him contemplate the ultimate self-sacrifice. Tasso is here commenting approvingly on the transformational power of self-sacrifice, even though, in his Tirsi persona, he is less sanguine about its eventual benefits. Aminta's gesture however can also be seen as having a Christian dimension in that the transformation it works in Silvia's affections may be regarded as his redemption from suffering.

In Aminta the protagonist achieves his aim without any surrender of principle, and principle, as we can see by its complete absence in Satiro's character, is a quality of the divine side of human nature rather than of the bestial. Another quality which this satyr lacks is love. His passion for Silvia, given the physical violence of its manifestation, can only be called lust. Aminta truly loves, and the appearance of Amore/Cupid as the Prologue underscores the heavenly nature of true love.

Heavenly approval of true love is again displayed in Battista Guarini's Il pastor fido 27(c.1590).

2.2 Il pastor fido

Silvio is a chaste hunter on the model of Euripides's Hippolytus. He is betrothed to Amarilli solely in order to nullify a curse laid by Diana, angered by the infidelity of one of her followers: an oracle has decreed that unless two Arcadians of semi-divine extraction marry, a nymph must be sacrificed every year to Diana and any nymph found to be unfaithful must also die unless someone volunteers to take her place. Silvio and Amarilli are descended from Hercules and Pan. Mirtillo, a foreigner, loves Amarilli but, on hearing of the curse, despairs.

Montano and Titiro, the fathers of the betrothed couple, discuss Silvio's lack of interest and Montano reveals that years ago he lost another son in a great flood. Despite Silvio's disdain for women, he is loved by Dorinda. Silvio is more interested in his dog. A wanton nymph Corisca teases an infatuated satyr until, enraged, he grabs her by the hair. He is left holding a hair-piece and she runs off laughing.

Amarilli catches Mirtillo in a game of Blind Man's Buff and he confesses his love for her. She rebukes him and tells him to leave her. Alone, she admits that she loves him. Corisca overhears her and, jealous of Amarilli, determines to do her a bad turn. She tells her that Silvio is having an affair with another nymph and that she will show Amarilli the cave where he meets her. Amarilli agrees to go to the cave.

Corisca then tells Mirtillo that Amarilli has an assignation with another man and, wild with jealousy, he enters the cave. The satyr, thinking he is impeding a love-affair of Corisca's, blocks the cave entrance with a stone and thus Mirtillo and Amarilli are trapped and subsequently arrested. Amarilli is condemned to die.

Silvio accidentally wounds Dorinda with an arrow. Full of remorse, he realises that he loves her and, since Amarilli is to die, there is no obstacle to their marriage. Dorinda is not seriously injured and will recover.

An old man, Carino, has come in search of his son, Mirtillo only to hear that he has offered to be executed in Amarilli's place. Amarilli has refused the offer but has been overruled by the priests. Montano is about to carry out the sacrifice when Carino recognises Mirtillo and stops the ceremony. It is revealed that Mirtillo is Carino's adopted son given to him by the servant Dameto during the great flood. Dameto reveals that he did this because of a prophecy that the boy would die by his father's hand. Tirenio, a blind soothsayer, points out that the curse on Arcadia may be lifted by the marriage of Amarilli and Mirtillo who, like Silvio, is a demi-god. Corisca, seeing that Providence is against her, repents and begs forgiveness, which is granted.

The oracle's statement,

That which offends will have no end until Cupid joins two seeds of heaven, and the high piety of a faithful shepherd amends the ancient error of a faithless woman.²⁸ (I,ii,p.168)

although initially seeming to sanction the mutually antipathic union of Silvio and Amarilli, does in fact give divine blessing to the love of Mirtillo for Amarilli; a love whose purity is tried, like that of Aminta for Silvia, to the point of death. Love in Il pastor fido however involves not only the testing of an individual's constancy, but also has a relationship to the general good which echoes contemporary cosmology's linking of God's love to the motion of the Spheres, "the high Mover of heaven"²⁹(I,v,p.193):

We have a judgement and a sacrifice, with all the panoply of priesthood, and this implies a network around the sentiment of love, no longer isolated, as in Tasso, for its own sake and its own fulfilment, but here enmeshed with the welfare of the state, and the rights of parents.³⁰

While Guarini's play is constructed of similar elements to the Aminta, its governing ethos, as we have seen above, is more comprehensively delineated. Thus, for example, we see Amarilli inveigh against materialism:

To my careful eye, these mortal goods are nothing but evil: he who has an abundance of them

owns the least, and is possessed more than possessing: they are not riches, but rather bonds against people's liberty.³¹ (II,v,p.225)

And the Chorus uses a comparison with the Golden Age of Man to verbally chastise contemporary ethical shortcomings (IV,ix,pp.373-6).

The transformation of Arcadia through Mirtillo's self-sacrificing love is presaged by the transformation of Silvio, a chaste hunter on the model of Euripides's and Seneca's Hippolytus, who, on realising his love for Dorinda, destroys his bow and acknowledges Amore "Formerly my enemy, now lord of all my thoughts."³² (IV,ix,p.370). As in *Aminta*, love has penetrated the walls of an idealised chastity through the Christian agency of pity.

Neither Mirtillo nor Dorinda, when faced with the seemingly implacable rejection of their love, fails to maintain that love unchanged. They are accordingly rewarded with the partners their fidelity merits. Corisca, on the other hand, is not disposed to such a waiting game, and the measure of her love (or lack of it) is her scheming preparedness to enact revenge if thwarted. In this she parallels Tasso's satyr but using 'woman's wiles' in place of brute strength:

First I shall try flattery and pleading, revealing the love but not the lover. If that does not serve I will employ deception; and if that does not work my scorn will take an unforgettable revenge. If you don't want my love, Mirtillo, you must try my hate.³³ (I,iii,p.175)

She is well-matched by Satiro whom we first meet raging against female vanity, trickery, and Corisca herself who, despite seeing him as an "unlovable thing"³⁴ (IV,i,p.313), has used him to her own advantage, making him steal from the other nymphs "The bow from Lilla, the veil from Clori, the dress from Dafne, and the buskins from Silvia."³⁵ (II,vi,238). These corrupt versions of the love-gift indicate Satiro's basic and savage depravity. He too conspires at revenge and reveals that it would not be his first attempt to ravish her:

Twice already I've caught that evil one but she always escapes me, I don't know how...Oh, if I get her what a revenge I shall take, how I shall torment her!³⁶ (I,v,p.190)

When he does seize her he is comically dumped on his back holding a hair-piece which is as false as the love she once avowed him:

Faithless witch! Isn't it enough for you to have a false heart, face, word, smile, and look, but you must have false hair?³⁷ (II,vi,p.246)

The satyr here is once again the embodiment of moral depravity and his appearance clearly defines him as such. Corisca's other failed suitor, the human Coridone, possesses the spiritual qualities of compassion and forbearance, which identify him with the rest of the uniformly virtuous characters and serve to further estrange the anomalous Corisca and Satiro from the moral, if not the dramatic, sympathies of the reader. Coridone recognises Corisca's unworthiness, as does the satyr, but, when Coridone believes Corisca to be with another, unlike Satiro he scorns to revenge himself on either party and is content to let the nymph construct her own punishment:

Her own life shall be my revenge. Let her live in her infamy, let her live for her paramour.
Since she is as she is I do not hate her, feeling rather sorry for her than jealous of him.³⁸
(IV,vii,p.355)

The pagan elements in Il pastor fido are, as in the Aminta, much reduced and marginalised while Mirtillo's token 'pursuit' of Amarilli in the game of "Blind Man's Buff"³⁹, although evoking a sterner rebuffal, can hardly be compared to Aminta's intrusion on his nymph's toilette. The greater size of the work (three times larger than the Aminta) also gives more scope for moralising both implicitly and explicitly and this, with the Terentian double-plot full of upright virtuous characters, definitively tips the balance away from the Renaissance's "art for art's sake". The satyr, as the bad example, is not even accorded the limited privilege of lyricism granted his Amintan counterpart but expresses himself in strong bold language befitting one incapable of delicate reasoning, while Guarini makes the lascivious Corisca undergo a truly Christian repentance, spurning her coquette's tricks and fancies:

But what are you doing to me, insidious treacherous longings, adornments of my unworthy body, stains of my soul? Away with you; I have had enough of your mockery and deception. And, because you are dust, go to dust. Once I armed myself with wanton love; now I will take the spoils and trophies of honesty.⁴⁰ (V,ix,p.449)

The later pastorals attracted (and continued to attract) heavy criticism for their supposed lush sensuality.⁴¹ I think I have demonstrated however that, although Tasso and Guarini may have failed to please the critical ascetics, their work has a Catholic moral cast

which works pre-dating the Counter-Reformation simply do not display. Whitfield's observation holds as true for Il pastor fido as it does for Tasso's satyr play when he states that the earlier pastoral dramas "remind us that the Aminta is a corrective as well as a concentration, not the exaggeration of a trend, but its purification."⁴²

3 Non-Pastoral Mixed-Genre

The three plays herein examined are not intended to reflect any exact chronological progression since, as a comparison, for example, between Oddi and Della Porta would illustrate, authorial idealism could, and did, run ahead of the expectations of inquisitors. The division, furthermore, of Italy into city-states meant that local political attitudes to the Papacy could hinder the implementation of the Tridentine ideal - it is no accident that Venice, frequently at odds with the Church's temporal ambition and a refuge for those who had offended the (non-Venetian) powers-that-be,⁴³ provided the seed-bed for the frequently scurrilous *commedia dell'arte*. Its powerful booksellers' and printers' lobby also ensured that many popular works escaped Church censorship within the Veneto. Milan, despite being the theological province of the witch-burning Cardinal Borromeo (1565-84), had a Spanish civil government whose touchiness in matters of jurisdiction forced the Cardinal, in 1583, to concede the *Gelosi* theatre company's right to perform - this despite Borromeo's vehement opposition to the theatre (see Introduction).⁴⁴ On the other hand, the Neapolitan Inquisitors, if their treatment of Giambattista Della Porta were typical, could enforce the will of the Papacy without apparent hindrance while smaller jurisdictions, such as Oddi's Perugia, would naturally reflect the ethos of their temporally and spiritually powerful superior. L'amor costante and Epitia have therefore been chosen for their innovatory blending of genres and character types and Gli duoi fratelli rivali as an excellent example of a late *commedia grave* which has been subjected to inquisitorial examination and can therefore serve as a measure of the auto-censorship to which the more spiritually-minded authors like Tasso and Sforza Oddi were inclined.

3.1 L'amor costante (Constant Love) by Alessandro Piccolomini (1536)⁴⁵

14 years prior to the action of the play, Pedrantonio, a Spanish gentleman, after becoming involved in a conspiracy, was declared a rebel and fled to Pisa changing his name to Guglielmo de Villafranca. His daughter, Ginevra, left in the care of his brother, Consalvo, fell in love with Ferrante, son of an enemy household, and eloped with him. The two lovers, now man and wife, were taken prisoner by Moorish pirates and separated. Ginevra was rescued by English sailors and, under the name of Lucrezia, given as a servant to the now aged Guglielmo. Neither has recognised the other.

Ferrante was freed at the fall of Tunis to Christian forces and took a position in the Florentine guard. During Carnival in Pisa, he saw Ginevra who did not however recognise him because of his beard. Ferrante, to see if Ginevra had been faithful to him, took a post as a servant, using the name Lorenzino, in Guglielmo's home. At the opening of the play, he has been there for two months.

Ioandro, Ginevra's twin brother, now known as Giannino, was sent to Rome to be a page to Cardinal de' Medici, later Clement VII. While travelling through Pisa, he saw and fell in love with Ginevra. He has wooed her unsuccessfully for three years. He is, in his turn, loved by Margarita, daughter of Doctor Gucciardo.

When Ferrante reveals himself to Ginevra, their marriage is finally consummated and they plan to run away together. The consummation and Ferrante's threat to kill anyone who obstructs them are overheard by Lucia, a maidservant, who tells Guglielmo that they are plotting against him. He arrests them and forces them to take poison given him by Doctor Gucciardo. Giannino and his men attack the house to free Ginevra. During the *melée*, Consalvo arrives, recognises Guglielmo as Pedrantonio and tells him that he has been pardoned. Giannino reveals that he is Ioandro. Ginevra has asked to say some last words of explanation before she dies and is brought out of the house. She explains everything and all are filled with grief until Gucciardo reveals that the potion was harmless. All are reconciled amid general rejoicing and Giannino agrees to wed Margarita.

3.1.1 Sources of L'amor costante:

The play blends romance and novellesque elements in its story of Ferrante and Ginevra, secretly married, captured and separated by Turkish pirates, reunited as servants in the house of the elderly Guglielmo, and forced to drink a poison which turns out to be the sleeping draught so familiar to us from Romeo and Juliet. The theme of the lovers separated at sea is a commonplace of early romance - Apollonius, Prince of Tyre and Achilles Tatius's Leucippe and Clitophon both feature similar incidents while the latter work more directly anticipates L'Amor costante in its use of elopement, separation, piracy and servitude. The punishment of lovers by the master of a household appears in Boccaccio's Decameron II.vi and V.vii while the theme of the lover who unknowingly courts his own sister forms the basis of Decameron V.v.

3.1.2 Characterisation in L'amor costante:

The Prologue makes a clear statement of the play's moral didacticism,

... we shall teach you, with our comedy, how a constant love (whence the name of our play) always ends up well and how clearly wrong it is to despair at love's misadventures: for that most compassionate god called Love never abandons those who serve him with constancy. (Prologue, p.8)⁴⁶

and one would therefore expect characterisation and plot to reflect these high aims. Such reflection is, however, only partially realised since, although *L'amor costante*, as Louise Clubb remarks, "points forward to late commedia grave",⁴⁷ it is still heavily coloured with the cheerful vulgarity of a typical Plauto-Boccaccesque romp.

The constancy of Ginevra/Lucrezia to the memory of her supposedly dead husband presages that of Oddi's heroines (see following chapter) and admirably illustrates the Prologue's moral dictum. Piccolomini adheres largely to the Classical tenet that respectable young women not be shown on stage and we thus see nothing of his heroine before her "dying" revelations (V.iv). Ferrante/Lorenzino tells of her "impregnable virtue",⁴⁸ "saintliness and wonderful goodness",⁴⁹ while the servant Marchetto says she "never speaks of aught but saints and legends."⁵⁰ On the other hand, her, admittedly licit, first night with Ferrante is woven into the pattern of bawdiness which colours much of the play. By placing its report in the mouth of the vulgar servant Lucia, Piccolomini plays the incident for its erotic rather than spiritual value:

I stick my ear to the door and I hear that it's Lorenzino and Lucrezia who are making such a racket on that bed that it sounds like they're going to make it collapse under them. I've always enjoyed such things - not just doing them but listening to them too - so I kept my ears cocked so as not to miss anything. (III.vii.p.74)⁵¹

Ginevra's essential submissiveness is demonstrated by her taking the potion before asking that her story be heard. Concern for her good name is her motivation rather than any hope of escaping death:

... before I die, I ask, as a final grace, that you listen quietly to my few words for I shall show you that I am neither shameless nor a rogue but unfortunate and ill-done by. (V.iv.p.110)⁵²

Although Piccolomini thus demonstrates Ginevra's capacity for endurance and sacrifice, his

heroine places honour above God by effectively attempting suicide to ensure that her name be cleared:

... I did not wish to tell you before drinking the poison so that you would not then think I had told you, through fear of dying, just to be pardoned. Now, however, since my death is inevitable, you can have no more doubt. (V.iv.pp.110-111)⁵³

The theological unsoundness of suicide obviously did not prevent it becoming a commonplace in Renaissance drama. Apart from the many variations on the *Romeo e Giulietta* theme, Torquato Tasso's *Aminta*, for example, has its protagonist hurl himself from a cliff in despair. Such instances excite dramatic sympathy, heighten the sense of passion while avoiding direct representation of sexuality, and generally carry a sense of a sacrifice occasioned by, or for the benefit of, others. This last might therefore find a partial *apologia* based on Christian sacrifice. Erminia, in Sforza Oddi's *Prigione d'amore*, is essentially presented as a Type of Christ in that she "dies" to save another from the consequences of disobedience to his Lord and is "resurrected" through the device of the sleeping draught substituted for poison (see Chapter III). Ginevra, however, saves no-one by embracing death so eagerly and eschews pleas for mercy solely in order to ensure the preservation of her honour and reputation. The internal logic of the play demands that its tragic potentiality be developed as fully as possible before a last-minute agnition and reversal return us to the world of comedy. It is therefore desirable that Ginevra and Ferrante appear to be dying - an outcome which would be prevented if explanation were advanced for their apparently villainous conduct. The method used by Piccolomini to delay such explanation would not be consonant with later Counter-Reformation ideals and is dependent for its credibility on a society in which a high standard of sexual morality and concern for personal honour prevail. A measure of Piccolomini's lack of commitment to such may be indicated by his reference in the Prologue to the yet-to-be-proscribed author of sundry lewd verses, famous libels and a handbook on the ways of Roman whores as "the most divine Aretino".⁵⁴ It is difficult to imagine Piccolomini or his audience being much exercised by such matters and the clumsiness of Ginevra's characterisation becomes apparent.

Ferrante, as the other half of the couple prepared to die for love, may be seen as the male type of the committed and enduring lover. Despite his willingness to risk all for Ginevra,

however, the fact that he carefully conceals his identity until assured of her fidelity implies a doubt which would surely be absent if his *amor* were truly *costante* - it is notable that Ginevra makes no such enquiries about his past activities although his mocking flirtation with Agnoletta (II.xi) suggests that he has not been short of opportunities. His suggestion that Ginevra and he flee their master's house by night because "if we were to reveal to Guglielmo how things are, he wouldn't believe us and would do us harm" (II.iii.p.47)⁵⁵ reveals that he trusts his kindly master as little as he has trusted his wife. This distrust is compounded by his subsequent declaration that "if, by bad luck, Guglielmo, or anyone else, blocks our way, we can defend ourselves with vigour and kill him if necessary" (II.iii.p.47).⁵⁶ Ferrante thus forfeits dramatic sympathy and it is hard not to take Guglielmo's side when this murderous intent is reported to him. Again Piccolomini weakens his plot and characterisation through an over-simplistic piece of scripting which exists only to create a patently artificial situation and thus robs Ferrante and Ginevra of both plausibility and apparent virtue.

A further lack of concern for verisimilitude is evidenced in the relationship between Margarita and Giannino. Margarita, who, like Ginevra, appears only briefly (III.iii;iv), is truly an example of an *amor costante*. Giannino displays absolutely no affection towards her. "I don't care much whether she lives or dies"⁵⁷ he says (I.x.p.27) and yet she asks her servant and *mezzana*, Agnoletta, to give him presents and instructs her "let all your words bear witness to my passion and faith"⁵⁸ - a passion demonstrated most vividly in her own words:

For me it would suffice that he was as willing to see me as I am to see him. Oh, to have him near me, to kiss him, to manhandle him all on my own, to cherish him and to delight my eyes and ears and all my senses with him and, above all things, to be able to make it plain to him how much I love him. (III.iv.p.70)⁵⁹

Giannino can hardly be regarded as any kind of lover to Margarita since even when he agrees to marry her it is done out of regard for his father and Doctor Gucciardo (V.v). Margarita may be getting what she wants, but marriage to one who doesn't care if she lives or dies is of dubious felicity at best.

While her love is constant, her use of a *mezzana* hardly indicates faith in Divine Providence (although it could be argued that her final union with Giannino is purely

providential) and her attitude towards an enforced stay in a convent while her father is away does not reveal any great respect for the Church:

... you can imagine that I can do without the conversation of these nuns. I have other things to think about than the pretty little altars, itsy-bitsy vegetable plots, cute kitty-cats and the other trivia that their heads are always full of. (III.iv,pp.70-71)⁶⁰

Agnoletta's response is in direct line of descent from Boccaccio in its accusations of ecclesiastical impropriety:

That shows how much you know. Kitty-cats with little bells, oh yes; but we're not talking about tabbies. The nuns of today know more about love and worldly affairs than all the generations before them. You won't be there two days before you'll discover proof of their goings-on that will amaze you. In all faith, if fathers were to be told about the amazing things I've seen these devil's offspring get up to - for I once spent two years in a convent - in all faith, they'd rather send their daughters to a ... well, I don't have to say where. (III.iv.p.71)⁶¹

Agnoletta, a *mezzana* drawn completely from popular tradition, cheerfully fornicates her way through the play. Thus, when lewdly propositioned by the lustful Spanish Captain, she displays no maidenly reticence;

CAPTAIN: Tell me, my lady: these bubbies and the other bits down below, who do they belong to?

AGNOLETTA: They're all yours, Francisco. (I.xii.p.30)⁶²

she then makes an unsuccessful play for Ferrante (II.xi); and a more successful one for Giannino's cook, Cornacchia:

AGNOLETTA: I want something.

CORNACCHIA: Stay there and tell me what it is.

AGNOLETTA: It's not something you can say through the window.

CORNACCHIA: Ha! Ha! Ha! The mare would like a bit of grooming for her mane, is that it?

AGNOLETTA: Hey! You're a cheeky one! Now are you going to open up or not?

CORNACCHIA: Tell me if that's what you want.

AGNOLETTA: I'll tell you later.

CORNACCHIA: Tell me now.

AGNOLETTA: Yes! Now, come on, open up! (III.vi,pp.72-73)⁶³

Despite a comical *coitus interruptus* when the servant Marchetto arrives with a message for Giannino (III.x), Agnoletta reveals, in a monologue directed at the women in the audience, that Cornacchia has proven a more than adequate lover:

Let me just brush down my skirt, I think it's all bespattered. I'm going to tell you something, ladies: whoever it was that invented the proverb "one man can be worth a hundred and a hundred not worth one" wasn't far from the mark. A thousand times I've ended up with one of those weeds with a broken reed and had to tease it a thousand times to make it sit up and beg for a bit - and then, God knows, it wasn't up to much! But as for my Cornacchia, may I drop down dead if, in the three hours I've just spent with him, we didn't go hard at it this many times. (*Holds up three fingers*) There aren't many like Cornacchia. Be like me, ladies. Say good riddance to those effeminate husbands who are always going "Oh, please, oh, please, oh, please" and then aren't up to it. (IV.xiii)⁶⁴

Given her flirtatious character, it is rather disconcerting to find that it is Agnoletta who, in complete contrast to the above, delivers what is effectively the moral of the piece when she hears that Giannino has agreed to marry Margarita:

Oh, Margarita, how happy you will be to hear such good news! Now you will harvest the fruits of so much perseverance and constancy; now you will finish with the misery that has been your life until today; now your sighs and tears will be converted into sweet embraces; now your constant love will be an example to everyone. Ladies, learn from her to be constant in your thoughts and never doubt thereafter. Lovers, learn not to abandon yourselves to despair and to endure your passions so that riches may finally come to you. (V.ix.pp.120-121)⁶⁵

This message clearly anticipates Counter-Reformation injunctions to quietism and trust in Divine Providence. The disreputable nature of the messenger, however, draws more attention to the play as a bawdy entertainment than a morally uplifting *commedia grave*. While some sort of worthy moral premise would have been indispensable given the play's performance before the Emperor Charles V,⁶⁶ much of *Amor costante* does in fact consist of episodic scenes in which a gamut of comic types, both classical and popular, engage in the type of *contrast* or comic debates typical of the market-square charlatans, while a sociological counter-balance is provided by an admixture of burgesses, graduates and aristocrats. Piccolomini's intent seems to be as much to present a social microcosm - perhaps in acknowledgement of his Imperial spectator's purview - as to develop a plot. Thus we see

German and Spanish students, a lecherous and boastful Spanish Captain, a Neapolitan poetaster and sexual braggart in search of an income, a Sicilian courtier and womaniser, a cook who is also a sexual athlete, a lustful maid, a parasitic and gluttonous *mezzano*, and a similarly gluttonous servant; the priest, Fra Cherubino, is presented as a serious figure but Cornacchia reveals a Boccaccesque attitude to the clergy by calling Agnoletta "as greedy as a priest" (V.vii.p.118),⁶⁷ and Doctor Gucciardino, as a *paterfamilias*, displays the more serious aspect of the charlatans' *dottor bolognese*. All that is lacking for a full comic typology is a witch-bawd and one is nearby in the form of Mona Bionda who, although she appears only through report, is another Celestina right down to the false piety:

The virtues of Mona Bionda are known to all. She can prepare potions of all types and draughts to induce sleep of exact duration. She is a wondrous herbalist, a great witch, and a mistress of sorcery. She renews virginites and knows all about brooms - she had the dust brushed off her back a couple of times in Rome and was branded in Venice a few years ago. She is, above all, a most excellent supplier of poultry. So, if she's going to help you out, well, at least she knows where the devil keeps his tail. But watch out and don't be astonished if, when you first talk to her, she lets out a holy *Amen*. Saint Brigid herself was never as devout as she will seem at your first meeting. She speaks about the Bible and the holy fathers as though she were the main preacher at the church of St Francis. (I.iii.p.17)⁶⁸

False piety and sacerdotal corruption are referred to on a number of occasions - as might be expected in a work for performance before the man whose troops had sacked Rome nine years earlier. The *apologia* of the Erasmian Alfonso de Valdés⁶⁹ (c.1541) was to promote the idea of Charles V as an instrument of God used to cleanse the vice-ridden Papal court and Piccolomini is on safe ground when he has Doctor Gucciardo say that he will stay a few more days in Rome "to see if the ecclesiastical court is as corrupt as they say" (I.xiii.p.34).⁷⁰ Giannino's servant, Vergilio, confirms the idle and licentious life of the Roman priesthood when he counsels his master - who is as yet a lay brother - to take Holy Orders and forget Lucrezia/Ginevra:

VERGILIO: ...the most quiet, free and happy life is that led by priests and it'll get better every day provided that a council doesn't mess things up. And if you feel, well, in need of love, in Rome there'll be no lack of women, oh no, and much more beautiful than Lucrezia is. You'll have all the honey while others get stung by the bees. Women's charms, their kisses, embraces, sweet conversation, delightful words and tender caresses are all for priests; the expense, insults, rudeness, disdain, and cuckold's horns belong to their husbands. (L.i.p.11)⁷¹

These, Agnoletta's description of the convent, and Cornacchia's mocking reference to Agnoletta's sexual appetite, clearly underline the pre-Tridentine character of Amor costante - late Cinquecento Italian comedies would avoid mention of priestly misconduct. The uninhibited representation of sexuality, both sanctioned and extra-marital, and the bawdy dialogue of the sub-cast at best throw into contrast and at worst overshadow the innovative use of the triumph-through-endurance theme which prefigures the development of *commedia grave* proper.

3.2 Epitia by Giovanni Battista Giraldi "Cinthio" (pub.1583)⁷²

Epitia is seduced by the Emperor's deputy, Iuriste, Governor of Innsbruck, on the promise that he will marry her and release her brother, Vico, who has been condemned for raping a virgin. Although Vico offers to marry the girl, this is rejected by Iuriste. Epitia is persuaded to submit to Iuriste's demands by the governor's sister, Angela, who believes her brother is sincere and will release Vico. The execution of Vico is nevertheless ordered but the Captain of Justice presents his master with the head of another condemned criminal saying that it is Vico's and delivers the headless corpse, which is dressed in Vico's clothes, to Epitia. Iuriste, having gratified his lust, thinks no more of marriage. Epitia decides to feign love for him, gain his confidence, and then murder him. The Emperor, however, arrives in Innsbruck and Epitia tells him her story. He orders Iuriste to marry her and then orders his execution. Angela asks Epitia to intercede for her brother's life, which at first she is unwilling to do, but, when the Captain reveals that Vico is, after all, alive Epitia relents and Iuriste is pardoned. The Emperor also pardons Vico on condition that he marry his victim.

3.2.1 Sources of Epitia:

The plot as a whole is Cinthio's own, deriving directly from his prose version of the story previously published, in the 5th novella 8th decade of his Hecatommithi (1565). The overall tone and structure of the play are Senecan in their focus on the twin demands of justice and revenge - Cinthio's *fin lieto* notwithstanding. The intertwining of sexuality and revenge is also typical of Seneca. Apart from the said ending, the structure is rigidly Classical: the opening is happy, the execution has been averted and Epitia, despite the forced nature of the

event, is eagerly looking forward to her wedding which, her nurse reveals, is seen as a heaven-sent bonus: "Heaven has granted us this which alone was lacking to crown our joys."⁷³ From there the plot descends into a typically tragic *mélange* of disaster, death and revenge. The evasion of full-blown tragedy is accomplished through the grafting onto the plot of a Classical *deus ex machina* in the shape of the Emperor and, by extension, his servant, the Captain. The sexual placating and subsequent murder of a threatening power-figure depicted in the Biblical story of Judith and Holofernes, whether or not providing direct inspiration to Cinthio, certainly finds echoes in Epitia's offering of herself to save her brother and her later, unrealised, plot to murder Iuriste in his sleep.

3.2.2 Publishing history and subsequent influence:

The play, although presumably written sometime between 1565 (publication date of the prose version) and 1573 (year of Giraldi's death), was not published until 1583 in the collected Le tragedie (Giulio Cesare Cagnacini, Venetia, 1583). The prose version was adapted by the English author George Whetstone in his Heptameron (Richard Jones, London, 1582) and also dramatised by him as Promos and Cassandra (Richard Jones, London, 1578). Since Epitia was first published in 1583, ten years after the death of its author, it is highly improbable that Whetstone's drama owed anything directly to that of Giraldi. Shakespeare's Measure for Measure, on the other hand, betrays a number of points of similarity which cannot be explained away by reference to either of the prose versions - although given his borrowing of the Othello plot from Hecatommithi it seems probable that Shakespeare had read Giraldi's *novelle* - or to Promos and Cassandra. Robert Hamilton Ball's excellent article "Cinthio's Epitia and Measure for Measure"⁷⁴ establishes a strong claim for Shakespeare's ability to read Italian and for his familiarity with Giraldi's play.

3.2.3 Characterisation in Epitia:

Since this is officially a *tragedia* (albeit *di fin lieto*), there is no comic sub-cast and such servants as are introduced (a Chorus of Epitia's maidservants, Epitia's Nurse, various house-servants and law officers) exist only to complement the main protagonists and supply

such information as is necessary for the comprehension of the plot.

While the majority of Giraldi's *tragedie* appeared prior to the conclusions of the Council of Trent, there is a definite Counter-Reformation morality present, both in characterisation and emphasis on Divine Providence, which colours his graver works. This is explicable in terms of the prevailing atmosphere at the Ferrarese court where a French marriage had concomitantly posed a Calvinist challenge to the prevailing orthodoxies:

The Ferrarese milieu lived at disturbingly close quarters to Calvinism which, thanks to the presence of Renée of France, had acquired a certain weight and force. If one further adds that Ercole II was very devout, one understands why he and his friends, Giraldi among them, tended to constitute a front of active resistance such as to create, even before the Council of Trent, a climate of Catholic *revanche* of a truly Counter-Reformation type.⁷⁵

Thus, given that the action of the play is set in motion by a corrupt jurist, there is a strong emphasis on a judicial process which is above corruption and cannot be swayed by emotional or family ties. The embodiment of this idea is the Podestà, or chief magistrate, who is troubled by Iuriste's motives for, apparently, granting a reprieve to Vico. The Podestà describes Vico, unequivocally, as a "rapist"⁷⁶ sentenced "for having raped a virgin."⁷⁷ Iuriste's secretary, however, argues the general view that the outcome has been positive citing Iuriste's clemency and the restoration of the victim's honour through her projected marriage to Vico (Liv). The Podestà cannot accept this since, in his scheme of things, Justice is not an earthly concept subject to manipulation but a divine gift:

Let those who want to go along with it, do as they wish, I shall never have any other guide than Justice. And, when His Lordship ordains otherwise, I would rather incur his displeasure, whatever he may wish on myself. Whatever his will may be, mine shall always be to maintain that which is just. I would rather offend him than, by wrong-doing, offend God. He may want to grant the Sister her Brother's freedom, but he'll never have my consent to it: if he's fallen madly in love with Epitia, I'll not let that come between me and the truth.⁷⁸

This strong identification of Justice with Divine Providence helps to underline the status of the Emperor as a veritable *deus ex machina* since it is only he who has the right and power to lawfully commute Vico's sentence. The Emperor himself confirms that he is God's chosen one,

To whom Heaven has given the government of the world (V.i.p.97)⁷⁹

and that mercy is indeed his prerogative:

... I can temper this law and make it mild (V.vii.p.115)⁸⁰

The extent of that mercy is underlined by the accumulating enormity of Iuriste's offences and the fact that the Emperor chooses to ignore the *lèse majesté* implied when Iuriste not only lies to him but also desperately tries to use the law, an instrument of justice, to obscure his guilt:

IURISTE: But I never pledged to her, nor to anyone else, that I would take her as my wife.

EMPEROR: Your own sister has come to me as a witness.

IURISTE: The law does not permit a sister to give evidence against her brother.

(IV.iv.p.84)⁸¹

It is clear that, while the Emperor views Iuriste's temporal crimes as reprehensible, his condemnation is principally reserved for his crimes against Heaven and those institutions sanctioned by Heaven:

It would have been better if you had raped only her and had not also violated your sworn word promising to take her as your wife. That way you would have but violated her chastity. Now you have offended not just that but also the King of Heaven, your faith, and the rules of marriage ordained by divine and secular law. (V.i.p.96)⁸²

The use of Angela as a *mezzana* could obviously be seen as carrying the traditional implications of bawdry. While using the type of the Bawd, Giraldi has nevertheless stripped it of its usual self-interested characterisation. Angela is not acting as her brother's go-between for any advantage it might bring her. She is, instead, trying to save a life and simultaneously resolve an ugly situation by arranging a marriage which, on the face of it, is not unattractive to either participant. Her anger and shame when she finds how her honour has been abused are palpable. In Angela, the tricky *ruffiana* of the traditional comedies has been given dignity and a conscience. While fulfilling the role of the Go-Between, Angela also provides a dramatic counter-poise to Eptia; each intercedes for the life of the other's erring brother and each is robbed of her sense of personal honour. Like Eptia, Angela displays a fiery nature. The shame she feels over her brother's trickery serves to bank her anger - as Iuriste reveals:

... my sister, ... wanted to tear

the eyes out of my head. (III.v.p.61)⁸³

It is Angela who reports the casuistic reasoning employed by Iuriste to avoid the consequences of his promise - which, as the Podestà has noted, runs counter to the Emperor's law:

... he promised Epitia
to give her Vico free from prison,
but he never promised her a living man (III.ii.p.55)⁸⁴

Despite the above, the Iuriste of the play is a much less cynical villain than his original in Giraldi's *novella*. The Ur-Iuriste has no intention of keeping any of his promises and Epitia's brother is executed while the Governor is taking her virginity. Iuriste, on the other hand, is restrained from ordering a reprieve by his chief magistrate, the Podestà:

While I long to please Epitia, that overbearing fellow's grim manner draws me back from doing so. (II.ii.p.30)⁸⁵

And the final execution order is precipitated when the Podestà complains to the Emperor:

The Podestà has been tormenting and confusing me with that bitter talk of his. He's so overbearing that I can't think what to do. I'm ordered to give account of my governorship to the Emperor. (II.ii.p.31)⁸⁶

The Ur-Iuriste only mentions marriage as a possibility while Iuriste's proposal is common knowledge to all the cast of the play. It would seem, given this public awareness, that his initial intention was to honour the arrangement but that the temptation to have his cake and eat it has prevailed. Once committed, however, he has no qualms of conscience - as can be seen when he uses his chamberlain as a *mezzano*:

... go and ask her to dine with me tonight and tell her that I await her with a burning desire to show her much stronger proof of my singular and affectionate love than she has seen so far - and don't forget to keep her hopes up that I might marry her. (III.v.p.64)⁸⁷

For all the insincerity of this final remark, Iuriste's weakness in the face of the Podestà's intransigence and his change of mind with respect to the marriage contract reveal him as a less direct villain than his prototype. I would argue that this development indicates a sub-textual element in the characterisation informed by Marian religious *exempla* and that here

Giraldi is anxious to flesh out the Ur-Iuriste by depicting his dramatic avatar as a man, whose free will has succumbed to temptation, finally seeking salvation through the intercession of a Mary-figure. The Emperor, as previously noted, is a *figura* of God, and Angela, both in her name and conciliatory actions, that of an angel. Irene, "Peace", also has a conciliatory role exemplified in her name. Epitia's ferocity in defense of her honour (discussed at greater length below) is not incompatible with the image presented in early Marian *exempla* where the Virgin showed an aggressive side quite at odds with the modern conception of the *mater misericordiae*,⁸⁸ while her capacity to influence the Emperor/God is typically Marian. A possible Greek derivation of the name Epitia<Epitimia "held in honour" would also indicate an attribute of the Virgin.

Giraldi habitually created strong central female characters. Only his *Antivalomeni* (Changelings), of all his *tragedie*, does not take its name from a woman and his heroines occupy, almost without exception, the same dramatic foreground as, say, Beatrice or Lady Macbeth. Thus Epitia hides "under feigned gladness and a human face, a fierce heart"⁸⁹ - as is made clear by her calculated plan of revenge: she will pretend indifference to the death of her brother, once more sleep with Iuriste, and "as soon as I see him asleep, I'll open his veins with this knife which I shall have with me."⁹⁰

The nobility of Epitia is emphasised both in terms of rank, she is "from an illustrious house",⁹¹ and in terms of the great sacrifice she has made in exchanging her virginity for her brother's liberty. While only the Podestà seems particularly concerned about Vico's rape-by-force of a commoner, we are made very aware of the tragic implications of Iuriste's treacherous seduction. Given the general gaiety at the beginning of the play, and given that Angela feels free to vaunt her own part in the proceedings to Epitia's face - "I was left feeling so happy that I had brought you and Iuriste together then",⁹² it would appear that Epitia has no great objection to Iuriste physically. His breaking of faith is an assault not so much on her body as on her honour. Angela also feels that her word has been traduced: "My sworn word has cost Epitia her virginity"⁹³ while Epitia mourns both her brother and her reputation:

Oh, my brother, my dear, dear brother, alas! How could this past night, from which we expected so much happiness, have left us in such misery? First you lost your life and now, alas, have I lost my honesty? (III.iv.p.59)⁹⁴

And, to one of her rank, the loss of honour demands an appropriate response:

While there is life in me, I am not about to let this outrage pass without taking due revenge.
(III.iv.p.61)⁹⁵

This emphasis on honour and the mortal consequences attendant on its slighting is interesting insofar as the time and place of the play's composition make it unlikely that Giraldi was imitating the conventions of the Spanish Honour Play. Taken with Oddi's use of the theme⁹⁶ and Ginevra's elevation of honour above life in *Amor costante*, this seems to contradict Louise Clubb's view that *onore* was a Spanish importation to Italian drama.⁹⁷ I introduce the question of the Honour Play in order to contrast the outcome of *Epitia* with the normal *dénouement* of its Spanish (presumed) descendant.

The avenging of honour in blood is typical of the Spanish *honor* play. This leaves it open to the theological criticism that it elevates honour above God - a charge frequently levelled at the Spanish theatre by its contemporaries. Whether Giraldi Cinthio, by constructing a *fin lieto* for his last six tragedies, was deliberately anticipating and avoiding such a conclusion is of course impossible to ascertain. It seems likely, nevertheless, that, in an ambience as heavily coloured by religious controversy as the court of Ercolc II, Giraldi might be attentive to such religious heterodoxy in his writings and amend them accordingly. An early observer of the "Counter-Reformation injunction to quietism and trust in the powers that be,"⁹⁸ he has his heroine forswear a personal *vendetta* in favour of a judgement from the Emperor and thus turns the plot away from that of a Senecan revenge tragedy towards a resolution compatible with both justice and the maintenance of a social order in which a very un-Senecan domesticity is a binding factor. Honour serves to provide *Epitia* with one more reason to hate her violator and thus to underline the magnanimity of her final forgiveness - a forgiveness which, even as the play nears its end, seems impossibly remote. "I shall take off his head with my own hands"⁹⁹ (V.iv.p.107) she tells her aunt Irene and Angela when they come to beg her intercession with the Emperor.

A very un-Senecan but very Christian forgiveness is indeed the final message of *Epitia*. With the exception of the Podestà's rigid opposition, there is a general will throughout the play to forgive Vico. This is realised in the final act wherein the effect of one act of

forgiveness is extended to cause a general reconciliation:

EMPEROR: Since the young woman he violated has forgiven him, I am pleased to give you your brother alive. (V.vii.p.115)¹⁰⁰

And Epitia, having previously, on the orders of the Emperor, married Iuriste, now not only forgives him but also repeats her marriage vow to emphasise that this is no feigned commitment:

... I therefore forgive him any offence and take him for my husband. (V.vii.p.116)¹⁰¹

In this respect, Giraldi's departure from Senecan norms has a basis in his moral didacticism which, coupled with the emphasis on marriage and the evils attendant on its frustration, adumbrates a central characteristic of much of the later post-Tridentine drama:

Above all he was a devotee of poetic justice, for he was ever anxious to make virtue triumphant over vice. Like his master Seneca, he made his characters complain of slippery Fortune; unlike Seneca, he saw to it that divine Providence overruled the vagaries of the fickle goddess. His main interest was apparently domestic virtue. Consequently his plays that were based upon the tales¹⁰² forecast the domestic drama of the Renaissance, with much of its romantic sentimentality.¹⁰³

3.3 Gli duoi fratelli rivali (The Two Rival Brothers) by Giambattista Della Porta (circa 1595)¹⁰⁴

The action takes place in Salerno. During a bullfight, Don Ignazio, nephew of the viceroy, has fallen in love with Carizia Della Porta whose father, Eufanone, is a nobleman fallen on hard times. Ignazio has a brother, Flaminio, who competes with him in everything. Ignazio and his servant Simbolo try to put Flaminio off the scent by asking him to negotiate a marriage between the Count of Tricarico's daughter and Ignazio. By asking for an enormous dowry, however, they ensure that these negotiations fail.

Flaminio is already in love with Carizia and has been trying to seduce her with the help of his servant, Panimbolo, and that of the parasite, Leccardo, who is a hanger-on of the Della Portas.

Captain Martebellonio, a braggart soldier, also recruits Leccardo's help in winning Carizia's sister, Callidora. When Ignazio's proposal of marriage is accepted by Carizia and approved of by her father, Flaminio and his servant ask Leccardo to arrange a liason with Chiaretta, Carizia's easy-going maid. Chiaretta is to dress in her mistress's clothes. Leccardo will tell Martebellonio that he has arranged for him to spend the night with Callidora - in reality Chiaretta disguised by darkness and Carizia's clothing. While the Captain and Chiaretta are enjoying themselves, Leccardo smuggles the discarded clothing out of the bedroom and shows it to Ignazio as proof of his lover's infidelity.

When Eufanone comes to fetch the bridegroom, Ignazio denounces Carizia. Later Leccardo reports that Carizia has died of fear as her father was about to stab her. Flaminio repents and confesses all. Eufanone takes the case before the viceroy, Don Roderigo, who condemns Leccardo to death and states that a marriage between Flaminio and Callidora will restore the Della Portas' honour. Flaminio is pleased but Ignazio considers this punishment to be like a reward and demands Callidora for himself.

The brothers prepare to duel but Polissena, Eufanone's wife, announces that her daughter has only been in a trance from which she has now awakened. Carizia forgives Flaminio and marries Ignazio. Flaminio and Callidora are also married and Leccardo is released.

3.3.1 Sources of Gli duoi fratelli rivali:

The main source is Bandello's *novella*, I, 22 whose ultimate source, the Greek 4th/5th century romance of Chaeras and Callirhoe, also finds a reworking in Much Ado About Nothing. Research by Vincenzo Spampinato has revealed the use of Della Porta family history being used to thicken the plot:

...the historical Della Portas were landowners in that province...they were connected with the counts of Tricarico...and...the Don Roderico [*sic*] de Mendoza of the play, Spanish viccroy and uncle to the rival brothers, was a historical personage, Don Rodrigo de Mendoza, governor of Salerno sometime after 1541.¹⁰⁵

Plautine elements are also in evidence. Captain Martebellonio, the gluttonous Leccardo and the scheming servants mirror common types in Roman Comedy although the farcical behaviour associated with the originals is not allowed to dominate the action in Duoi fratelli as it does in most of the Plautine canon. Instead the prevailing tone verges on the tragic - this is one of the new breed of serious comedies as its extensive use of *contaminatio* and heightened passion proclaim. To see it as standing within a modernised Plautine tradition, Louise Clubb opines, one must look to the "unaccustomed seriousness and nobility of Captivi"¹⁰⁶ rather than to the more typical comic mayhem of Pseudolus or Casina. If, however, there is a conscious nod in the direction of Captivi, this is but one strand amongst many involved in the formation of the play - the emphasis on honour, for example, is quite innovatory within a comedy. As the rulers of Naples were of Aragonese extraction, their court was a melting-pot of Spanish and native Italian cultural influences. This emphasis may therefore have been inspired by the emerging Spanish school of 'Cape and Sword' drama for, in the Italian context, it was not yet a commonplace. The theme, however, had already been touched on by Piccolomini, Giraldi Cinthio and, as we shall see in the next chapter, Sforza

Oddi.

3.3.2 Publishing history:

Gli duoi fratelli rivali was first published in Venice in 1601 and again in 1606. It was included, along with Della Porta's thirteen other surviving comedies, in the collection Delle commedie di Giovanbattista de la Porta Napolitano published in Naples in 1726 (ed. Gennaro Muzio) and and again collected in Le commedie edited by Vincenzo Spanpanato (Bari, 1911). This last edition is that quoted herein. One interesting aspect of its publishing history is that Della Porta's brush with the Inquisition over his researches into Magic had led, on the 9th of April 1592, to an order that all manuscripts for publication be submitted directly to Rome. Gli duoi fratelli rivali can be seen therefore not simply as an example of the auto-censorship so commonly found among the *litterati* of the Counter-Reformation but as an indicator of what was directly permissible by the Church.

3.3.3 Characterisation in Gli duoi fratelli rivali:

The moral tone of Counter-Reformation comedy, generally loftier than its predecessor of the Humanist Renaissance, required a form of language from its principal characters which, for the normal bourgeois comic cast, seems rather high-flown. The expression of great moral issues, existential dilemmas, and the invoking of Divine Providence, or its pagan counterpart Fortune, had hitherto been the province of tragedy and of its noble protagonists. While some dramatists' comic *oeuvres*, in part or wholly, ignore this incongruity, Della Porta, in Gli duoi fratelli rivali, resolves the issue by making his *innamorati* grandees of the ruling Spanish court and his *innamorate* the daughters of a minor Italian noble house.

Given that this manoeuvre is successful and justifiable with regard to the principals, whose expressions of sentiment, honour and morality thus become consonant with their rank, it is curious and seemingly antithetical that Della Porta should extend it by imbuing his sub-cast with a mixture of sententiousness and grandeur of expression at odds with the lighthearted banter expected of the servant class in comedy. Simbolo's pronouncement on matrimony is no mere repetition of *cliché* but is uttered in the knowledge that Ignazio's proposed marriage to a

girl without dowry, who is, let it be remembered, the daughter of a man dispossessed for rebellion, may have grave consequences for the honour of the family:

Be warned that he who would take a wife walks on the road to repentance: think well on it. ... Do you know your brother's pleasure in the matter, or that of your uncle? He wishes to match you with the daughter of a Spanish grandee but this girl's poor and lacks a dowry! He'll turn against you and perhaps cut you out of his will. Where the honour of the whole family is concerned, an unsuitable marriage can bring down the wrath of the entire clan, and especially that of brothers and uncles. (I.i.pg.205)¹⁰⁷

And, when Flaminio despairs on hearing of his brother's proposed marriage, Panimbolo is more elder statesman than servant:

Be ruled by mature advice: there must be an end to this persistence. When faced with the impossible, be of good heart, make a resolution as honourable as it is necessary, and let the matter rest.¹⁰⁸

Raffaele Sirri Rubes has noted this as an unusual departure for Della Porta:

The most interesting thing to note is that Della Porta, has always made sure of giving character types, and particularly servants, a form of speech which rigorously conforms to their station, only indulging in an occasional vivaciously theatrical literary flourish. He has introduced in this comedy two servants, dignified with the name of valets, who are wise, sententious, prudent and vigilant over the lives of their patrons.¹⁰⁹

This departure he sees as based on the model of *Erofilomachia* (circa 1561), a romantic comedy, suffused with pathos and sentimentality, written by Sforza Oddi.¹¹⁰ Oddi's romantic comedies, critically acknowledged as the most complete dramatic realisations of Counter-Reformation ideals, are discussed in the following chapter.

The motive behind such emulation may be seen as originating in Della Porta's desire to please the Inquisition and, indeed, such may be the case. It is more likely however that he is simply experimenting with a literary model and/or exercising an auto-censorship reflecting his own perception of the prevailing literary morality. The Inquisitors, despite the anti-theatrical railings of ecclesiastics such as Carlo Borromeo, Cardinal Archbishop of Milan, were perhaps less concerned about stage morality and orthodoxy than were the likes of Oddi and Pino da Cagli. Thus it would seem, at any rate, by their passing as approved a play which contains as

pagan a braggart warrior as ever existed: Captain Martebellonio.

The Captain's references to the Roman deities go well beyond an occasional, ultimately meaningless, oath in the "By Jove!" category. He, if we are to judge by his avowed parentage, is a god himself - as he tells the mocking glutton, Leccardo:

MARTEBELLONIO: Don't you know that Mars is the god of the fifth heaven, the god of weapons? And that Bellona is goddess of battles?

LECCARDO: What have you got to do with them?

MARTEBELLONIO: Don't you know that I'm their son and their lieutenant of weapons and battles on Earth as they are in charge of weapons in Heaven? My very name means "Mars-Bellonius." (I.iv.pp.213-4)¹¹¹

In addition to divine parentage, he claims, like Hercules, to have temporarily lifted the burden of the world from Atlas's shoulders (I.iv.pg.214), and to have strangled Death using only two fingers (I.iv.pg.216). The Underworld which he claims he has disturbed with his heavy tread is Classical not Christian:

A little while ago I received a letter from the other world. Pluto presents his compliments and begs me not to walk so boldly, to go as gently as possible, for so many rocks and mountains are tumbling from the Earth's highest points that before very long the world might collapse and bury him and his wife, Proserpine, alive. (III.xi.pg.266)¹¹²

The crudely sexual motivation displayed by both the Captain and Flaminio is unrestrained by Counter-Reformation morality. While it could well be argued that Flaminio's late attack of conscience signals authorial disapproval, the actual sentence handed down by the court promises pleasure rather than an opportunity for repentance and expiation. Whether judged by moral or dramatic standards, the court scene is weak in comparison with the foregoing action. Indeed, in the last two acts, Della Porta seems to have exercised himself more to create his "peripety born of peripety and agnition born of agnition" than to maintain any kind of believable characterisation.¹¹³

In the Captain's case, given that 'all cats are grey in the dark', he at least achieves the desired opportunity for sexual release. That this does not work out as planned is entirely consistent with his role as a braggart soldier which, as it did for his Roman forebears, sets him up for a fall. His waking up next to the monkey-faced but lustful Chiaretta and her subsequent

revelation of his sexual inadequacy cannot therefore be seen as having a base in the poetics of the new morality but as emanating from Roman comedy and the bawdy tradition of Italian vernacular literature.

Leccardo, the glutton, is depicted as somewhere between the Roman *parasitus* and the astute enabler, Ligurio, of Machiavelli's Mandragola. While his obsession with food is typical and is introduced into every conversation, including the one he has with the men taking him off for execution, he is very much a man of action, running, not walking, about his employer's business - as when he arrives breathless to tell Flaminio of Carizia's impending marriage:

I've run so hard I can't speak: I haven't a breath in me....It feels like I'm dying of complete exhaustion (II.ix.pg.237)¹¹⁴

The scheme to besmirch Carizia's good name is entirely his and he is proud of its success:

LECCARDO: I've never been so pleased with myself as I am now. I think I've done really well.

DON FLAMINIO: I'm much obliged to you.

LECCARDO: You've got reason to be! (III.xi.pg.268)¹¹⁵

As go-betweens go, then, he is an eminently serviceable and vigorous one. If Della Porta had written this play prior to the Council of Trent, there can be little doubt that this serviceability would have secured Leccardo both a larger role and a greater degree of authorial approval. However, the conventional foolishness rebuked by the go-between's trickery is, in this instance, absent. Leccardo's purely comic episodes are restricted to two *intermezzi* with the Captain (I.iv and IV.iii) while, although the gluttonous decorum of his type is maintained, his other appearances are strictly related to the job at hand or its consequences. The danger of these consequences is never far from Leccardo's mind and in enunciating it he aptly sums up the tone of the play:

...this is a solemn jest, and if it were discovered I would be the first to suffer. In my time alive, I have eaten a good few cooked birds and I don't want the rooks and crows that are left alive to have their chance at me dead on a gallows. (III.ii.pg.247)¹¹⁶

He is also possessed of a fatalism which continually indicates his narrowly-to-be-avoided fate

while resignedly pointing out the inequality of justice for rich and poor. This latter point may be seen as emanating from a Counter-Reformation concern with the buying of favours and indulgences, as an admonition to the poor to stay on the right side of the law, or both:

No, no, the gallows is made for the unfortunate. Justice is like spiderwebs: little bugs like me fall into it and end up dead, lords like you are the great birds who tear it into rags and bear it away. (III.ii.pp.247-8)¹¹⁷

And the short soliloquy in which he debates with himself whether to do Flaminio's bidding betrays the fear of poverty and starvation which lies behind the parasite's persistent scrounging.

Leccardo, give yourself a word of advice: you're in a real dilemma. On the one hand there's hunger and on the other there's hanging and one's as scary and threatening as the other. I'm dying of hunger here and now and hanging's a while off yet. Hanging's an awful thing but never eating again would choke me just the same. This way I'll banish hunger in perpetuity and assure myself of an abundance of everything. Oh, I'm a mean-spirited slug! If soldiers can risk their lives against swords, pikes, arquebuses and artillery for three ducats a month, for a reward as great as this one, can I not face up to the gallows? Better to die once than always go short. I've survived so many dangerous situations, I'll survive this one just the same. What the pox am I saying? You can eat lots of sweet custard apples and then a sour one will avenge them: "your sins come back to haunt you." (III.ii.pp.249-50)¹¹⁸

Some Counter-Reformation dramatists, notably Oddi, recognised the moral dubiety of the go-between and strove to eliminate the type. While Della Porta has not, in this case, written out or completely marginalised the *mezzano* figure, he has certainly endowed it with a non-Plautine gravity and sententiousness. Leccardo's observation that "we are Fortune's playthings; at her whim one is raised up while another is cast down"(IV.xi.p.268)¹¹⁹ foreshadows his own fall from nobleman's favourite to condemned criminal and his near brush with death is surely intended to give us a moral perspective on the *mezzano's* activities: by thus rebuking one of his principal comic characters, Della Porta seeks to justify his inclusion in a Counter-Reformation dramatic context.

The principals in the love intrigue, as previously noted, display a conspicuously Spanish punctilio with regard to honour. Thus, when traditional decorum is violated and Della Porta places Carizia and Ignazio together on stage, alone but for the tacit Simbolo, the incident

is rendered morally antiseptic by the knowledge that Dame Honour is their chaperone. This is a chaste ceremony of betrothal in which any contravention of the honour code is rendered impossible by the overwhelming honesty of intent on the part of the protagonists. To give an idea of how Della Porta sublimates erotic passion into a contest of idealistic sentiment, I quote the passage in full:

CARIZIA: My Lord Don Ignazio, since my Aunt Angiola has sworn to the honourable nature of your request, I can do no less than accede: here I am, what do you command?

DON IGNAZIO: I command? I who would hold myself the luckiest man alive if I were the least of your slaves? It is you alone who holds dominion over all my desires, and to you alone does it fall to impose or break laws as you wish.

CARIZIA: I beg you to explain your wishes as plainly as you may.

DON IGNAZIO: Mistress of my life - and may you pardon me saying "my", since from the day that I first saw you I have consecrated it to your dear beauty, - I wish nothing more in this life than to be your husband. Please forgive the ardour which presumes to aim so high.

CARIZIA: My dear sir, I am well acquainted with the inequality of our ranks and with my own humble condition. These do not permit me to expect a husband as great in merit and estate as yourself. Therefore seek out another more worthy of your rank and let me live humbly as I am. My fate commands me to be aware of my lowly position and I know that you speak thus merely to mock me. My dowry and my wealth are comprised in my honesty whose inviolability I secure with my poverty.

DON IGNAZIO: Your dowry is too generous, My Lady, since the more you disparage it the more it grows. Your wealth is an incalculable treasure chest of such rare virtues which reside within you as though in their own quarters. Ordinary merits may be praised with words but those which lead to Heaven are praised with wonder, and one reveres them in silence through acts of reverence. But you speak thus to shame one who comes like a merchant too poor to purchase such fine goods. Truly I would merit such shame were I not so rich in love, for naught could pay the infinite price of your virtues but the infinite love I bear them.

CARIZIA: I know that such virtues are not bestowed on one of my lowly station; in reply, I cannot find words worthy of yours and must let my heart's mute voice respond.

DON IGNAZIO: My Lady, here is a ring on whose diamond are carved a betrothed couple: take it as a pledge of love and of our engagement. The gift is small in itself but, if you consider the affection of the donor, it is well worthy of the receiver.

CARIZIA: The gift is well worthy of the giver; however ... you well know that the rules of maidenly honesty do not permit the receiving of gifts.

DON IGNAZIO: My Lady, do not disdain myself nor your nobility by refusing the first gift of your betrothed. Accept it, and if it be not worthy of your hand, then cast it away.

CARIZIA: Then I accept, thank you for your gift, and place it on my finger. Since my poverty does not permit me to give you a gift of equal value, I give you my self, for she who gives

herself has nothing greater to give. And since this ring is now mine, I give it back to you as a dear pledge of my faith.

DON IGNAZIO: I accept both the ring and the offer of your person; and, although I am unworthy, love forces my acceptance. In recompense I can only give you all that I am; and, although that may not equal your own splendour, please accept it as I have accepted you.

CARIZIA: Do you have any other wish?

DON IGNAZIO: I beg you to stay a little longer so that my eyes may feast upon the beloved fruit of their desires.

CARIZIA: A master's wish is his servant's command; and if maidenly conduct does not permit as much, then maidenly conduct must be set aside for a husband. Here I am, ready to do whatever you wish.

DON IGNAZIO: My dear lady, I only desire your love, knowing well that any other request would do you little honour. I am content that you should now go in and would ask only that, for the brief space before our marriage, you treat my heart kindly for it shall stay with you and never leave you. Think of me.

CARIZIA: If I were not to think of you I would forget my very self.

DON IGNAZIO: Love me as I love you.

CARIZIA: Low and unworthy is she who lets herself be surpassed in love. If it please God that we be married, then we shall strive to see who loves the most - and I shall not let you beat me in this. Farewell. (II.iii.pp.222-224)¹²⁰

As well as the use of a sublimatory rather than an active portrayal of sexuality on the part of the principals, Della Porta employs a subversive approach to neo-Plautine norms. Thus the customary use of servants to facilitate the love intrigue in the face of parental opposition and the necessity of concealment is here turned on its head. Far from hiding his love for Carizia, Ignazio goes directly to her father, Eufranone, and asks for her hand. Eufranone only requires assurances of Ignazio's sincerity and a waiver of the normal dowry to be overjoyed at this request. Panimbolo and Leccardo, while acting as Flaminio's *mezzani*, are ultimately unsuccessful and almost manage to derail the main love intrigue completely - for which Leccardo (and, by extension, those like him) is reproved as severely as is compatible with the world of comedy.

The requirement of a happy conclusion and its realisation in a Terentian double marriage temper the moral overtones by imposing the sudden rehabilitation of Flaminio - a rehabilitation rather more convincingly denied to Don John in Shakespeare's re-working of essentially the same material. Flaminio's cynically amoral pursuit of Carizia robs his final-act

display of penitence, which might be compared to that of Proteus in Two Gentlemen of Verona, of any credibility. While Proteus's reformation may be excused as reflecting his Ovidian genesis, Flaminio's has no such mythic overtones and is simply an unconvincing element in an otherwise entertaining and innovative work

¹ Stephen Gosson cited in Louise George Clubb's Italian Drama in Shakespeare's Time (London 1989) pp.49-50.

² Giovanni Battista Giraldi <<Cinthio>> Egle (Urbino 1980).

³ Named for Theseus's love, Aegle, as seen in Plutarch's Life of Theseus. Shakespeare has Oberon accuse Titania of causing Theseus to break faith with the nymph (Mids.N.Dr. II.i.76-80). There is no mythological basis for naming Egle as Sileno's mate although he was associated with an unnamed ash-nymph.

⁴ Non si dee desiar cosa, che neghi
Il ciel, ne cosa à l'honestà contraria;
Che non sen puo veder felice fine.

⁵ Richard Cody, The Landscape of the Mind (Oxford 1969) p.7

⁶ Notwithstanding his "S'ci piace, ci lice" - "If it pleases, it is permissible" - Aminta I.ii.p.46.

⁷ Che quanto i'miro più, più chiaro i'ueggio,
Ch'al mondo non è ben senza diletto,
Et che solo il piacere è, che condisco
Di dolcezza ogni amar di questa uita,
Tal, che la uita istessa, che uiuiamo,
Saria una morte espressa se priuata
Fosse di quel piacer, che la conserua,
Ond'io conchiudo, che di cio, che uiue,
Il diletto sia fine, e tra i diletti
Quel di Venere, e Baccho il maggior sia.

⁸ Ne creder ti uoglian ciò, che n'hai detto
De la nostra Diana.

⁹ Beccari, Agostino Il sacrificio (in National Library of Scotland, no publisher or date indicated).

¹⁰ Diremo ch'alcun Satiro, o alcun Fauno,
O ver, che meglio sia, alcun dio del cielo
Sotto mentita forma l'abbia presa,
Levandole quel fior ch'altri avrà colto.

¹¹ MEL. Perchè non levi il fratel mio dal mondo
Per salvar due così fedeli amanti?
SAT. Nota, nota, che vuol che il fratel muoia
Per darsi in preda a qualche vil pastore.

¹² ...o, o, del vino
Vi sento! Bacco, Bacco di letizia
Padre, sii benedetto: o com'è buono.

13 O in quanta poca riverenza siamo
Noi Satiri or, che più non siam tenuti,
Nè Dei, nè Semidei!

14 ...egli suole
Esser il più codardo, ed il più rozzo
Satir che ne l'Arcadia ora si trovi,
E si crede tra noi ch'egli non abbia
Parte di Deità seco, nè punto.

15 Rispetto non s'ha a' Satiri?

16 Nuda ti vuo'spogliar; poi tutta nuda
Ti vuo'piagar e farti tutta sangue.

17 Oimè, saran pur pochi sol nov anni.

18 Aminta (Rotti, Roma 1700) (Collected with Il Pastor Fido by Guarini).

19 petto/Setoso/
vellute cosce.

20 Picciola è l'ape, e fa col picciol morso
Pur gravi e pur moleste le ferite:
Ma qual cosa è più picciola d'Amore,
Se in ogni breve spazio entra, e s'asconde
In ogni breve spazio? or sotto all'ombra
Delle palpebre, or tra' minuti rivi
D'un biondo crine, or dentro le pozzette
Che forma un dolce riso in bella guancia:
Eppur fa tanto grandi e sì mortali
È così immedicabili le piaghe.

21 Poichè sol vince l'oro, e regna l'oro.

22 ...che s'io posso
Questa mano r avvolgerle nel crine,
Indi non partirà, ch'io pria non tinga
L'armi mie, per vendetta, nel suo sangue.

23 Nè l'api d'alcun fiore
Coglion sì dolce il sugo,
Come fu dolce il mel ch'allora colsi
Da quelle fresche rose (L,ii,p.38)

...al cor scendeva
Quella dolcezza mista
D'un secreto veleno

24 Mi resta sol che, per placarla, io mora:
E morirò volentier

25 Là dunque s'inviò dubbio ed incerto,
Mosso non dal suo cor, ma sol dal mio
Stimolar importuno: e spesso in forse
Fu di tornar indietro, ed io 'l sospinsi,
Pur mal suo grado, innanzi.

26 E pur nulla cagione avea di tema;
Che l'era noto il rispetto d'Aminta.

27 Il Pastor Fido (Rotti, Roma 1700) (Collected with Aminta by Tasso).

28 Non avrà prima fin quel che v'offende,
Che duo semi del ciel congiunga Amore;
E di donna infedel l'antico errore
L'alta pietà d'un PASTOR FIDO ammende

29 alto Motor del cielo

30 J.H. Whitfield, A Short History of Italian Literature (Harmondsworth 1960) pp.158-9

31 Che, se ben dritto miro,
Questi beni mortali
Altro non son che mali:
Meno ha chi più n'abbonda,
E posseduto è più, che non possede:
Ricchezze no, ma lacci
Dell'altrui libertate

32 ...già nemico, or signore
Di tutti i pensier miei

33 Tenterò prima le lusinghe e i preghi
E scoprirò l'amor, ma non l'amante:
Se ciò non giova, adoprero l'inganno;
E se questo non può, farà lo sdegno
Vendetta memorabile. Mirtillo,
Se non vorrai amor, proverai odio

34 cosa inamabile.

35 l'arco a Lilla, e'l velo a Clori,
La veste a Dafne, ed i coturni a Silvia

36 ...Due volte
L'ho presa già questa malvagia; e sempre
M'è, non so come, dalle mani uscita:
...O qual vendetta
Ne vo'far se la prendo, e quale strazio!

37 ...Perfida maga!
Non ti bastava aver mentito il core
E 'l volto e le parole e 'l riso e 'l guardo,
S'anco il crin non mentivi?

38 Sarà la vita sua vendetta mia.
Viva all'infamia sua, viva al suo drudo;
Poich'è tal, ch'io non l'odio; ed ho piuttosto
Pietà di lei, che gelosia di lui.

39 il gioco della cieca.

40 Ma che fate voi meco,
Vaghezze insidiose e traditrici,
Fregi del corpo vil, macchie dell'anima?
Itene; assai m'avete
Ingannata e schernita:
E perchè terra sete, itene a terra.
D'amor lascivo, un tempo, arme vi feci;
Or vi fo d'onestà spoglie e trofei.

41 Described at length by Nicolas J. Perella in his The Critical Fortune of Battista Guarini's "Il pastor fido" (Firenze 1973).

42 Whitfield, p.157

43 The tyrannicide, Lorenzino de'Medici, the "Scourge of Princes", Pietro Aretino, and the heretic Giordano Bruno, to name but three of the most famous.

44 Taviani, Ferdinando and Mirella Schino Il segreto della Commedia dell'Arte (Firenze 1982) pp.379-386.

45 Alessandro Piccolomini, Amor costante in Commedie del Cinquecento Vol. II reprint of Ireneo Sanesi's anthology of 1912 *a cura di Maria Luisa Doglio* (Roma 1979)

46 ... vi ammaestraremo, con la nostra comedia, quanto un amor costante (dove piglia il nome la comedia) abbia sempre buon fine e quanto manifesto error sia abbandonarsi nelle avversità amorose: perchè quel pietosissimo dio che si chiama Amore non abbandona mai chi con fermezza lo serve.

47 Clubb, *op.cit.* p.68.

48 ... inespugnabile la virtù di costei
(II.iii.p.44)

49 ... santimonia e bontà maravigliosa
(II.iii.p.47)

50 Mai parla se non di santi e di leggende.
(III.v.p.49)

51 Acconcio l'orecchie alla porta e sento ch'egli è Lorenzino e Lucrezia che facevano un fracasso in su quel letto che pareva che lo volessero buttar a terra. Io, che di cotale cose mi son sempre diletta, non solamente di farle ma d'udirle ancora, mi recai con l'orecchie attentissime per non perderne niente.

52 ... vi domando per ultima grazia, inanzi ch'io muoia, che mi vogliate ascoltare quietamente alquante parole: ch'io vi farò conoscer ch'io non so' sfacciata né ribalda ma disgraziata e sventurata ...

53 ... io non ho voluto manifestarvelo prima ch'io me bevesse la morte acciò che voi non vi pensaste ch'io l'avesse fatto allora per iscusarmi per paura ch'io avesse del morire; dove che ora, non essendo più rimedio alla mia vita, non devete più dubitar di questo.

54 "el divinissimo Aretino"
(Prologue, p.111)

55 ... se noi discoprissemo a Guglielmo come la cosa sta, non ce lo crederebbe e farebbe ci dispiacere.

56 ... se impedimento avessimo o da Guglielmo o da altri per mala sorte, possiam defenderci gagliardamente e ammazzarlo, bisognando.

57 ... poco m'importa ch'ella si viva o si muoia

58 ... che le tue parole sieno tutto testimonio della mia passione e della mia fede.
(III.iv.p.69)

59 A me basterebbe che mi vedesse volentieri come io veggio lui, avermelo appresso, baciarmelo, trammenarmelo sola sola io, vagheggiarmelo e godermelo con gli occhi, con le orecchie e con tutti i sensi e, supra tutto, poter farli palese quanto io l'amo ...

60 ...tu poi pensare che la conversazion di queste monache non è il mio bisogno; ché altro tengo nell'animo che altarucci, orticelli, gattucci o simil frasche che elle hanno sempre nel capo.

61 Voi ne sète mal informata. Gattucci con sonagli, sí; ma non son soriani. E ne sanno piú, oggidí, le monache de le cose del mondo e d'amore che altra generazione. E non ci sarete stata due giorni che voi scoprirete maccatelle dei casi loro che vi faran trasecolare. In buona fé, che, se questi padri fusser informati delle cose stupende che ho visto io di questa generazion del diavolo, che stetti una volta due anni in un monistero, in buona fé, che le mandarebbon piú volentieri ... appresso ch'io nol dissi.

62 CAPITANO: Dezime, señora: de quien son estas tetinas y de las otras cosas que teneis mas de bascio?

AGNOLETTA: Ogni cosa è vostra, signor Francisco.

63 AGNOLETTA: Voglio una cosa.

CORNACCHIA: Dimmela di costí.

AGNOLETTA: Non si può dir dalla finestra.

CORNACCHIA: Ah! ah! ah! T'intendo, per Dio! Tu vorresti fare un tratto, la criniformia, ch'?

AGNOLETTA: Eh! tu se'l bel frasca! Apre, se tu vuoi aprire.

CORNACCHIA: Dimmi se tu vuoi questo.

AGNOLETTA: Tel dirò poi.

CORNACCHIA: Dimmel ora.

AGNOLETTA: Sí. Orsú! Or, apre.

64 Lassami un po' scuoter la gonella, ch'io credo d'esser tutta imbrattata. Io vi so dir, donne mie, che non sognava chi trovò'l proverbio che dice <<un uomo val cento e cento non vaglian uno>>. Io mi so'trovata mille volte con qualcuna di queste uominesse, di queste canne fiacche e ho avuto a far mille civettarie inanzi ch'io gli facci scroccar un tratto; e poi Dio sa come! Ma il mio Cornacchia, mi possa venir la morte se, in tre ore ch'io son stata con esso, non siamo arrivati a questi (*dicendo così alzava tre dita*) valentissimamente. De' Cornacchi se ne trovan pochi. Fate a mio modo, donne. Lassateli andare queste maritesses che tutta volta <<chié, chié, chié>>, e non fan poi mai niente.

65 Oh quanto sarai contenta, Margarita, quando sentirai sí buona nuova! Or coglierai el frutto di tanta perseveranzia e fermezza; or porrai fine a tanta miserabil vita quant'hai fatto sino a oggi; ora i sospiri e le lagrime si convertiranno in dolcezze e abbracciamenti; ora il tuo amor costante sarà csempio a tutto il mondo. Imparate, donne, da costei a esser costanti nei pensier vostri; e non dubitate, poi. Imparate voi, amanti, a non abandonarvi nelle miserie e soffrir le passioni per fin che venghino le prosperità.

66 Noted in *Commedie dei Cinquecento* Vol.I, p.xvi.

67 ... sei prete ingordo!

68 Mona Bionda è conosciuta per tutto'l mondo per le sue virtù. Sa fare acque di piú sorte, sonniferi a tempo; erbolaiia valentissima, stregonia, maestra di malie; racconcia vergini, pratica fra le scope, ché due volte è stata scopata in Roma e fu marcata in Vinegia, pochi anni sono; e, sopra tutto, pollastriera eccellentissima, sí che, s'ella vi vòl servire, la sa dove'l diavol tien la coda. Ed avertite, se, alle prime sue parole, la vi paresse una santa *Amen*, di non vi sbigottire; perché non fu mai santa Brigida sí devota quanto vi parrá costei su la prima giunta. Parla dell Bibbia e de' santi padri come s'ella fusse il primo predicatore de San Francesco.

69 Alfonso de Valdés *Diálogo de las cosas acaecidas en Roma* ed. Rosa Navarro Durán (Madrid 1992)

70 ... per veder se la corte ecclesiastica è cosí corrotta quanto si dice.

71 VERGILIO: ...la piú quieta, la piú libera e felice vita è quella de voi preti ed è per esser ogni dí piú, se un concilio non ci ripara. E, se pur sète inclinato ad amore, in Roma non mancaranno donne, no, molto piú belle che Lucrezia non è, delle quali voi n'arete il mele e gli altre le mosche: perché i vezzi, i basci, gli abbracciamenti, le dolci conversazioni, le saporose parole, le carezzine delle donne son di voi preti; e le spesi, i rimbrotti, le vilanie, i tagliuzzi, lo impaccio, le corna sono dei lor mariti.

72 *Le Tragedie di M. Gio. Battista Giraldi Cinthio* (Venice 1583).

73 Questo solo
A compimento delle gioie nostre,
Ci bisognava e lo ci hà dato il Cielo (II.vi.40)

74 From *University of Colorado Studies*, Volume 2, Number 4 (October 1945) pp.132-146.

75 Roberto Mercuri in *Il teatro del Cinquecento* by Nino Borsellino and Roberto Mercuri (Bari 1979) pg.89.

L'ambiente di Ferrara vive in un preoccupante contatto con il calvinismo che, grazie alla presenza di Renata di Francia, aveva acquistato un certo peso e una certa forza. Se si aggiunge poi che Ercole II era molto devoto, si comprende come egli e i suoi amici, fra i quali il Giraldi, tendessero a costituire un fronte di resistenza attiva nei confronti dei calvinisti sì da creare, ancor prima del Concilio di Trento, un clima di *revanche* cattolica di pretto stampo controriformistico.

76 Violator (I.ii.pg10.)

77 ...per haver violata una vergine (I.ii.12.)

78 Acquetesi chi vuole al voler loro
Io mai non voglio haver altro per guida
Che la Giustitia. Et quando contra quella
Fià statuito dal Signor, io voglio
Spiacere più tosto à lui, che à me medesimo
Sia il suo voler, qual esser voglia, il mió
Sempre sarà di conservare il giusto.
Ch'à lui più tosto dispiacere i'voglio
Che, per far torto, dispiacere à Dio.
Se libero il Fratello à la Sorella
Egli vuol dar gliel dia, non farà mai
Ciò col consenso mio: s'egli perduto
Si è ne l'amor d'Epitia, non voglio io
Che l'appetito suo dal ver mi parta.

79 Cui dato hà il Cielo il governare il Mondo.

80 ... io posso
temporar questa legge, e farla mite.

81 IURISTE: Ma non promisi à lei, ne ad altri mai,
Di prenderla per moglie.
IMPERADOR: Ella mi adduce
Per testimon la tua Sorella istessa.
IURISTE: Non vuol la legge, che sorella possa
Testificato far contra il Fratello.

82 Stato saria men mal, che sol violata
L'havesse e non l'havesse fatto oltraggio
Con la giurata fede, promettendo
Di prenderla per moglie, che à quel modo
Violata havrebbe sol la pudicitia
E così, hà offesa quella, e offeso insieme
Il Re del Ciel, la fede, e le ragioni
Che statuite sono al Matrimonio
Da le divine leggi, e da le nostre.

83 ... mia Sorella, che voleva trarmi
Gli occhi del capo.

84 ... promise à Epitia,
di darle liber di prigione Vico,
Ma ch'egli mai non gliel promise vivo.

85 Da un lato bramo far contenta Epitia,
Da l'altro mi ritrahe da contentarla
La gran severità di quest'huom fiero.

86 Sì travagliato mi hà, così confuso
Il Podestà, con quel modo di dire
Aspero, è fiero, che di me medesimo
Incerto io son rimaso. Son costretto
Al sacro Imperador render ragione
Di ciò c'ho fatto in questo reggimento.

87 ... va ad invitarla meco
A' cena questa sera, e dille ch'io
L'aspetto con ardente desiderio
Per darle segno più efficace molto
Di singolare, e affettuoso amore,
Di quel ch'ella havuto hà, ne mancar punto
Di tenerla in speranza, che per moglie
La sia per prender.

88 Berceo's Los Milagros de Nuestra Señora ed. Brian Dutton (London 1971) is such a collection of mediaeval *exempla*. The Miracle of St. Ildefonso's Chasuble has the Virgin strangle a priest who traduces her and The Miracle of the Simple Cleric shows her threatening with death a bishop who calls one of her followers a "son of an evil whore."

89 ... sotto humano viso,
sotto finta letitia un cor feroce. (IV.i.70)

90 Si tosto ch'io il vegga
Adormentato, il vò svenar con questo
Cottello che adeto haverò meco. (IV.ii.p.73)

91 ...del'illustre casa (II.vi.p.38.)

92 Rimanessi più contenta c'haver voi con Iuriste hora accoppiata (II.i.p.27)

93 Sotto il giuramento
Mio la virginità perduta hà Epitia. (III.ii.p.54)

94 Ai Fratel caro
Caro Fratello, oime, quanto infelice
Stata è per noi questa passata notte
Da cui noi speravamo esser sì liciti?
Pocia che tu la vita, io l'honestade
Oime hò perduta?

95 Non sono,
pur che il viver me basti, per lasciare
senza degna vendetta questo oltraggio.

96 See Chapter III: Commedia Grave; Sforza Oddi and the Missing Mezzano

97 Louise George Clubb, Giambattista Della Porta, Dramatist (Princeton 1965) p.66.

98 Louise George Clubb, Italian Drama in Shakespeare's Time (London 1989), p.80.

99 Levar gli vò con le mie mani il capo.

100 IMPERADOR: Io son contento di donarti vivo
Il tuo Fratello, Poi che gli hà perdonato
La Giovane violata.

101 ... Per ch'io gli perdono
Qualunque offesa, e per marito mio
L'accetto.

102 i.e. the Hecatommithi.

103 Marvin T. Herrick Tragicomedy (Urbana 1955) p.65.

104 In Le commedie ed. Vincenzo Spampinato (Bari 1911).

105 Cited in Clubb Della Porta pp.204-5.

106 Clubb Della Porta pg.205.

107 Avertite che chi si dispone tór moglie, camina per la strada del pentimento: pensatici bene. ... Che sapete se vostro fratello se ne contenta, o vostro zio che vi vol maritar con una figlia de grandi de Ispagna? Poi, povera e senza dote! Si sdegnarà con voi e forse vi privarà di quella parte de eredità ch'avea designato lasciarvi: perché gli errori che si fanno ne'matrimoni, dove importa l'onor di tutta la famiglia, si tirano gli odii dietro di tutto il parentado e principalmente de'fratelli e de'zii.

108 Reggetevi con maturo consiglio: bisogna dar fine all'ostinazione; e nelle cose impossibili far buon cuore e abbandonar l'impresa, e prender una risoluzione tanto onorata quanto necessaria.

109 Raffaele Sirri Rubes, L'attività teatrale di G.B. Della Porta (Napoli, 1968) pg.107:

La cosa più interessante da osservare è che il Della Porta, che ha sempre tenuto a dare ai personaggi tipici, e in particolar modo ai servi, un linguaggio rigorosamente conforme alla loro parte, solo indulgendo a qualche svolazzo letterario vivacemente teatrale, ha introdotto in questa commedia, nobilitandoli col nome di camarieri, due servi saputi e sentenzioso, assennati, vigili sulla vita dei loro padroni.

110 Rubes, pp.107-8.

111 MARTEBELLONIO: Non sai tu che Marte è il dio del quinto cielo, il dio dell'armi? e Bellona delle battaglie?

LECCARDO: Che avete a far con loro?

MARTEBELLONIO: Non sai che son suo figlio e son lor luogotenente dell'armi e delle battaglie in terra, com'eglino tengono il possesso dell'armi nel cielo? però il mio nome è di <<Marte-bellonio>>.

112 Poco anzi mi è venuta una lettera dall'altro mondo. Plutone mi si raccomanda e mi prega che non camini così gagliardo, che vada pian piano, ché tante sono le pietre e le montagne che cascono dagli altissimi vòlti della terra, che mancò poco che non abissasse il mondo e sotterrassero lui vivo con Proserpina sua moglie.

113 Ireneo Sanesi criticises Acts IV and V as lacking "all warmth and any trace of reality in the representation of sentiment" (Sanesi, pg.356) while Louise Clubb defends Della Porta on the grounds that his title, *The Two Rival Brothers*, serves as a governing motif, unifying the work by maintaining an active rivalry intact to the end (Clubb, 212- 3).

This latter view would seem to deny the validity *per se* of peripety as a dramatic device. Surely reversal is bound to affect character in as much as character creates plot? If Clubb's argument were valid, most of Shakespeare's comedies and romances would be discredited thereby. e.g. Winter's Tale, Two Gentlemen of Verona, The Tempest et al. Does Prospero's change of character weaken the play?

114 Ho tanto corso che non posso parlare: non ho fiato....per la soverchia stanchezza mi sento morire.

115 LECCARDO: Mai mi son compiaciuto di me stesso come ora, tanto mi par d'aver fatto bene.

DON FLAMINIO: Te ne ho grande obbligo.

LECCARDO: Ne avete cagione.

116 ...questa è una solenne ribaldaria, discoprendosi io sarei il primo a patire la penitenza, e non vorrei ch'avendomi io vivo mangiati molti uccelli cotti in mia vita, che or le cornacchie e corbi vivi se avessero a mangiare me morto sopra una forca.

117 No, no, la forca è fatta per i disgraziati. La giustizia è come i ragnateli: le moschette piccole com'io ci incappano e ci restano morte, i signori come voi sono gli uccelli grandi che la stracciano e portano via.

118 Leccardo, consiglia un poco a te stesso: sei in un gran passo. Dall'una parte sta la fame e dall'altra la forca; e l'una e l'altra mi spaventano e mi minacciano. La fame uccide subito, la forca ci vuol tempo a venire: la forca è una mala cosa, mi strangolarà che non mangiarò più mai; alla fame darò un perpetuo bando e mi prometto dovizia di tutte le cose. Ahi, infingardo e senza core! i soldati per tre ducati il mese vanno a rischio di spade, di picche, di archibuggi e di artiglierie; ed io per sí gran prezzo non posso contrastar con la forca? Meglio è morir una volta che sempre mal vivere. Ho passati tanti pericoli, così passerò quest'altro. Cancaro! si mangiano molte nespole mature, poi un'acerba l'ingozza: <<è di errore antico penitenza nuova>>.

119 La fortuna scherza con noi, ché scambievolmente abbassa l'uno e inalza l'altro.

CARIZIA: Signor don Ignazio, poiché Angiola mia zia mi fa fede della vostra onorata richiesta, io non ho voluto mancare dalla mia parte: eccomi, che comandate?

DON IGNAZIO: Io comandare, che mi terrei il piú avventurato uomo che viva, se fusse un minimo suo schiavo? Voi sète quella che sola avete l'imperio d'ogni mia volontà, e a voi sola sta impor le leggi e romperle a vostro modo.

CARIZIA: Vi priego a spiegarmi il vostro desiderio con le piú brevi parole che potete.

DON IGNAZIO: Signora della vita mia - e perdonatemi si ho detto <<mia>>, ché dal giorno che la viddi la consacrai alla vostra cara bellezza, - io non desio altro in questa vita che essere vostro sposo: e perdonate all'ardire che presume tanto alto.

CARIZIA: Caro signore, io ben conosco la disuguaglianza de' nostri stati e la mia umile fortuna, a cui non lice sperar sposo sí grande di valore e di ricchezza come voi; però ricercate altra che sia piú meritevole d'un vostro pari, e lasciate me poverella ch'umilmente nel mio stato mi viva. La mia sorte mi comanda ch'abbia l'occhio alla mia bassa condizione. So che lo dite per prendervi gioco di me: la mia dote e la mia ricchezza s'inchiude nella mia onestá, la quale inviolabilmente nella mia povertá custodisco.

DON IGNAZIO: Troppo sontuosa è la vostra dote, signora, la quale quanto piú dimostrate sprezzarla piú l'ingrandite; le vostre ricchezze sono inestimabil tesoro di tante peregrine virtù, le quali riesiedono in voi come in suo proprio albergo: meriti ordinari si possono con le parole lodare, ma i gradi infiniti si lodano meravigliando, e con atti di riverenza tacendo si riveriscono. Ma voi lo dite acciuché io n'abbia scorno, ché troppo povero mercante a cosí gran liera compaia per comprarla: e veramente meriterei quel scorno che mi fate, se non venissi ricchissimo d'amore, ché non basta comprarse l'infinito valore de' vostri meriti se non con l'infinito amore che le porto.

CARIZIA: So che in una mia pari non cadono tanti meriti; e per non poter trovar parole condegne per risponderli, vi risponde tacendo il core.

DON IGNAZIO: Signora, ecco un anello nel cui diamante sono scolpite due fedí: tenetelo per amore e segno del sponsalizio. Il dono è picciolo ben sí; ma si considerate l'affetto di chi lo dona, egli è ben degno di lei.

CARIZIA: Il dono è ben degno di lui; nondimeno ..., ma ben sapete che il rigor dell'onestá delle donzelle non permette ricever doni.

DON IGNAZIO: Signora, non fate tanto torto alla vostra nobiltá né tanto torto a me: rifiutar il primo dono di un sposo. Accettatelo, e se non merita cosí degno luogo delle vostre mani, poi buttatelo via.

CARIZIA: Orsú accetto e gradisco il vostro dono e me lo pongo in dito; e non potendo donarvi dono condegno - ché nol consente la mia povertá, - vi dono me stessa, ché chi dona se stessa non ha magior cosa da donare; e questo anello come cosa mia ve lo ridono in caro pegno della mia fede.

DON IGNAZIO: Accetto l'anello e accetto l'offerta della sua persona; e se ben ne sono indegno, amor mi sforza ad accettarla. In ricompensa non so che darle tutto io; e se ben diseguale alla sua grandezza, accettatelo come io ho accettata la sua persona.

CARIZIA: Comandate altro?

DON IGNAZIO: Vi priego a trattenermi un altro poco, acciuché gli occhi mei abbino il desiato frutto di lor desiderio.

CARIZIA: I prieghi de' padroni son comandi a'servi; e se ben i rispetti delle donzelle non patiscono tanto, pur per un marito si devono rompere tutti i rispetti. Eccomi apparecchiata a far quanto mi comandate.

DON IGNAZIO: Cara padrona, mi basta l'animo solo. So ben che la mia richiesta sarebbe a voi di poco onore: mi contento che ve n'entriate, pregandovi che in questo breve spazio, che non siano nostri, di far buon compagnia al mio core che resta con voi né si partirá da voi mai; e ricordatevi di me.

CARIZIA: Non ricordandomi di voi, mi smentirci di me stessa.

DON IGNAZIO: Amatemi come amo voi.

CARIZIA: Troppo vile e indegna è quella persona che si lascia vincere in amore; e se piacerá a Dio che siamo nostri, allora faremo contesa chi amerá piú di noi, ed io dalla mia parte non mi lascerò avanzare da voi. Adio.

COMMEDIA GRAVE: SFORZA ODDI AND THE MISSING MEZZANO

1 Sforza Oddi and His Times:

A new era of comparative peace in the late Cinquecento provided a breathing space in which the arts and sciences experienced a kind of secondary Renaissance. Italy showed herself still capable of generating the kind of multi-disciplinary scholar familiar to us from the early Renaissance. Naples had its Giambattista Della Porta, biologist, mage and playwright, and Pisa its Galileo Galilei. Perugia produced Sforza Oddi, a law professor who was to help to define and popularise the new style of *commedia grave* - a style in which the role of the *mezzano* was superseded by that of Divine Providence, and the principles of the Counter-Reform determined the prevailing moral tone.

The degree to which Sforza Oddi's views echoed those of contemporary orthodoxy may be divined from his position within the establishment of his day.¹ He was born around 1540 in Perugia, where both his father, Galeotto Oddo, and his mother, Virginia della Penna, were members of the local nobility. Galeotto was created governor of Rieti by the Farnese Pope Paul III and the Farnese and Oddi families maintained links for the remainder of the century. Sforza studied canon and civil law at the University of Perugia and obtained his doctorate in 1569. In 1570 he was appointed to the faculty and in 1573 was proposed, unsuccessfully, as a candidate for the Ruota Romana. Despite his failure, the proposal of such a young man to a council of Italy's most outstanding jurists is indicative of the respect felt for Oddi by his colleagues. In 1577 his opinion was required in a suit between Gregory XIII and the Orsini family, and in 1579 he helped formulate the claim of Ranuccio Farnese to the Portuguese throne. He was resident at the University of Macerata from 1583 until 1588 when Ferdinand I de'Medici invited him to head the law faculty at Pisa. From 1592 to 1598 he was at Pavia and then returned to his home university. He became involved in public affairs and was sent as ambassador to Pope Clement VIII. In 1599 he was made head of the department of civil law at Padua but, in

1600, he was invited by Ranuccio Farnese, now Duke of Parma and Piacenza, to occupy the same post, with a sizeable increase in salary, in the newly re-opened University of Parma. The Duke subsequently raised Sforza to the rank of councillor of state, protected him against professional jealousy, and granted him two renewals of his original four-year contract before Sforza's death in 1611.

On his way to the heights of his chosen profession, Oddi leavened his legal output with three plays: Erofilomachia (circa 1561)², I morti vivi (circa 1576) and Prigione d'amore (circa 1585). Although he self-mockingly referred to his dramatic works as "crimes of my youth",³ his concern as a jurist for the moral well-being of society is amply demonstrated in these key works of *commedia grave*.

1.1 Oddi and the *commedia*:

Commedia grave, with respect to its sentimental structure, seems to have evolved as an urban counterpart of the contemporary *pastorale*. Sanesi defines the three sentimental elements of Oddi's plays as "conflict of passions, heroic intent, and spirit of sacrifice"⁴ and it can readily be seen that, in this, Oddi has much in common with Tasso and Guarini. Both Tasso's Aminta and Guarini's Pastor Fido, through these elements, convey the moral tone of the Counter-Reformist literature as expressed by Tasso in his Discorsi (see Introduction). Despite Tasso's lofty aims, the moral vision of the pastoralists attracted criticism on the grounds of its undue emphasis on sensuality.⁵ It may therefore be an indication of Sforza Oddi's greater adhesion to Counter-Reform ideals that Tasso himself criticised Oddi's first comedy, the Erofilomachia (which had been presented, along with Aminta, at the Carnival of Pesaro in 1574), on the grounds that its subject was rather that of a tragedy than of a comedy.

...as to the action of the comedy which had been performed...he [Tasso] showed himself to be of the opinion that the action of that comedy was not suitable to comic poetry, but rather to tragic, or even to epic. The fact is, he sees heroic action, such as putting aside one's own desires and one's own beloved for pure commitment to . friendship, as too noble - and therefore not well suited to comedy.⁶

Guido Baldi sees a link between Oddi's use of sentimental elements and the political

morality, both ecclesiastical and civil, of the day. Oddi's drama "has essentially political ends" and Oddi not only "conforms with absolute fidelity to the fundamental political line of the Counter-Reform Church" but also offers a lesson in practical morality to both rulers "who, for reasons of self-preservation, must learn not to be tyrants" and subjects "to whom must be proposed a model of conformist behaviour based on passivity and self-denial" ⁷ Oddi's propagandist stance is also noted by Nino Borsellino who sees in his work a conscious attempt at "strict adhesion to Tridentine ideology". ⁸

It is evident from all the above that, when we speak of the drama of Sforza Oddi, we are citing a case of mixed genre. As Tasso observed, there is much of the stuff of tragedy in Oddi's *commedie gravi*, and sentimental elements are as much part of the *pastorale* as of this new style of comedy. The introduction of noble characters and tragic overtones within the structure of a comedy is a characteristic of the *tragedia di fin lieto* of Giraldo Cinthio and his imitators - as is, indeed, a tendency to somewhat heavy-handed moral didacticism wherein virtue is rewarded and improper behaviour admonished. The structural originality of Oddi lies in his blending of these elements with an admixture of typically low comic characters, unusually strong female roles, and plots which owe more to the *novelle* and romances than to Plautus and Terence. In this Oddi comes closer than anyone to anticipating the later works of Shakespeare and secures himself a key role in the promulgation of this new type of theatre. Mario Apollonio credits him with being the author "with whom the literary comedy claims for itself those themes of pathos and that movement of the affections which we associate with high drama" ⁹ and the popularity of Oddi's plays may be deduced from the number of their editions. The *Erofilomachia* went through twelve printings between 1572 and 1622; *I morti vivi* had fourteen between 1576 and 1617; and *Prigione d'amore* was printed twenty-two times between 1590 and 1634. ¹⁰

The partial or complete eschewing of Plauto-Terentian device may find its origin in the desire of Italian playwrights to lay some claim to originality. Ariosto, for example, despite having constructed his *Cassaria* (1508) from what Angela Casella calls "a colossal intermingling of all the comedies of Plautus and Terence", ¹¹ still makes the claim:

I present to you a new comedy full of varied amusements which neither Latin nor Greek tongues ever performed on stage.(Prologue.1-3)¹²

In the fifty-plus years between Ariosto's first play and the writing of Oddi's Erofilomachia it would indeed be surprising if more tangible proofs of originality were not forthcoming but, given that over three hundred years later Oscar Wilde can still extract considerable comic mileage from a classical model in The Importance of Being Earnest, the old formulas can hardly be defined as moribund. The major impetus for change lies rather in the incapacity of the old forms to incorporate the new moral didacticism in a dramatically effective way. The traditional character of the *mezzano*, bawdy, foul-mouthed, uninhibited by morality, and sexually promiscuous, has no place in such a scheme of things and therefore comes under pressure to reform (which, almost by definition, diminishes the importance of the Type as the comic motor of the drama) or be marginalised, frustrated, and/or eliminated entirely from the action.

2 The *pastorale*, *commedia grave* and Divine Providence:

The *pastorale* is, as I have indicated, to some degree the rural equivalent of the *commedia grave*. It too is an example of mixed genre with a predilection for the themes of passion and renunciation and the moral implications thereof. We have also seen that, although formally committed to the ideals of the Counter-Reform, its most celebrated authors were criticised for not fully conforming to these standards. In fact it represents a kind of moral staging-post between the relative vulgarity of the Plauto-Terentian comedies and the didacticism of the *commedie gravi*. The pattern revealed by the *pastorale* with respect to the Go-Between and the lovers is one in which the personified *mezzano* is increasingly marginalised and identified with carnality while the lovers have become emblematic of passion subordinated to spirituality and the will of Divine Providence. Oddi, as we shall see later, takes this one step further by practically eliminating the *mezzano* and wholly attributing the resolution of his plots to an intervening Providence. The submission of the lovers to that Providence, while no doubt interesting from a philosophical viewpoint, leaves a distinct hole in the action which Oddi replaces with greater dramatic colour and complexity realised through the use of noble principal and humble secondary

casts, strong female roles, sentimentality and self-sacrifice, rapid reversals of fortune, disguise and misunderstanding, and the narrow avoidance of a tragic end. Oddi conveys a psychological dimension in his writing akin to that shown by Shakespeare. His principal characters invite our comprehension through action and soliloquy which show their inner feelings and frustrations. Emotions run high as the integrity and endurance of the lovers are tested by Providence while the plot mingles the adventures of romance and the complex story-line of the *novella*.

3 Oddi's Moral Intent:

In clarification, as if such were necessary, of the moral outlook inferable from Oddi's plots and characters, a clear statement of intent prefixes two of his comedies. The first is to be found, in Oddi's own voice, in the prologue of Erofilomachia; and the second, the longer and more significant, appears in the second prologue to Prigione d'amore in the form of a debate between Tragedy and Comedy.

3.1 Prologue to Erofilomachia:¹³

The didactic tone of the prologue is established almost immediately. It opens with the observation that, of all the laws which exist to protect human society, there can be none greater than the Horatian maxim which commands and instructs us to "to teach and delight others." Oddi goes on to praise the arts as leading to this end and especially drama as being "a pleasure which does no harm." Of all theatrical spectacles he gives first place to Comedy "since there appears in it, as in a mirror of brightest crystal, the image of our lives and of truth". From the character of Amico, the gentlemen (this is obviously written for a court performance) are asked to understand "how beautiful it is to have a generous spirit and direct your attention to the obligations of friendship rather than to your own desires and passions" and the ladies are enjoined to recognise that a generous man must place "honour and friendship" above love and that they should love and respect him for doing so. From Leandro, the young gentlemen will learn that it is better to satisfy the demands of faith and duty, no matter the attendant hardship, than to ignore these in pursuit of pleasure, no matter how great. They are assured that Cupid will not abandon them if they follow this difficult path and that their seemly and honest hopes will be realised. The ladies, in turn,

are to see their own virtues of continence, honesty and faith mirrored in Leandro. Thus they will learn not to reproach the supposed lack of such virtues in their admirers since "Leandro will clearly show that a young nobleman of good lineage cannot harbour such ugly defects in his heart".¹⁴

It is interesting to note the emphasis, repeated in the later plays, on honour - the staple diet of the Spanish Golden Age drama. Louise Clubb sees Oddi as yielding to Spanish influence,¹⁵ but even if we accept the date of composition of the prologue as 1572 (the year of first publication) and not Corrigan's hypothetical 1561, this would seem to be a precursor rather than a product of the conventions of the *Siglo de Oro*.

3.2 The Second Prologue to Prigione d'amore:¹⁶

This prologue consists of a dialogue between the spirits of Tragedy and Comedy. Its title, "Author's Prologue in Defence of This and of His Other Comedies"¹⁷ suggests, as Corrigan notes,¹⁸ that it was written in response to those who, like Tasso, thought the stuff of Oddi's plays too serious for comedy.

Tragedy is first on stage. The setting is the Duke's palace at Ferrara and therefore, according to Aristotelian norms, should be her domain. She is accordingly surprised to see Comedy enter smiling happily. Tragedy upbraids Comedy for usurping her territory but Comedy asserts her right to offer the spectators a mirror of life. Aristotle did not limit the scope of her activities to the ridiculous but only denied that area to Tragedy. She backs her claim by reference to the Roman *togatae* and *praetextae* which recounted the love affairs of knights and senators. In every state are there not three conditions of people? The powerful reckon themselves fortunate; the miserable are near the point of complete despair; and those in between, either through virtue or their undistinguished lives, are not disturbed by either of Fortune's faces. The last group have no need of advice from either dramatic spirit; Tragedy is the mirror of the first group; and Comedy similarly reflects the second.¹⁹

Oddi's socio-political motives are then strikingly revealed in Comedy's functionalist description of her role. Because of its obvious importance to the understanding of Oddi's *commedia grave*, I shall cite the entire speech:

Through my direction of their mind's eye, the great throng of the wretched, those near despair, and especially those young and in love discover that, even at the worst point of human existence, a day, an hour, a single moment can bring them good fortune. Therefore they need never, through despair, perform acts unworthy of themselves, losing their senses and staining themselves with their own or others' blood, as happens to the unfortunates in your tremendous mirror. Thus, while you liberate Republics from the spirits of such as Sulla or Marius, or from the tyrannical oppressions of a Caesar or Pompey, I free them from the desperate resolve of a Spartacus or Catiline. From the two extremes of fortune we recall the citizenry to acceptance of the civilised mean. So, I must confess that I, thus nobly renewed, can well realise those virtuous aims of consoling and teaching hopeless wretches and am able, just as you do, to enlighten Republics. I could never have done so when the Aristotelians' rule restricted me to their comic *novelle*.²⁰

This thesis of Comedy helps Oddi bypass one of the problems with moral didacticism in the neo-Plautine comedies: the *topos* that virtue be taught through the depiction of vice. The potential for an ambiguous audience response was inherent in this practice, while the use of lewd characters and vulgar language tended to become conventional rather than functional. A prime example of this may be found in Piccolomini's Amor costante (see Chapter II) which, in some ways, as the title itself suggests, appears an ancestor of Oddi's drama. The play blends romance and novellesque elements in its story and the constancy of Ginevra to the memory of her supposedly dead husband presages that of Oddi's heroines. Where the play differs from Oddi's blending of passion and morality is in the vulgarity of its sub-cast, and in particular the character of the promiscuous maid Agnoletta who, as we have seen, has her mind on less elevated matters. That Counter-Reform social, as opposed to doctrinal, attitudes had not yet impinged greatly on courtly mores is evidenced by the play's performance before the Emperor Charles V.

Oddi's theory, that since Tragedy exists to curb the pride of the fortunate, then Comedy should balance this by raising the spirits of the downcast, embodies no requirement for the portrayal of vice. Given Oddi's temperament, it is hardly surprising therefore that characters in the Agnoletta mould occupy a steadily diminishing space in his works. In fact, he seems to expand the moral dimension to include not just illicit but licit sexuality. While Piccolomini's (married) protagonists are reported as making "such a racket on the bed that it sounds like they're going to make it collapse under them",²¹

Oddi's heroes and heroines show their passions through displays of exalted self-sacrifice. The aura of carnality and self-interest which clings to the Go-Between is obviously out of place in this context. With the lovers so exalted it would not do to have them tainted by association with such a type, and the *mezzano* gives way to Providence as the agency which finally unites the lovers.

4 Providential Intervention:

The structure of Oddi's plays poses problems which would be beyond the capacity of the *mezzano* to solve. The simplistic portrayal of lovers in Plauto-Terentian comedy does not allow for psychological counter-motives. Thus the Go-Between is faced with the task of persuading, coercing, or tricking others (generally elderly fathers) into permitting the lovers' union; the state of mind of the lovers themselves is static and monolithic. When concepts such as honour, the conflicting demands of love and friendship, and self-sacrifice complicate the love intrigue, the essentially spiritual basis of these issues demands a correspondingly spiritual intervention to untangle them and achieve a happy resolution. Such intervention, in our agnostic age, might instead be ascribed to coincidence; this would be to say that the writers of *commedie gravi* were, like the neo-Plautine *mezzano*, incapable of resolving their own plots and thus begs the question as to why these complex plots were preferred to the still-vital classical model. The ancients, and, indeed, the Italian pagans of the Humanist Renaissance would have happily ascribed such resolution to the hand of Fate or Fortuna. The *controriforma* Church, with its doctrine of free will, obviously could subscribe neither to the former notion nor to any definition of Fortuna which implied an inexorable pre-destination. Thus dramatists who continued to employ these concepts tended to use formulaic disclaimers in which they asserted their orthodoxy. The Neapolitan dramatist, Giambattista Della Porta, who had already had a brush with the Inquisition for his heterodox philosophical writings,²² saw fit to preface his tragedy *Ulisse* (1614) with the following:

The present tragedy is performed by pagans. Therefore one finds in it the following words: fate, destiny, luck, fortune, the force and compulsion of the stars, gods etc. This has been done to accord with their ancient customs and rites. The latter, however, according to the Catholic religion, are all folly since one must attribute all outcomes and events to our Blessed Lord, the supreme and universal cause.²³

More orthodox writers, Oddi among them, developed the complexities of the *commedia grave* which, through its apparently irreconcilable tangles of love and honour, passion and obligation, required Providential intervention to bring about a successful conclusion. Thus the good faith and self-abnegation of the lovers brought the reward of their hearts' desire, while the public were reminded and assured of God's supremacy:

...in play after play, like Castelletti's *Furbo* and Gonzaga's *Inganni*, it is expressly stated that the seeming chaos and confusion of the intrigue are in fact part of a plan above change, a divine pattern, implicitly or explicitly Christian, guiding characters through innumerable *intrichi*, *inganni*, *laberinti* and *errori* to perfect order. The very pattern of seemingly unresolvable complexities worked out to an unexpectedly simple and satisfying conclusion, the structural ideal of the writers of *commedia grave*, was held to be a reflection of the working of Divine Providence. As Oddi says in the second prologue to *Prigione d'amore*, *commedia grave* teaches people, especially lovers, not to despair, by showing that in times of darkest confusion the pattern of their happiness is taking shape.²⁴

5. The Importance of Oddi's Heroines

The portrayal of women in the Italian comedy tended to follow classical convention in that while it was permissible to show servants, bawds and prostitutes on stage, the daughters of respectable households rarely if ever appeared. Many erudite comedies continued the classical convention that respectable young women not be seen on the stage. Aretino carries this a stage further and does not even show the *matrona* Livia or the *cortigiana* Camilla in his *Cortigiana*. Even when she does appear, the heroine of the academic comedy, for example Macchiavelli's Lucrezia in La mandragola, has a role that is small in comparison with the rest of the cast. To cite an instance of a play more directly comparable with Oddi's comedies of beleaguered fidelity, the heroine of Piccolomini's Amor costante, Ginevra, only appears in Act V, scene iv to supply the anagnorisis. All other reference to the character, despite her centrality to the plot, is indirect or reported.

The professional stage, on the other hand, tended to equalise the parts played by the actors and thus the Italian heroine came into her own. As Kathleen Lea relates, the *commedia dell'arte*, let the actresses appear as much as possible:

In farce the women are always at the window, or on the doorstep ready with the excuse of a dropped handkerchief, or an escaped hen, to allay the suspicions of parents and servants. In romantic comedy they appear as slaves, pages, pilgrims, soldiers, sometimes they are fugitives inadequately escorted by a brother or a lover, they come to ransom their relations, or claim their lovers. In Pastoral proper they are nymphs; in chivalric pastoral they disguise as shepherds. The adventures of tragicomedy are designed to give them every opportunity for scenes of love-making, lamentation, frenzy, and even of duelling.²⁵

While this certainly provides Sforza Oddi with a precedent for his romantic heroines, it is a precedent of doubtful moral acceptability and unlikely to be accepted *in toto* by a champion of the Counter-Reformation. The popular theatre had a reputation for all sorts of obscene ribaldry and some leading actresses may well have been ex-prostitutes.²⁶ In creating major roles for women, Oddi, like his long-suffering characters, bows to inevitability in conceding the female presence on the stage. He does not, however, sacrifice his moral vision in so doing since not only does he imbue his nobler heroines with the chastity and constancy of the Virgin Mary but also, in his *Erofilomachia*, gives his audience a Magdalene in the person of the reformed courtesan, Ardelia. The frantic activity described by Kathleen Lea becomes, in Oddi's women, an enduring *passività* which exemplifies their faith in Providence.

6 The Plays

All three of Oddi's comedies are broadly similar in structure in that their plots revolve around a common central idea: two young people, sweethearts since childhood, are forced to undergo numerous misfortunes and to overcome tremendous difficulties before being able to crown their relationship with marriage. The protagonists are all well-favoured in appearance and noble both in their sentiments and social background. The love which they have for each other is unforced by parental or other pressure, assisted initially by some external circumstance which brings them together, and, as is implicit in the final untangling of their problems, willed by Providence. The lovers themselves have no doubts

about their feelings but their union is obstructed by an external obstacle which forces them to renounce their love at the very moment in which it is most capable of realisation. Tortorizio notes that a structural contrast is maintained between "*attività*" and "*passività*"²⁷ wherein the faithful lovers, emblematic of the latter quality, seek only the restoration and, with the exception of *Erofilomachia*'s Ardelia, the consummation through marriage of their previous happiness. They realise their goals through submission to Providence. The competitors for their affections, representing *attività*, seek a new order but are frustrated in their aims and constrained to settle for what they can get - usually a return to the *status quo*.

Tortorizio's thesis of *attività* and *passività* as underlying the pattern of Providential dispensation, while extremely useful, requires some re-definition of *passività* to be truly all-embracing. Ardelia is, after all, an extremely vital figure while the same play's Flamminia sets out alone for Genoa to search for her lover, Leandro. A simple definition of *passività* as accordance with events seems inappropriate here and I suggest that the term be taken to include the instances of deliberate renunciation and sacrifice for love and friendship which are frequent in Oddi's plays. Thus when Ardelia aids Amico in his plans to marry Flamminia, the passionate depth of her love for him illustrates the magnitude of her self-sacrifice; similarly Flamminia's setting forth alone and unprotected in search of Leandro may be seen, on the *figura* of Matthew 10.21-23, as her renunciation of family, home and security for love. In both cases dramatic interest is heightened through the characters' submission to the demands of love.

6.1 The plot of *Erofilomachia* or *Duello d'amore e di amicizia* [Duel of Love and Friendship]:

The play has a typically novellesque background, à la *Romeo and Juliet*. The families of Leandro de'Sardi and Flamminia de' Portici are engaged in a blood-feud. Despite this, the two young people (Leandro 16 and Flamminia 12) fall in love. To escape the feud, Flamminia's father, Oberto, secretly moves himself and his family to Florence. Leandro, searching for Flamminia, is captured by pirates and spends three and a half years as a galley slave. Finally he is ransomed by Amico, a courtier of the Duke of Tuscany. To please his benefactor, Leandro, under the name of Fabio, enters Oberto's household as a servant. At this point the play opens.

Amico loves Flamminia and is in turn loved by the courtesan, Ardelia. Ardelia, despite her profession and to the dismay of the bawd, Giubilea, is faithful to Amico. Oberto wishes to marry his daughter to Ippocrasso, an elderly and foolish doctor. Ippocrasso and the bombastic Captain Rinoceronte are infatuated with Ardelia who wishes nothing to do with them. Amico wishes Leandro to help him marry Flamminia and Leandro, constrained by the bonds of friendship and honour, agrees to do so. Together with Giubilea and Ardelia, they arrange for Rinoceronte and Ippocrasso to go to Ardelia's house disguised as each other. Ippocrasso, by this, is discredited with Oberto, and both the doctor and the captain receive a beating.

Leandro, torn between love and duty, leaves a letter, in cipher, with Ardelia for Amico explaining all. He goes off to seek death in the wars. Ardelia, however, has been instructed in this cipher by Amico and reveals everything. Meanwhile news arrives of the end of the feud in Genoa. Leandro is found and re-united with Flamminia, and Ardelia rejoices that Amico is once more hers. A celebratory dinner is announced and the play ends.

6.1.1 Sources of *Erofilomachia*:

Marvin Herrick identifies Oddi's first play as owing much to Terence's *Eunuchus* and Ardelia in particular as descending from Thais the *meretrix honesta* of that play.²⁸ Corrigan also sees her as having, ultimately, a Terentian source but notes her as originating rather in the disinterested courtesan of *Hecyra*. She goes on to attribute the direct inspiration for Ardelia to the courtesan of the same name in Pino da Cagli's *Ingiusti sdegni* (1553), the theme of love sacrificed to friendship as proceeding from Contile's *Pescara* (1550), and the idea of the manservant in love with his master's daughter to *Polifila* (1556) (anon.).²⁹ This last is nevertheless not original to *Polifila* having already appeared in Boccaccio's *Decameron* II.vi and V.vii and Ariosto's *I suppositi*, while Boccaccio also predates Contile by examining self-sacrifice, high passion, love and friendship in X.vii, the story of Tito and Gisippo. It is interesting that, although Corrigan mentions Oddi's son, Cesare, as writing a play, *Gisippo*, based on the same story,³⁰ she makes no observation with regard to Sforza's debt to Boccaccio.

6.1.2 Characterisation in *Erofilomachia*:

There is little or nothing in *Erofilomachia* to confirm Flamminia and Leandro as of noble origin, and the setting of the play is the standard Plautine urban *locale*. However, Oddi's prologue to *Prigione d'amore*, justifying the inclusion of tragic elements in the *commedia*, is intended, as its title makes clear, to be *in apologia* for all three of his plays. It would seem reasonable therefore to infer the nobility of the lovers. A hint is given as to

Leandro's aristocratic status when his friend Alfonso agrees to listen to his reasons for not returning to Genoa:

...to show you that, ever since you were a lad in Genoa, I have loved you as my brother...and not as my lord, and that time and distance have not diminished that love by one iota, tell your story and I shall listen to you for as long as you wish. (I.i.pp.12-13)³¹

The social parity of Flamminia and Leandro's families is demonstrable by the feud which exists between them and by the readiness with which, the feud resolved, Oberto accepts Leandro as a son-in-law (V.v). Flamminia's nobility is also indicated by the fact that her suitor, Amico, is a courtier to the Duke of Tuscany and is, moreover, "a scion of a noble family" (IV.vi.pp.118-119).³²

The lovers' nobility of sentiment is more readily identifiable through their self-sacrificing behaviour. Leandro, torn by the opposing demands of love and friendship, determines to honour the latter. He promotes Amico's cause and decides to leave Florence and seek an honourable death. This last is, nevertheless, no arbitrary act of self-denial but an action designed to bring about the reconciliation of the Sardi and Portici families - as Leandro's valedictory letter makes clear:

...I beg you, My Lord Oberto, to some day make peace with our family, since you may judge by me that they are not as cruel and mean-spirited as, in your home, you used to call them to my face. And, as for my service with you I wish no other reward save this peace. I no longer desire this in order to possess Flamminia, but for love of you. (V.v.p.154)³³

Through his death, Leandro hopes to redeem others. The Christian implications are unmistakable. Unlike Tasso's Aminta, he is not sacrificing himself just for the love of one woman, but for the love of all.

Flamminia's devotion to the memory of Leandro also has a notably Christian dimension in the tenacity of her faith in his love. She has heard nothing of Leandro for five years but, rather than marry Amico or Ippocrasso, she is prepared to set out alone for Genoa to look for him. When the disguised Leandro reminds her of her duty to her father, she says that she would seek death or become a nun in the convent of Saint Agnes rather

than marry Ippocrasso or even Amico (IV.iv). In this, Oddi's first play, there are a number of concessions to the theatrical conventions which do not feature in his later work. One of these shows itself in the short length of time Flamminia is on stage. She appears in only three scenes, IV.iv, IV.vi, and, very briefly, in V.ix wherein all is revealed and she is reunited with Leandro. Oddi however redresses the balance by realising the first of his powerful female roles through the more dramatically familiar character of the courtesan.

Ardelia, fashioned to accord with Oddi's moral view, is a courtesan on the way out of business. She has been reformed by the power of Love and has dedicated her affections, her body, and her wealth to the service of the somewhat ungrateful Amico. As a courtesan, she should be a member of the traditional Plautine sub-cast and, with respect to the structure of the play, that is the role she fulfils. Notwithstanding this secondary ranking, modern critics judge Ardelia to be the most effective role in the *Erofilomachia*. Corrigan sees the character as "one of the most attractive in the comedy of the century....a figure both lifelike and admirable."³⁴ Marvin Herrick opines that "Ardelia ...distinguishes this play and raises it above the common run of romantic comedies and love-and-honor (*sic*) plays."³⁵ Maria Bianca Tortorizio sees her as the symbol of Oddi's ethical system:

In fact it is she, a courtesan and therefore relegated to a low social stratum, who incarnates the most noble human values, which, moreover, mark the noble heroines of the other comedies.³⁶

But Ardelia, while possessing nobility of spirit, is a courtesan. She is specifically referred to as such,³⁷ she wears her profession's identifying yellow veil,³⁸ and her closest friend is the bawd, Giubilea.³⁹ She can have no hope of marrying Amico who in any case, and in despite of Oddi's declared intention that he be an exemplar, only wishes to take advantage of her. Therefore her selfless devotion is all the more admirable for being completely disinterested. When Amico wishes to discredit Ippocrasso in Oberto's eyes and thus pave the way for his own courtship of Flamminia, it is Ardelia who is the prime mover in the *burla* which is played on the old doctor - even though, by doing so, she acts completely against her own interests. In this she shows herself as noble of mind as the *innamorati*.

Ardelia so captures dramatic sympathy that Benedetto Croce sees her as the touchstone of Sforza Oddi's elevation from dramaturge to poet:

Such indeed Oddi becomes in the person of his creation Ardelia, the enamoured courtesan, for she, poetically speaking, is the real protagonist of the drama...Ardelia, in the scenic drama, is, rather, a second-level character; but in the poetic drama she is on the first level and she fills it completely.⁴⁰

Flamminia is theoretically and logically Leandro's partner in *passività*. Oddi's early reluctance, amended in his later plays, to challenge theatrical convention on the depiction of women means, however, that it falls to Ardelia to dramatically personify this trait. This enriches her character by imbuing it, as I have noted, with magdalenic overtones. It also serves to smooth the structural divisions created by the juxtaposition of a primary cast drawn, as Tasso complained, from the world of tragedy with a secondary cast of stock comic types. Ardelia moves freely from one to the other. As courtesan she acts as foil to the Celestinesque bawd, Giubilea; she is the focus of the amorous rivalry between Captain Rinoceronte and Ippocrasso - which may be seen as a burlesque of the main events; and it is Ardelia who plays a key part in the *burla* which occasions the beating of those two worthies. As disinterested lover and noble spirit she parallels Leandro; as the embodiment of *passività* her behaviour contrasts with and implicitly challenges Amico's self-seeking *attività*; and her generosity and gracious manners are such as to cause the noble Oberto to address her as "Your Ladyship"⁴¹ and to describe her as "well-bred"⁴² and "too courteous and modest"⁴³. Oberto thus recognises that she belongs, *de facto* if not *de jure*, as much to the social world of the primary cast as to that of the *comici*.

That Ardelia has abandoned her old ways for love of him, Amico is willing to admit to his servant, Sandrino: "and because of this she has discarded many others who have loved her"⁴⁴. And her devotion and fidelity to him he also confesses:

She cannot be in bed with anyone, for there never was such an honest wife who kept such faith with her husband as Ardelia has always kept with me since the day her love for me flared up so fiercely.⁴⁵

Notwithstanding this recognition of her virtues, Amico is quick on the attack when he wishes to rid himself of her:

...your behaviour has never brought me aught but harm and shame. Therefore, in order that this may not happen again, I have resolved to take a wife and have chosen a most honourable and beautiful young woman. She is much worthier of love than you who can only strip me of my possessions, my life and my honour, like the most dishonourable whore that you are.⁴⁶

This is strong language and all the worse for being a lie. Sandrino has already reminded Amico that Ardelia has given him "as much again in money as in clothes so that those at court who know your income have, more than once, been amazed that you dress so well."⁴⁷ And Ardelia, finally goaded beyond the limits of her *passività*, explodes with rage in a way which transcends the limits of the *commedia grave* and is surely modelled on one of the set-piece "frenzies" of the popular stage referred to by Kathleen Lea:

You foul-mannered lying coward! So I have stripped you of your possessions, your life and your honour, reviled, ruined and beggared you? Why, if it hadn't been for me you'd have been a thousand times dead of hunger and forced to steal to finance your gambling. Now give me back some of it, right this minute, give me back those fifty gold scudos that I loaned you to pay My Lord Luigi who had won it from you playing primero - Sandrino and Giulio saw me give you it - and those hundred and forty in solid gold that you used to buy that beautiful horse last Christmas...Now, hand over those hundred and ninety scudos right this minute. As for my other gifts, the jewels as well as the money - and including what I gave you this morning - I don't care if you never mention them to me again. I'd be ashamed to behave like you, you base and vulgar man, by asking for my gifts back. And now I'm going off to visit the Prince, your lord, and tell His Highness that you were going to swindle me by running off to Genoa as fast as you could to avoid paying-up. You'll see if I've reviled you in the past by the way I'll revile you in the present, you ill-mannered ass!⁴⁸

That the young Oddi has simply been unable to resist the temptation to graft a popular set-piece onto his *commedia grave* is, I think, shown by Ardelia's instant return to *passività* when Amico reproaches her, "you shouldn't treat me like that, Ardelia: that's enough"⁴⁹. The inclusion of this "frenzy" does however add considerably to the negative side of Amico's moral balance sheet.

Amico's ill-treatment of Ardelia is unexpected since his aptronym would seem to indicate generosity of character. Indeed, as we have seen, he is expressly identified in the prologue as an exemplar of a noble type. The prologue, however, as a statement of intent,

would seem to temporally as well as positionally precede the play since any reading of Amico's personality, and indeed Oddi's own words in the mouth of Ardelia, show him as far from unalloyedly noble. The reasons for this must be sought in the comedy's philosophical and dramatic structure.

Oddi, as I have noted, identifies the bonds of male friendship as the nexus of the drama. These bonds, Platonic by implication, must be regarded as having a superior status to those of heterosexual love and accordingly, when there is conflict, the latter must yield to the former. Amico ransoms Leandro from the pirates, conceives a friendship towards him, and obtains him a position by which he can earn his living. Leandro acknowledges and returns Amico's friendship and is therefore obliged to yield to him in the matter of Flamminia. In the moment of anagnorisis Amico willingly recognises that friendship demands that he now withdraw and permit Leandro the enjoyment of his love. This skeletal story, albeit rather anodyne, perfectly demonstrates one aspect of Oddi's belief system - the Platonic elevation of friendship - but is subverted by another.

Tortorizio's thesis of *attività* and *passività* has implications with regard to the presence of Divine Providence in Oddi's work. While *mezzani* are present in this play - for Giubilea and Ardelia may be seen as such - it is left to Providence to successfully fulfil the role of Go-Between for the principals. That Providence will resolve the lovers' difficulties is implied throughout by the dramatic and moral sympathy which the author plainly intends the characters representing *passività*, to have. Since, in such a scheme of things, *attività* is a trait to be reprehended, the character of Amico must lose some of its nobility in order to accommodate this idea. In his pursuit of Flamminia, Amico personifies *attività* which therefore entails a concomitant degree of self-interest. The pairing of Amico with the dramatically potent Ardelia requires an intensification of this self-interest both to point up Ardelia's suffering and to avoid his character being completely eclipsed by her. Oddi is thus obliged to fracture the unity of his ethical purpose by presenting an Amico rather less morally consistent than his prologue would suggest.

While the comic sub-cast generally perform the set-pieces of popular comedy - *lazzi* of boasting, gluttony, beatings etc. - the bawd Giubilea deserves special mention. As

we have seen, Oddi effectively eliminates the need for a Go-Between through his use of Divine Providence. It is therefore only as a concession to dramatic custom that he includes her with the rest of the comic sub-cast; but, having included her, he must find something for her to do. She appears to be modelled on the Spanish bawd, Celestina, and, like her original, gets a lot of comic mileage from her false piety and reminiscences of better days. Her primary function as a *mezzana* is nevertheless superfluous to the Oddian scheme of things and is accordingly only presented in a burlesqued form. Ardelia initially wishes to use her as a Go-Between to bring Ippocrasso to her house so that she may tell him that Amico wishes to marry Flamminia.⁵⁰ Thus Giubilea is being asked to obstruct rather than facilitate a relationship. Amico, unaware of this, hatches his own plot to bring Ippocrasso to Ardelia's house in order to discredit the doctor with Oberto. He pays Giubilea to arrange that Captain Rinoceronte and Ippocrasso disguise in each other's clothes. Since Amico has previously expressed jealousy of the Captain, he will persuade Ardelia to give the disguised Ippocrasso a sound beating to prove her loyalty to him.⁵¹ The beating is a slapstick set-piece imported from the popular comedy and contributes nothing to the plot. The intrigue with Giubilea however again demonstrates the reversal of her usual function. While it is not unusual in Italian comedy for a bawd to fail in her task - especially when representing a *vecchio* like Ippocrasso - she is conventionally depicted as trying to realise the lover's wishes. Here Giubilea's actions directly ensure the failure of Ippocrasso's marriage plans and place at risk Ardelia's relationship with Amico; there is no suggestion however that she then goes on to actively solicit the affections of Flamminia and therefore, with regard to the main action, she has no function as a *mezzana*: she simply underscores the Providential outcome of Ardelia's *passività* by deepening the *imbroglio*. In Ardelia's case, any *mezzana*-like action on her part is dramatically overshadowed by the pain of her self-sacrifice. Even if she were to try to influence Flamminia directly in Amico's favour, our foreknowledge of her real feelings would force a sympathetic perception of her as a sacrificial figure rather than as a *mezzana* while the extremity of such self-abnegation, in the context of *commedia grave*, would ensure her Providential reward. In fact, this is exactly the point which Oddi develops in his second comedy, *I morti vivi*.

6.2 Plot of *I morti vivi* [The Living Dead]:

Girolamo, a merchant from Ancona, settles in Alexandria with his twelve-year-old son, Ottavio. A business associate of Girolamo's, the Turkish Abraim, has a daughter, Alessandra. The two young people fall in love but, because of the difference of religions, cannot marry. Alessandra secretly converts, thus putting herself in grave danger, and Ottavio, ordered by his father to return to Italy, decides to take her with him. Abraim is told that she has been stolen away by Christian pirates. On the way to their ship, however, she is in fact stolen from Ottavio's party by a band of Egyptian pagans who wish to sacrifice a Christian virgin. Moretto, a mountebank (i.e. a street performer and seller of trifles), says that he has a plan to rescue her and instructs the others to wait for him at the mouth of the river. Ottavio's impatience and worry get the better of him and he follows in Moretto's tracks. He comes to a clearing where he is shocked to see Moretto, dressed as a pagan priest, apparently disembowel Alessandra and order her body placed in a sack to be thrown into the sea. Ottavio faints and is carried to his ship by his friends who set sail for Italy. Nevertheless, Alessandra is still alive. Moretto, who had to ransom two friends from these very pagans, had volunteered to perform the sacrifice with his friends assisting. In reality, he had used his mountebank's trick knife which only penetrated far enough to rip open a bag of dog's guts with which Alessandra had covered her belly. While he was making great ceremony of burning these entrails, his friends carried the girl away to their rendezvous. Finding the ship gone they take passage to Italy on another. While stopping off in Crete they hear a rumour that Ottavio has married a rich Neapolitan lady and has returned with her to Naples. Alessandra goes alone to the shore to weep and is seized by Turkish pirates. Upon being pursued, the Turks are seen to tie a piece of the anchor around her neck and drop her in the sea. Ottavio meanwhile has been befriended by the Lady Oranta whose husband Tersandro has been reported drowned in battle. She falls in love with him and takes him to Naples. There she tries to persuade him to marry her but he cannot forget Alessandra. The play opens at this point.

Moretto arrives in Naples and tells Ottavio of Alessandra's second "death." Ottavio's anguish is heightened since he now blames himself. He promises reluctantly to marry Oranta but she fears he may change his mind. Alessandra is not really dead, since it was another girl who was thrown overboard, and has been sold to Oranta as a Turkish slave, Rossana. She is credited with magical abilities and Oranta decides to use her to firm Ottavio's resolve. Rossana, moved by Oranta's kindness to her, agrees to do so and, feigning possession by the dead Alessandra's spirit, counsels Ottavio to marry her rival. Luigi, a suitor spurned by Oranta, plots with her steward, Marcone, to pay a man to impersonate Tersandro and thus prevent the marriage. All is thrown into confusion by the arrival of the real Tersandro, who has been rescued by Abraim. The latter has converted to Christianity and now has no objection to Ottavio as a son-in-law. Ottavio discovers Rossana's real identity and they are reunited.

6.2.1 Sources of *I morti vivi*:

Marvin Herrick identifies the plot as primarily based on a *contaminatio* of Achilles Tatius's romance of Leucippe and Clitophon with that of Melitte and Thersander.⁵² To this Oddi adds the character of the rejected suitor, Luigi, and the *burla* of the impersonation of Tersandro. Corrigan notes this latter motif as being suggested by the *Trinummus* of Plautus and already employed in Ariosto's *Suppositi* (1509) and Francesco d'Ambra's *Furto* (1544).⁵³

6.2.2 Characterisation in *I morti vivi*:

The 16th century blurring of the divisions between Italian bourgeois and aristocrat - the de'Medici being a prime example - permits us to accept the essentially mercantile families of the main protagonists as noble. Ottavio, whose father is "extremely rich",⁵⁴ is certainly named "nobleman" by Antonino who also titles Oranta "a noble lady of some importance"⁵⁵, while Tersandro's desire to be first into battle⁵⁶ is more the action of an aristocratic leader than of a typically cautious merchant.

As in Erofilomachia there is a contrast between *attività* and *passività*. The figure who most effectively exemplifies the latter is Alessandra in whom the moral and the dramatic are so sympathetically combined as to cause Corrigan to name her "the most charming heroine to be found in Italian comedy of that period."⁵⁷ Louise Clubb sees her as "functioning centrally as visible proof of God's miraculous providence and as an example of the virtues of faith, hope and charity."⁵⁸ The danger implicit in the creation of such a personage is that, in representing these virtues, she may run the risk of blandness and a self-effacement excessive for the purposes of drama. The first is partially if not wholly countered by the exoticism in her character. A Turkish slave, presumably costumed and veiled as such, with a reputation for divinatory magic automatically lends colour to the plot and to the stage; the personal history to which the audience is privy augments this and also gives us some idea of her strength of character. Excessive self-effacement is countered by the use of soliloquy and aside which reveal the tremendous conflict between her desires and her principles. Her *passività* is not that of the enervated. In her opening soliloquy she shows her anger with Ottavio, calling him "ingrate", and admits to her own "jealousy" and "pain"; and pride and resentment are manifest as she complains about being led through the streets with a rope around her neck like "a very beast led to sacrifice, sold, beaten and finally abandoned by all".⁵⁹

While it could be argued that, in fleeing her father's house, Alessandra has shown a lack of filial piety, her justification for this act serves to emphasise the essentially religious basis of Oddi's dramatic morality. As a secret apostate in Egypt, at a time of war between Christian and Turk,⁶⁰ she would have been in peril of her life. Antonino, in fact, refers to her voluntary abduction from her home as "this holy and honourable theft",⁶¹ and a flight from Egypt has inevitable biblical overtones. When Oranta promises to free her

if she embraces Christianity, the supposed Rossana, far from revealing the *fait accompli* of her conversion, insists on the prior restitution of her slave's purchase price:

It is not to avoid becoming a Christian that I will not accept this now - for I have liked your religion ever since I was a girl - but so that first I may give you satisfaction for the 200 scudos Marcone spent for me. That way no one may ever say that I was baptised to avoid spending the two hundred rather than from the desire to become Christian.⁶²

Here we have a perfect model of Christian renunciation of both family, again on the *figura* of Matthew 10.21-23, and freedom.

An emphasis on constancy in the face of apparently hopeless situations, a commonplace of both classical and renaissance romance,⁶³ is given a Christian dimension through its association with Alessandra. Running alongside the theme that Love requires self-sacrifice and renunciation is the analogous proposition that Christianity is equally demanding. The non-sensuous nature of Ottavio's and Alessandra's expressions of love underlines the equation of the two. We can therefore see that the initial "sacrifice" of Alessandra and her subsequent journey over the waters of the Mediterranean may be interpreted as a metaphor of the repudiation of her culture and religion through the medium of the baptismal waters.

That Alessandra's position within the drama is central is confirmed by Oddi's breaking with convention in placing her onstage for the greater part of three acts as well as in the final reconciliation.⁶⁴ While classical plays had presented slave-girls who later turned out to be free-born, the audience, as a rule, were, at least nominally, unaware of the true circumstances. At the moment of revelation, the girls disappeared from the stage and their actions thenceforth became only a matter of report. We are aware of Rossana's real identity from her first appearance wherein she brings us up-to-date with a lengthy soliloquy. The lovers are also re-united onstage. Here Oddi has obviated the need for a character in the *Ardelia* mould by directly presenting a noble heroine. In so doing he has removed all trace of moral dubiety from the characters of his principals, reinforced his didactic purpose, and created a model for the future.

Ottavio, like Leandro, represents *passività* and the choice he is called upon to

make involves a similar sacrifice of his desires. With respect to Erofilomachia, however, his position much more closely parallels that of Flamminia in that he is being pressured into a marriage he does not want and is unaware that his beloved lives within the same household as himself. Herrick sees him as "a thoroughpaced lover"⁶⁵ citing his reported extravagant protestations of love for Alessandra while in Egypt; nevertheless, he points out, we see little of this side of Ottavio until the re-union of the lovers. Ottavio is constrained by circumstances to lament rather than to love. Such glimpses of another side to his character as we have come through his friend Antonino who, together with Moretto, recounts the background to the action of the play. Thus Antonino reveals that Ottavio has a vengeful side: "Moretto,...not once but a thousand times he has vowed that you would die if he could get his hands on you"⁶⁶. The impression given is of a powerfully emotional personality and the character's dramatic colour and intensity are thereby enhanced. It is Ottavio's depth of emotion which maintains his faith to the supposedly dead Alessandra - a faith which ultimately finds its reward. The very title of the play carries implications of death and resurrection and Ottavio's suffering can accordingly be seen as a metaphor for the soul in torment redeemed through faith in Christ. As a true Christian he resists temptation. Oranta is a woman of "beauty and wealth"⁶⁷ who has a powerful desire for him. She has taken him to live in her house and has even gone to his bedside to beg him to marry her.⁶⁸ Ottavio only consents, reluctantly, when it is apparent that she is desperate, threatening to have him killed if he does not accede to her wishes. Ottavio is to sacrifice himself for another. He is in torment and, like Christ in Gethsemane, cries "how can I sip from this cup".⁶⁹ The pattern of Christian analogy and reference in his actions and speech serve to remind us that he is in the hands of Providence.

Oranta fulfils the antithetical role of *attività* among the serious characters (Luigi corresponds to her in the sub-cast). Although capable of great generosity, the self-abnegation of an Alessandra or Ardelia is beyond her. Corrigan, comparing her with Alessandra, sees the former as a completely contemporary figure:

Oranta, in her very different way, is equally interesting: the typical great lady of the century, noble imperious, sensual; extremely generous, yet showing flashes of the tigrish cruelty so characteristic of the period.⁷⁰

Her nobility has already been discussed. Of her sensuality, we have already seen demonstration in her invasion of Ottavio's bedroom; and, in the hospitality she offers him and in the liberty she offers Rossana, she is certainly generous. Her cruelty is manifest in her threat to have Ottavio killed and in the contempt she displays when, pleading her case with the heartbroken lover, she refers to Alessandra as "a barbarian, a beggar, killed in such a shameful manner."⁷¹ These are words of anger, of an imperious nature thwarted in its desires.

The *attività* of Oranta is ironically contrasted with Ottavio's *passività* over the question of Providential intervention. As we have observed, it is a basic tenet of Oddi's thesis that unquestioning submission to Divine Will brings ultimate reward. Oranta, however, far from submitting to the will of Providence actually invokes it as a weapon in her relentless campaign to persuade Ottavio to submit to her own will.

...isn't this whole business of your Alessandra being so miraculously saved and then drowned again at sea a sign that she wasn't born for you? And that God hadn't called you to an Egyptian but to a much more suitable Italian marriage?⁷²

Tortorizio adduces more evidence of Oranta's *attività* in her hypocritical befriending of Rossana.⁷³ Although Oranta states that she is bringing Rossana into her personal household to protect her,⁷⁴ the maid Giovanna reveals the real reason:

...there's that Rossana our slave who, according to what she once told me there in the garden, knows certain excellent remedies for these kinds of afflictions [*i.e. for Ottavio's insistent memories of Alessandra*]. If only her ladyship knew about that. Maybe she does know and that's why she's had her brought back here..⁷⁵

And Giovanna also provides an insight into Oranta's devious thought processes:

She was going to tell me and then she thought better of it; look, if you please, at how she thinks about everything and how much she does herself. She hardly trusts anyone else. She's a wise young woman and that's a fact.⁷⁶

Oranta will only confide in those who can be of use to her. This and the functional nature of her regard for Rossana's welfare are made clear in her reply to the girl's expressions of gratitude:

I thank you for this goodwill; and you in turn should know that, when I saw you in the garden this morning, I began to hold you dear, I liked you, and I determined to make use of you for a task I need performed. Wherefore, since you have offered yourself to me so readily - and with a will more free than servile - I am resolved, in fact, to confide my secret to you.⁷⁷

The relationship between the two women, despite the protestations of mutual regard, is based on a perception of mutual advantage. If Rossana is successful, Oranta promises her "what those who find themselves in your condition usually want"⁷⁸, i.e. freedom. Rossana, as has been seen, is too proud to accept freedom so easily and wishes only that Oranta help her find Ottavio - nominally so that she may have him buy her freedom. The essentials of the exchange relationship are nevertheless in place. This bargaining equality is soon destroyed by the revelation that Ottavio is Oranta's beloved. Rossana's weak attempts to excuse herself bring the restitution of the mistress/slave polarity and Oranta, once more imperious, chides her for a "naive fool"⁷⁹. It is in this moment that Rossana acknowledges the apparent opposition of Providence and places her services entirely at Oranta's disposal. Her *passività*, unlike that of Ardelia, is not occasioned by disinterested love but by a sense of duty. She has, after all, given her word to help Oranta and she does owe her a debt of honour. In this she recalls Leandro but with the difference that her submission to another's wishes is not done for pure friendship but is occasioned by colder virtues and a keen sense that her life is in the hands of this powerful woman:

Would you have it that the concerns of someone like myself, lowly and of no account, should disturb in the slightest the happiness of a most noble and well-favoured lady like you?⁸⁰

Just as in Egypt in the hands of the pagans, just as in Crete when kidnapped by the Turks, Rossana finds that she has no power to influence events in her favour and bows to inevitability. Thus the whole Neapolitan scene could simply be yet another episode in a romance structure were it not for the return from the dead of another victim of circumstances, Tersandro.

Tersandro, despite belonging to the nobles of the principal cast, is essentially a rough comic character - this being in itself an Oddian innovation. Corrigan sums him as

"overbearing, lacking in sensibility, violent, but with a certain rough good humor."⁸¹ He demonstrates this good humour when he mischievously pretends to be Iancola, the man engaged to impersonate him, in order to gull his rival, Luigi.⁸² Tersandro's function within the play is to impose a reality external to the intrigues of Oranta and Luigi, the personifications of *attività*, and frustrate them by restoring the original order. Fortorizio calls him the "*deus ex machina*" of the play⁸³ but it is clear from his fortuitous rescue by Abraim that he is only an agent and not the fount of Providence. His knowledge of Abraim's conversion and the re-establishment of his marriage to Oranta effectively remove the last barriers separating the lovers. Thus *passività* is rewarded and *attività* chastened. The Providential outcome of his, Ottavio's and Alessandra's adventures evidently so impresses Tersandro that he vows a pilgrimage to Loreto. A change of heart has overtaken this man who had previously tried to force Rossana. Tersandro's redemption completes the Christian vision of the play.

6.3 The Plot of Prigione d'amore (Prison of Love):

Flamminio loves Erminia, a lady-in-waiting to the Duchess of Ferrara. Flamminio's best friend, Erminia's twin brother, Lelio, loves Marzia who is also a lady-in-waiting. Marzia's brother, the *miles gloriosus* Captain Bellerofonte Scarabombardon, has been promised Erminia's hand in marriage by the Duke. Lelio discovers that Erminia and his friend are in love and, to obstruct the planned marriage, arranges for his sister to go to an aunt's house in Bologna. He writes to tell Flamminio of what he has done saying that where his friend's happiness is concerned he has no more regard for the Duke than for a dish-cloth. Unfortunately this letter finds its way to the Duke who throws Lelio into prison and orders his execution as a disloyal oath-breaker. Flamminio, to save his friend, renounces all claim to Erminia and the Duke gives Lelio eight days to bring his sister back and marry her to the Captain if he wishes to be pardoned. Someone, however, has to take his place in prison as surety for his return and Flamminio offers himself. The play opens on the last of the eight days with Flamminio facing execution if Lelio does not return.

Erminia returns to Ferrara before her brother can find her. She disguises herself as Lelio and takes Flamminio's place in prison. The executioner gives her poison and she apparently dies and her body is taken to Marzia's house to be prepared for burial. She is however only asleep since the "poison" was merely a soporific prepared by Marzia who believes the prisoner to be her beloved Lelio. When the truth is revealed, the Duke is moved by the women's fidelity and willingness to endanger themselves for their lovers. He sanctions Erminia's marriage to Flamminio. The Captain's honour is satisfied with the offer of a profitable sinecure and the play ends with wedding preparations for the two pairs of lovers.

6.3.1 Sources of Prigione d'amore:

Corrigan gives a most comprehensive resumé of material which Oddi may have

drawn on for this play and I therefore reproduce it in full:

The title of the play was probably suggested by Diego de San Pedro's immensely popular Cárcel de amor [Prison of Love], but its sources are very doubtful. The motif of the twins who resemble each other exactly dates, of course, from the Menaeclumini, and is also found in Bibbiena's Calandria, and in the Ingannati of the Intronati of Siena, in both of which plays brother and sister masquerade as each other. The story of Damon and Pythias probably suggested the episode in which Flamminio takes Lelio's place in prison, while the fourth tale of the fifth *deca* of Giraldu's Ecatommiti relates the escape from prison of a man disguised in the clothes of his wife, whose readiness to die in his stead wins the pity and pardon of the king. The sleeping potion which produces the appearance of death is a common device both in the *novella* and in comedy. It appears in the story of Romeo and Juliet adapted by Bandello from the original story by Della Porta, in Piccolomini's Amor costante, and in Parabosco's Pellegrino.⁸⁴

6.3.2 Characterisation in Prigione d'amore:

There is no possible doubt as to the noble, and thereby conventionally tragic, status of the main participants in this drama. Oddi's *dramatis personae* identifies the scene as the court of Ferrara and the characters as "Knights and Ladies of that court"⁸⁵. The prison scenes and Oddi's normal concern for the Unities suggest that the drama takes place within the castle. Oddi's use of a *prologo defensivo* would imply that the gravity of his previous works had come under criticism and we therefore see a much greater proportion of comic *lazzi* and an enlarged sub-cast - a nurse, a maid, two serious servants, one comic servant, a gluttonous parasite, a gaoler, a pedant, and a *miles gloriosus* - who recall the Masks of the professional theatre. The intermingling of comic and tragic features is even more unconventional in that some of the principals display aspects of comedy while the *miles gloriosus* is elevated to the nobility. Corrigan notes the importance of these developments and also comments on the realism of their presentation:

...the Prigione d'amore is probably the first comedy of the century to have a court setting, and to introduce as its principal characters ladies and gentlemen attached to one of the most important courts in Italy. There are references to the pleasures enjoyed by the courtiers, their hunting, their parties for swimming in the Po, their music, and the elaborate needlework of the ladies-in-waiting. The introduction of prison scenes, too, is both interesting and novel.⁸⁶

The renunciatory *figura* personified in Ardelia and Alessandra again finds voice in

Erminia. In her however we see a strange blending of the principles of *attività* and *passività* since she refuses to sit by and let others decide her fate but instead places herself deliberately centre-stage as a sacrificial victim. Her *attività* nevertheless has no function in directly supplying her wants but is firmly directed towards saving her lover and her brother. There is therefore none of the naked self-interest so apparent in the persons of Amico and Oranta. Even more so than Ottavio, she represents a Christ-figure - especially since she is to be executed as a criminal for having allegedly challenged the power-of-the-day - and it is her death and 'resurrection' which bring about the forgiveness of sins by the deus ex machina, the Duke. Louise Clubb sees Erminia as "a primary illustration of the Counter-Reformation injunction to quietism and trust in the powers that be", and sees those powers as embodied in the Duke of Ferrara who "is continually referred to and given an effect on the action so as to associate him with the idea of providence."⁸⁷ The Duke is off-stage for the entirety of the play and yet his wishes have constantly to be taken into account. He is thus effectively invisible as well as all-powerful while his decisions and the final blessing of the *innamorati*'s marriages are conveyed by his secretary, Pomponio, who effectively functions as the Vicar of this clearly Providential *figura*.

Corrigan describes Erminia as having "all the resourcefulness and courage of a man, without becoming unsexed and repellent, like too many of the masquerading heroines of comedy."⁸⁸ That her sexuality is not merely nominal is revealed where an unguarded reference to Flamminio as "my soul" causes the comical turnkey, Grillo, to suspect that his prisoner is a homosexual.⁸⁹

As well as possessing courage and personal warmth, Erminia has a cheeky sense of humour which is revealed by her admission that she has tricked the Duke and Duchess many times by dressing as her brother.⁹⁰ There is even a kind of gallows humour in her mysterious and mocking denials to her prison visitors that she ever promised Erminia to the Captain.⁹¹ Her vivacity is compared to that of Portia, Rosalind and Viola by Marvin Herrick⁹² while the way in which she arranges for the disposal of her body before calmly facing execution seems to presage Webster's Duchess of Malfi.

As we have seen in his other comedies, the renunciation of love in favour of

friendship is an important component of Oddi's *passività*. Flamminio goes further than this by placing his life in danger as well as abjuring his love. Despite Oddi's platonic elevation of friendship above love being the principal theme of his first play, it is here presented with greater strength and pathos; this is partly because of the life-and-death issues involved but also because Erminia is more evidently worthy of love than the rather anodyne Flamminia of Erofilomachia. When we see Erminia we know the magnitude of Flamminio's sacrifice.

An interesting development in Flamminio's characterisation is seen in Oddi's final eschewing of the generation gap as a dynamic of the plot. In Erofilomachia and I morti vivi parents have been deceived by their offspring. In this Oddi has followed a tradition in which classical models set father against son for comic purposes and *novellieri* like Bandello explored the tragic consequences of such deception. Flamminio's first words in the play however are a model of filial piety and contrition:

Oh, my dear father, I do not know whether I feel more gladness at seeing you here at such a time of trouble for me, or pain at the displeasure you have felt, and which you feel even more on finding me, after so many years, in such a state.⁹³

And respect and love for his father are further attested in his "wise and loving father."⁹⁴ Odoardo, his father, is no less devoted to his son and has volunteered to take his place in prison saying that it would be better if "danger and ruin were to fall on this head of mine, already gray and near its end."⁹⁵ Flamminio insists that filial duty take precedence, "shouldn't I take this risk just once for a father?"⁹⁶ Oddi has taken the opportunity to confirm not just the sanctity of friendship but also that of familial love.

Since Oddi's original production probably had the same actor play Lelio and Erminia - they are never shown together - and since Erminia is the main focus of the play, the development of Lelio's character is minimal. Like Tersandro, he is partially a comic figure and similarly creates comical confusion among the sub-cast by his apparent return from the dead. The use of Lelio for comic purposes is of a piece with the use of the Captain to set the plot in motion.

Bellerofonte Scarabombardon belongs firmly to the comic tradition as a braggart

and a coward. He is an inveterate self-publicist and, as Odoardo reveals, "even in Padua they speak of his deeds."⁹⁷ However, his sometime servant and companion, the parasite Spazza, reveals that the Captain's boasts, although they have gained him prestige at court, are in fact

...stupendous and gross lies that he tells, but they are often so diverting that they would surprise the dead. It is because of this that the Duke shows him so much favour.⁹⁸

And the Captain's cowardice is made clear by his fear of offending Lelio's 'ghost'.⁹⁹ Despite his comic antecedents, Bellerofonte is of noble extraction. As the brother of Marzia he can be nothing else. It is this which makes him a credible suitor for Erminia and the manipulative way in which he persuades his sister to intervene on his behalf (here revealed by the servant Ventura) identifies him as being on the side of *attività*:

...Bellerofonte, so ambitious and eager to have her [Erminia] as his wife, and knowing Marzia's immoderate love for Lelio, told her one day not to even think that she would have Lelio for her husband unless she were first to persuade the Duke to let him have Erminia for his wife..¹⁰⁰

Marzia, unlike her brother, is no coward. Her plot to rescue Lelio shows both her ingenuity and her courage. In this she too shows the blend of *attività* and *passività* which characterises Erminia. In this play Oddi gives a greater psychological depth to his female characters by sanctioning an *attività* which is genuinely self-sacrificing in its concern for others. To emphasise the inherently perilous nature of *attività* in general however, he attaches its use directly to a consequent *passività* in which the participants must resign themselves to the possibility of punishment and death. It is only Providence, as personified by the never-seen Duke, which wills that the women escape the fatal consequences of their actions. An added Marian dimension is imposed on the general Christian tone of the play by the decision¹⁰¹ to place the whole matter before the Duchess and beg her to intercede with the Duke. If the latter symbolises Divine Providence then the Duchess can only represent the Queen of Heaven.

7. The Influence of Oddi's *Commedie Gravi*:

However one looks at it, it is certain that the subject matter of comedy is transformed and elevated: no more, or not only, jokes, mockery, trickery and fraud; but the clash of noble and generous passions, competing acts of sacrifice, constancy of affections and firmness of purpose.

For this reason that small handful of Cinquecento writers who composed serious comedies possesses a great historical, not to say aesthetic, importance for us. And perhaps the most remarkable of these is precisely Sforza Oddi.¹⁰²

Ireneo Sanesi's assessment of Oddi's importance for *commedia grave* is echoed by M.H. Corrigan who sees the publication of the three plays as giving a decisive boost to the genre. She notes the greater focus on women in Raffaello Borghini's La donna costante (circa 1578) and L'amante furioso (1580), and in Francesco Podiani's Fidi amanti (1599), Schiavi d'amore (1606) and Malia d'amore (1618). Degli Angeli in his Amor pazzo (1596) uses a central female character and repeats Oddi's device of the supposedly dead lover. Centio's Padre afflitto (1578) and Mazza's Ricatto (1588) both show friends vying with each other in generosity, while Giovanni Villifranchi reveals in the prologue to La greca schiava (1618) that his comedy was modeled directly on I morti vivi. Pico's Honesta schiava is mainly a *contaminatio* of I morti vivi and Erofilomachia, and, as late as 1664, Cicognini rewrites I morti vivi as Verità riconosciuta.¹⁰³ Sanesi also indicates a possible Oddian influence on the serious comedies of Della Porta - the which however cannot be confirmed owing to the uncertain chronology of the Neapolitan dramatist's *oeuvre*.¹⁰⁴

Sanesi also confirms Oddi's influence outside of Italy, citing Rotrou's Clarice ou l'Amour constant (1641), liberally derived from Erofilomachia; and D'Ouville's Morts vivants and John Marston's What You Will, both based on I morti vivi.¹⁰⁵ John M. Lothian proves Erofilomachia to be the source of Walter Hawkesworth's university comedy Leander (1598);¹⁰⁶ and John Florio's New World of Words cites Prigione d'amore as one of its source-works.¹⁰⁷

Another mode of transmission for Oddi's works in Europe may have been through adapted *scenarii* presented by the professional companies. Corrigan notes that the Captain of the Fedeli company played under the name of Rinoceronte while, in 1629, Giulio Cesare Croce produced his anthology of boasts, Bravure tremende del Capitano

Bellerofonte Scarabombardone.¹⁰⁸ These indicate that some at least of Oddi's characters had found their way into the repertoires of the *comici dell'arte*. *Commedia* troupes are recorded as visiting England seven times between 1546 and 1578 and by 1591 the practice seems to have been common enough for spies to find a ready disguise in the role of Italian actor.¹⁰⁹ Oddi's plays, in their psychological complexity, strong female roles, and mixing of the noble with the comic seem to presage the romantic comedies of Shakespeare and the tragicomedies of such as Fletcher, Heywood and Ford. It is tempting therefore to imagine the playwrights of the English Renaissance passing an instructive afternoon watching the Italian players interpret that most innovative of dramatic poets, Sforza Oddi.

¹ The biographical material on Oddi is a paraphrase of pp.719-723 in the article by M.H. Corrigan, "Sforza Oddi and His Comedies," PMLA, 49 (1934) pp.719-742.

² Corrigan, pp.724-5 n.37.

³ Corrigan, p.723.

delicta juventutis meae

⁴ Ireneo Sanesi, La commedia Vol.1 (Milano 1944) p.347.

confitto di passioni, eroismo di propositi, spirito de sacrificio

⁵ Described at length by Nicolas J. Perella in his The Critical Fortune of Battista Guarini's "Il Pastor Fido" (Firenze 1973).

⁶ A. Solerti, Torquato Tasso II (Torino 1895) p.104.

...sopra l'azione della commedia rappresentata...mostrò di essere d'opinione che l'azione di questa commedia non fosse convenevole a poema comico, ma piuttosto a tragico, ovvero a epico, essendo che supponga che azione così eroica, com'è il posporre il proprio volere e diletto per vero zelo d'amicizia, sia troppo illustre, e però poco conveniente a commedia.

⁷ Guido Baldi, "Le commedie di Sforza Oddi e l'ideologia della controriforma," Lettere italiane 1 (1971), pp.43ff.

ha fini essenzialmente politici,...

si uniforma con assoluta fedeltà alle linee fondamentali della politica della Chiesa nella controriforma...

che devono imparare a non essere tiranni ai fini dell'autoconservazione ...

a cui deve essere proposto un modello di comportamento conformistico basato sulla passività e rinuncia.

⁸ Nino Borsellino Il teatro del Cinquecento 57 (Bari 1979) p.43.

stretta adesione all'ideologia tridentina.

⁹ Mario Apollonio, Storia del teatro italiano Vol.2 (Firenze 1940) p.161.
con il quale la commedia letteraria s'aroga quei temi patetici e quella mozione degli affetti che noi riserviamo al dramma

¹⁰ Corrigan, p.734.

¹¹ Introduction to Ludovico Ariosto Commedie (Verona 1974) p.xiii.
una colossale *contaminatio* di tutte le commedie di Plauto e Terenzio

¹² Ariosto, p.3.
Nova comedia v'appresento piena
Di vari giochi che né mai latine
Né greche lingue recitano in scena.

¹³ The text used for Erofilomachia is that edited by Benedetto Croce (Napoli 1946). The text for I morti vivi and Prigione d'amore is that prepared by Maria Bianca Tortorizio for her unpublished Laureate Thesis Le commedie di Sforza Oddi (Università degli Studi, Firenze 1973) and is based on the 1576 Perugia edition of I morti vivi and on the 1590 Florence edition of Prigione d'amore.

¹⁴ Erofilomachia ed. Croce, pp.7-10.

giovare e dilettere altrui ...

non dannoso piaccere....

per apparire in essa, come in uno specchio di lucidissimo cristallo, l'immagine della vita nostra e della verità.

quanto sia bella cosa di essere d'animo generoso e aver piuttosto l'occhio al debito dell'amicizia che alle proprie voglie e passioni

l'onore e l'amicizia

Leandro vuol mostrar...apertamente che nel cuore di un giovanetto nobile e nato di chiara stirpe non possono albergare sì brutti difetti.

¹⁵ Louise George Clubb, Giambattista Della Porta, Dramatist (Princeton 1965) p.66.

¹⁶ The first prologue is simply a description of the scene and a humorous apology for the deficiencies of the company originally delivered by Oddi's nine-year-old son.

¹⁷ Prologo dell'autore defensivo di questa e dell'altre sue commedie

¹⁸ Corrigan, p.732.

¹⁹ This is my summary of Le commedie, pp.478-81.

²⁰ Le commedie, p.482.

Nel mio fissando gli occhi dell'intelletto, la gran turba de' miseri e quasi disperati, e per lo più giovani innamorati scuoprono che nell'estrema miseria umana un giorno, un'ora et un sol punto gli può far beati, e che perciò non deono mai per disperazione far cosa indegna di se stessi, uscendo di senno et imbrattandosi or nel proprio or nell'altrui sangue, come avviene a gli infelici del tremendo cristallo vostro; e così, come voi liberate le Republiche da gli animi sillani o mariani, e dalle oppressioni tiranniche de' Cesari e de' Pompei, io dalle disperate risoluzioni de' gli Spartachi e Catilini; voi dall'uno, et io dall'altro estremo di fortuna, richiamando i cittadini al contentarsi della mediocrità civile. Dunque è forza di confessare che io, così nobilmente rinnovata, posso ben conseguire questo virtuoso fine di consolare e giovare a' miseri disperati, et alle Republiche non meno di voi, e che con la peripatetica regola delle sue ridicolose novelle nonarei già mai potuto.

21 Amor costante III.vi.

un fracasso in su quel letto che pareva che lo volessero buttar a terra,

22 Clubb, Della Porta, pp.15ff.

23 Giambattista Della Porta, Teatro, a cura di Raffaele Sirri, vol.1, Le tragedie (Napoli 1978), p.315.

La presente tragedia è rappresentata da persone gentili; e perciò se vi trovano dentro queste parole: fato, destino, sorte, fortuna, forza e necessità di stelle, dèi ed altri simili, è stato fatto per conformarsi con gli antichi loro costumi et riti. Ma queste, conforme alla religione cattolica, sono tutte vanità, perché si ha da attribuire a Dio benedetto causa suprema ed universale, ogni effetto ed evento.

24 Louise George Clubb, Italian Drama in Shakespeare's Time (London 1989) p.62.

25 Lea, p.113

26 Taviani/Schino, pp.334-9

27 Tortorizio, Le commedie p.64 et al.

28 Marvin T. Herrick, Italian Comedy in the Renaissance (Urbana 1960) p.187.

29 Corrigan, p.726.

30 Corrigan, p.723.

31 ...per farti vedere ch'io da fratello t'ami, mentre tu eri giovanetto in Genova, ...e non da signore, o che il tempo e la lontananza non hanno diminuito in me punto di quell' amore, di' pur via che t'ascolterò quanto tu vuoi.

32 nativo di una famiglia nobile

33 ...prego voi, signor Obero, che vi pacifichiate un giorno coi nostri, che da me potrete conoscere che non sono sì crudeli e d'animo basso, come in casa sollevate in faccia mia chiamarli. E della mia servitù con voi non voglio altro premio che questa pace, che non più per aver Flamminia, ma per amor vostro desidero.

34 Corrigan, p.727.

35 Herrick, p.187.

36 Tortorizio, Le commedie p.121.

Ella infatti, cortigiana e quindi relegata ad un basso suolo sociale, incarna i valori più nobili e umani, che del resto caratterizzano le gentili eroine delle altre commedie.

37 I.iii.p.25 *et al.*

38 I.v.p.30.

39 I.v.p.30ff.

40 Benedetto Croce, Preface to Erofilomachia, pp.xii-xiii.

Tale invece l'Oddi diventa nella figura da lui creata di Ardelia, la cortigiana innamorata, che, poeticamente parlando, è lei la vera protagonista del dramma...Ardelia, nel dramma scenico, è invece un personaggio di secondo piano; ma nel dramma poetico è nel primo piano e lo riempie tutto.

41 V.v.p.156.

Vostra Signoria

42 V.v.p.152.

ben creata

43 V.v.p.156.

troppo cortese e modesta

44 II.v.p.56.

E per questo ha scartati molti altri che l'hanno amata

45 II.vi.p.60.

In letto accompagnata non de'essere, poichè non fu mai moglie sì onesta e che mantenesse quella fede a suo marito quale Ardelia ha mantenuto a me sempre, da che amore l'accese sì fieramente di me.

46 V.iv.p.147.

...la tua pratica non mi è stata mai se non di danno e vergogna; onde acciò che non mi sia più, mi son risoluto a pigliar moglie ed ho avuta una onestissima e bellissima giovinetta, molto più degna d'esser amata che non sei tu, che non mi puoi se non togliere la roba, la vita e l'onore, come una disonestissima puttana, che tu sei.

47 I.iii.p.26.

tanto in danari quanto in vestimenti, sì che quei di corte, che sanno le vostre intrate, si sono maravigliati più volte vedendovi comparire sì bene

48 V.iv.pp.147-148.

Vigliacco, mal creato, bugiardo, io ti ho tolto l'onore, la vita e la roba, vituperato, disfatto, mendico? Che se non fossi stata io, ti saresti mille volte morto di fame e messoti a rubare per poter giocare. Or rendimi un poco, or ora, quei cinquanta scudi d'oro che io ti prestai per pagar il signor Luigi, che te gli aveva vinti a primiera, e vi furo presenti Sandrino e Giulio, e quei centoquaranta pur d'oro in oro, con che comprasti il natal passato quel bel cavallo...Or questi centonovanta scudi d'oro fa' che tu me li renda or ora; gli altri doni tanto in danaro quante in gioie, e fra gli altri quelli di questa mattina, non mi curo pure che tu me li ricordi mai, ch  mi vergognerei di far come te, vile e plebeo, richiendoti le cose donate. Ed ora me ne voglio andare dal Principe, tuo signore, a dire a Sua Altezza che hai voluto truffare, e per non mi pagare fuggir a Genova in fretta in fretta. Vedrai se ti aver  vituperato per il passato oppur ti vitupero al presente, asino discortese!

49 V.iv.p.148.

non dovereste far cos  meco, voi, Ardelia: basta

50 I.v.

51 II.v.

52 Herrick, p.188.

53 Corrigan, p.729.

54 I morti vivi, I.i.p.243.

ricchissimo

55 I morti vivi, I.i.p.241 *et al.*

gentiluomo

gentildonna di qualche conto

56 I morti vivi, I.i.p.250.

57 Corrigan, p.729.

58 Clubb, Italian Drama p.81.

59 II.iv.p.294.

ingrato...gelosia ...dolore

una vera bestia condotta in sacrificio, venduta, battuta e finalmente abbandonata da ognuno

60 "la guerra gi  per tutte tra i Cristiani e Turchi accesa" [the war which, by then, had broken out between all the Christians and Turks] I.i.p.246.

61 I.i.p.247.

questo santo e onorato furto

62 III.i.p.309.

E non già per non farmi cristiana io non voglio accettar questo, essendomi da fanciulla piaciuta sempre questa vostra religione, ma perché prima siate sodisfatta da me dei 200 scudi che Marcone ha spesi per me; acciò che non si dicesse mai che, non per la voglia di farmi cristiana, ma per guadagnarmi la libertà senza lo sborscio dei ducento, io mi fossi battezzata.

63 Cf. Apollonius and the Orlando cycles.

64 II.iv; II.v; II.vii; III.i; III.v; III.vi; III.vii; IV.ii; IV.iii; IV.iv; IV.vii; IV.ix; IV.xi; V.xi; V.xii.

65 Herrick, p.189.

66 I.i.241.

Moretto,...non una, ma mille volte ti ha giurata la morte, se ti può avere nelle mani

67 I.i.p.251.

belleze e ricchezze

68 I.ii.p.260.

69 I.iii.p.265.

come potrò...sorbir questo calice

70 Corrigan, p.729.

71 III.iii.p.326.

una barbara, una mendica e una occisa di morte così vituperosa

72 III.iii.p.323.

...questo essere scampata la vostra Alessandra con sì gran miracolo e poi di nuovo annegata in mare, è segno che non era nata per voi? E che Iddio non a questo d'una Egizia, ma ad altro matrimonio d'Italiana molto più convenevolmente vi avea chiamato?

73 Le commedie, p.68.

74 I.iv.p.268.

75 I.v.p.270.

...vi è quella Rossana nostra schiava che, secondo che mi disse una volta là al giardino, sa certi rimedi eccellenti contra queste sorti d'infermità. Al manco la signora il sapesse. E forse il sa e per questo l'ha fatta ritornar qua

76 I.v.p.270.

E mel voleva dire e poi s'è pentita; guarda, di grazia, come pensa ad ogni cosa e fa assai, e poca se fida d'altri. Infatti ell'è una savia giovane.

77 II.vi.p.300.

Io ti ringrazio di questo buon animo; e acciò che tu sappia, anch'io subito che ti vidi questa mattina al giardino cominciai ad averti cara, e mi piacesti, e mi disposi perciò a servirmi di te in un bisogno mio. Onde, poi che tu mi ti offerisci così prontamente e con animo più tosto libero, che servile, mi risolvo affatto a confidarti un mio secreto.

78 II.vi.p.300.

quello che si suole...desiderare da chi si truova nello stato tuo

79 III.i.p.312.

semplicità

80 III.i.p.313.

Volete dunque ch'el rispetto d'una mia pari, vile e di niun conto, abbia a dare un minimo disturbo alla felicità d'una nobilissima e gentilissima signora, qual siete voi?

81 Corrigan, p.729.

82 V.ix.

83 Le commedie, p.111.

84 Corrigan, p.732.

85 Cast list, p.474.

Cavalieri e Dame di quella corte

86 Corrigan, p.733.

87 Clubb, Italian Drama p.80.

88 Corrigan, p.733.

89 III.iii.p.566.

anima mia

90 III.i.p.552.

91 IV.ii.p.599 *et al.*

92 Herrick, p.192.

93 II.ii.p.519.

Oh, mio padre caro, io non so qual sia maggiore in me o l'allegrezza di vedervi qui a tempo, in sì gran bisogno mio, o'l dolore del dispiacere che avete sentito, e tuttavia sentite maggiore, di ritrovarmi in capo a tanti anni in tale stato.

94 II.ii.p.520.

saggio e padre amorevole

95 II.ii.p.521.

pericolo e rovina...cadesse sopra questo mio capo già canuto e vicino al suo fine

96 II.ii.p.522.

non devo correre questo pericolo una sola per un padre?

97 I.i.p.491.

fino a Padova se ne dice delle sue prodezze

98 II.iv.p.525.

...stupende e grosse menzogne che dice, ma son tanto gustose che ci si piglierebbono spesso i morti; e di qui nasce che il Duca gli fa tanto favore.

99 V.vi.

100 I.i.p.491.

...Bellerofonte in tanta ambizione e gara per averla per moglie, che sapendo egli l'amore eccessivo di Marzia verso Lelio, le disse un giorno che ella non pensasse di aver mai Lelio per marito, se ella non gli faceva avere per mezzo del Duca, Erminia per moglie

101 V.viii.

102 Sanesi, pp348-349.

In ogni modo, è certo che la materia della commedia si trasforma e s'innalza: non più, o non soltanto, scherzi e beffe e trappolerie e ciurmerie; ma urto di passioni nobili e generose, gara di sacrifici, costanza di affetti, sakezza di propositi.

Per questa ragione il piccolo manipolo di quegli scrittori cinquecentisti che composero commedie serie ha per noi una grande importanza storica, se non propriamente estetica; e il più insigne, forse, di costoro è precisamente Sforza degli Oddi.

103 Corrigan, pp.734-735.

104 Sanesi, p.353.

105 Sanesi, p.375.

106 John M. Lothian, "Sforza Oddi's 'Erofilomachia' the Source of Hawkesworth's 'Leander.'" in MLR 25, (1930) pp.338-341.

107 John Florio, Source list

108 Corrigan, p.737.

109 K.M. Lea, Italian Popular Comedy (Oxford 1934) Vol.II, pp.362-3, 325.

IV

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE: "HAPPY IN THE ITALIAN"?

This chapter will firstly relate William Shakespeare to the literary and cultural ethos of the Counter-Reformation. It will then identify and examine Italianate elements in the plots, themes and characterisations of Shakespeare's comedies and the extent to which these elements echo the morally and theologically didactic tone of the Italian *controriforma*. In particular, I shall examine his employment of the conventions of the *pastorale* and *commedia grave* - the two forms which, together with Giraldi's *tragedia di fin lieto*, are arguably most associated with the development of a non-tragic drama acceptable to the Counter-Reformation. A comprehensive examination of Shakespeare's *oeuvre* would be beyond the scope of this thesis so I shall content myself by examining four plays which I consider representative of different stages and styles in his career:¹ Two Gentlemen of Verona because it is an early comedy and probably the first which features the "green world", a cross-dressing heroine, and a strong moral emphasis on expiation, endurance and self-sacrifice; A Midsummer Night's Dream because, with its emphasis on love - there are no fewer than six love intrigues (Theseus/Hippolyta, Lysander/Hermia, Demetrius/Helena, Oberon/Titania, Bottom/Titania, Pyramus/Thisby) - a pastoral setting, magic, danger and confusion as its *imbroglia*, it recalls the Italian *pastorale* (and in particular, I hope to demonstrate, Guarini's Il pastor fido); Measure for Measure because it indicates a refinement of the *Controriforma* ideal as represented by its original, Epitia; and The Tempest because - (1) structurally it most resembles Italian models in that the plot details are complex, eclectic and mainly precede the action of the play which preserves the Aristotelian unities of Time and Place, - (2) the sea, as is common in Cinquecento Italian plays, is here a medium of disturbance and transformation, and - (3) The Tempest, in my view, represents the most coherent and satisfying comedy of Shakespeare's 'Romance' period given that Pericles, although stylistically and emotionally extremely close to the *commedia grave* of Sforza Oddi, is probably a collaboration; Cymbeline, even though it presents many Italianate features, is an overly cluttered play bearing all the hallmarks of an experiment; and The Winter's Tale, while more successful, is not so much a tragicomedy as a tragedy *and* a comedy grafted onto each other.

1 Shakespeare and the Counter-Reformation:

The ultimate Italian provenance of many of Shakespeare's plots and settings is beyond dispute. His comedies abound with Italianate nomenclature, situations and plot details, his "green world" owes much to Tasso and Guarini, the antecedents of the Tempest may be found in *commedia dell'arte* scenarios, while Othello has come full circle from Italy and Giraldi Cinthio's *novella*, to Shakespeare's great tragedy, and back to Italy *via* Verdi's opera. Given that this has engendered much speculation as to Shakespeare's possible Italian connections, comparatively little attention has been focussed on the innovative characteristics, fostered by the Counter-Reformation, which he, arguably more than any other English dramatist, adopts in his comedies. While Marston and Jonson may be more precise in the language and geography of Italy, it is Shakespeare who best conveys the moral tone and complexity of plot typical of the Counter-Reformation *commedia erudita*. This may well be simply due to his exemplary skills as an adaptor of sources. The carrying-over of the post-Tridentine morality could, however, be argued as stemming from exposure to Counter-Reformation Catholicism at a formative period in his life.

Heinrich Mutschmann and Karl Wentersdorf, in their Shakespeare and Catholicism², align themselves with Carlyle and Chateaubriand in identifying Shakespeare as a Catholic. Their case is convincing as far as the religious sympathies of his parents are concerned: his mother, Mary Arden, came from a staunch Catholic family³; John Shakespeare withdrew from public life at a time when Counter-Reformation Catholicism forbade the taking of the Oath of Supremacy or attendance at Anglican services⁴; much of the family's property was sold, leased-out or mortgaged at this time and thus became immune to confiscation⁵; at a time when many Catholics were being summoned to appear at Westminster to account for an unspecified "breach of the Queen's peace", John Shakespeare, and others who had stood guarantor for him, paid heavy fines *in lieu* of appearing to answer such a charge - presumably fearing imprisonment if he were to present himself in London⁶; and the Shakespeares had many links, both by family and acquaintance, with known Catholics - some of whom would later be involved in the events of the Gunpowder Plot⁷. The evidence for William Shakespeare's adherence to the Old Faith is of a more circumstantial nature, e.g. his marriage, by special

licence, probably in Temple Grafton - a parish whose officiating clergyman was a Catholic⁸, the Catholicism of his patron, Southampton⁹, and the circumstances of his lodging with a Huguenot family in London which provided him with a legal dispensation from attending Anglican services - there appears to be no evidence in parish records that Shakespeare conformed while in London¹⁰. E.A.J. Honigmann supports the Shakespeare-as-Catholic theory and bolsters it with a mass of circumstantial evidence identifying the early career of Shakespeare as that of a tutor and occasional actor-in-residence for a wealthy Catholic household in Lancashire.¹¹

Mutschmann and Wentersdorf, in the textual examination to which much of their book is devoted, indicate that Shakespeare, whatever the truth regarding his religious affiliation, frequently chooses to depict a theology which reflects Catholic rather than Anglican orthodoxy. It thus appears likely that Shakespeare was, at the least, well-acquainted with Catholicism whether through upbringing or association. The ideals of the Counter-Reformation, in a doctrinal sense, would have therefore been available to him either directly - if he were a practising Catholic - or through the Catholic *milieu* inhabited by many of those known to him. Among such we may count his family, his patron, Southampton, and his friend and rival, Ben Jonson.

On the literary front, the publication of Italian texts in England provided Shakespeare with first-hand evidence of the effects of the changes in Catholic morality, theology and censorship on the printed word. Printers like John Wolfe, "the most prolific and important printer in Italian during Elizabeth's reign"¹², ensured that the appetite for Italian literature engendered by the English Renaissance was satisfied. Both of Machiavelli's comedies and four of Aretino's were published in London in 1588, and the Aminta and Pastor Fido followed in 1591, while the influence of the Italian drama on the native product was sufficient to cause Stephen Gosson, in his Plays Confuted in Five Actions (1582), to complain that Italian comedies were "ransackt to furnish the play houses in London."¹³

John Florio, as translator and tutor in residence to the Earl of Southampton, may have given his fellow *protégé* access to his library - that Shakespeare had, at the least, leafed through the Italian master's First Fruits (1578) is proven by his putting Florio's words,

"Venetia, chi non ti vede, non ti pretia", in the mouth of Holofernes (L.L.L.IV.ii.91-2) while Florio's 31st dialogue contains a phrase which anticipates the title of Love's Labour's Lost:

We need not speak so much of loue, al books are ful of loue, with so many authours, that it were labour lost to speak of Loue.¹⁴

In the light of Shakespeare's extensive borrowings from Italian sources, it seems likely that his study of Florio's dictionaries and proverb-lists was sufficient to give him a reading knowledge of Italian.

2 Two Gentlemen of Verona

2.1 Sources:

The antagonism between the demands of friendship and love is explored in Two Gentlemen of Verona. The use of the theme in Boccaccio's "Tito e Gisippo" Decameron X.8 provides a probable literary ancestor while Geoffrey Bullough's Narrative and Dramatic Sources of Shakespeare¹⁵ identifies two English versions of Boccaccio's tale (Thomas Elyot, 1531, and Edward Lewicke, 1562) which Shakespeare may have drawn on rather than the original. He also cites Montemayor's Diana Enamorada as a source¹⁶ but, even here, Montemayor's debt to the Italian *pastorale* provides an Italianate rather than Iberian flavour. Analogous plots may be found in Italian comedies of the Counter-Reformation - as we have seen, Sforza Oddi's Erofilomachia and I morti vivi explore the theme of sacrifice of love for friendship while Della Porta's Gli duoi fratelli rivali has two brothers, one as unprincipled as Proteus, competing for the hand of Carizia.

Like Oddi, Shakespeare uses the sub-cast for comic effect and, to some extent, as a Chorus. The lower orders mimic the goings-on of their superiors and engage in dialogues which, as Valentina Capocci¹⁷ asserts, contain *lazzi* typical of the *commedia dell'arte*.

2.2 Characterisation:

While there are *mezzani* in the play, they are present only in vestigial form. Speed and Lucetta are involved in the passing-on of Proteus's letter (I.i&ii) but they are not employed to plead his case and the circumstance of Lucetta's commending Proteus to Julia

contains no suggestion that she has been suborned or paid to do so. The presentation of Crab the dog to Silvia is so absurd as to neutralise the idea of the servant-as-mezzano completely. The language of the sub-cast, while occasionally bawdy, e.g. the reference to "a lac'd mutton" (I.i.96), is never truly obscene or brutal while that of the principals is generally of a courtly tone befitting their rank.

The four lovers seem to mirror the Oddian pattern of *attività* and *passività* noted by Tortorizio. It is the latter mode which is rewarded and the former which attracts condemnation and/or a return to a previously unwanted *status quo*. Thus, as M.C. Bradbrook observes, Valentine's initial humility is rewarded:

Valentine, falling instantly into worship of the divine Silvia, does not aspire, and when she asks him to write a letter to one she loves and then tells him to keep it, his witty page has to enlighten him on this modest device.¹⁸

When he decides upon elopement, he has crossed into the camp of *attività*. His boastfulness to the Duke, "That man that hath a tongue, I say, is no man/If with his tongue he cannot win a woman" (III.i.104-105), contrasts with his previous submissiveness and indicates that his nature can be as protean as that of his rival.¹⁹ His discovery and banishment are consequent upon this personality shift. The sojourn in the forest may be seen as a time of expiation and transformation during which he devotes himself to reclaiming the outlaws whom he presents to the Duke as "reformed, civil, full of good,/And fit for great employment" (V.iv.156-157) having previously had "much to do/To keep them from uncivil outrages" (V.iv.16-17). Although his longing for Silvia is undiminished, he is now prepared to await events and so, when he discovers Proteus and Silvia in the forest, his first reaction is one of *passività*,

How like a dream is this I see and hear!
Love, lend me patience to forbear awhile. (V.iv.26-27)

and it is only when Proteus, like Tasso's Satiro in the *Aminta*, attempts to rape Silvia that Valentine intervenes - as does the initially reluctant Aminta in Tasso's play. His reaction to Proteus's repentance shows a dramatically appropriate submission to God's will:

Then I am paid,
And once again I do receive thee honest.

Who by repentance is not satisfied
Is nor of heaven nor earth. For these are pleas'd;
By penitence th'Eternal's wrath's appeas'd.
And that my love may appear plain and free,
All that was mine in Silvia I give thee. (V.iv.77-83)

This last line would appear to be carrying *passività* a little too far for comfort but that its tense may, as Bradbrook points out, dilute its apparent sense:

...the tense of the verb is all significant, in the light of courtly service. 'Was' is not 'is' as another less exalted character remarked. If Valentine holds his betrothed love by the hand, Proteus kneeling may be permitted to kiss her other hand. What is offered is public reinstatement to the position the gentlemen had formerly shared, and Valentine had procured; both had formerly held the position of courtly servant, but now, as her betrothed (II.iv.1-87) and her protector, Valentine in a generous but not preposterous act uses his authority to reopen the service to 'penitence'.²⁰

When the Duke is captured by the band of outlaws, Valentine could have taken revenge for his exile or made marriage to Silvia a condition of the Duke's ransom. Instead he trusts to Providence and orders his men "Forbear, forbear, I say" (V.iv.121) while his attitude displays both forgiveness and humility:

Your Grace is welcome to a man disgrac'd,
Banished Valentine. (V.iv.122-123)

His *passività* is at this point tested by Thurio's attempt to claim Silvia (V.iv.124) but here, as in the thwarting of Proteus, we see a wholly justifiable defence of the lady - an *attività* acceptable because it helps another - rather than an advancing of Valentine's self-interest.

The Duke confirms that Valentine's period of atonement in the Mantuan forest has transformed him into one worthy of Silvia's hand, recognising "a new state in thy unrivall'd merit,/To which I thus suscribe: Sir Valentine,/Thou art a gentleman, and well deriv'd;/Take thou thy Silvia, for thou hast deserv'd her" (V.iv.144-147). Thus Valentine's *passività* wins back what his *attività* in the affair with the ladder threatened to lose him.

Proteus, as his name suggests, is almost all *attività*. His only acts of submission to Providence occur near the beginning of the play, when his father sends him to Milan, and at

the end when he accepts the restoration of the *status quo* in his relationship with Julia. His elevation of love above friendship runs counter to the morality of the Boccaccesque source material and, Anne Barton indicates, counter to the sympathies of the Elizabethan public:

... most Elizabethans would have seconded the opinion of Francis Bacon in his *Essays* that friendship is a serious matter and passion a far more dangerous and ephemeral kind of commitment.²¹

His characterisation therefore fails within another Italianate theatrical tradition: it is a fully anthropomorphised version of the Italian Pastoral's *satiro*. This is most clearly demonstrated, in a clear echo of the *Aminta*, by his thwarted attempt to rape Silvia in the forest (V.iv.57-61). The guile employed by him to dispose of his rival, Valentine, is of a piece with Giraldi's precept that trickery is a trait of the satyr²² while Silvia's answer to Proteus's "In love,/Who respects friend?" is to affirm the abandonment of human qualities represented by his satyric nature: "All men but Proteus" (V.iv.53-4). Proteus himself confirms that his feeling is not true human love - which here, as in the *Aminta*, has a spiritual, self-sacrificing dimension - but an aggressive passion which runs counter to the grain of love:

I'll woo you like a soldier, at arms' end,
And love you 'gainst the nature of love - force ye...
I'll force thee yield to my desire. (V.IV.57-9)

The brutality of this outburst, coupled with the "arms" image, immediately recalls Tasso's Satiro and his threat to bathe his "arms" in nymph's blood,²³ while the manner in which the rape is forestalled by the intervention of the girl's true lover, again suggests the influence of the Ferrarese. Proteus is dangerous, treacherous, and willing to use force where blandishments have proven ineffective. In betraying his lover, his employer, and his best friend he forfeits all sympathy and accordingly it is only his role as a touchstone for the Christian forgiveness of others which permits his restoration as lover, servant, and friend.

Anne Barton notes that, in this early comedy, Shakespeare's "tendency to hand over most of the initiative and just judgment to the women in his cast of characters was already marked."²⁴ This tendency is, of course, one that we have seen foreshadowed in the comedies of Sforza Oddi - *Erofilomachia*'s Ardelia being perhaps the most notable example - while

Giraldi, the ultimate source for Othello and Measure for Measure, features strong female characters in many of his *novelle* and in all of his plays. With regard to Two Gentlemen of Verona, there would also appear to be a generic resemblance between Julia's journey to Milan, disguised as a boy, to look for Proteus (II.vii), Silvia's flight to the Mantuan woods, and Erofilomachia IV.iv's portrayal of Flamminia similarly setting out to look for her lover in Genoa.

In Two Gentlemen, it is Silvia and Julia who principally demonstrate those qualities of constancy and self-denial which merit Providential reward. Proteus recognises the Christian nature of Silvia's constancy: she is "too fair, too true, too holy" (IV.ii.5) to succumb to him. Although commanded "to close prison" (III.i.235), she resists her father's pressure to forget Valentine and marry Thurio. Besieged by Proteus, she maintains faith with Valentine and recommends that the former reaffirm his love for Julia:

Thou subtle, perjur'd, false, disloyal man,
Think'st thou I am so shallow, so conceitless,
'To be seduced by thy flattery
That hast deceiv'd so many with thy vows?
Return, return, and make thy love amends.
For me, by this pale queen of night I swear,²⁵
I am so far from granting thy request
That I despise thee for thy wrongful suit,
And by and by intend to chide myself
Even for this time I spend in talking to thee.
(IV.ii.91-100)

And her generosity of spirit is signalled by the sympathy she extends to the supposedly absent Julia when Sebastian/Julia appears as Proteus's *mezzano* and offers her his ring:

The more shame for him that he sends it me;
For I have heard him say a thousand times
His Julia gave it him at his departure.
Though his false finger have profan'd the ring,
Mine shall not do his Julia so much wrong. (IV.iv.129-133)

Her flight to Valentine demonstrates a degree of *attività* but this is balanced by her implied sharing of his forest exile and consequent endurance of hardship. It is also dramatically

rebuked by her falling into the hands of the outlaws - which she seems to see, echoing Valentine's experience, as a kind of expiation:

O Valentine, this I endure for thee! (V.iii.15)

And indeed she is not at all pleased to be rescued by Proteus - even although, at this point, he has not yet tried to force the issue:

Had I been seized by a hungry lion,
I would have been a breakfast to the beast
Rather than have false Proteus rescue me. (V.iv.33-35)

Julia's male disguise and her use as a *mezzana* between her lover and a woman who spurns him are pre-figured in a comedy performed, in 1532, by members of the Sienese literary academy the *Intronati*. The early date of composition of *Gl'ingannati* means that Counter-Reformation exemplars of self-sacrifice are unlikely to feature in it and, in fact, the Fabio/Lelia character therein actively takes advantage of her position to subvert her master's plans. While Sebastian/Julia does use the occasion to praise Proteus's abandoned lover, the matter is first raised by Silvia and Sebastian/Julia truly intends to sacrifice her own interests by pleading her master's case - albeit "coldly" (IV.iv.102). This characterisation is far closer to that of Rossana/Alessandra in Oddi's *I morti vivi* where the disguised Alessandra is constrained by gratitude to act as *mezzana* for her mistress, Oranta, with her lover, Ottavio. Like Alessandra, Julia suffers inner torment but will still place her employer's will above her own:

How many women would do such a message?
Alas, poor Proteus, thou hast entertain'd
A fox to be the shepherd of thy lambs.
Alas, poor fool, why do I pity him
That with his very heart despiseth me?
Because he loves her, he despiseth me;
Because I love him, I must pity him.
This ring I gave him, when he parted from me,
To bind him to remember my good will;
And now am I, unhappy messenger,
To plead for that which I would not obtain,
To carry that which I would have refus'd,

To praise his faith, which I would have disprais'd,
I am my master's true confirmed love,
But cannot be true servant to my master
Unless I prove false traitor to myself.
Yet will I woo for him (IV.iv.86-102)

Her *passività* is finally rewarded when Proteus, compelled by circumstance and his own repentance, bows to the Providential will:

PROTEUS: Bear witness, heaven, I have my wish for ever.
JULIA: And I mine. (V.iv.119-120)

3 A Midsummer Nigh's Dream

3.1 Sources:

The Italianate character of A Midsummer Night's Dream appears to have been overlooked in the source-lists of both Anne Barton²⁶ and Geoffrey Bullough.²⁷ Both of the aforementioned identify much of the nomenclature and characterisation of the play as deriving from Plutarch, Chaucer, the romance Huon of Bordeaux, Ovid, and Apuleius. However, the shifting relationships of the Lovers and the conflict with paternal wishes bear a generic resemblance to Giraldi Cinthio's Hecatommithi II.9 which, given Shakespeare's other instances of mining Giraldi for plots - Othello, Measure for Measure - might be significant. I would suggest that a more obvious Italian source may be seen in the similarities of plot and setting between Shakespeare's play and Guarini's pastoral best-seller Il pastor fido published in London in 1591 and translated into English in 1602. Lady Politic Would-be's comments in Jonson's Volpone would seem to indicate a fairly general availability of the text:

Here's *Pastor fido*...All our English writers,
I mean such as are happy in the Italian,
Will deign to steal out of this author, mainly:
Almost as much as from Montaigne (III.iv)

Shakespeare's mining of the Italian drama and *novelle* probably identify him as one who is "happy in the Italian" while his debt to Montaigne is indisputable. It is not unreasonable, I would therefore suggest, to suppose the most successful playwright of the public theatre to be understood as one of those who "steal from out of this author". While a general resemblance

to Pastor fido may be noted in any of Shakespeare's "Green World" plays, there is only one which goes beyond a superficial borrowing of the scenery of the *pastorale*: A Midsummer Night's Dream.

Like the Pastor fido, A Midsummer Night's Dream, poses its human characters a number of problems, in a world of inflexible custom, whose resolution is dependent to some extent on the placating of supernatural forces. Theseus' court is administered in accordance with time-hallowed laws which bind the Duke himself. As the play begins we find him complaining that his marriage to Hippolyta cannot be consummated until the next new moon, four days away. The welfare of Guarini's Arcadia is also governed by observance of the rites of Diana - the moon - and the frame of the Pastor fido is the impending marriage of a god-descended couple - as is that of Shakespeare's play: Theseus descends from Poseidon and Hippolyta from Arcs.²⁸

The right of disposal of a daughter in marriage is governed by custom, herein vested in the father, as the determinedly litigious Egeus affirms:

I beg the ancient privilege of Athens:

As she is mine I may dispose of her; (I.i.41-2)

And the unlucky Hermia is thus faced, in the Athenian context, with three unwelcome choices: to marry Demetrius, to die, or to become an unwilling votress of that very moon which delays the Duke's own marriage. The *pastorale's* Amarilli is also faced with an unchangeable ritual, a stern father, and a suitor, Silvio, whom she has no wish to marry. She too, through her love for Mirtillo, risks being sacrificed to the goddess, Diana.

The Fairy King's greeting "Ill met by moonlight, proud Titania" (II,i,60) again invokes the moon as a symbol of disharmony, a disharmony centred on Titania's refusal to present a changeling boy to her husband. The world of the play is in turmoil as a result of Oberon's and Titania's displeasure:

...The spring, the summer,

The childing autumn, angry winter, change

Their wonted liveries; and the mazed world,

By their increase, now knows not which is which.

And this same progeny of evils comes
From our debate, from our dissension;
We are their parents and original. (II,i,111-7)

Arcadia too knows disruption as Diana's fury causes mayhem and disease, and here it is perhaps fitting to point out yet another parallel between the two works: Ovid, in Metamorphoses III.173, specifically refers to the bathing Diana as Titania. Thus in both plays we see a destructive chaos occasioned by Diana's wilfulness.

Il pastor fido, in the pursuit of Silvio by Dorinda, also provides a parallel to Helena's wooing of Demetrius and in both cases the women/nymphs face initial rejection.

Of course, to complete the parallel, a satyr-in-the-flesh, as it were, is required and Puck, as a non-human anarchic element, fills that niche in the dramatic ecology of the play. He of course differs from the satyr in that he does not display the latter's exaggerated sexuality but, like the satyr, he plagues womankind:

...Are not you he
That frights the maidens of the villagery (II.i.34-5)

Puck has another satiric attribute which may indicate another possible Italian part-source: like Satiro in Beccari's Sacrificio (1554), he is possessed of a magical substance which, when applied to the victim's eyes, causes transformation. In the case of Satiro the substance is a combination of soporific and truth-serum while Puck's flower-juice evokes or cancels love; it is nevertheless interesting to note the similarity of application and the fact that both the satyr and Puck induce their victims to sleep. Puck's juice also rather neatly eliminates any need for a *mezzano* to bring the lovers together.

Among the available entertainments listed by Theseus is one which perhaps has as its suggestion Poliziano's Orfeo (circa 1480),

'The riot of the tipsy Bacchanals,
Tearing the Thracian singer in their rage.' (V.i.48-9)

while the 'rude mechanicals' and their ludicrous version of 'Pyramus and Thisby' suggest the *Zanni* of the *commedia dell'arte*. This suggestion is confirmed by Bottom's offer of a "Bergomask dance" (V.i.344) since the *Zanni* character was originally based on that of the

uncouth porters from Bergamo.

There would therefore seem to be a strong argument that, in addition to the sources listed by Barton and Bullough, much of A Midsummer Night's Dream, in a general structural and thematic sense, is a *contaminatio* of identifiable Italian elements.

3.2 Characterisation:

While the characterisation is, to some extent, native-born - the *Zanni*, if admitted as such, are particularly Anglicised - I hope to show that Shakespeare has endowed his cast with the requisite post-Tridentine elements of a complex pattern of suffering and endurance before granting them a Providential resolution of their plight.

Suffering and endurance, the usual lot of lovers before the resolution of a Counter-Reformation comedy, are here a-plenty. Hermia begins the play faced with a forced marriage, her alternatives being "Either to die the death or to abjure/For ever the society of men" (I.i.65-66). Lysander, sharing her grief, rather self-consciously lists the generic conventions of the love-plot:

Ay me! for aught that I could ever read,
Could ever hear by tale or history,
The course of true love never did run smooth;
But either it was different in blood...
Or else misgraffed in respect of years...
Or else it stood upon the choice of friends...
Or, if there were a sympathy in choice,
War, death, or sickness did lay siege to it
(I.i.132-135,137,139,141-142)

Hermia accepts this, rather ironically, as just another obstacle to be brushed aside: if true lovers have to suffer these things "Then let us teach our trial patience" (I.i.152). This auto-injunction to *passività* is hardly likely to be heeded by one who "was a vixen when she went to school;/And, though she be but little, she is fierce" (III.ii.324-5) but it does suggest that Shakespeare is presenting *passività* as a choice which the lovers must consider. Hermia however is firmly in the camp of *attività*, as is shown by her immediate and enthusiastic falling-in with Lysander's plan to flee Athens:

My good Lysander!

I swear to thee by Cupid's strongest bow
By his best arrow, with the golden head,
By the simplicity of Venus' doves,
By that which knotteth souls and prospers loves,
And by that fire which burn'd the Carthage Queen,
When the false Trojan under sail was seen,
By all the vows that ever men have broke
In number more than ever women spoke,
In that same place thou hast appointed me,
To-morrow truly will I meet with thee.
(I.i.168-178)

Demetrius too, as the initiator of her problems, is firmly on the side of *attività*.. As Hermia is unwilling to undergo a forced marriage, Demetrius is similarly unwilling to lose his bride. His intention in following the lovers is not simply to plead his case: "Where is Lysander and fair Hermia?/The one I'll slay, the other slayeth me" (II.i.189-190). This defiance of events should, on Italian precedent, invite a dramatic rebuke - as indeed transpires when the lovers face danger, rejection, and a magically-induced madness.

When Lysander forsakes her in the woods, Hermia is only too aware of the danger she is in, "Either death or you I'll find immediately" (II.ii.156) and her subsequent rejection by Lysander is, for her, the ultimate punishment - "What! Can you do me greater harm than hate?" (III.ii.271). Lysander too is paid for his initiative with danger and rejection. Magically enamoured of Helena, he is chided by her for his falseness,

These vows are Hermia's. Will you give her o'er?
Weigh oath with oath, and you will nothing weigh:
Your vows to her and me, put in two scales,
Will even weigh; and both as light as tales.
(III.ii.130-133)

and, when he says "I had no judgment when to her I swore" (III.ii.134), Helena comes closest of all of them to identifying their torment as a kind of madness when she replies "Nor none, in my mind, now you give her o'er" (III.ii.135).

Death is a recurring presence throughout the play, being, in most cases, the only or

principal alternative suggested to the successful resolution of problematic situations. The city threatened death for Hermia; the woods threaten death for Lysander and Demetrius when their madness forces them into a duel (III.ii.252-255); we see Demetrius threaten to leave Helena "to the mercy of wild beasts" (II.i.228) and to do her "mischief in the wood" (II.i.237) while Helena pledges herself "To die upon the hand I love so well" (II.i.244); Hermia looks for Lysander and, as previously noted, resolves "Either death or you I'll find immediately" (II.ii.156) and, confronting Demetrius, she assumes the worst, "If thou hast slain Lysander in his sleep,/Being o'er shoes in blood, plunge in the deep,/And kill me too" (III.ii.47-49) "It cannot be but thou hast murdr'd him" (III.ii.56); when Demetrius taunts Lysander for being held back from the duel by Hermia, Lysander assumes he wishes the worst for her, "What, should I hurt her, strike her, kill her dead?" (III.ii.269) and, as Helena tells Hermia, Demetrius has already "chid me hence, and threatn'd me/To strike me, spurn me, nay, to kill me too" (III.ii.312-313); and the litigious Egeus, upon Lysander's confessing the elopement, demands "the law upon his head" (IV.i.152) - presumably the same capital penalty which he has demanded for his daughter if she were to prove disobedient.

What is a dramatic rebuke for the *personaggi attivi* becomes a trial of sacrifice and endurance in the case of Helena. She alone has behaved selflessly in love. Her decision to tell of his loved one's flight was taken "in love unto Demetrius" (III.ii.309), she has no hope of meriting his esteem - as she makes clear with her "spurn me,strike me,/Neglect me,lose me; only give me leave,/Unworthy as I am, to follow you" (II.i.205-207). While her following of Demetrius may be taken as a kind of *attività*, it is undertaken in a spirit of self-abnegation - she expects nothing from it but blows and disdain - and her action in informing Demetrius appears to act directly against her own interests; it thus better fits my expanded notion of a *passività* which encompasses renunciation and self-effacement as well as simple bowing to events. While Hermia, Lysander and Demetrius all pursue a destiny they feel is their due, Helena has so little *hubris* that she is incapable of believing the protestations of love offered her by the two men.

Apart from the conventional troubled beginning, traditional in comedy, and a general lightness of tone, no plot element persuades us that a happy ending is inevitable. Indeed the

danger in the woods - from both wild animals and a capricious magic, the death sentence hanging over Hermia and Lysander, the duel, and the parodic references to doomed love in the mechanicals' rendition of *Pyramus and Thisbe* could just as easily portend a tragic outcome. Oberon's decision to untangle the *imbroglio* and Theseus's to accept the lovers' choices as a *fait accompli* both have a Providential aspect. Neither party needs to take such action and neither party has been shown so far to be a controlling force in the play - Oberon does not obtain satisfaction from Titania until the main action is over and his initial attempt to help Helena fails; Theseus starts the play lamenting his inability to break with custom by hastening his marriage and is similarly incapable of preventing the *lèse-majesté* represented by Hermia and Lysander's flight in defiance of his edict. It is the lovers' purging of their *attività* or, in Helena's case, the selfless endurance associated with *passività*, which determine the ending; and thus, as agents of an ultimately benevolent Providence, Oberon and Theseus are permitted to restore and ratify the *status quo* which precedes the action of the play.

Jack shall have Jill;
Nought shall go ill:
The man shall have his mare again, and all shall be well.
(III.ii.461-463)

Oberon himself, both as an onstage figure of power working to unite the lovers and as a fallible participant in the *imbroglio*, has a dramatic function similar to that of another Shakespearean *deus in machina*: Duke Vicentio of Measure for Measure.

4 Measure for Measure

4.1 Sources:

Measure for Measure, as I have indicated in Chapter 2, derives ultimately from Giraldi Cinthio's Epitia. Giraldi had however previously published, in the 5th novella 8th decade of his Hecatommithi (1565), a prose version of his story which differed slightly from the dramatised version. This prose version was adapted by the English author George Whetstone in his Heptameron and dramatised by him as Promos and Cassandra (1578) which is universally cited, e.g. by Barton²⁹ and Bullough,³⁰ as strongly influencing Measure for

Measure. Since Epitia was first published in 1583, ten years after the death of its author, it is highly improbable that Whetstone's drama owed anything directly to that of Giraldi. Shakespeare's, on the other hand, betrays a number of points of similarity which cannot be explained away by reference to either of the prose versions or to Promos and Cassandra—although given his borrowing of the Othello plot and his possible derivation of part of A Midsummer Night's Dream from Hecatommithi it seems probable that Shakespeare had read Giraldi's *novella*. In noting the following resemblances I must acknowledge a substantial debt to Robert Hamilton Ball's article "Cinthio's Epitia and Measure for Measure"³¹ which establishes a strong claim for Shakespeare's ability to read Italian and for his familiarity with Giraldi's play.

Ball notes that elements not to be found in either of Whetstone's renderings of the tale or in Giraldi's *novella* include, firstly, a certain coincidence of names. Epitia, in her rage and grief at Vico's 'execution' equates Angela, who has counseled her submission to the deputy, with Iuriste. Shakespeare appears to have taken this identification a step further by naming his villain Angelo. Shakespeare's 'fantastic', Lucio, also finds a namesake in Giraldi's councillor, Lucillo, while Vico (the abbreviation of Lodovico) may have suggested Duke Vincentio's alias, Lodowick.

In the last scene of Measure for Measure the Provost brings on a "muffl'd" Claudio who remains mute until the end of the play. In both of Whetstone's treatments Andrugio speaks - at length in Promos and Cassandra. In Epitia however Vico is not brought on stage and can therefore say nothing. It is the Captain, like Shakespeare's Provost, who reveals all. The pirate, Ragozine, resembles Claudio but, in Whetstone's play, the head presented as Andrugio's had been "mangled" so that "she knew it not from her brother's." In the last scene of Epitia the Captain describes the executed criminal:

His face being so like Vico's that he seemed the man himself. (V.vii)³²

Shakespeare has Angelo precede his order of execution with an apparently pointless "Whatsoever you may hear to the contrary, let Claudio be executed" (IV.ii.114-5). Angelo has no reason to suspect that the Provost has heard *anything* to the contrary. Vico, on the other hand, has had his shackles removed and is about to be set free when the order arrives to

carry out the execution

Without regard for what may have been said. (III.i)³³

P.R. Horne³⁴ points out a remarkable coincidence of expression between the Captain of Justice's summation at the end of Epitia and Duke Vincentio's listing of the benefits which will ensue from his compromising of Angelo - remarkable because it does not appear in the other versions of the story:

Vico is saved, Iuriste is saved, Epitia's honour is saved and the honour also of the woman violated by Vico.

(Epitia V.vii.p.107)³⁵

...here, by this,
is your brother saved, your honour untainted,
the poor Mariana advantaged, and
the corrupt deputy scaled. (M. for M. III.i.242-5)

While the connection with the Italian play may thus be established, it is important to note that Shakespeare has added to what might be called a "city" tragicomedy a number of elements which also recall the conventions of the *pastorale*. In Epitia there is no bed-trick - Iuriste succeeds in gratifying his lust with the intended object of that passion. Angelo, on the other hand, pursues Isabella but is frustrated in the attempt by her 'transformation' into Mariana. The bed-trick - also featured in All's Well That Ends Well - appears in Boccaccio's Decameron III.9. Its metamorphic aspect however suggests a demythologised version of the transformation of the reluctant nymph as seen in Ovid's recounting of the Apollo/Diana Pan/Syrinx stories and given dramatic form in Giraldi Cinthio's Egle (1545). The resemblance is underlined by Isabella's characterisation. Epitia, while essentially virtuous and a victim of deception, is no nymph of Diana; given the Renaissance equation of Diana as a *figura* of the Virgin Mary, Isabella manifestly is. As a novice she has the same unshakeable dedication to chastity displayed by the nymphs of the *pastorale* and, like those nymphs, she is not intended for the satyric Angelo but for the (as it were) 'higher god', Duke Vincentio. Vincentio may also be seen in the light of the Amintan rescuer whose repulsion of the violator and whose virtue entitle him to the reward of his heart. Shakespeare, perhaps inspired by their mutual diversion from Aristotelian norms, has thus fused the parallel genres of *tragicommedia*

and *pastorale* to enhance Giraldi's plot with the mytho-religious tone of the latter form.

The use of a prison and its immediate surroundings as one of the principal settings in the play is unusual for a comedy - as is the underlying threat of execution, although Shakespeare had already used the latter in Comedy of Errors. In Epitia the events at the prison take place off-stage and are reported by the Captain; and the prison scenes in Promos and Cassandra are few in number and do little to advance the plot. A precedent for Shakespeare's focus on the prison, the mixing thereof of high and low characters in alternate pathos and out-and-out comedy, the substitution of prisoners, and a feigned death is found in Oddi's Prigione d'amore. While there is no direct evidence that Shakespeare had read Oddi's plays, the popularity of Prigione d'amore (printed twenty-two times between 1590 and 1634)³⁶ makes it likely that an author "happy in the Italian", as Shakespeare probably was, would at least be aware of the work and, indeed, may well have seen it in John Florio's library - Prigion d'Amore. Comedia is noted on the third page of Florio's list of source works for his World of Words.³⁷

4.2 Characterisation:

As Man, in the Ptolemaic scheme of things, contained within himself aspects of both his divine and his animal natures, so Angelo is portrayed as at first wedded to the higher qualities represented by Reason and Law. He is "a man whose blood/Is very snow-broth, one who never feels/The wanton stings and motions of the sense,/But doth rebate and blunt his natural edge/With profits of the mind, study and fast" (I.iv.57-61). His virtue is nevertheless devalued by his self-congratulatory boasting - "my gravity,/Wherein - let no man hear me - I take pride" (IV.i.9-10) - and it is thus not entirely unexpected when this precise man falls victim to his own previously suppressed desires. His conduct throughout the bulk of the play is unworthy of his position yet, at the end, he secures the mercy which he has denied others. His is a Fall redeemed by blood - that of Mariana's maidenhead - and by his own repentance. As well as the lesson in good civil administration normally recognised in Measure for Measure, there is a clearly Christian forgiveness of sins.

Isabella's unworldly virtue is the touchstone which causes Angelo's vaunted purity to

crumble. Angelo wants to see her as an instrument of the Devil - "O cunning enemy, that, to catch a saint,/With saints dost bait thy hook!" (II.ii.180-181) - but in reality it is the Devil within himself which recognises that his own virtue is but a show. Her virtue is undeniable and Angelo must acknowledge that he is a false 'angel': "Let's write 'good angel' on the devil's horn;/Tis not the devil's crest" (II.iv.16-17). However, his is not a sudden and wholehearted conversion to evil. He argues with himself (II.ii.161-187, II.iv.1-30) and spends just over half of II.ii prevaricating before making it plain to Isabella that he is not speaking hypothetically, "Believe me, on mine honour,/My words express my purpose" (II.ii.147-148). Unlike Proteus in Two Gentlemen who, as befits his name, goes more or less spontaneously to the bad, Angelo is aware that he is choosing between good and evil and makes us aware of it too. This underlining of his indecision gains him some dramatic if not moral sympathy and also hints at Catholic doctrines regarding Free Will and choice. His choice made, Angelo comes down heavily on the side of the "cunning enemy": the option of marriage never occurs to him and, fearing that Claudio might try to take revenge for the shameful manner of his reprieve (IV.iv.26-30), he breaks faith with Isabella and orders her brother executed (IV.ii.114-119). When this fallen man stands accused by Isabella and Mariana, he tries to bluster his way out of the charges against him by alleging the existence of a conspiracy set in motion by some unknown hand:

My patience here is touch'd. I do perceive
 These poor informal women are no more
 But instruments of some more mightier member
 That sets them on (V.i.233-236)

The dramatic irony of this is not lost on audience or reader while the wording of the statement suggests an identification of the Duke with the workings of Providence.

The Duke is a complex figure being simultaneously temporal ruler and, in his guise as Friar Lodowicko, spiritual adviser. The setting of the action in Vienna, the Imperial residence, replaces Giraldi's Roman and Whetstone's Hungarian *milieux* and suggests an Imperial rather than Ducal identification for Vincentio. If we accept the identification, the full assumption of priestly duties by Vincentio³⁸ might argue Shakespeare as a latter-day Ghibelline, favouring the spiritual as well as the temporal supremacy of the Emperor. A politic

reluctance on Shakespeare's part to directly name one of the twin heads of Roman Catholicism may explain the use of the latter title.

Vincentio then is credited, directly or by inference, with enormous power. This contributes to our recognition of his shifting role as agent/avatar of Divine Providence. Providence is all-pervading therefore Vincentio, as Duke and Friar, is seen moving through all levels of his society. Unlike Giraldi's Emperor or Whetstone's King, he is no outsider come to right wrongs: his is the Dukedom, the Power and the Glory and, as in many analogous Old Testament *exempla*, he has decided to test the worth of his people and of his officers. While his removal of himself from the seat of power initially appears nothing more than a trying of Angelo's virtue, a contemporary Ptolemaic world-view³⁹ would interpret this as a primary disruption in the chain of being and expect the repercussions to affect all levels of society from the Duke's deputy to Pompey Bum.

This testing-of-all presupposes a judgment and thus the *dénouement* of the play sees the apportioning of reward and punishment by a generally Providential Duke; Providential because, although the audience have been made aware that his actions tend to an ultimate good, the characters are, at most, only partially aware of his guiding hand, and Providential because all that he has done to direct the action has been done in the guise of God's agent, Friar Lodowick. The Duke, as an on-stage character in the play, cannot be wholly Providential and yet convincingly human. His Providential aspect is therefore imperfectly realised - as becomes apparent when Angelo advances the hour of Claudio's execution.

Shakespeare's sympathetic depiction of the Friar is clearly influenced by post-Tridentine norms. I have already discussed, in Chapter 1, how, prior to the Counter-Reformation, the Church, and friars in particular, had long been a target for *novellieri* and for writers of comedies. Real-life reports of priestly vice were not lacking either - Ariosto's biographer, Edmund G. Gardner, cites one Friar Guglielmo, a former ducal confessor, whom Ercole I of Ferrara dismissed his post as Rector of the Spedale di Santa Anna for extorting money from the patients,⁴⁰ and Ariosto himself, during his period as ducal commissary of the Garfagnana (1522-5), had ample opportunity to observe and comment on priestly behaviour:

'The worst and the most partial men of this district,' wrote Ariosto, 'are the priests.'...A certain Prete Matteo, 'a homicide and public assassin,' had been with some other scoundrels in hurling a poor man down from a rock, and had wounded Ariosto's chancellor; the poet handed him over to the Bishop of Lucca, who 'with a little water sent him away absolved.' An even more abominable ecclesiastical ruffian, known as Prete Job, had brutally mishandled a girl and her mother...Ariosto assured the Duke that it would be 'a holy work' if he would order the Captain to burn down all the presbyteries and churches in the country.⁴¹

The Counter-Reformation however, if it did not altogether solve the problem of clerical depravity, effectively ended the use of the Corrupt Priest in Catholic dramatic typology. This prohibition did not exist in England - rather the contrary.⁴² Shakespeare, nevertheless, not only invents Friar Lodowick (he does not appear in Giraldi or Whetstone) but makes him "a man divine and holy" (V.i.144) and the instrument of the happy ending. A sticking-point in this assessment of his character may seem to be the apparent casuistry used to justify the bed-trick,

He is your husband on a pre-contract:
To bring you thus together 'tis no sin,
Sith that the justice of your title to him
Doth flourish the deceit. (IV.i.69-72)

but Mutschmann and Wentersdorf reveal this as compatible with old Catholic custom:

This interpretation of the moral aspects of the situation, strange as it may seem to modern ears, is absolutely Catholic. It is based on the pre-Tridentine marriage law: according to this, "troth-plight," or betrothal, was automatically transformed into indissoluble marriage by the cohabitation of the betrothed. In the case of Angelo and Mariana, cohabitation did not constitute a sin.⁴³

The appearance of a pre-Tridentine marriage rite in this play does not necessarily contradict the idea of Shakespeare as a dramatist of the Counter-Reformation. An imperfect dissemination of post-Tridentine standards within Protestant England, or a shortage of clergy leading to a continuation of the custom, could both explain the discrepancy. The action also takes place in an undefined era which may be thought of as pre-dating the Council of Trent (1545-63).

A.D.Nuttall indicates that the flexibility of Elizabethan marriage custom meant that the bed-trick could be seen as licit or otherwise depending on its function within the play. The

play itself he sees as having a fairy-tale dimension in its flirting with tragic consequences prior to a happy ending in which the heroine, after much distress, will marry her 'prince'. It is this folkloric quality which excuses any legal dubiety in favour of a device which ensures the general felicity of the outcome.⁴⁴ While this triumph of dramatic expectation over exact legality ensures the sympathy of the audience, the bed-trick is also motivated by a concern very much in tune with the post-Tridentine morality: the preservation of the female protagonist's chastity.

Isabella is the perfect Counter-Reformation heroine for virtue. A novice with the Poor Clares, she makes her entrance affirming her rejection of worldly liberties,

ISABELLA: And have you nuns no farther privileges?

FRANCISCA: Are these not large enough?

ISABELLA: Yes, truly; I speak not as desiring more,

But rather wishing a more strict restraint

Upon the sisterhood, the votarists of Saint Clare.

(I.iv.1-5)

and, upon hearing of her brother's sentence, her first thought is to fulfil her duty to the Mother Superior:

I will about it straight;

No longer staying but to give the Mother

Notice of my affair. (I.iv.85-87)

When, as familial feeling and duty demand, she pleads for her brother's life, it is obvious that her virtue is at war with her emotions,

There is a vice that most I do abhor,

And most desire should meet the blow of justice;

For which I would not plead, but that I must;

For which I must not plead, but that I am

At war 'twixt will and will not. (II.ii.29-33)

but, upon Lucio's urging her, she begins to display that virtuous passion associated with Counter-Reformation heroines. Angelo, apparently her equal in virtue, is accused of lacking the mercy which makes virtue specifically Christian,

Why, all the souls that were were forfeit once;

And He that might the vantage best have took
Found out the remedy. How would you be
If He, which is the top of judgment, should
But judge you as you are? O, think on that;
And mercy then will breathe within your lips,
Like man new made. (II.ii.73-79)

she rebukes his misuse of power,

So you must be the first that gives this sentence,
And he, that suffers. O, it is excellent
To have a giant's strength; but it is tyrannous
To use it like a giant. (II.ii.106-109)

and invokes his conscience,

Go to your bosom,
Knock there, and ask your heart what it doth know
That's like my brother's fault. If it confess
A natural guiltiness such as his,
Let it not sound a thought upon your tongue
Against my brother's life. (II.ii.136-141)

while offering the intercession of the nunnery for his soul

...with true prayers
That shall be up at heaven and enter there
Ere sun-rise, prayers from preserved souls,
From fasting maids, whose minds are dedicate
To nothing temporal. (II.ii.151-155)

It is souls rather than bodies which preoccupy Isabella as she carefully distinguishes between the venial sin represented by pardoning Claudio - "It is no sin at all, but charity" (II.iv.66) - and the mortal sin represented by the surrender of her virtue -

Better it were a brother died at once
Than that a sister, by redeeming him,
Should die for ever. (II.iv.106-108)

In her holding to this opinion she carries the virtue of the Post-Tridentine heroine to its logical extreme.

The Duke, at times, has an all too human aspect, e.g. in his dealings with Lucio, at others, as I have noted, he is more the avatar of Divine Providence than its agent. Isabella similarly can show a human mutability - notably in letting her concern for her brother over-ride her respect for the law against fornication - but her primary role may be seen as that of an archetype of Womanly Purity. In part this gives her an aspect doubly suggested by the name of the woman who begs her to intercede with the Duke for her husband's life. A *mariana*, in Spanish or Italian, is a female devotee of the Virgin Mary, humanity's intercessor with God. The choice of this name, for a character who does not appear in any of the other versions of the story, is surely significant. Her employment therefore as a type of *mezzana* for Mariana is effectively that of a *sanctified* Go-Between: her task is laid upon her by the Duke who, effectively representing Providence in his guise of a priest, also assures Mariana that the Church sanctions the union as a true marriage:

He is your husband on a pre-contract.
To bring you thus together is no sin (IV.i.70-71)

Nothing in the preceding action suggests the final liaison of the Duke and Isabella; at a symbolic level, however, the joining of Vincentio, who best represents God's purpose in the plot, with Isabella, who jointly combines her role as proto-Bride of Christ with the purity and compassion of the Virgin, is surely intended to underline the Providential nature of events.

Shakespeare puts into Measure for Measure the largest number of religious allusions of all the comedies;⁴⁵ he gives a religious dimension to the characterisation by making Isabella a novice nun; he adds the Mariana character thus saving the virtue of Isabella who is presented as a Type of the Virgin Mary; and he converts the head of state from a *deus ex machina* into a *deus in machina* thus assuring us of the triumph of Right. Arthur C. Kirsch sees Christian experience as a central feature of the play:⁴⁶

Alone among Shakespeare's plays, the very title is drawn from the Scriptures - and not from its dark corners, but from the Sermon on the Mount and a passage in Luke which was regularly read in the liturgy of the fourth Sunday after Trinity....the language is suffused with allusions to the Gospels, often to parables, like those of the talents and of the unmerciful servant, which were common currency. At certain points, notably in Isabella's speech on the Atonement, both the language and action are explicitly and deeply concerned with central truths of Christian experience. (pp.89-90)

There is therefore much more to be communicated by the play than the simple lesson that Justice should be tempered with Mercy. Shakespeare has clearly absorbed the concerns of the dramatists of the Italian *Controriforma* that the minds of the people be directed to Christian behaviour and a trust in Providence.

5 The Tempest

5.1 Sources:

Hallett Smith identifies a real-life inspiration for the storm, shipwreck and island locale of The Tempest in pamphlets published by survivors of a ship run aground on Bermuda.⁴⁷ A contributory source is also seen in Florio's translation (1603) of Montaigne's essay "Des Cannibales" based on explorers' descriptions of the New World. Frank Kermode finds an Italian historical basis for some of the nomenclature and plot background in William Thomas's The History of Italy (1549) wherein is recounted the story of Prospero Adorno, Duke of Genoa, deposed in 1460, reinstated by the Duke of Milan 17 years afterwards and subsequently the target of a conspiracy between Milan and King Ferdinando of Naples.⁴⁸ Nevertheless, the characterisation of Prospero and the inclusion of the supernatural elements have much more to do with literary and dramatic tradition than with historical precedent.

In The Tempest, Shakespeare may be regarded as returning to first principles and invoking the spirit of the Euripidean Cyclops.⁴⁹ The action does after all take place on an island, and people landing on the island are greeted by a half-human presence whose master they plot to kill and to whom they supply wine. The rest of the plot details and characterisation however suggest that, whatever the ultimate origins of the island pastoral, Shakespeare has again had recourse to Italian models - in this case probably to the improvised *pastorali* of the *commedia dell'arte*. The resemblances between The Tempest and a number of *scenari* have been pointed out by Ferdinando Neri who has collated them in his book Scenari delle Maschere di Arcadia.⁵⁰ The basic plot structures of these *scenari* are very similar so I will content myself with citing only a few examples from the many provided by Neri.

In Bartolomeo Rossi's Fiammella, performed in Paris in 1584, the setting is Arcadia; the characters are shepherds, nymphs, seamen shipwrecked by a storm, and a Mage. The

nymphs are amazed by the appearance of the shipwrecked Graziano and take him for a god,

FIAMELLA: Please tell me, are you some god?

GRAZIANO: Yes my lady, and my name is Grazian.⁵¹

just as Caliban does with Stephano:

That's a brave god, and bears celestial liquor.

I will kneel to him. (*Tempest* II.ii.109-10)

Scala's *Arbore Incantato* also features a Mage, Sabino, who has as his servant a wild man, while Locatelli's *Li Tre Satiri* features a Mage served not by one but by three satyr servants. These last transfer their loyalties to Pantalone just as Caliban offers his to Stephano and Trinculo. The Mage in this case also governs shipwrecked sailors, nymphs and shepherds through the use of spirits - we may compare Shakespeare's Ariel.⁵² The shipwrecked sailors again pretend to be gods. In the same author's *Pantaloncino*, the Mage, at the end of the *scenario*, decides to give up magic, throws away his wand and book, and says that he will now live with his non-supernatural brother. Compare Prospero's

...this rough magic

I here abjure;...

...I'll break my staff,

Bury it certain fathoms in the earth,

And deeper than did ever plummet sound

I'll drown my book. (*Tempest* V.i.50-7)

Since anthologies of *scenari* were normally the product of a writer or artist's retirement from active performance, there is every probability that the Locatelli *scenari* (and undoubtedly others of their ilk) were being staged long before the date, 1622, assigned to the collection. Indeed, given that the first surviving description of such a plot occurs in 1584, it seems likely that the growth of the *commedia dell'arte's* island pastoral went hand-in-hand with that of its crude cousin, the Italian satyr-play. Shakespeare therefore may well have had an opportunity to see the prototypes of his Prospero, Caliban, Ariel, and the comic sub-cast brought to life by Italian players.

The mishaps attendant on a sea voyage are a recurrent theme in the Italian *commedia*,

c.g. Gl'ingannati, L'amor costante, and I morti vivi, and are part of the *controriformista* expansion of comic plot rendered necessary by the marginalisation of the *mezzano* figure. The *topos* derives ultimately from the Romance tradition, the most notable example of which is probably Apollonius, Prince of Tyre, the basis of Shakespeare's own Pericles. The sea voyage in The Tempest is occasioned by the marriage of Alonso's daughter to the King of Tunis and, given the identification of the realm of Tunis with that of ancient Carthage, is probably suggested by the Aeneid's tale of Dido and Aeneas - indeed II.i.77-80 rather explicitly draws our attention to the parallel.

5.2 Characterisation:

The play is largely concerned with opportunities for Redemption. Prospero's exile, the suffering of the castaways, the failure of the sub-cast's drunken rebellion, all provide an opportunity for reflection and self-improvement. Even Caliban, the least-fitted by nature for repentance, says "I'll be wise hereafter,/And seek for grace" (V.i.294-295) - a grace which shall surely be forthcoming if Prospero, who acknowledges "this thing of darkness" (V.i.275) as his own, means to take him to Milan - or does his "as you look/To have my pardon" (V.i.292-293) mean that he intends to leave Caliban in possession of the Island? In either case it appears that the monster's repentance is to have some reward.

Caliban's words indicate a most unexpected conversion - however temporary it may be - for, with one exception,⁵³ until this point he has shown only the satyric qualities of drunkenness, lust and a vivid resentment which recalls the complaining satyrs of the *pastorale*. Like his Euripidean brethren he has vowed to aid the sailors in return for wine and attests the divine origin of the drink,

I'll swear upon that bottle to be thy true subject, for the liquor is not earthly. (II.ii.116-7)

and Stephano also alludes ironically to the Bacchic divinity of wine by administering the oath on his bottle, thus equating it with the Bible:

...kiss the book.

I will furnish it anon with new contents. (II.ii.132-3)

Caliban, as befits his satyric role, has attempted to rape Miranda but has been thwarted by the

'higher god', Prospero. His bestial nature is clearly indicated by his continued lust and lack of repentance:

O ho, O ho! Would't had been done.
Thou didst prevent me; I had peopl'd else
This isle with Calibans. (I.ii.349-51)

And Caliban, again like the satyrs of the Cyclops, fears his master,

I must obey. His art is of such pow'r,
It would control my dam's god, Setebos,
And make a vassal of him. (I.ii.372-4)

depending for his rescue on Stephano who, like Odysseus, will "knock a nail" (III.ii.58) into his oppressor's head.

Stephano himself displays the characteristics of a satyric pursuer in his intoxicated desire to possess Miranda after removing Prospero,

Monster, I will kill this man; his daughter and I will be King and Queen (III.ii.102-3)

while the group he heads, of himself, Trinculo⁵⁴ and Caliban, as in the case of Giraldi Cinthio's satyrs in Eglog, is frustrated in its intent by intervention from 'above' in the form of Prospero and Ariel. And, when Prospero twits him "You'd be king o' the isle, sirrah?" (V.i.287), his reply is a rueful "I should have been a sore one, then" (V.i.288). Trinculo will never forget his chastisement:

I have been in such a pickle since
I saw you last that, I fear me, will never
out of my bones. (V.i.282-284)

This attempt to dethrone Prospero mirrors in parodic form his betrayal by his fellow nobles - and merits a similar chastisement.

While the portrayal of Ariel as a spirit is, as indicated previously, probably generic in origin, his role as a servant of one who is, as we shall see, an agent of Divine Providence implies a Christian dimension to that spirituality. The progress of this spirit, from prisoner of the witch, to servant of the white magician, to ultimate freedom is an allegory of human

redemption through good works - a doctrine at odds with Protestant determinism but quite compatible with the *controriformu*.

Fate, Destiny, and Fortune, have little of their pagan sense here and are effectively identified with Providence. It may be argued that Prospero treats Fortune as his "dear lady" (I.ii.179) but this is surely self-deception - if he were so dear to her it is hardly likely that he would have ended up on the Island. Fortune here plays a Providential role rewarding the expiation of sins and rebuking those who commit them. Thus it plays its part in creating the opportunity for the meeting of the deposed Duke, Prospero, with those who plotted against him. In a sense however the magician had contrived his own downfall. By his own admission he had plainly neglected the duties of statesmanship thus creating a power vacuum which his ambitious brother, Antonio, filled:

The government I cast upon my brother
And to my state grew stranger, being transported
And rapt in secret studies. (I.ii.75-77)

His "secret studies" are of what he later identifies as "rough magic" (V.i.50) - a heretical practice which thus merits Providential rebuke. He even confesses that his punishment was decreed from above when he describes the circumstances of his deposition to his daughter Miranda:

A treacherous army levied, one midnight
Fated to th' purpose, did Antonio open
The gates of Milan; and, i' th' dead of darkness,
The ministers for th' purpose hurried thence
Me and thy crying self. (I.ii.128-132) [my emphasis]

Set adrift in a death-ship with his three year old daughter to what appears certain doom, he is saved by the intervention of the divinity's kindlier aspect:

MIRA. How came we ashore?
PRO. By Providence divine. (I.ii.158-159)

It is the same providential hand which brings Alonso, Antonio, Sebastian, Ferdinand, Gonzalo *et al.* to the vicinity of the island where Prospero raises his storm.

Destiny's role and Prospero's expectations are now revealed:

By accident most strange, bountiful Fortune,
Now my dear lady, hath mine enemies
Brought to this shore; and by my prescience
I find my zenith doth depend upon
A most auspicious star, whose influence
If now I court not, but omit, my fortunes
Will ever after droop. (I.ii.178-184)

It does not occur to Prospero that Fortune, his "dear lady", has a purpose of her own in bringing about this reunion, nor that his "zenith" may involve the abandoning of his sorcerous craft.

Antonio also sees the situation as ordained, giving him and Sebastian the opportunity to murder Alonso for their own advantage:

We all were sea-swallow'd, though some cast again,
And by that destiny, to perform an act
Whereof what's past is prologue, what to come
In yours and my discharge. (II.i.242-245)

He correctly perceives that his past acts have a bearing on the present situation but fails to recognise that what he calls "destiny" is in fact a just Providence.

Ariel gives them another interpretation of their destiny which shows them all, Alonso included, at risk of their sanity for their crimes against Prospero and Miranda.

You are three men of sin, whom Destiny,
That hath to instrument this lower world
And what is in't, the never-surfeited sea
Hath caus'd to belch up you; and on this island
Where man doth not inhabit - you 'mongst men
Being most unfit to live. I have made you mad;
And even with such-like valour men hang and drown
Their proper selves. You fools! I and my fellows
Are ministers of Fate (III.iii.53-61)

His implication that the men's sins are responsible for the intervention of Destiny and Fate

clearly equates these forces with Divine Providence while his claim to be a minister of Fate shows another facet of Prospero's characterisation: the Mage is not just on the receiving end of Providential judgment, he also has a role as an agent of Providence.

A friendlier fate awaits Ferdinand, Alonso's son, who is missing believed dead by his father. He has entered Prospero's household and, after a preliminary rite of passage - the sins of the father are only lightly visited upon the son - he has been accepted by Miranda and her father as her suitor. When he is finally reunited with his father he makes clear who he thinks has brought him love:

...Sir, she is mortal;
But by immortal Providence she's mine. (V.i.188-189)

Physically however it is Prospero who has brought them together. Nevertheless his role as a *mezzano* is, like that of Isabella in Measure for Measure, sanctified by its purpose and intent. The unification of the two households will annul their mutual enmity and lead to the restoration of the rightful Duke of Milan. Prospero himself desires that their union be no illicit encounter but blessed by Heaven:

...Heavens rain grace
On that which breeds between 'em! (III.i.75-76)

If thou dost break her virgin-knot before
All sanctimonious ceremonies may!
With full and holy rite be minist'ed,
No sweet aspersion shal the heavens let fall
To make this contract grow. (IV.i.15-19)

Ferdinand, it is true, has suffered before being allowed to enjoy his love but the obstacles placed in his way are few and what mainly identifies the *controriformista* character of this play is its moral tone rather than the usual complex physical and emotional obstacle course to be negotiated by the lovers. This is probably owing to the concentration of the plot on Prospero's agnition and consequent redemption rather than on the love intrigue.

Prospero's magic is related inseparably to his treatment by the divinity: he loses his dukedom because of it and his abandonment of magic is related to his resumption of state duties. In his casting of illusions before the shipwrecked travellers he ignores the illusions under which he labours himself. He equates magic with "the liberal arts" (Lii.73) and sees his

dedication to it as "the bettering of my mind" (I.ii.90). Using his spells he frees Ariel from the pine where Sycorax had left him imprisoned for twelve years but he is quick to threaten Ariel with an oaken prison when he asks after his freedom (I.ii.294-296). He excoriates the memory of "This damn'd witch Sycorax" (I.ii.263) and her terrible sorceries but by his own admission he has practised necromancy:

...Graves at my command
Have wak'd their sleepers, op'd, and let 'em forth,
By my so potent art. (V.i.48-50)

His abandonment and isolation, with only the sprite Ariel and the monstrous Caliban as company for him and Miranda, have soured him and bred a desire for revenge. The withering of his humanity is finally made clear to him when a soulless sprite shows more awareness of the need for compassion than he. He is engulfed in a wave of realisation:

ARIEL. ...Your charm so strongly works 'em
That if you now beheld them your affections
Would become tender.
PRO. Dost thou think so, spirit?
ARIEL. Mine would, sir, were I human.
PRO. And mine shall.
Hast thou, which art but air, a touch, a feeling
Of their afflictions, and shall not myself,
One of their kind, that relish all as sharply,
Passion as they, be kindlier mov'd than
thou art? (V.i.17-24)

Faced with the reality of his victims Prospero's imagined desire for revenge is transmuted to mercy. This upsets his original purpose and provides him with the recognition that either his magic has corrupted him or he his magic - in either case it is of no further use to him as an instrument of self-discovery given that it is manifestly tainted. Ultimately he has used it to perpetrate a cruel revenge and this is obviously incompatible with his aspirations to be a dispassionate mage.

From a theological point of view his exercising of mercy is of a higher spiritual quality than his magic and the reawakening of his humanity is its proof. He abjures his "rough

magic" (V.i.50) which challenges the Heavens and resolves to return to Milan, an earthly Dukedom, where "Every third thought shall be my grave" (V.i.311). The state of his soul is now his proper concern.

¹ All Shakespeare quotes are from The Complete Works of Shakespeare: The Alexander Text ed. Peter Alexander (London and Glasgow 1989)

² Mutschmann H. and Wentersdorf K., Shakespeare and Catholicism (New York 1952)

³ *ibid.* pp.35-36.

⁴ *ibid.* p.44.

⁵ *ibid.* pp.46-47.

⁶ *ibid.* pp.49-50.

⁷ *ibid.* pp.51-53, 67-68, 121-122.

⁸ *ibid.* pp.90-95.

⁹ *ibid.* pp.108-114.

¹⁰ *ibid.* pp.380-381.

¹¹ Honigmann, E.A.J. Shakespeare: the 'lost years' (Manchester 1985)

¹² Sellers, Harry, "Italian Books Printed in England before 1640" pp.105-128 in The Library Fourth Series, Vol. V. No.2 (September 1924) p. 108

¹³ Louise George Clubb, Italian Drama in Shakespeare's Time (London 1989) pp.49-50.

¹⁴ Frances A. Yates's John Florio (London 1934) pp.35-38.

¹⁵ Bullough, Geoffrey, Narrative and Dramatic Sources of Shakespeare Vol.1 (London 1957) p.203.

¹⁶ *ibid.* p.205.

¹⁷ Valentina Capocci, Genio e mestiere. Shakespeare e la commedia dell'arte (Bari 1950) p.56.

¹⁸ Bradbrook, M.C. "Courtier and Courtesy: Castiglione, Lyly and Shakespeare's *Two Gentlemen of Verona*" pp. 161-178 in Theatre of the English and Italian Renaissance (Basingstoke 1991) p.173.

¹⁹ Proteus himself identifies male fickleness as a universal:

... O heaven, were man
But constant, he were perfect! That one error
Fills him with faults; makes him run through all th'sins (V.iv.110-112)

We are therefore implicitly invited to contrast Valentine's ability to subdue this tendency with Proteus's moral weakness.

20 Bradbrook, p.176.

21 Barton, Anne, in the foreword to *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* in The Riverside Shakespeare (Boston 1974) p.144.

22 E perchè nel Ciclope usano i satiri gli inganni, ho avuto anch'io riguardo a ciò, ed ho indotto Egle ad ingannare le Ninfe.

And because in the Cyclops the satyrs use trickery, I have also had regard to this and have induced Egle to deceive the Nymphs - Gibaldi cited in:

Enrico Carrara, La Poesia Pastorale (Milan 1951) p.323.

23 ...che s'io posso
Questa mano rinvolverle nel crine,
Indi non partirà, ch'io pria non tinga
L'armi mie, per vendetta, nel suo sangue.

If I can wrap this hand in her hair, it will not leave there before I take my revenge by bathing my arms (i.e. weapons) in her blood.

Torquato Tasso, Amita (Roma 1700)(Collected with Il pastor fido by Guarini) II,i,p.51.

24 Barton, p.145.

25 The moon-goddess, Diana, is a Type of chastity and may be taken as a *figura* of the Virgin Mary in this context.

26 In her foreword to the play, The Riverside Shakespeare, pp.217-221.

27 Bullough, pp.367-376.

28 See William Smith's A Smaller Classical Dictionary ed. E.H. Blakency (London 1910) pp.265 and 532-534.

29 In her foreword to M for M in the Riverside Shakespeare, pp.545-549.

30 Bullough, Vol. II, p.406

31 From University of Colorado Studies, Volume 2, Number 4 (October 1945) pp.132-146.

32 Essendo così simile di viso
Egli à Vico, che parea quegli istesso.

33 Senza udir cosa che fusse detta.

34 P.R. Horne, The Tragedies of Giambattista Cinthio Giraldi (London 1962) pp.112-3.

- 35 Salvo è Vico, è salvo Iuriste e salvo
E d'Epitia l'honor, e l'honor anche
De la violata Donna da Vico.
- 36 Corrigan, p.734.
- 37 Florio, John Queen Anna's New World of Words (London 1611)
- 38 He counsels Juliet in proper repentance (II.iii.21-36), gives Claudio a sermon on death and submission to destiny (III.i.5-41) and reconciles him to his fate (III.i.160-172, offers to shrive Barnardine (IV.ii.207-208) and has been Mariana's confessor (V.i.525)
- 39 That this essentially mediaeval world-view still had currency in Shakespeare's day is illustrated by Plate 18 in The Riverside Shakespeare (between pp. 1134 & 1135) which reproduces a 1588 depiction of Queen Elizabeth I as the *Primum Mobile* of the State of England.
- 40 Gardner, Edmund G., Dukes and Poets in Ferrara, (London 1904) p.132.
- 41 Gardner, Edmund G., The King of Court Poets (London 1906) pp.175-6.
- 42 One example may suffice to illustrate the point: the treatment of Bandello's *novella* of the Duchess of Amalfi by, respectively, Webster and the Spanish dramatist, Lope de Vega. Webster retains the character of the Cardinal, enlarging his role and placing him firmly on the side of evil; Lope eliminates the character altogether.
- 43 Mutschmann and Wentersdorf, p.279.
- 44 A.D.Nuttall "Measure for Measure": The Bed-Trick" in Shakespeare Survey 28 (1975) pp.51-56
- 45 Mutschmann and Wentersdorf, p.368.
- 46 Arthur C. Kirsch, "The Integrity of 'Measure for Measure'" in Shakespeare Survey 28 (1975) pp.89-105).
- 47 In the foreword to The Tempest, Riverside Shakespeare p. 1607.
- 48 The New Arden The Tempest ed. Frank Kermode (New York 1964) pp.lxix-lxx.
- 49 A brief summary of the relevant sections follows:
- Odysseus and his men land on the island and are captured by the Cyclops, Polyphemus. They attempt to persuade the fearful servants of the monster - a group of satyrs - to help them. They offer them wine which is greedily accepted.
- The rest of the play more or less follows the legend.
- 50 Ferdinando Neri, Scenari delle Maschere di Arcadia (Lapi 1913).
- 51 FIAMMELLA: Dimmi, di gratia, sei tu qualche nume?
GRAZIANO: Madonna sì, e ho nome Gratian. - Neri p.19.

⁵² It may be noted in passing that the relationship of Mage and Sprite in Li Tre Satiri not only parallels that of Prospero and Ariel but could also provide the model for Oberon and Puck.

⁵³ III.ii.130f. wherein he describes the island in lyrical terms. However, when we recall Tasso's Satiro and his comparison of the sting of Love with that of the bee (Aminta ii.i.p.48), it would seem that occasional lyricism is also a feature of the satyr's make-up.

⁵⁴ A standard servant's name in Italian comedy; the word suggests a drunken German.

A MIRROR OF ITS TIME?: SATIRICAL COMEDY AND ITS USE OF ITALIAN SOURCES

1 Satirical Comedy

The sub-cast of the Italian comedy may be seen as indicating a native Italian satirical tradition given that it always contains some element of burlesque - especially in its frequent mockery of the mean and lecherous *vecchio*. Outwith this basic typology moreover, satirical observations are frequent in the *commedia* - although rarely to the extent that satire overshadows romance. Thus Ariosto's characters, at the beginning of the Cinquecento, frequently rail against corrupt government officials, Aretino later incorporates the splenetic tone of his pasquinades into his comedies, while, towards the end of the century, Giordano Bruno castigates the credulity of those who believe in magical tricksters in his *Candelaio*. Of these only Bruno comes near the English satirists, and in particular Jonson, in his filling of the stage with tricksters and their dupes. Satire, as a theatrical genre, occupied only a minor place in Italian comedy. In England however it was to contend strongly for supremacy with the Romantic Comedy and engage the talents of some of the most gifted playwrights of the English Renaissance.

The English Satirical Comedy ostensibly has more of a claim to be compassed by the Ciceronian definition "a mirror of the times" than its Romantic cousin. The aim of the satirists is that contemporary vices be personified, performed, ridiculed and rebuked: the cunning lawyers and doctors who cozen their clients with a plentiful application of Latin and double-talk, the misers, the spendthrift heirs, the wily parasites who rise on the coat-tails of others, the cuckolds and womanisers, undistinguished soldiers who brag their way into society and instruct the youth of the day in the arts of fencing and swearing, and the foppish social climbers seeking to impress with their extravagant clothing and banal poetry. This breakdown of the satirical typology, however, reveals the genre as operating firmly within the traditional characterisations of the Italian comic theatre, *erudito* and *dell'arte*, of the Cinquecento. The Latin-spouting lawyers and doctors hark back to Dottor Graziano; the misers, cuckolds and

womanisers recall Pantalone; the astute parasites originate in Graeco-Roman comedy and have perhaps their most notable Italian incarnation in the Mandragola's Ligurio; the voluble soldier is another classical figure given new life in Italian comedy as the Spanish Captain; while the fop is an Italian development of the Captain-as-Second-Lover's role, a common *alter ego* of the Braggart Soldier, of which the earliest fully-realised example in a *commedia erudita* appears to be that of Taddeo in Grazzini's La strega.¹

In stating the above, I have no wish to deny the contemporaneity of the satirist's targets. Nevertheless, I would suggest that the choice of targets was prompted by reference to existing theatrical practice. This hypothesis is given strength by the fact that the one Type whose role is frustrated, marginalised, transformed or eliminated in the *controriformista* comedy, i.e. the *mezzano*, tends to play a similarly diminished role in the Satirical Comedy of the English Renaissance. Exceptions to this tendency are generally explicable in terms of authorial reference to pre-Counter Reformation norms. Jonson, for example, gives as much prominence to lust as to avarice in Volpone. This, however, is the only comedy of his where bawdry lays claim to some centrality in the plot² and, as we shall see, would seem to owe much to Machiavelli's bawd-ridden Mandragola rather than to the *controriformista* school of comedy.

It is reasonable to suppose that some real-life sexual and/or romantic encounters will always require the services of a facilitator, e.g. the friend who provides an alibi or carries a message for an erring spouse. It is therefore surprising to find that a Satirical comedy which purports to be a mirror of its times rarely shows a successful Go-Between. There are successful flatterers, spendthrifts, cozeners, fops and philanderers (generally suitably rebuked at some point by circumstances or the Satyr/Satire but normally remaining static in character) but very few successful Go-Betweens and even fewer whose success is not in some way confounded. I suggest that this is explicable in terms of the theatrical continuity of Italian practice since the English playwrights would have no external motivation to avoid or modify the type - such censorship as existed in England was of the political rather than moral sort. Indeed, on the occasions where a Go-Between does appear, it is evident that the depiction of the character owes little to moral restraint - Ursula the Pig-woman in Bartholomew Fair is a

particularly robust example but, it must be remembered, Ursula is but one figure in a work which exemplifies the etymology of the word 'satire' by saturating the stage with comic Types. While *mezzani* in the earlier Italian drama can be found similarly incorporated into an *ensemble*, e.g. in *La mandragola*, they generally function as plot facilitators, complementing each other in the single purpose of uniting the *innamorati*, rather than as relatively static portrayals of vice.

While the cast-list may therefore find the bulk of its derivation in the Italian comic typology, the genre differentiates itself from the later *commedia erudita* by largely concentrating on Types which would normally have inhabited the sub-cast of the Italian Romantic Comedy while the *innamorati* and the Love intrigue are, more often than not, secondary to the main satirical business. Since these Types often form the principal matter of the play, the ridicule of character traits becomes more pronounced and the author's satirical intent ensures a savage edge to the expected burlesque. The elevation of the comic sub-cast and the concentration on a sharply critical treatment of characterisation, often at the expense of plot, represent a kind of restoration of first principles: the former accords with the New Comedy of Greece and its later Plautine incarnation, while the latter brings to mind the Aristophanic satires of Old Comedy.

One Type who, on first view, seems to owe little to the Italian dramatic tradition is the Satirical commentator - often portrayed as a 'natural man' arguing for a return to 'natural values.' His frequent characterisation as a rough, aggressive, and, particularly in the work of Marston, incoherent fellow, emerges, however, from a view of him as a demythologised version of the Satiro character from the *pastorale*. The Elizabethan concept of the satyr's character was, notwithstanding, very different from that of the Italians. Based on the combination of a false etymology and the assertion by the 4th century Terentian commentator, Aelius Donatus, that the Greek satyr play used the satyr's mask as a critical licence to upbraid the foibles of real people,³ the satyr's uncouth manner and aggressive behaviour became features of the satirist. G.K. Hunter quotes Ben Jonson's translation of Horace's *Ars Poetica* II.221-226 used by Jonson as justification for his identification of the Satyr with the satirist:

Hee...soone after, forth did send

The rough rude Satyres naked; and would try,
Though sower with safetic of his gravitie,
How he could jest; because he mark'd and saw,
The free spectators, subject to no Law,
Having well eat, and drunke (the rites being done)
Were to be staid with softnesses, and wonne
With something that was acceptably new.
Yet so the scoffing Satyres to men's view,
And so their prating to earnest was best,
And so to turn all earnest into jest.

On the basis of this passage Hunter concludes:

In such a passage the satyr ceases to be simply the wild man of the pastoral scene and becomes the urban expression of irreverence and license, the presiding genius of sophisticated satire.⁴

The Satirical Satyr's character is further complicated by an envy which may find its suggestion in Aristotle:

Aristotle asserts that envy and indignation have much in common, particularly in that each emotion arises solely on one's neighbour's account. Hence these two emotions can be dispelled only through disaster to the fortunes of envied persons. The envious man, if he is wise, will therefore devote his activities to accomplishing the discomfiture of those whom he envies.⁵

While the Satyr might appear a central figure, he was merely a means to the end of displaying contemporary vices and rebuking them. The Satirical comedy, often hurling its barbs at many targets other than those who facilitate love-affairs, naturally tended to avoid a central focus such as that which had been supplied by the Go-Between. The Italianate Romantic comedy had already bowed to the *controriformista* pressure, in its country of origin, to eliminate or marginalise the *mezzano* creating thereby a more complex plot and, in many cases, a larger cast-list to handle the new complexities. Thus the dissimilarities between the two genres were lessened, opening the way to a productive *contaminatio*.

Having established the general principles and antecedents of the Satirical Comedy, I shall now examine their realisation in the works of arguably the three major dramatists in the field: Jonson, Marston and Middleton.

2 Ben Jonson⁶

Jonson's philosophy of comedy largely eschewed the Romantic tradition established by the Italians and adopted so wholeheartedly by Shakespeare. He drew instead on the *Vetus Comoedia*,⁷ the older Aristophanic mode which concerned itself with the castigation of society's perceived ills rather than with the successful resolution of initially ill-starred love affairs. Satiric elements, to be sure, find a place in English and Italian Romantic comedies - Shylock, in his way, is just as much a satire on the corrupting effects of cupidity as Epicure Mammon; the prating pedant, Holofernes, could find a place within either genre; while the perfidy of corrupt officials and lawyers is given ample exposure by Ariosto. A similar cross-fertilisation may be seen in Jonson's comedies which derive much of their colour from the incorporation of details proceeding from the Italian *commedia*, while his use of both Poetic and Judicial Justice as a structural element finds a precedent in Giralaldi's *tragedie di fin lieto* in which the virtuous are rewarded and the bad admonished or punished.

The frustration, marginalisation and/or disappearance of the Go-Between - previously the dynamo of the comic action - which was common to the *controriformista* development of both romantic comedy and pastoral, forced a dramatic concentration on character which, as I have noted, helped to bridge the gap between the Romantic and Satiric comic traditions. In satire, this dependence on character is realised through an extensive typology rather than through character development. As I shall demonstrate, Jonson enriched his catalogue of types and situations by drawing on the structural elements of the Italian Romantic comedy while almost totally ignoring its underlying moral philosophy. The credit for this typological inspiration would seem to lie mainly at the door of "his loving Father, & worthy Freind/Mr John Florio: the ayde of his Muses"⁸ whose "ayde" presumably included access to his library which, judging by the source-list for Florio's World of Words, had a theatrical content dominated by the Italian Romantics from Ariosto to Oddi. Ian Donaldson indicates that Jonson may have bulked out his characterisations through reference to Fr. Thomas Wright's treatise The Passions of the minde in generall (1601). This includes an explication of human behaviour on the basis of national stereotypes and draws parallels between human traits and those exhibited by the animal kingdom - the Fox in particular is mentioned. There are obvious

implications for the depiction of the protagonist and of the other Italians in Volpone and Donaldson sees an "ironical echo" of Wright's warnings against overtalkativeness in the garrulous discourse of Sir Politic and Lady Would-Be. The probability that Jonson was influenced by this work is enhanced by Jonson's having contributed a sonnet in praise of the author to the 1604 edition.⁹

Although the main trend of Italian comedy was romantic, a native satirical tendency also existed. The bawdy ridicule characteristic of Aretino's comedies (Quattro Commedie was published in London in 1588), pamphlets and pasquinades provides a closer historical precedent than Aristophanes and one with which Jonson was familiar - if we are to judge by his citing of the Italian in Volpone and The Alchemist, not to mention his borrowing of plot and character elements from Aretino's Marescalco (Venice 1533; England 1588), for his Epicoene (see below). A near-contemporary precedent would also have been available to Jonson in the form of Giordano Bruno's satirical masterpiece Il candelajo. Taking into account Florio's close friendship with Bruno, some familiarity with the play on Jonson's part would seem almost inevitable.¹⁰

It is not difficult to perceive Italianate qualities in Jonson's comedies - either through complexity, setting or frame of reference. An early work, The Case is Altered, is largely based on Plautus's Captivi and Aulularia. The *contaminatio* of these two plots is however compounded by sub-plot elements reminiscent of Two Gentlemen of Verona - which itself draws on Italian sources and models (see previous chapter) - and The Merchant of Venice, whose daughter-stealing *motif* recalls the Plauto-Terentian comedy and whose title identifies the miserly Pantalone figure of Shylock. Further complexity is added by a love intrigue featuring a Penelope-like heroine, the beggar-maid Rachel, who, while assailed by suitors of every degree, retains her virtue and fidelity to Lord Paolo Ferneze. Her steadfastness is reminiscent of that of Oddi's heroines while the eventual revelation that she is of noble blood and therefore eligible to marry her lover is typically Providential. A *mezzano* figure appears in action in only one short scene (IV.iv) wherein the cobbler, Juniper, tries to advance the cause of the groom, Onion, but to no effect. Their actions are held up to ridicule and at no point do we feel the virtue of the heroine threatened by them. The complexity of plot, the combination

of nobility and comic sub-cast, and the virtuous nature and centrality of the love *motif* confirm this as that rare thing in Jonson: a Romantic comedy informed by a Counter-Reformation morality.

Apart from this venture into Romantic territory and some pastoral experiments, Jonson, perhaps more than any other satirist, used his comedies as a typological shooting range setting up target after target for his wit. His crowding of the stage might indeed be seen as stemming from first principles given the etymology of 'satire' - *satura* 'medley'. Thus plot development tends to be restricted to some device or pretext which will permit his creations to parade their foibles *en masse*. This is evident in his two self-styled 'humours' plays; later works, such as Volpone and The Alchemist, show more signs of plot development, although they too lean towards the episodic; while Bartholomew Fair represents a full-blooded return to social-interaction-as-drama. Jonson's deft interweaving of character-strands can impose a masterly logic on the whole - most particularly in The Alchemist - but this is more a case of accretion of complementary sub-plots rather than the unfolding of any principal theme. Human folly and vice, as a general condition, substitute for plot as a unifying thematic factor and the contact of disparate types forms the essence of the action. The characters' follies spark a mutual reaction leading to an outcome flavoured, in varying degrees, with agnition, punishment, and repentance.

The wide range of persons depicted in Jonsonian comedy reflects the many vices and venialities to which humanity is prone. The satirist is never short of targets:

The scene of satire is always disorderly and crowded, packed to the very point of bursting. The deformed faces of depravity, stupidity, greed, venality, ignorance, and maliciousness group closely together for a moment, stare boldly at us, break up, and another tight knot of figures collects, stroking full stomachs, looking vacantly into space, nervously smiling at the great, proudly displaying jewels and figures, clinking moneybags, slyly fingering new-bought fashions....The sheer dirty weight, without reason or conscious purpose, of people and their vulgar possessions threatens to overwhelm the world...Everywhere the satirist turns he finds idiocy, foolishness, depravity, and dirt.¹¹

While many of Jonson's characters may be regarded as 'autosatires', in that their follies are so manifest as to require little commentary - e.g. Matheo and Stephano, the Town

and Country Gulls of Every Man in His Humour - a more intrusive voice is sometimes required to clarify the social and moral concerns of the author and provide a standard against which fools may be judged: the Satyr/Satire. As we have seen, the presence of this Juvenalian character in the comic theatre is largely due to a peculiarly English confusion and therefore owes little to its ostensible Italian prototype - although some resemblance may be discerned in Satiro's complaints about the corrupting effects of urban life in Il pastor fido. The twin role of the Satirical Satyr as both a rough-and-ready character and an incisive and verbose social critic made him a difficult character to portray with any degree of verisimilitude. Jonson's obvious discomfort with the character is apparent in his experimental division of satirical traits between Macilente and Asper in Every Man Out of His Humour and in the broader distribution of the satirical voice and its incorporation in more fully-realised characters in later works - Bartholomew Fair's Tom Quarlous, for example, has his characterisation as a 'Satyr' combined with a more recognisably human dimension.

Carlo Buffone, in Every Man out of His Humour, is a typical Neo-Classical Parasite, while his characterisation as an Italian jester also recalls the *commedia dell'arte*'s Zanni and Arcino's Rosso in La cortigiana. Jonson, while making good use of Buffone to point up the deficiencies of others, does not mean us to confuse him with the satirist whose railings have moral purpose. Buffone fails to escape his dramatic come-uppance: Puntarvolo, enraged by the jester's baiting, assaults him and, appropriately enough, seals his mouth with wax (V.iv). The knight's comment, "So, now, are you 'out of your humour,' sir" (V.iv.p.245), serves to underline his status as a target while Jonson directly labels him "scurrilous", "profane", and a "slave".¹² The incident also recalls the farcical aspects of the Italian professional theatre. Puntarvalo himself appears a conflation of that theatre's Pedant and Spanish Captain - both bombastic types much given to deliberately archaic declamation.

Volpone has no direct personification of the satirist and his functions are redistributed among the other characters. Mosca, the parasite, thus shares with his master the role of commentator on human deficiencies (although both are themselves deficient in judgement), while Bonario and Celia define morality. The unshakeable virtue of the latter two serves to throw into relief Volpone's lechery and the corruption of the courts.

Bonario and Celia are clearly related dramatically to Tasso's Aminta and Silvia. Both are paragons of virtue and Silvia's dedication to the goddess Diana finds an echo in Celia's chaste rejection of Volpone and in her invocation of Heaven to save her from his lust:

If you have ears that will be pierced, or eyes
That can be opened, a heart may be touched,
Or any part that yet sounds man about you;
If you have touch of holy saints, or heaven,
Do me the grace to let me 'scape. If not,
Be bountiful and kill me. You do know
I am a creature hither ill betrayed
By one whose shame I would forget it were.
If you will deign me neither of these graces,
Yet feed your wrath, sir, rather than your lust,
(It is a vice comes nearer manliness)
And punish that unhappy crime of nature,
Which you miscall my beauty: flay my face,
Or poison it with ointments for seducing
Your blood to this rebellion. Rub these hands
With what may cause an eating leprosy,
E'en to my bones and marrow; anything
That may disfavour me, save in my honour,
And I will kneel to you, pray for you, pay down
A thousand hourly vows, sir, for your health;
Report and think you virtuous (III.ii.240-260)

The combination of passion and self-effacement as she tries to recall Volpone to religion and humanity is furthermore reminiscent of the heroines of *commedia grave* while Volpone's elevation of sensual gratification above morality identifies him as a Satyr figure in Tasso's sense of the word. Celia's appeal to his humanity is destined to fail since Volpone sees himself as belonging to a different kind:

I do degenerate and abuse my nation
To play with opportunity thus long;
I should have done the act, and then have parleyed.
Yield, or I'll force thee. (III.ii.263-266)

Volpone's "nation" is that of the Satyrs and, as with Tasso's Satiro, the frustration of his satyric intent is accomplished by the unexpected intervention of a virtuous youth, in this case

Bonario. The satyric identification is also consonant with Volpone's foolish scheme to have himself proclaimed dead being conceived after he has drunk a bowl of wine (see V.i.11-17).

Bonario, while prepared to intervene and to confront the courts in defence of Celia, reveals a *passività* and filial respect typical of a *commedia grave* hero in his refusal to defend himself against Corbaccio's accusations,

Sir, I will sit down,
And rather wish my innocence should suffer,
Than I resist the authority of a father. (IV.ii.112-114)

and both Bonario and Celia show a characteristically *controriformista* faith in Providence when asked, by the Ist Avvocato, whom they can produce in their defence:

BONARIO: Our consciences.
CELIA: And heaven, that never fails the innocent.

Celia, given Jonson's acquaintance with the Florentine's writings and the Italianate cast of the play as a whole, may also be intended as a dramatic *riposte* to Machiavelli's Lucrezia of La Mandragola who, similarly pressured towards adultery, succumbs to her foolish husband's persuasion. Daniel C. Boughner¹³ argues that Volpone owes much of its moral debate, implied and stated, to Machiavelli's Prince and Discourses while La mandragola provides the basis for the sexual intrigue: Callimaco and Volpone both fear that they will die if their passions are unrequited; both turn for help to an atypically energetic parasite; Callimaco claims his mandrake potion is esteemed by the French nobility and the king while Volpone/Scoto promotes a marvellous oil valued by cardinals, princes and the Grand Duke of Tuscany; Lucrezia and Celia are both portrayed as paragons of virtue who rarely venture out except to go to church; Nicia and Corvino both agree to and actively promote the schemes to persuade their wives to adultery; Fra Timoteo assures Lucrezia that her first duty is to please her husband and that her adultery would accordingly be a pious duty while Corvino argues similarly and his demand that she recognise "the necessity of those means,/For my recovery" (III.v) embodies the famous Machiavellian dictum that the end justifies the means. To these I would add the bedroom confessions to the women, by both Callimaco and Volpone, that they have been the victims of a ruse.

A further Italian part-source may be seen in Aretino's Il marescalco. One of the treasures which Volpone offers Celia is "a carbuncle,/may put out both the eyes of our SU
MARKE" (III.vii.193-4). Ian Donaldson notes a resemblance between this and the commentary of a jeweller displaying his wares in Act III of Aretino's play:¹⁴

Questo è un carbone, fratello del tesoro di
San Marco; par di fuoco ed è netto, e brilla
di sdorte che abbaglia la vista. (III.vi)

This is a carbuncle, a twin ("brother") of the
treasure of San Marco; it seems of fire, and is
clear and shines so that it blinds the sight. (p.140. Donaldson's translation)

The lines display a clear mutual resemblance and the likelihood that Jonson had this in mind is increased by his use of Aretino's comedy as the basis for his own Epiccoene (for which see below).

The villains and dupes of The Alchemist reveal themselves largely without need of commentary although Subtle's rebukes and observations on Puritan absurdities would seem to have an authorial voice - that there is something of Jonson himself in Subtle is revealed in Drummond of Hawthornden's Conversations:

He [Jonson] can set horoscopes, but trusts not in them. He with the consent of a friend
cousened a lady, with whom he had made an appointment to meet an old Astrologer, in the
suburbs, which she kept; and it was himself disguysed in a longe gowne and a whyte beard
at the light of dimm burning candles, up in a little cabinet reached unto by a ledder.¹⁵

While Lovewit can be seen as an arbiter, the resolution he imposes, although it rebukes general folly, hardly shows him as a moral exemplar given that he reaps so much advantage from the villainy of others. Lovewit escapes censure because he represents established order. He is a "fine old boy" (V.ii.133) and no upstart from the country or affected *nouveau riche*. Again Jonson may be following the precepts of Aristotle:

What is long established seems akin to what exists by nature; and therefore we feel more
indignation at those possessing a given good if they have...only just got it...The newly rich
give more offence than those whose wealth is of long standing and inherited.¹⁶

Tom Quarlous, despite his rakish occupation, similarly avoids censure in

Bartholomew Fair. He is rewarded with the rich widow Purecraft for his success in deflating the pretensions of Justice Overdo and others. This authorial seal of approval imposes a different interpretation of his aptronymic cognomen than the obvious. His querulousness is no mere 'humour', it identifies him as the satirical voice. Quarulous however is no Macilente, always resorting to audience asides which stop the action dead, but a character fully integrated with the stage-action. Hence, as a rake and gambler - both attributes which recall the Captain - he displays the interest of his kind in rich heiresses, preferably young and pretty but, if a Grace Wellborn is not available, he will settle for a Dame Purecraft. He shares with Winwife the task of chiding foolish Littlewit (I.ii&v) and the pair exchange comment on the characters of Cokes the country upstart and his man, Wasp (I.iv&v); Quarulous censures Puritanism (I.iii.128-41), upbraids his fellow gamester, Knockem (II.v), and, in the same scene, baits the pig-woman, Ursula, with her gross appearance - an appearance that harmonises with the grossness of her nature. Here indeed do we see bawdry rebuked, but only as one target among many - while Ursula and her tent physically dominate much of the play, Jonson's satirical bolts are as diversely directed as there are *dramatis personae*. Furthermore, as we would expect in a work whose main concern is moral remonstrance, the attempts by Ursula and her bravos to corrupt Madams Overdo and Littlewit are ultimately frustrated.

The bawdry of Dol Common and her accomplices in The Alchemist is similarly frustrated by events. Dol herself seems very much a *commedia dell'arte* character - part *ruffiana*, part *innamorata* - especially in her 'mad scene' (IV.iii), a frequent feature and a part much-coveted by the actresses of the Italian comedy. There is a clear generic resemblance between Dol's ravings and the following extract from a 'mad' scene for Isabella Andreini from a scenario called, appropriately enough, The Madness of Isabella:

I remember the year I could not remember that a harpsichord sat beside a Spanish Pavane dancing with a gagliarda of Santin of Parma, after which the lasagne, the macaroni, and the polenta dressed in brown, but they could not stand one another because the stolen cat was the friend of the beautiful girl from Algeria.¹⁷

[cf. DOL:For, after Alexander's death...That Perdiccas and Antigonus were slain/The two that stood, Seleuc' and Ptolemy...Made up the two legs, and the fourth beast,/That was Gog-north and Egypt-south; which after/Was called Gog-iron-leg and South-iron-leg/And then Gog-horned....etc.]

The development of the Captain embodied in the Fop is given free play in the 'humours' comedies. The aspects displayed by the 'Type are illustrative of the flexibility of its original. Just as Pantalone may be a miser, a cuckold, a lecher and/or a foolish old man, so the Captain/Fop may be a penniless gold-digger, a pretentious social climber, a farmer-come-to-town, an oath-swearing swordsman, a spendthrift, a poetaster and/or an extravagant dresser.

Social climbers are a primary target for the satirist and Jonson's comedies abound with examples of the type. Their affectations inevitably invite the derision of other characters while their ignorance makes them easy prey for swindlers and parasites. Matheo,¹⁸ the Town Gull of Every Man in His Humour, takes fencing lessons from the *miles gloriosus*, Bobadilla,¹⁹ to enhance his gentlemanly pretensions. Like Taddeo of La strega, he is a poetaster. His country cousin Stephano is similarly afflicted with the urge to create doggerel. This is not the only outward form of the gentleman he thinks can be put on like a new coat: for fashion's sake he has bought himself a hawk, with all the attendant trappings, although he has no idea what to do with it; he deliberately affects an objectionable manner with (other people's) servants to emphasise his supposed superiority (I.i); he is vain of his appearance (I.ii); and his ignorance of true quality lets him be gulled by Musco into buying a poor-quality sword as a Toledo rapier (II.i).

The type occurs again in Every Man out of His Humour as Fungoso, the student desperate to catch up with fashion, and Sogliardo who is "so enamoured of the name of a gentleman, that he will have it, though he buys it." He is cozened by Shift, yet another avatar of the Captain, who tutors him in tobacco-taking and appeals to his desire for vicarious thrills by his pretence of being an ex-highwayman. Fastidius Brisk is another type of upstart who, lacking the resources to finance the life of a gentleman, lives on credit and hopes for preference or a rich marriage. The identification of his page as a disguised prostitute²⁰ emphasises the authorial disapproval of his parasitic way of life but no matter of any moment arises from this facet of his characterisation and bawdry is not one of the principal targets of this satire.

The Alchemist gives us Dapper, the lawyer's clerk who, presumably inspired by

types like Fastidius Brisk, seeks an easy path to wealth and is easily persuaded that Subtle can change his gambling luck by the provision of a familiar; his role as a lawyer's clerk also reflects Jonson's critical view of the legal profession, its pretensions - well illustrated by Justice Overdo in Bartholomew Fair - and its corruptions - exemplified by Volpone's Voltore.²¹ The Jonsonian view of the legal profession is however part of a long-standing tradition in Renaissance theatre. Ariosto frequently berates legal officialdom, while Dottor Graziano of the commedia dell'arte burlesques both medicine and the law.

Epicure Mammon has his sights set high: nothing less than the Philosopher's Stone will suffice to enable the gratification of his boundless greed and lust. He and Subtle find extensive precedent in Italian drama and literature - Boccaccio, for example, has Bruno give a fraudulent 'magic scroll' with aphrodisiac effects to Calandrino in Decameron IX.5, while Giordano Bruno's Candelaio offers a near-exact parallel, and possibly a source,²² in its portrayal of a Magician and an Alchemist who offer their gulls respectively the love of a beautiful woman and the Philosopher's Stone.

Kastril is the typical country gull come to town to learn to take tobacco and be a roaring boy. In this he is a cousin of Stephano and Sogliardo. The common factor distinguishing all these characters is their preoccupation with appearances and, in the case of those whose funds will not match appearance, an unwillingness to take an honest route to wealth.

Those who fall under the corrupting influence of money frequently serve Jonson as a satirical target. To add variety to his display of such characters he often blends them with other targets, as we have seen, for example, with the upstart gentleman Epicure Mammon. In Volpone he goes a step further and brings in a cast-list from the *commedia dell'arte*. The similarity of names between Corbaccio and Corvino, the raven and the crow, indicates their carrion-feeding nature and also their common origin. Their inspiration is the multi-faceted Pantalone of the *commedia*, Corbaccio representing his greedy and foolish *vecchio* and Corvino his equally venal *becco* or cuckold. In Corvino's case the characterisation is ironically stressed by his cry, "Heart! ere tomorrow I shall be new christened,/And called the Pantolone di Besogniosi/About the town.", as he beats the disguised Volpone (II.iii.7-9). The advocate,

Voltore, is another carrion-feeder who draws on an Italian archetype: Doctor Graziano, the Bolognese lawyer, who, like Pantalone, is frequently shown as an avaricious fool.

Sir Politic Would-Be, the English fop, is a political variant of the Type, his empty boasts of diplomatic and conspiratorial knowledge echoing the military bragging of the *commedia's* Spanish Captain.

The performance by Volpone and Mosca as a mountebank and his *zanni* is an archetypal *commedia dell'arte* scene while Volpone *qua* Volpone may be taken as Pantalone in his more astute characterisation although displaying a depth of depraved obsession alien to a personage conceived in the ambience of light comedy. Where Volpone parts company with the tradition of the *commedia* is in the sinister overlay of moral corruption which pervades the play and in its animal imagery which forcibly underlines the bestial nature of human depravity. The *commedia* may be bawdy but it proceeds from a more indulgent school of ridicule than that of the satirist's damning condemnation.

Lesser lights afflicted by cupidity include the tobacconist, Abel Drugger, of The Alchemist, who wishes to ease his path to commercial success, and, more conventionally, the band of cutpurses, gamblers, pimps and bawds who inhabit Bartholomew Fair. Also damned for avarice, along with a host of other vices, are Jonson's Puritans who, perhaps because of their opposition to the theatre, are given particular attention. Puritanism was an easy target for dramatists:

Since the Puritan violated convention in his worship, in his preaching, in his attitude toward the Bible, and in his daily conversation, he easily became a clownish parody of the religious reformer.²³

And Jonson's own Anglo-Catholic sentiments were hardly likely to induce him to sympathise with the practitioners of a creed which, moreover, attacked his livelihood.

The Puritan as a theatrical Type has obvious traits in common with the Pedant: bombastic, given to regurgitating cant terms with little idea of their meaning, and with pretensions to a learning he does not possess. The Type is conflated with that of the Corrupt Priest of the early Cinquecento theatre - compare the casuistry of Fra Timoteo's reasoning in

favour of adultery with the easy acceptance of the righteousness of counterfeiting by Tribulation Wholesome and Ananias. While the Counter-Reformation in Italy had put a stop to the portrayal of corrupt churchmen, there was no prohibition in England against showing corrupt Catholic and sectarian priests. The Puritans of The Alchemist are personifications of religious hypocrisy in the service of greed. Like Epicure Mammon, they wish to use the Stone to transmute base metal and thus enrich their sect. Ananias, at his first appearance, reveals the ignorance typical of the stage Puritan by his denunciation of all foreign tongues but Hebrew - and he gives no indication of any knowledge in that department either (II.v). He is a tailor and parasitic dealer in second-hand goods, buying from distressed widows and orphans and, as Subtle points out, cheating those who are not of his faith (II.v.59-60). Nevertheless Ananias does possess some shred of conscience as is made apparent when he expresses his doubts about the use of alchemy to further their religion: "The Sanctifièd Cause/Should have a sanctified course" (III.i.13-14). His pastor, the ironically named Tribulation Wholesome, hastens to reassure him of its necessity, "*aurum potabile* being/The only med'cine for the civil magistrate,/T'incline him to a feeling of the Cause;/and must be daily used in the disease" (III.i.41-4) - a vivid reminder of Machiavelli's famous doctrine of ends and means and explicitly contrary to Ananias's scruples cited above. Wholesome's speech enables Jonson to get in another dig at the legal profession and Ananias' effusive confession of error reveals the shallowness of the Puritan's morality - he is not without conscience but simply refuses to listen to it.

Ananias is also made to personify the nit-picking theological disputes of the precisionists in his insistence on "Christ-tide" for Christmas, the profanity of bells, the idolatrous nature of starch, the Popishness of all tradition (III.ii.43,61,83,106-8), and the lewdness of Spanish breeches (IV.vii.48-9). While the details are thoroughly contemporary, this aspect of his characterisation is very much that of the traditional Pedant in its bombastic style and concern for irrelevant minutiae.

Tribulation Wholesome, in despite of his name, covets earthly glory rather than the tribulations of the "saints". He desires the Philosopher's Stone so that "we may be temporal lords ourselves" (II.ii.52); and his casuistic declaration that "Casting of money may be lawful"

(III.ii.153) reveals the ephemeral nature of his wholesomeness.

The absurd mockery of Biblical speech employed by Ananias and Wholesome renders even more comic their impotent abuse of Subtle when they realise their deception. While the other gulls use the conventionally-worded insults of "pander" and "cozener", the Brethren vent their fury in Biblical burlesque:

ANANIAS. Locusts

Of the foul pit.

TRIBULATION. Profane as Bel and the Dragon.

ANANIAS. Worse than the grasshoppers, or the lice of
Egypt. (V.v.13-15)

Zeal-of-the-Land Busy, in Bartholomew Fair, combines in one character the venal aspect of the Corrupt Priest (again cf. Fra Timoteo) and the Parasite of Neo-Classical comedy. He is a suitor of Dame Purcraft who "puts in...at meal-tide" and has his hostess revive his spirits "with malmsey, or *aqualcoelestis*" (I.ii.61,65-6). Busy's love of a good meal leads him to formulate a ludicrous dialectical deliberation which concludes by sanctioning the Littlewits' pork-hunting expedition to the Fair (I.vi.67-78) and, by extension, his own presence at that profane gathering. He deftly manages to find religious justification for his appetite:

In the way of comfort to the weak, I will go and eat. I will eat exceedingly and prophesy; there may be a good use made of it, too, now I think on't: by the public eating of swine's flesh, to profess our hate and loathing of Judaism, whereof the Brethren stand taxed. I will therefore eat, yea, I will eat exceedingly. (I.vi.91-6)

On their arrival at the Fair, Busy declaims against the sinful goods purveyed by the stallholders but, as Winwife observes, he is merely trying to hasten his party to Ursula's pig-booth and thus gratify his appetite without delay; when it is objected that the booth cannot be entered because of its "idolatrous" sign, he declares that it may be entered because of its smell and, indeed, that it would be "a sin of obstinacy" not to enter. He is, of course, the first to order (III.ii).

Like La mandragola's Donna Sostrata, Dame Purcraft, Busy's fellow Puritan and supposed spiritual charge, is not averse to a spot of casuistry when her mother-love takes precedence over her religion. Accordingly, when Win longs to see the sights of the Fair, her

mother tells her

Ay, child, so you hate 'em, as our brother Zeal does, you may look on 'em. (III.vi.61-2)

And, when she tries to win Quarrious, she confesses her real opinion of her erstwhile mentor:

Our elder, Zeal-of-the-Land, would have had me, but I know him to be the capital knave of the land, making himself rich by being made feoffee in trust to deceased Brethren, and coz'ning their heirs by swearing the absolute gift of their inheritance. (V.ii.63-6)

The worthy elder meanwhile, still mouthing his pseudo-Biblical condemnations of the Fair, has spent time in the stocks for drunken brawling (III.vi) and thus given public evidence of his hypocrisy. Having lost the rich widow and been disgraced in public, it only remains for the confounding, by the puppet Dionysius, of his absurd arguments against the theatre to complete his discomfiture (V.v).

Cokes's keeper, Humphrey Wasp, fills essentially the same niche as Carlo Buffone. He, like many a Neo-Classical Pedant, affects a superiority which gives him licence to upbraid others. Thus he serves to illustrate their failings but, failing to acknowledge his own, is finally confounded when the public revelation of his time in the stocks explodes his pretensions to moral superiority (V.iv.93-98). The relationship between himself and Cokes bears a generic resemblance to that of the foppish Taddeo and his servant in La strega. Both Cokes and Wasp, however, are more extreme in their characters, Cokes being impervious to Wasp's jibes and Wasp much more aggressive in his critique of his charge. Wasp and Busy's punishment by Bristle and the Watch again recalls Bruno's Candelaio in which the Pedant is beaten by the fake Constable and his Watch.

The burlesque of marriage in Epicoene has its roots in Plautus's Casina as re-interpreted by Machiavelli in La clizia and, more particularly, by Aretino in Il marescalco. While the ultimate derivation of the disguised boy-bride can be seen in Plautus's Casina, the presentation of the device is stylistically closer to the two best-known Italian renditions of the tale. Machiavelli's Clizia is a lively update of the Plautine original and Daniel C. Boughner argues that its crotchety *vecchia*, Nicomaco, may have provided Jonson with a ready model for Morosc.²⁴ More specifically, the manner in which Morose is repeatedly provoked to the

extremes of despair by the other characters closely resembles the cumulative provocation of the homosexual stablemaster in Pietro Aretino's *Il marescalco* who is also faced with an unwanted spouse finally revealed to be a boy. Both the stablemaster and Morose try to wriggle out of the marriage by professing their inability to consummate it - there is no parallel to this scene in *Casina*.²⁵

The characterisation of Morose as a miserly old man who is also an apparently impotent cuckold strongly suggests that, in addition to the sources listed above, Jonson has drawn on the *commedia dell'arte*'s *Pantalone-as-becco* to bulk out the role. Morose's exaggeratedly choleric humour similarly recalls the larger-than-life acting typical of the improvised farce.

Dauphine, Clerimont and Truewit, in their baiting of Morose, resemble nothing more than a troupe of *Zanni* making fun of their *Magnifico*, while Daw, La-Foole and Otter are all variants on the Captain/Fop model. The one group of personages which cannot be related to Italianate models is that of the Ladies Collegiates who hark back to Aristophanic practice in their presentation as a social anomaly to be satirised. Jonson seems to be presenting Lady Haughty and her companions as a parodic version of *Lysistrata*'s band of women. There is no Co-Between as such although the way in which Morose is gulled into marrying the 'Silent Woman' is reminiscent of the bawd's traditional persuasion.

While, therefore, there are grounds for claiming that Jonson makes ample use of Italian theatrical precedent in his characterisation, setting and, plot, the Go-Between, so much a feature of the early Cinquecento comedies, is, with the notable and totally explicable exception of *Volpone*, a non-central or non-existent figure in Jonsonian comedy and in this the typology and dramatic morality concord with those of the *commedia grave*. There can be little doubt that Jonson, in attacking vice, was largely in accord with the moral vision of the *controriforma*. However, his choice of the satirical medium means that the suffering and self-sacrifice of *innamorati* such as Bonario and Celia take second-place to the comic deflation of villainy and self-indulgence; where there is complexity, it is not generally the complexity of event which typifies much of *commedia grave*, but a complex interaction of character designed to bring out the particular traits Jonson wishes to burlesque; and such moments of

agnition as are present are normally direct consequences of the personages' own actions rather than of Providential revelation. Jonson's treatment of Italian source material is thus, apart from the weakening of the *mezzano* figure, far removed from the dramatic methodology of the likes of Oddi and Della Porta..

3 Marston²⁶

Given his background, it would seem probable that Marston would show a definite Italianate character in his work:

Marston's mother was Maria Guarsi, daughter of an Italian surgeon who had settled in London. This fact, when added to that of Marston's being an Oxford man, shows us how capable he was of utilizing immediately what Italian material came to hand.²⁷

While it is the case that Marston, like Jonson, imposed a thoroughly English satirical sensibility on his themes and characters, there can be no doubt that he drew upon Italian literary models as part of his source material. The connection is, at times, of a general stylistic nature, as Marvin Herrick notes:

Marston's masterpiece, the *Malcontent* (1604), as the Stationer's Register recognized, is a "Tragicomedia." Were it not for the satirical scenes and the homely prose passages, Giraldi Cinthio might have allowed it the title of tragedy with a happy ending.²⁸

Bernard Harris, in his introduction to the New Mermaid edition of the play, shares Herrick's view,

The relationship between *Epitia* and *Measure for Measure* has long been proposed, and it seems worthwhile to emphasise how much *The Malcontent* shares the 'idealistic content' of Giraldi's tragedies.²⁹

and justifies his assertion by reference to P.R. Horne's The Tragedies of Giambattista Cinthio Giraldi (Oxford, 1962, p.155) which describes a dramatic morality much akin to that of The Malcontent:

It was compassion rather than terror that he wanted his audience to feel, for it was with the experience of compassion that he identified the secret pleasure latent in the tragic spectacle. This conception, so far from suggesting a morbid mentality, was part and parcel of a general outlook conditioned by the humanistic culture in which the writer grew up...[associated with the theme of tyranny and infidelity] are two ideal figures, the function of which is to affirm the value of the ideals of clemency and fidelity to the marriage vow. They are the figure of the just and clement ruler (typified by the Emperor in *Epitia*) and the figure of the faithful wife (as represented by the heroines of *Euphemia* and *Arrenopia*).³⁰

Harris goes beyond the general, however, in noting Marston's textual borrowings from the 1602 translation of Guarini's *Il pastor fido*, comparing, in particular, the moment in III.v when the amoral Corisca criticises Amarillis's attitude to honour with Maquerelle's advice to Bianca and Emilia (*Malc.II.iv*):

CORISCA:

The fresher that we are, the dearer still:
 Beautie and youth once gone w'are like Bee hives
 That hath no honey, no nor yet no waxe.
 Let men prate on they do not feele our woes,
 For their condition differs much from ours,
 The elder that they grow, they grow the perfecter:
 If they loose beautie, yet they wisdome gaine:
 But when our beautie fades that oftentimes
 Conquers their greatest witts, strait fadeth all our good,
 There cannot be a vilder thing to see
 Then an old woman.

MAQUERELLE:

But for your beauty, let it be your saint, bequeath two hours to it every morning in your closet. I ha' been young, and yet in my conscience I am not above five and twenty, but believe me, preserve and use your beauty, for youth and beauty once gone, we are like beehives without honey, out o' fashion apparel that no man will wear; therefore, use me your beauty...Men say? Let men say what they will; life o'woman, they are ignorant of your wants. The more in years, the more in perfection they grow; if they lose youth and beauty, they gain wisdom and discretion. But when our beauty fades, goodnight with us. There cannot be an uglier thing to see than an old woman.

Maquerelle is, in fact, the only bawd in Marston's comedies to exercise her trade as part of the dramatic action and to have therein some success insofar as she aids Femeze by blackguarding Mendoza to the Duchess (Act I). However, Aurelia's later punishment by Mendoza and her

final repentance negate that success while Ferneze's near-fatal wound robs him of any satisfaction he may have had in the encounter. Maquerelle's failure to corrupt Altofront's Duchess Maria (Act V) emphasises the difference in moral stature between the chaste (and aptly-named) Maria and the magdalenic Aurelia - a difference re-inforced by Maria's refusal to countenance Aurelia's ex-lover, Mendoza, even under threat of death. As a Type of incorruptible chastity, Maria fully accords with the dramatic morality of Counter-Reformation theatre as well as recalling Isabella of Measure for Measure. The Giraldian tone noted by both Harris and Herrick is indeed reinforced here by the play's obvious debt to Shakespeare's version of Cinthio's Epitia. There is a Duke disguised as a holy man while the true Duke is also disguised and dispenses a merciful final justice - both aspects of Shakespeare's Vincentio; the Captain/Jailer shows his primary loyalty to the higher authority - as do the Capitano in Epitia and the Jailer in Measure for Measure; Maria displays impregnable virtue and is finally claimed by the Duke - cf. Isabella in Measure for Measure; Pietro, believed dead, is restored to his wife - Claudio, in Measure for Measure, is similarly restored to his pre-contractual betrothed; and Bilioso, the two-faced courtier, is publicly rebuked - as is Shakespeare's Lucio.

The Dutch Courtezan and its tragic descendant The Insatiate Countess have as their ultimate source Bandello's *novella* I.4,³¹ (retold in Painter's Palace of Pleasure) of which I offer a plot summary below:

Bianca Maria, Countess of Cellant, leaves her husband and goes to Pavia where she takes the Count of Masino as her lover; she throws him over for his friend the Count of Gaiazzo and tries to persuade him to murder Masino who has been defaming her; Gaiazzo informs Masino and leaves Bianca Maria; Masino and Bianca Maria make up and she tries to persuade him, in turn, to murder Gaiazzo; Masino informs Gaiazzo and leaves Bianca Maria once more; a Sicilian soldier, Pietro di Cardona, becomes Bianca Maria's lover and, incited by her, kills Masino and his brother; Pietro and Bianca Maria are arrested; Pietro escapes but Bianca Maria, despite offering a huge bribe, is decapitated.

John J. O'Connor³² rejects Bandello as the source for The Dutch Courtezan citing instead the story of Dellio as told in Nicholas de Montreux's Le premier livre des bergeries de Julliette (1585). I give O'Connor's plot *resumé*:

In Venice lives a beautiful but proud courtesan named Cinthye. She falls in love with Dellio, a young Venetian nobleman who has proved his valor in fighting against the Turks, and refuses to see her other admirers. Dellio is completely infatuated. One day he takes his friend, the Sieur de la Selve, to see Cinthye. The Frenchman immediately falls in love. He feels himself in an impossible position, torn between passion for Cinthye and friendship for Dellio. Rather than betray his friend, he makes preparations to go back to France. Dellio surprises him one day in his chamber at work on a love poem and demands to know the reason for his evident grief. The Frenchman at last is forced to tell him. Dellio, for whom friendship is above love of a woman, promises to intercede with Cinthye. But when he goes to her, she refuses to listen because she dislikes the Frenchman.

Meanwhile Dellio's parents have become concerned for their son's reputation. For their sake and his friend's Dellio decides to give up Cinthye. He becomes engaged to Angelicque, of whom his parents approve. When Cinthye hears about the engagement, she is enraged and swears revenge. But when Dellio comes, unaware that she knows, she pretends that everything is as always. She feigns admiration for the ring he wears - a token from Angelicque - and asks him for it. When he refuses, she becomes angry, complains of his parsimony, and tells him to leave.

Now that Dellio is no longer concerned with Cinthye, the Frenchman feels free to plead for himself. He swears he will do anything for her. She asks that he show his good faith by killing Dellio, and, knowing that Dellio would not willingly give the ring to anyone, she asks for it as a sign of his death. To quiet her, the Frenchman consents, but he prepares to leave Venice rather than stay and either burn with unrequited love or commit the crime of killing his friend. But friendship requires that he say farewell to Dellio, who then insists upon knowing why he is leaving so suddenly instead of waiting for the wedding. The Frenchman tells all. Since Dellio does not want to see his friend leave under such circumstances, he conceals a scheme whereby both the Frenchman and Cinthye will be satisfied but no harm done.

One night when Dellio is with a group of maskers, the two friends pretend to quarrel and go off to fight. When the Frenchman returns alone, everyone assumes he has killed his friend. Actually Dellio has hidden away in a small country house of his. The Frenchman goes to see Cinthye to obtain his promised reward, but she pleads she is indisposed and asks him to return the next day. She then goes to see Dellio's parents and tells them their son is dead. She promises to betray the killer by posting officers secretly in her chamber to overhear his words. When the Frenchman comes, he gives her the ring and explains how he "killed" Dellio. He is seized and condemned to death.

Meanwhile Angelicque is desolate at the news of Dellio's death. She falls into a dangerous illness. Cinthye comes to see her and tells her that she must forget Dellio, that he is not worth her tears. Cinthye shows the ring and says that Dellio gave it to her as a sign of their love. She goes on to say that Dellio has confessed to her he cares not at all for Angelicque and has consented to the marriage only to please his parents. Angelicque believes Cinthye and is crushed. She wants only to die with her beloved Dellio.

In the meantime Dellio has the feeling that something is wrong. Deciding that he has waited long enough, he returns to the city on the night before the execution. There he hears the news. He waits until morning, then goes to the courtroom just as the final order for execution is to be given. He reveals himself to the amazement of all and the particular relief of the Frenchman. Then he goes to the bedside of Angelicque, who is on the verge of death, still believing Dellio has been false to her. He convinces her that Cinthye's story is untrue, she recovers, and they are soon married. Cinthye leaves Venice. After the marriage the Frenchman returns to his country.

While it is indeed obvious that Montreux's story more closely mirrors Marston's main plot and is probably his direct source, there can be little doubt that its resemblance to Bandello's story is not accidental - indeed de Montreux appears to pay tacit homage to his source author by naming his male character Dellio - the source Bandello himself names as his informant in the Duchess of Malfi story (Novelle I.26), although the similarity of names suggests that the Italian's 'Delio' is a cover for Bandello himself. The Italian nature of Montreux's sources is confirmed by his use of Boccaccio's Tale of Two Friends, "Tito e Gisippo" Decameron X.8, to flesh out the plot and move the emphasis from the immorality of the woman to the steadfastness of male friendship. O'Connor himself admits the connection:

Dellio and the Frenchman are direct literary descendants of Titus and Gisippus.³³

It is therefore clear that, although Marston's immediate source may have been French, the *exemplum* tradition from which de Montreux's story principally descends is that of the *novella*. In addition, the character of the aptly-named Angelicque - very different from that of Boccaccio's rather indifferent Sofronia - immediately recalls the devotion and self-sacrifice typical of Sforza Oddi's comedies while the lady-courtier-whore line-up of lovers is strongly reminiscent of Erofilomachia - a device re-used by Marston and perhaps re-inforced by his own knowledge of Oddi's work (see below). The high-minded and faithful heroine may also have been suggested by Giraldi Cinthio's frequent use of the type and, indeed, the naming of

Cinthy suggests another act of homage to a source. All in all, there can be no denying the Italianate nature of de Montreux's tale.

In his own comic version of the story, Marston, like de Montreux, observes poetic decorum in making the female protagonist a vulgar prostitute. In so doing, he confirms the Italianate nature of the tradition within which he is working by renaming her as the coarse servant *cum ruffiana* of the *commedia dell'arte*, Francischina. The contrasting of her character with that of Beatrice serves to underline the latter's depiction as a *controriformista* heroine. Beatrice, with her constant devotion to a lover believed dead, is reminiscent of Alessandra in Oddi's I morti vivi. The Beatrice-Frevile-Francischina situation, wherein the upper-class lover of the whore wishes to abandon her after falling in love with a woman of his own class, like that of de Montreux's lovers, also parallels the Flamminia-Amico-Ardelia relationship in Oddi's Erofilomachia while the bawd, Mary Faugh, takes the Giubilea role. Like her Italian counterpart, Mary Faugh is only a cameo role for the Type of the Old Bawd and plays no part in moving the plot forward. The passionate anger shown by Francischina further emphasises her dramatic kinship with Ardelia (although the latter's passionate outbursts are to very different purpose). While no definite connection can be established between this play and Oddi's comedies, Marston could have consulted John Hawkesworth's Leander (c. 1598), essentially a Latinised version of Erofilomachia, and it is certain that he was acquainted with a version, original or otherwise, of I morti vivi. It is quite clear that all three of Oddi's comedies had found their way to England at this time since Hawkesworth must have had his translator's copy of Erofilomachia, Florio's library contained Prigione d'amore, and Marston himself makes use of I morti vivi (see below).

What You Will has a more evident connection with Oddi. David Orr draws attention to Marston's use of I morti vivi:

What You Will (1601) is significantly indebted to Sforza d'Oddi's [sic] *I Morti Vivi* (1576) as his major source.³⁴

Marston, while making use of the device of the husband returned to life and impersonated by another in order to foil the 'widow's' remarriage, has completely omitted the Alessandra-Ottavio plot and has accordingly had to invent a new lover for the married woman and has

made use of the remaining dramatic space as a vehicle for satire. Even in this he has maintained an Italianate line, as David Orr affirms:

...the invention for satirical purposes and the intrusion of the pedant actually face us with a stock character from Italian comedy, though he does bear the habits, at least, of an English pedant.³⁵

And Laverdure's close association with his "trunke of apparaile" (stage directions, II.i) reveals him as the Italianate Captain/Fop descending from Grazzini's Taddeo.

Marston, in his two versions of the Countess of Cellant theme, is working within the long Italianate tradition of adapting *novelle* to dramatic purpose. In The Fawne, he similarly makes use of a theme whose literary ancestor is Boccaccio's Decameron III.3, wherein a foolish priest is used as unwitting intermediary by an aristocratic lady. Dulcimet's manipulation of Gonzago in The Fawne is essentially the same in its main details. The disguised Duke *motif* of The Malcontent is here repeated as is the Giraldian final dispensing of justice. The remaining content of the play is a somewhat static series of satires on the usual cast of fops, fools, flatterers and fornicators and, indeed, there is little real plot movement apart from the Boccacesque bringing-together of the lovers.

Of all the comedies, Antonio and Mellida comes closest to the *controriformista* type. The love theme derives *in genere* from the Romeo and Juliet *topos* while its resolution, through Piero's abrupt recognition of the lovers' bravery and endurance, cannot be anything other than Providential since there is nothing prior to this which even remotely suggests that Picro can be moved in this way. The lofty sentiments mouthed by the lovers are, on the face of it, akin to those traditionally expressed by the *innamorati* - an impression reinforced by their lapsing into Italian when overcome by emotion. The transvestite *motif* is a commonplace of Italian Romantic comedy and, although usually involving a disguised woman, was not infrequently used as a way of protecting a male protagonist from discovery in an amorous situation or from the wrath of his enemies.³⁶ The typically Italian sub-cast of rumble-bellied comic servants and the linking character of the Captain/Fop are both apparent in the persons of the obscenely named Catzo (= Prick *ital.*) and Dildo, and the range of Fops and Braggarts represented in Balordo (Dullard *ital.*), Forobosco (Forestcourt *ital.* possibly implies

'bumpkin'), Mazzagente (Kill-the Folk *ital.*) and Castilio (Spaniard *corruption of 'Castigliano' ital.*). According with the principles of the *controriforma* Romantic genre it appears to ape, the play contains no *mezzano* figure.

This resemblance to Italianate comedy is however subverted by the author's satirical commitment. As well as larding the dialogue with obscenity sufficient to distance it from that of the *controriformista* comedy, Marston gives a parodic air to the plot by replacing the already thinly-stretched verisimilitude of the Italian Romantic hero with a hyperbolic characterisation. Thus the normal high sentimentality, perhaps best typified by Oddi's Ottavio (*I morti vivi*), is pushed beyond all credibility in the person of Antonio whose susceptibility to emotion repeatedly robs him of the power to stand up. Far from arousing the sympathy of others, this melodramatic excess is curtly dismissed in Act II as "Belike the falling sickness" and then ignored completely. Antonio then, with more bathos than pathos, has to struggle to his feet again in order to re-insert himself into the action. His choice of a transvestite disguise, somewhat ridiculous in itself, is turned to farcical purpose by Rossaline's offer, at the end of Act I, to share her bed with the supposed shipwrecked Amazon. This further diminishes Antonio's status as a Romantic hero. In the person of Antonio, the Romantic comedy becomes just another butt of Marston's satire.

As a satirist, Marston has few compunctions about depicting immorality or offensive behaviour on stage provided that it is seen as a warning rather than an encouragement. Thus the absence of a *mezzano*, morally significant in the *commedia erudita*, is, in *Antonio and Mellida*, nothing more than an observance of form. Marston's moral methodology makes more use of repulsion than of emulation and here the high tone which characterises the *commedia grave* is absent. A critique of the obsequious and unwanted suitor is accordingly rendered not by the Stoic patience of a long-suffering heroine but through Rossaline spitting phlegm for her admirers to wipe up and, in reply to Castilio's unabated courtship, through her offer, "He spit in thy mouth, and thou wilt, to grace thee" (Act II, pg22).

Marston, then, is significantly indebted to his Italian literary predecessors in terms of plot and nomenclature and, to a much more limited degree, in his characterisation and dialogue. It might be said that his borrowings owe more to the Pre-Counter-Reformation

theatrical ethos than to the *commedia grave* given that he portrays bawds and prostitutes with some frequency. Such an observation misses the mark. Marston's bawds are rarely seen performing the role of Go-Between: when they do so, they are generally unsuccessful or, in the exceptional case of Maquerelle, rebuked, and, even in The Dutch Courtezan, they are not the main focus of the action. That focus is generally found in the satirical reproof of foolishness - very much in the English Chaucerian tradition which itself owes much to Boccaccio.

4 Middleton³⁷

Because of Middleton's wide-ranging use of sources and his stylistic flexibility, I have limited myself, in this section, to examining those plays by him which contain a significant satirical content, which relate directly to Italian models, and which are identifiable primarily as comedies rather than tragicomedies. An example of Middleton's tragicomic work will be dealt with in the final chapter.

D.J. Gordon points out the debt owed by Middleton to Della Porta for the theme of Sir Oliver Twilight and his family in No Wit, No Help Like a Woman's.³⁸ In all its important details, the Twilight plot is a close adaptation of Della Porta's La Sorella (1604) - a typically complex *controriformista* comedy full of confusing reversals and discoveries, as the following synopsis of the Italian play demonstrates:

Pardo's wife, Constanza, and daughter, Cleria, are thought lost in a storm at sea some years before. Pardo hears that they are in fact slaves in Constantinople and sends his son, Attilio, and his servant, Trinca, to ransom them. *En route*, in Venice, they stay at Pandolfo's house and Attilio falls in love with the slave Sofia, buys her from Pandolfo, using the ransom money, and secretly marries her. Sofia is then presented to Pardo as his daughter, Cleria, and Constanza is reported dead.

Later, Pardo betrothes the supposed Cleria to Captain Trasimaco and wishes Attilio to marry Sulpizia, niece of his neighbour, Orgio. Orgio, however, opposes the match. Attilio's friend, Erotico, loves Sulpizia and accuses Attilio of disloyalty. Attilio and Trinca tell Erotico everything. Trinca's solution is that Erotico is to pretend to pay suit to 'Cleria' - since he is a better catch than the Captain he will be preferred. Attilio will apparently accept Sulpizia and the couples will live together. The marriages will be carried out by a fake priest and, when Pardo dies, the situation will be legitimised. Trinca arranges that Pardo and Captain Trasimaco quarrel and the Captain thereafter plays no part as 'Cleria's' suitor.

Pedrolito, a friend of Pardo's, returns from Constantinople with his young son whom he has ransomed from the Turks - the boy speaks only Turkish. Pedrolito reveals that Constanza is alive but no-one knows the whereabouts of Cleria. He brings a message from Constanza asking to be ransomed. Pardo confronts 'Cleria' with Pedrolito who recognises her as Sofia. 'Cleria' denies all. Pedrolito goes off to look up his relatives, leaving the boy. When Pardo accuses Attilio and Trinca, the servant quizzes the boy in mock-Turkish and reports him as saying that Pedrolito is playing a trick on Pardo, that they did not come *via* Venice and that Pedrolito was drunk. Pedrolito, on his return, questions the boy and is told that Trinca spoke nonsense to him.

Attilio's mother, Constanza, returns, having been released because of her age, and meets Attilio and Trinca. At first they do not recognise each other. When recognition is effected, Attilio confesses all and Constanza agrees to back his story and acknowledge 'Cleria' as her daughter. Trinca warns 'Cleria' what to say and do. The girl embraces Constanza. When Pardo goes out, Constanza reveals to Attilio that the girl is really his sister. Attilio is grief-stricken.

Sulpizia's nurse, angry with Orgio for an unjust punishment, reveals to Pardo that the real Cleria and Sulpizia were exchanged by Sulpizia's parents, now dead, when their fortunes were at a low ebb, in order that their daughter could have a good life. Although their fortunes improved, they could not reverse the exchange since their true daughter had, by then, been captured by the Turks. Before dying of grief, the father had left his property to Orgio on condition that a dowry of 10,000 ducats be given to his daughter if she returned. Now that the story is out, Orgio will be forced to pay the dowry - this explains Orgio's opposition to the match with Attilio. The usual double wedding is arranged and the comedy ends.

The Lady Goldenfleece plot appears to have no single source and is instead made up of an accretion of plot elements from diverse literary sources. David George identifies Weatherwise's almanac as the Almanacs for 1611 of J. Neve and T. Bretnor and dates the play accordingly; he gives Petronius's Satyricon as a probable source for Weatherwise's Banquet; and cites a possible influence of the sub-plot of Beaumont and Fletcher's The Scornful Lady on the depiction of Lady Goldenfleece and her suitors.³⁹ To these I would add Bibbiena's La Calandria (1513) in which Santilla masquerades as her brother Lidio and is loved by Fulvia. The real Lidio turns up and, mistaken for his transvestite sister, is admitted to Fulvia's bedroom while her husband is absent. La Calandria features a raid on Fulvia's bedroom in order to trap her in adultery. This is foiled by the re-substitution of Santilla for Lidio and thus has a *dénouement* different from that of No Wit but the generic similarities are evident.

The suitors themselves are obvious 'humours' from the satiric typology of targets and have Italian ancestors in the Pedant (Weatherwise), the Spanish Captain (Lambstone), Pantalone (Overdone) and Dottor Graziano - a role I assign to Pepperton since, as a widower, he is probably an older suitor and, as he tends to be more of a commentator than a protagonist, his role as a *vecchio innamorato* is secondary to that of Overdone. The Go-Between, Saviourwit, makes great and ingenious efforts to help his master but, based as he is on a

Counter-Reformation model of the *mezzano*, he only succeeds in compounding his difficulties and the final resolution is none of his doing.

Robert I. Williams notes the "striking similarities between the plot of Niccolò Machiavelli's Mandragola (c.1520) and the Touchwood Senior plot of Middleton's A Chaste Maid in Cheapside (c.1610)."⁴⁰ The childless couple, the fertility potion, the cuckoldry and the cuckold's grateful offer of the freedom of his home to his wife's seducer are indeed present in both plays and suggest that Middleton was aware of Machiavelli's plot. Both Middleton and Machiavelli implicitly justify the adulterous liaison on the grounds of the greatest good for the greatest number: an heir for Nicia/Oliver Kix; a child for Lucrezia/Lady Kix; sexual and amorous gratification for Callimaco; the same for Touchwood Senior given that he will be reunited with his wife; payment for the *mezzani*; payment for Touchwood; security for Lucrezia and her mother; support for the Touchwood family.

The situation of the Allwit family also has Italian literary predecessors. Allan H. Gilbert postulates as a source for the figure of the prosperous wittol Giovanni Battista Modio's Il Convito overo del Peso della Moglie, dove ragionando si conchiude, che non può la Donna dishonesta far vergogna a l'Huomo (1554), a comic treatise on cuckoldry wherein the etymology of *cornuto* 'cuckold' is traced to *Cornucopia* and observations are made regarding the prosperity of cuckolds.⁴¹ Gilbert's principal justification for considering Modio as a source is the originality of the concept:

A wittol luxuriating in abundance is an uncommon character on the Elizabethan stage, and novelty was then sought after.⁴²

While Allwit's prosperity is certainly an unusual variation on the theme, a practically simultaneous literary precedent for the *ménage-à-trois* is the Spanish novel Lazarillo de Tormes (1554 *Anon.*) in which the frame for Lazarillo's episodic autobiography is the need (probably to avoid legal consequences) to account for exactly such a marital arrangement. Lazarillo, although not well-off by the Allwit's standards, nevertheless considers himself at the high point of his life. An English translation of the story was published in 1586 - The Pleasaunt Historie of Lazarillo De Tormes trans. D. Rouland - which David George indicates as having influenced the writing of Blurt Master Constable.⁴³ It seems to me, however, much

more likely that the theatrical possibilities of the Allwits' domestic arrangements would be more readily suggested by a theatrical source. Such a source may be found in Ariosto's La Lena (see Chapter I) which, first performed in 1528, predates either of the above-mentioned examples. The way in which Middleton has skilfully interwoven these themes - ultimately deriving from the humanist *commedia erudita* - with a main plot-line more reminiscent of the *commedia grave* adds, however, a moral dimension largely absent from the Mandragola and La Lena.

In Touchwood Junior and Moll we have a love story containing the principal situation, action and characters of the *Romeo e Giulietta* tradition: hidden love; parental opposition; a sword-fight; a sympathetic cleric; a maid/nurse as *mezzana*; and the 'death' of the lovers. It is Touchwood Senior's involvement which removes the obstacles to a happy and parentally-approved union of the lovers, thus clearing the way for the comic version of the 'dead lovers' *topos* - as in Piccolomini's Amor costante - rather than Shakespeare's darker vision. In the process, Moll has been rescued from a loveless marriage to the rake and fortune-hunter, Sir Walter Whorehound, and the Allwits have been freed from their humiliating habit of adulterous dependence on him - and habit it is since we discover at the end that they are now prosperous enough to do without his money.

The repentance of Sir Walter (V.i), who at first thinks his wound mortal, and his sudden concern for his soul mean that even he has derived some benefit from events - although his consignment to the "Knight's ward" of debtor's prison implies a spiritual rather than temporal reward. The marriage of the Welsh whore to Tim Yellowhammer has also saved a soul - as the girl herself points out: "There's a thing called marriage, and that makes me honest" (V.iv). A love interest between a young gentleman and a prostitute is, of course, a commonplace of Plautine comedy but, if we accept the Lena/Allwit parallels as indicating Middleton's familiarity with Ariosto's comedies, then it is possible that the *topos*, if not its development, had a more recent suggestion in Ariosto's Cassaria in which the love intrigues show two youths of good family and two female slaves belonging to a pimp, Lucrano.

Middleton's emphasis on reforming as well as rebuking vice makes A Chaste Maid in Cheapside unusual in that its satirical content is very largely subordinated to the needs of the

Anselmo Saltimbeni, who is in love with Angelica, pays the fine anonymously. Carlo discovers the identity of his rescuer and decides that his family honour requires him to repay Anselmo's liberality. Realising what Anselmo's motives must have been, he explains to his sister that she, being the reason for Anselmo's generosity, must offer herself to Anselmo to do with as he wishes. She is upset by this but Carlo assures her of Anselmo's noble character and she finally consents. When the offer has been made and Angelica is left alone with Anselmo, he rouses his entire household and leads a torchlight procession to Carlo's home. Once there, he publicly praises the virtues of the brother and sister and proposes marriage to Angelica. The ceremony is carried out immediately and Anselmo then presents his bride with half of his estate to serve as her dowry and the rest of his estate is given to Carlo.

The story had previously been used as a source by Heywood in his A Woman Killed with Kindness (1607) which, in George's opinion,⁴⁶ probably suggested the idea to Middleton and Rowley. Much of the original has been retained but, in some cases, with a redistribution of incident and detail: the sword-fight between the ancestors of the protagonists is now between the Colonel and Captain Ager; the subsequent feud between the families is therefore current; the false imprisonment is for debt not treason; the victim is a relative but not the brother of the woman offered and his release has nothing to do with that part of the plot; he is poor but of a good family; the amount of money is of the same figure but substituting pounds for florins; the reason for the offering of a sister is remorse for a slander not gratitude for a life saved; the argument used to persuade the sister is that she will save the soul of her brother (thought to be dying) rather than repay the gift of his life; the dowry comes from the brother rather than from the lover; the gift of all the Colonel's property will not leave him destitute because "war is able to maintain her servant" (V.i) while Anselmo is dependent on his wife's dowry.

The use by the Physician of his sister Anne as intermediary thematically parallels that of Angela by Iuriste in Giraldi's Epitia - as does the contrast between the personalities of the siblings: lustful brother, virtuous and well-intentioned sister. David George cites a more specific Giraldian source in Hecatommithi IV.5, which I summarise below:

The setting is the Danish court. Nepa, attendant to the Queen and daughter of the Castle Governor, loves Liscone, a low-ranking courtier. Her father and brothers oppose the match. Liscone is named ambassador to Poland and Nepa discovers that she is pregnant. She confides in the Queen's Doctor and his sister, Simmacha. When the child, a boy, is born, the doctor and his German girlfriend take him to a Wet-Nurse in the country and tell her it is their child. The Doctor tells Nepa that he loves her. She turns him down and he asks Simmacha to act as Go-Between. Simmacha angrily refuses. The Doctor threatens Nepa with exposure and she challenges him to do his worst.

The King's sister, Catigora, is a widow. The King's son is having an affair with one of her maids and this leads to a quarrel between the Queen and her sister-in-law in which the Queen calls Catigora's maids 'whores.' The Doctor tells Catigora about Nepa and Catigora, eager for revenge, denounces her to the Queen. Nepa tells the Queen that the Doctor is a rejected suitor and is doing this out of spite. Simmacha, who likes Nepa, backs her story saying that her brother had an accident and since then has often invented false stories. The Queen's Secretary finds the Wet-Nurse who says that the child belongs to the Doctor and his German girlfriend. Catigora is furious and storms out.

Nepa's kinsmen feel that the Doctor has besmirched her reputation and kill him. Because of the scandal, they are unable to secure her a better marriage and agree to her marrying Liscone. The King, impressed by Liscone's good work as ambassador, knights him and names him governor of a castle. Simmacha raises the child, who never learns his true identity, and Nepa and Liscone act as his patrons securing him a position at court where he so impresses the King that he is named Master of the King's Horse.

Middleton has taken the main details out of the aristocratic and into a bourgeois *milieu*. The reason for opposing the marriage is thus not based on the groom's lack of nobility but on his lack of money and the bride's future is rendered secure by her large dowry rather than by promotion of her husband.

The comic sequence with the Surgeon (IV.ii) shows him to be the medical incarnation of the *commedia dell'arte's* Dottor Graziano, full of bombast and obscurantism. Sanesi's definition of Graziano, if we overlook the Bolognese dialect, perfectly describes the Surgeon,

To sum up: deformation of normal speech; a prevalent use of Bolognese dialect stuffed with Latin or Italian phrases; long declamatory tirades jammed together, one after another, like rosary beads; unrestrained verbosity; thoughts twisted out of shape; asinine stupidity of every kind - these are the characteristics of the Doctor.⁴⁷

and, indeed, the Surgeon himself underlines his adherence to type:

Marry, in plain terms I know not what to say to him: the wound, I can assure you, inclines to paralism, and I find his body cacochymic: being then in fear of fever and inflammation, I nourish him with viands refrigerative, and give for potion the juice of savicola dissolved with water cerefolium: I could do no more, lady, if his best ginglymus were dissevered. (IV.ii)

The fact that the scene of "The Roaring School" immediately precedes that of the Surgeon emphasises their generic similarities. In both cases deliberate obscurantism is meant to assert social or professional superiority, and in both cases those on the receiving end of such gibberish rebuke it for what it is:

VAPOUR: All this is but smoke out of a stinking pipe. (IV.i)

COLONEL'S SISTER: And what a mount of nothing has he cast forth! (IV.ii)

Here Middleton rather pointedly compares a satirical device with a traditional *topos* and thus indicates the debt owed to theatrical tradition in the depiction of contemporary vices. The 'roaring' episode with the Captain, the bawd and the whore *versus* Chough and Trimtram is similarly an extension of the already parodic encounter between two Captains in the Italian *commedia*, e.g. Della Porta's Captains Dante and Pantalcone in La fantesca, while the juxtaposition of the first three may have been suggested by Act XVIII of the late mediaeval Spanish play by De Rojas, La Celestina, which shows the pimp-cum-braggart warrior, Centurio, in company with the whores Areúsa and Elicia. The use of Chough as an unsuccessful Second Lover reflects one aspect of the Captain's role while his foppish characterisation is the previously-mentioned development of this. The episode of the Captain and the Whores is a satirical aside which contributes nothing to the plot and the bawdry is there only to be rebuked and is not given employment in the play.

¹ Published in 1582, La strega portrays Taddeo as a *nouveau riche*, the son of a cattle dealer and grandson of a charcoal seller, who, as well as a lover, fancies himself as a swaggering swordsman and wishes to marry into the gentry. If his lady will not have him, he will ape his superiors and have recourse to the courtesans. He wears a German cap, a French cloak, a Spanish ruff, Gascon hose and Roman slippers, plays the harp and composes banal pastoral love-lyrics. An obvious forerunner of the type, he may well have suggested the theatrical representation of the foppish courtier to Ben Jonson - a possibility made more likely by the fact that Jonson's good friend, John Florio, possessed a copy of the play (named in the source-list for Florio's World of Words).

² Jonson provides other memorable portrayals of the bawd in The Alchemist and Bartholomew Fair but the principal butts of his satire in these plays are alchemy, cupidity, pedantry and hypocrisy.

- ³ See pp.54-55 of Alvin Kernan's The Cankered Muse (New Haven 1959)
- ⁴ Hunter, G.K. "Italian Tragicomedy on the English Stage" in Renaissance Drama VI (1973) fn.17 p.135
- ⁵ Campbell, Oscar James. Comical Satyre, (San Marino, California 1938) p.59.
- ⁶ All references to Volpone, The Alchemist and Bartholomew Fair relate to the Penguin edition Three Comedies ed. Michael Jamieson (Harmondsworth 1985); all other references to Jonson plays are to Ben Jonson collected works ed. Brinsley Nicholson (London undated).
- ⁷ As he has Cordatus assert in the induction to Every Man Out of His Humour.
- ⁸ Jonson's handwritten dedication to a copy of Volpone in the British Museum. Quoted by Mario Praz in his essay "Ben Jonson's Italy" from the collection The Flaming Heart (New York 1958) p.177.
- ⁹ Ian Donaldson, "Jonson's Italy: 'Volpone' and Fr. Thomas Wright" in Notes and Queries (December, 1972) pp.450-452.
- ¹⁰ Mario Praz (pp.176-177) cites an article by C.G. Child, in the New York Nation, July 28, 1904 which suggests Bruno's play as a possible source for The Alchemist. R.C. Simonini, in his Italian Scholarship in Renaissance England (Chapel Hill, University of North Carolina 1952) p.109, argues that the strong thematic similarities - both plays burlesque vice, alchemy and pedantry - and the close literary friendship between Jonson and Florio make the assertion worthy of consideration.
- ¹¹ Kernan, pp.7-8.
- ¹² Every Man out of His Humour, 'The Characters of the Persons', pp.113-4.
- ¹³ Boughner, Daniel C. The Devil's Disciple (Westport 1968) pp.113-137.
- ¹⁴ Ian Donaldson, "Volpone, III.vii.193-4 and Il marescalco" in Notes and Queries (April, 1982) pp.139-140.
- ¹⁵ Ben Jonson's Conversations with Drummond of Hawthornden ed. R.F. Patterson (Glasgow 1924) p.28.
- ¹⁶ Quoted by Campbell, p.60.
- ¹⁷ Salerno, Henry F. Scenarios of the Commedia Dell'Arte (New York 1967) p.289
- ¹⁸ Version I. The reworking of the play, transmuting the Italian names and places into English equivalents, has a precedent in Ariosto's two versions of La cassaria wherein the original Greek milieu and characters give way to Italian homologues.
- ¹⁹ Is this name derived from that of Boabdil, last Moorish king of Granada?
- ²⁰ 'CINEDO, his punk, disguised as his page' - Drumatis Personae p.112.

- 21 Justice Clement of Every Man in His Humour is an exception to the general run of Jonson's lawyers in that his eccentricities evoke an uncritical amusement rather than moral comment.
- 22 See footnote 10.
- 23 Holden, William P. Anti-Puritan Satire, (London 1954) p.110.
- 24 Boughner, Daniel C. "Clizia and Epicoene" Philological Quarterly 19 (1940) pp.89-91.
- 25 This resemblance was first pointed out by Oscar James Campbell in his article "The Relation of Epicoene to Aretino's Il marescalco" PMLA 46 (1931) pp.752-762.
- 26 Unless otherwise stated, all citations from Marston refer to The Works of John Marston ed. J.O. Halliwell (London 1856).
- 27 Orr, David Italian Renaissance Drama in England before 1625 (Chapel Hill 1970) p.7.
- 28 Herrick, Marvin T. Tragicomedy (Urbana 1955) p.243.
- 29 The Malcontent, ed. Bernard Harris (London 1967, p.xxviii).
- 30 Harris, pp.xxvii-xxviii.
- 31 Cecil M. McCulley in The New Intellectuals ed. Terence P. Logan and Denzell S. Smith (London 1977), pp. 205 & 216, credits Hanns Passmann with this observation (in Der Typus der Kurtisane im elisabethanischen Drama 1926).
- 32 John J. O'Connor "The Chief Source of Marston's Dutch Courtesan" Studies in Philology 54 (1957): pp.509-15
- 33 O'Connor, pp.512-513.
- 34 Orr, p.46.
- 35 Orr, p.47.
- 36 E.g. Amasio in Della Porta's La cintia, Aloisio in Alessandro Piccolomini's L'Alessandro, Lidio in Bibbiena's La calandria, Gherardo in G.B. Gelli's Lo errore, Giacchetto in Lodovico Dolce's Il ragazzo.
- 37 All quotes from Middleton are from The Works of Thomas Middleton ed. Alexander Dyce (London 1840).
- 38 Gordon, D.J. "Middleton's No Wit, no Help like a Woman's and Della Porta's La Sorella" in Review of English Studies 17 (1941) pp.400-414
- 39 George, David "Thomas Middleton's Sources: A Survey" in Notes and Queries 216 (1971) pp.17-24

- 40 Williams, Robert I. "Machiavelli's *Mandragola*, Touchwood Senior, and the Comedy of Middleton's *A Chaste Maid in Cheapside*" in Studies in English Literature 10 (1970) pp.385-396 - this quote from p.385
- 41 Gilbert, Allan H. "The Prosperous Witto! in Giovanni Battista Modio and Thomas Middleton" in Studies in Philology 41 (1944) pp.235-237
- 42 Gilbert, p.237
- 43 George, p.18
- 44 Lasciati persuadere, figliuola mia. Non vedi tu che una donna che non ha figliuoli non ha casa? Muorsi el marito, resta com'una bestia, abandonata da ognuno.
- 45 Illicini, Bernardo La novella di Angelica Montanini collected in Novelle del 400 ed. Giuseppe G. Ferrero and Maria Luisa Doglio (Torino 1975) pp.669-689
- 46 George, p.20
- 47 Insomma, deformazioni del linguaggio comune; uso prevalente del dialetto bolognese con infarcimenti di frasi latine o italiane; lunghe tirate di proposizioni che s'infilano l'una dietro l'altra come le pallottole d'un rosario; infrenabile verbosità; storpiature di pensiero oltre che di forma; scipitaggini e asinerie d'ogni genere: tali sono le caratteristiche del Dottore. Sanesi, II:p.85

VI

THE ANGLO-ITALIAN TRAGICOMEDY

I have chosen to examine the Fletcherian model of English tragicomedy in preference to the dramatic experiments of earlier playwrights such as Daniel and Greene because it represents the mainstream of early seventeenth century mixed-genre drama - "the most popular dramatic form in England"¹ - and because, as Marvin Herrick points out,

John Fletcher was the first English dramatist to rescue the term "tragicomedy" from its "mongrel" status and to restore its standing in the world of letters.²

An important part of this restoration was Fletcher's formulation, largely following Guarini, of a theoretical basis which supplied a model for the tragicomedy in England. His address to the reader in The Faithful Shepherdess³ describes the principles of tragicomic construction,

A tragicomedy is not so called in respect of mirth and killing, but in respect it wants deaths, which is enough to make it no tragedy, yet brings some near it, which is enough to make it no comedy: which must be a representation of familiar people with such kind of trouble as no life be questioned, so that a god is as lawful in this as in a tragedy, and mean people as in a comedy. This much I hope will serve to justify my poem, and make you understand it; to teach you more for nothing, I do not know that I am in conscience bound.

which we may compare with Guarini's own observations in his Compendio (Herrick's translation):

The proper and principal style [of tragicomedy] is the lofty, which, when accompanied by the weighty, becomes the Idea of tragedy, but, when mingled with the ornate, makes that norm which fits tragicomic poetry. Since it treats of great persons and heroes, humble diction is not fitting, and since it is not concerned with the terrible and the cruel, but rather avoids them, it foregoes the weighty and accepts the pleasant, which moderates the grandeur and sublimity that are proper to the purely tragic.⁴

In practice, the tragicomedies written by Fletcher alone, or in partnership with

Beaumont and/or others, clearly embody a mixture of elements which are normal components of the *controriformista* drama. As in Giraldi's *tragedia di fin lieto*, the audience are not normally privy to material concealed from the characters of the play and there is a final big scene in which all is revealed and justice and/or bounty dispensed. As in the *commedia grave*, there is normally a chaste and constant heroine who is much tried by circumstance. And, as in the *pastorale*, there is often a character whose function, like that of Satiro or Corisca, is to foment disunity. The language used by the principal lovers is, as is normal in the *commedia grave* and *pastorale*, usually of an elevated and sentimental nature and the heroine, although chaste, often demonstrates a passionate nature - in which Fletcher accords, consciously or not, with the typology of Sforza Oddi's comedies.

In this chapter, I shall try to demonstrate something of the range and flexibility of Beaumont and Fletcher's tragicomedies. I shall then follow on with a selection of plays and dramatists with which I intend to demonstrate the popularity among dramatists of the tragicomic medium.

1 Beaumont and Fletcher

Francis Beaumont and John Fletcher popularised a form of tragicomedy which, as I have indicated, happily mixes the sombre tone of Giraldi's *tragedie di fin lieto* with the high sentiment and Providential tone of the *commedia grave* and *pastorale* in general, and the Pastor fido in particular. I shall examine four plays which, in my opinion, demonstrate something of the possibilities available within this framework. While all four have some claim to Italian precedent in terms of source, the most important point to be drawn is that they all display similarities in structure which owe much to the mixing of genres typical of the Italian Counter-Reformation.

Fletcher's The Faithful Shepherdess owes an obvious debt to Italian *pastorale*. While the title simply feminises Guarini's Pastor fido, and that work certainly underpins the conventions adopted by Fletcher, the number of different love intrigues and the plentiful use of myth and magic suggest a *contaminatio* of major proportions.

Lee Bliss sees part of the nomenclature, the wide spectrum of love intrigues, the

idea of the false Amoret, and the characterisation of the shepherds as emanating from Spenser's The Faerie Queene and The Shepherd's Calender while the tone of the play owes much to Sidney's Arcadia. The structure of the play shows Fletcher adopting the pattern of A Midsummer Night's Dream using Shakespeare's nocturnal setting and central image of midnight confusion and metamorphosis.⁵

V.M. Jeffery looks further afield and cites a variety of Italian *pastorali* as possible sources.⁶ The satyr who is happy and helpful can be found in the Mirzia (composed 1523-28) of Antonio Epicuro dei Marsi, wherein the satyr comforts two unfortunate shepherds, and in Andrea Calmo's Ecloga quarta (1553) whose satyr releases Rapido, a peasant, from a tree to which he has been bound by two wily nymphs. This satyr, unlike his brethren in Egle, urges submission to the dictates of Heaven. In Fletcher's play, it is the Sullen Shepherd who embodies the more conventional aspects of the satyr as a Type of the Serpent in Eden. A precedent for Clorin may be seen in the Pastor vedovo of Dionisio Rondinelli (1579) in which the hero, Fileno, vows eternal constancy to his dead love, Clori. The similarity of the names, Clori and Clorin, suggests this as a partial source - although a Clori is mentioned but does not appear in Il pastor fido (II.vi.p.238). Magic and mythological elements such as the healing well and the river god are indicated by Jeffery as commonplaces of the minor Italian pastoral drama while he cites three precedents for the device of one character assuming the shape of another. Marcello Roncaglia's Comedia Nuova in Moresca (no date given), shows a spirit who takes the form of a woman, and Bartolommeo Rossi's Fiammella (1584) portrays a magician who helps the shepherds Titiro and Montano to win two nymphs who each love the shepherd who does not love her. The magician transforms each shepherd into the form of the other. Jeffery sees a direct prototype for the episode of Perigot and Amarillis/Amoret in a comedy by Hieronimo Bisaccioni, I Falsi Pastori (c.1575, pub.1605), set, like The Faithful Shepherdess, in Thessaly. Carchia, a wicked sorceress, plots to win the love of Silvio and assumes the shape of his beloved Stella. Her eagerness for his embraces, however, arouses his anger and suspicion and he flees, repelled by her lust. When Silvio encounters the real Stella he abuses and strikes her. The theme of the warring of the two forces in human life is already developed in the Falsi Pastori and Jeffery considers the resemblances

between it and The Faithful Shepherdess to be so close as to indicate Fletcher's certain knowledge of the Italian play.

Bliss sees The Faithful Shepherdess as personifying a range of sexual possibilities in its range of characters. The Sullen Shepherd is ungoverned lust, Clorin is unassailable chastity, and the lovers Perigot and Amoret represent a harmonious and licit resolution of the two impulses. Thenot's chastity is of an infantile sort, both desiring and being repelled by the physical Clorin.⁷ To Bliss's observations I would add that there is a clear pattern of punishment/agnition and repentance, typical of the *commedia grave*, in Alexis's wounding and subsequent purging of unchaste thought. The same pattern governs Amarillis who, already impressed by the constancy of Amoret's love for Perigot, undergoes a final reformation after escaping rape at the hands of the Sullen Shepherd. Cloe's comically wanton passion is subdued when she sees how it has brought her real love, Alexis, close to death, while the ingenuously chaste Daphnis returns to his flocks horrified by the bloody consequences of untamed lust. The Sullen Shepherd, whose human form clothes an unchangeable satyric bestiality, is banished from the woods.

Amoret's devotion to Perigot survives his abuse and two attempts to kill her and, in accordance with the pattern of *commedia grave*, she thus merits Providential reward. To achieve this, Perigot is brought to repentance through the Macbethian device of the hand that will not be washed of an innocent's blood. Seeking a cure, he comes to Clorin's bower and finds reconciliation with an all-forgiving Amoret. 'That their meeting is Providential is clear to Clorin: "Pan be blessed that brought you hither!" (V.v.p.403). Bliss sees a comic irony in Fletcher's use of Pan as a chastity-rewarding deity⁸ but the monotheistic world of the play, in my opinion, reveals this Pan (= 'all') as being truer to his etymology than to Ovid. As the god of all, he surely represents the omnipresent Christian deity while his worship by both nymphs and shepherds shows a Protestant dimension in its implicit rebuff to Marianism. The Satyr's 'fuming' of the ground and sprinkling of holy water (V.v.p.403) further undermines the apparent paganism in that it is identical in nature to the Christian use of censer and holy water.

Structurally Philaster⁹ resembles both Italian *pastorale* and the Shakespearean

'green world' comedies - Two Gentlemen of Verona in particular. As in Guarini's Pastor fido, there is a love intrigue between two people of noble descent which is forbidden by the higher authority; their love is tried to the point of death by execution; an *innamorata* is wounded by the one she loves; an immoral female contrives to have an accusation of having an illicit affair levelled at an *innamorata*. As in Two Gentlemen of Verona, there is a woman disguised as a page in order to be near the man she loves - itself a device typical of Italian comedy;¹⁰ the male protagonist retreats to the forest; he is followed by both his lover and the transvestite page; the monarch searches for them and, all being revealed, has a Providential change of heart and sanctions the union he previously opposed; on the urging of the male protagonist, the monarch dispenses mercy. T.P. Harrison, Jr. also cites as sources Books VII and VIII of the Diana of Montemayor and its continuation by Alonso Pérez.¹¹ Harrison himself, however, admits the debt owed by Pérez to the Italian novella tradition¹² while the pastoral frame of the Diana derives from Italian models. The morality of the piece, however, although acknowledging the primacy of Christian Providence - "For what Heaven wills can never be withstood" (V.v.p.191) - is complicated by a focus on sexual honour more extreme than that found in any of these sources. While the suffering of the lovers and Arethusa's constancy are Providentially rewarded in the unexpected *dénouement*, much of the preceding intrigue has been more akin to the Spanish 'cloak-and-sword' drama, with its insistence that dishonour be bloodily avenged, than to the various versions of pastoral.

Megra corresponds in character and dramatic function to Guarini's wanton nymph, Corisca. As Corisca, along with the Satyr, personified the disunity of Arcadia, so Megra, by obstructing the union of the lovers, threatens to maintain the opposition between Crown and People which afflicts Sicily. She is partnered in this disruptive rôle by Pharamond who is a composite character displaying aspects of two different Italianate Types. Although formally of aristocratic status, he is firstly and evidently a Type of the Spanish Captain. Apart from the obvious fact of his nationality, his boastfulness in announcing himself (I.i.p.107) is typical, as are his extravagant dress ("prince of popinjays" I.i.p.109), cowardice when challenged by Philaster in Arethusa's chamber (I.ii.pp.119-120), and lechery (I.ii.p.120). This last quality is also identifiable, in this

quasi-pastoral context, as one of the principal characteristics of the Satyr. Like the Satyr, Pharamond is in thrall to his animal nature:

The constitution of my body will never hold out till the wedding; I must seek elsewhere. (I.ii.p.120)

The situation in which he principally displays his cowardice also identifies that trait as belonging as much to the Satyr as to the Captain. When Pharamond, in the Princess's chamber, is rebuked by Philaster and rebuffed by Arethusa there are surely hints here of the Satiro/Aminta/Silvia encounter at Silvia's fountain in *Aminta* III.i. The action has been re-ordered to show the hero frightening the Satyr/Captain prior to the latter's rejection by the heroine, while the scene and those who inhabit it have been demythologised, but the basic elements of lecherous and cowardly suitor, chaste maiden and fearless hero are still apparent.

Arethusa's Ovidian name underlines the play's debt to pastoral and her behaviour is typically chaste. In this, however, she reveals more of a kinship with the heroines of the *commedia grave* in that her chastity is pledged to the hero rather than to Diana or the Virgin Mary. Like her *controriformista* forebears, she is in an apparently hopeless position, undergoes great trials and suffering without breaking faith, and is finally rewarded by Providence at a moment when all seems lost. Her faith in a Providential outcome is shown almost from the beginning:

...and, sure, our love
Will be the nobler and the better blest,
In that the secret justice of the gods
Is mingled with it. (I.ii.p.117)

Philaster is a strangely protean character whose divided nature, in a rather simplistic manner, attracts both reward and punishment according to its manifestation. Thus his offer of his life to Arethusa (I.ii.p.116) is rewarded with her declaration of love while his acceptance of all blame and his championing of the virtue of Arethusa and Bellario lead him not to death but to life as the King's heir and husband to the Princess. His credulous jealousy and its sanguinary effects are, however, what bring him to the point of death and are thus dramatically censured. It is Philaster, with his 'tragic flaw,'

who is the necessary focus of the tragic elements in this tragicomedy but it is questionable whether his Neo-Aristotelian personification as a tragic hero is sufficiently blended with that of comedy's *innamorato* to achieve dramatic credibility. This type of Protean hero reappears in Fletcherian tragicomedy and is, Marvin Herrick indicates, the principal distinguishing feature between it and Guarini's type of tragicomedy. Writing of the qualities discernible in Fletcherian tragicomedy, he states:

The *Pastor fido*, for example, had all of them save the Protean characters. Since Guarini was determined to observe classical *decorum*, he could not use unpredictable or inconsistent characters.¹³

The King's nature is also Protean but finds its explanation within the structure of the play - Philaster's action in calming the mob has, after all, saved the life of a powerful prince whose nation might have avenged itself on the King, and has ensured the King's own safety. Little wonder that he looks on him with a more benevolent eye thereafter. Philaster, however, turns from total adoration of Arethusa to a murderous jealousy on the basis of Dion's inexplicable lie "In short, my lord, I took them; I myself" (III.i.p.141), and his subsequent questioning of Bellario and Arethusa is conducted in a way that reveals his pre-judgement of them. His jealousy drives the action thereafter but is, *ab initio*, an over-contrived device. If there is a morality behind this which is compatible with *controriformista* theories of theatre it can only be seen in the depiction of error, punishment, repentance and forgiveness - Iuriste in *Epitia* furnishes a kind of precedent - but such traits are not typical of the *heroes* of the Italian comedy.

Marvin Herrick identifies *A King and No King* as a "tragedy with a happy ending, and one that Cinthio might have blessed."¹⁴ The main plot components of *A King and No King*¹⁵ have a number of precedents in European literature. The device of the child raised as another's is a commonplace in Italian literature (see references to *La sorella* and Illicini's *novella* in the preceding chapter). Robert K. Turner finds specific parallels to the plot of incest averted by a happy discovery of true identity in one Italian source - the *Dugento Novelle del signore Celio Malespini* (II.36), a number of Spanish versions - the anonymous tale of the Abencerraje and the beautiful Jarifa; Montemayor's *Diana* (I.iv in Bartholomew Yong's English translation); Juan de Timoneda's *Patrañuelo* (I.i); and

Alonso de la Vega's Tolomea - and in the French author Fauchet's story of Thierry of France in Lez Antiquitez et Histoires Gauloises et Françoises. He cites an additional Italian parallel in Il Novellino of Masuccio of Salerno (III.xlii) which tells of a queen of Poland who accepts the son of another woman as her own under similar terms to those which Arane has promised Gobrias.¹⁶

Arbaces is described by his captain Mardonius as "vainglorious and humble, and angry and patient, and merry and dull, and joyful and sorrowful, in extremities, in an hour" (I.i.p.7) Given that he is a successful and brave warrior, his vainglory owes more to Marlowe's *Tamburlaine* than to the Captain, as do his extremes of temperament. Like Philaster's jealousy, Arbaces's emotional extremism drives the plot; unlike Philaster's passion, that of Arbaces is established from the very beginning and is a basic assumption of the play.

While Arbaces is a proud and passionate man, he does not fail to remind us of the primacy of Heaven, "for I am a man and dare not quarrel with divinity" (III.i.p.43), thereby suggesting Providence as an intrinsic element of the play. The frequency, indeed, with which references are made to Heaven, Fate and Destiny with regard to the love intrigue prepares us to accept a Providential resolution:

PAN. I have ne'er another wish
For Heaven to grant (III.i.p.41)

ARB. Incest is in me
Dwelling already; and it must be holy,
that pulls it thence (III.i.p.50)

ARB. Heaven forgive me, to hear this! (III.iii.p.61)

SPA. Heaven comfort both,
And give yours happy ends (IV.i.p.63)

SPA. And sweet peace to your grace!

PAN. Pray Heaven, I find it! (IV.i.p.64)

SPA. The Destinies, I hope, have pointed out

Our ends alike (IV.ii.pp.66-67)

ARB. You're welcome, sister; and I would to Heaven
I could so bid you by another name! (IV.iv.p.78)

PAN. It is my fate;
To these cross accidents I was ordained (IV.iv.p.81)

PAN. It is a sullen fate that governs us (IV.iv.p.81) *a*

ARB. I would the book of Fate were here...
That all the Destinies should quite forget
Their fixed decrees, and haste to make us new
For other fortunes (V.iv.p.98)

and the final acknowledgement of Providential beneficence:

ARB. I have a thousand joys to tell you of,
Which I dare not utter, till I pay
My thanks to Heaven for'em (V.iv.p.108).

Panthea generally conforms to the Type of the chaste heroine who holds true despite Arbaces's attempt to marry her to Tigranes and her imprisonment subsequent to her 'brother' becoming aware of his apparently incestuous love. The feelings stirred in her when her ingenuous statement "Brothers and sisters lawfully may kiss" (IV.iv.p.83) sounds previously unsuspected depths of passion represent a test she must pass in order to ultimately obtain her Providential reward. Passionless chastity, after all, contributes little to the theatricality of drama and is of small spiritual value. The *controriformista* heroine, particularly of the Oddian type, has strong passions and an equally strong moral continence. The God-reference indicated by Panthea's name also implies the triumph of the spiritual over the animal.

Spaconia is similarly tried by events and remains constant. She travels from Asia Minor to Western Europe to be with her beloved Tigranes only to apparently lose him to Panthea; dramatic irony then dictates that she be thought by Arbaces to be the go-between for Tigranes and Panthea. Her chastity, like that of Shakespeare's Marina in Pericles, is apparently capable of subduing even the lecherous and amoral Bessus who confesses, "I

did wait upon her like a groom" (V.i.p.87). Spaconia's reward for such constancy is explicable only in terms of Providential whimsy since no other external factor renders explicable Tigranes's decision to return to her.

Bessus and his Swordsmen companions are obvious Types of the Spanish Captain. Their bragging, their cowardice and their nationality proclaim them while their comic function confirms them so. Bessus is also enrolled as a go-between when Arbaces commissions him to persuade Panthea. The function of go-between is, however, both dramatically and morally discredited by the 'incestuous' circumstances and by Bessus's equation of the act with Oedipus's sin: "if you have a mind to your mother, tell me, and you shall see I'll set it hard" (III.iii.p.61). The Spanish Captain, traditionally of loose morals, here reaches a new low. As Jonson, in Volpone, depicts a Pantalone become a monster, so Beaumont and Fletcher have developed the Captain's sexual laxity into an amorality so sinister in its implications that it dramatically shocks Arbaces into full awareness of his sins. The go-between in A King and No King, despite his more amusing moments, is clearly an object of contempt.

Fletcher's The Loyal Subject¹⁷ derives from Bandello's *novella* I.2. Eugene M. Waith indicates that the theme may have come to Fletcher second-hand through Painter's version in Palace of Pleasure II.4 and/or Heywood's adaptation of the *novella* in The Royal King and the Loyal Subject.¹⁸ I summarise Bandello's story below:

Artaserse, King of Persia, is renowned for his generosity. His seneschal, Ariabazane, tries to outdo him in his prodigal distribution of wealth. While playing chess, Ariabazane purposely forfeits the game to the King. Artaserse is annoyed at what he sees as an egotistical attempt to outshine his own generosity. When the King goes hunting only he and the seneschal are close to the prey when the King's horse loses two shoes. Ariabazane takes the shoes off his own horse so that the King may continue. At a great joust, Ariabazane, who looks a certain winner, forfeits the prize by letting the King's son defeat him.

The King resolves to rebuke Ariabarzane by stripping him of his post and awarding it to his mortal enemy, Dario. Ariabarzane does not show his hurt and outwardly seems content. The King lets it be known that he is displeased with Ariabarzane who is hurt by this ingratitude and would retire to his castle but is reluctant to beg permission of Artaserse. Artaserse hears that Ariabarzane has been complaining of his ingratitude and summons him to explain himself. Ariabarzane repeats his complaints and the King explains to him that he has stripped him of his position because Ariabarzane has done the same to him by exceeding him in that prodigal generosity which is the prerogative of a king. A king should always show his majesty by rewarding above the merits of the recipient but Ariabarzane has not permitted him to do so. What he wishes from his subjects is fidelity and love. Ariabarzane protests that it is surely the right of the subject to secure the love of his sovereign through generosity. The King says that the issue must be decided by his Council of Ministers and until then Ariabarzane is banished to his castle.

Ariabarzane has two daughters, the elder more beautiful than the younger. The King sends for the more beautiful one and Ariabarzane sends him the younger counselling her not to reveal the truth until she is pregnant by the King. The King marries her and sends to her father for her dowry the amount of which is doubled by Ariabarzane out of respect for the majesty of the bridegroom. The girl becomes pregnant and tells the King the truth. He is furious and sends her and her dowry back ordering Ariabarzane to send the elder sister to him. Ariabarzane sends both sisters as an act of generosity. The King, in turn, marries his son to the elder girl. Ariabarzane sends his daughter's baby son as a wedding gift. Artaserse in turn gives his daughter in marriage to Ariabarzane who promptly awards her the amount of her dowry and returns the dowry itself to the King.

The Council find him guilty of *lèse-majesté* and sentence him to death. Ariabarzane says that his final act of generosity will be to give his head to his sovereign and makes his will, increasing the dowries of his wife and daughters, leaving a great quantity of precious jewels to the King, and his weapons and a large amount of money to the Prince, his son-in-law as well as providing generously for his relatives and servants. On the day of execution the King asks Ariabarzane if he will admit his error and accept the gift of life from him. Ariabarzane does this attributing, in a long discourse, the rift between himself and Artaserse to the doings of envious courtiers. He is embraced by Artaserse and restored to his former rank.

Fletcher has transferred the scene to Russia, perhaps inspired, Bliss notes,¹⁹ by the study Of the Russe Common Wealth (1591) written by his uncle, Giles Fletcher. Archas, the 'Loyal Subject', is now a paragon of honour not of prodigality while the emphasis placed by Ariabarzane on malicious voices at court is given a more concrete personification in the evil counsellor Borosky. At the opening of the play, the breach between monarch and subject is already apparent and is gradually widened through the machinations of Borosky until the villain exceeds his authority by sentencing Archas to death, thereby incurring the wrath of the Duke. The basic structure of the play thus loosely approximates that of its original. The characterisation and development of that structure are however formed on the basis of a *controriformista* love intrigue.

Archas is the direct equivalent of the heroine doomed to suffer for her love before receiving her Providential reward. The relationship between himself and his country, as

represented by the Duke, is that of the Lovers in a *commedia grave*. Effectively the distinguishing motifs of the Romantic tragicomedy are here taken as metaphors for the relations between the individual and the state. Young Archas underscores this point when he reproaches the Duke:

Y. ARCH.: You had a mistress,
Oh, Heaven, so bright, so brave a dame, so lovely,
In all her life so true - -
DUKE: A mistress!
Y. ARCH.: That serv'd you with constancy, that care,
That lov'd your will, and woo'd it too - -
DUKE: What mistress?
Y. ARCH.: That nurs'd your honour up, held fast your virtue,
And, when she kiss'd, increas'd, not stole your goodness!
DUKE: And I neglected her?
Y. ARCH.: Lost her, forsook her,
Wantonly flung her off.
DUKE: What was her name?
Y. ARCH.: Her name as lovely as herself, as noble,
And in it all that's excellent.
DUKE: What was it?
Y. ARCH.: Her name was Beau-desert: do you know her now, sir?
DUKE: Beau-desert! I do not remember - -
Y. ARCH.: I know you do not;
Yet she has a plainer name, - lord Archas' service:
Do you yet remember her? There was a mistress
Fairer than woman, far fonder to you, sir.
'Than mothers to their first-born joys. Can you love? (III.iii.p.62)

As well as the anguish of estrangement from his beloved Duke's affections, Archas, like Arethusa and Amoret, is wounded, both literally and metaphorically, before the Duke, who has been as much enchanted by Borosky as Perigot was by Amarillis, realises where his true devotion lies. There is even a surrogate lovers' reunion in the linking by marriage of Archas's family to that of the Head of State.

Again like his female predecessors, and despite all temptations and hardships, Archas is a model of unblemished 'chastity' in that he never once by word or deed deviates from loyalty to his sovereign. This modification of the original Ariabarzane, who voices

his complaints, is indicative on Fletcher's part of his wish to adapt the model of a Romantic tragicomedy to an essentially political drama. Since the model thus requires Archas's political 'purity', it therefore falls to those around him to voice the legitimate grievances of one who has been spurned by the state he has preserved from danger. His soldiers, Burris, Alinda/Y.Archas and Theodore therefore, almost in the manner of a Chorus, direct our attention to the history of this noble soldier and to the injustice he has suffered. Borosky's role, in this 'political pastoral', corresponds to that of Guarini's Corisca or Fletcher's own Amirillis (as noted above). Like them, he is chastened by experience and included in the general forgiveness typical of the genre.

The worthiness of the Duke is tried in real love intrigues as well as in a metaphoric political one. His dalliance with Alinda/Young Archas and with Archas's two daughters is also a test in which he is rebuked and brought to self-realisation finally settling for a licit marriage with the aptly named Honora. The feminine guise adopted by Young Archas is, as I have observed (see Chapter V), a commonplace of Italian Romantic comedy. Here it serves not only its normal functions of confusion and concealment but also, with respect to the Duke, implicitly mocks the moral lightness of one who should be an exemplar for his nation.

It is interesting to note the reflection in the sub-plot of the male/female reversal apparent in the main theme. Along with female guise, Fletcher has chosen to have his transvestite lover represent the *passività* more usually associated in his drama with the heroine. It is Alinda/Y.Archas who suffers rejection for an apparent infidelity and whose constancy is, as usual, rewarded with a reconciliation with his beloved. As Borosky plays the Corisca role in the political intrigue, so the maid Petesca bears false witness and threatens the resolution of the love intrigue. She too finally repents, "'Twas a wicked thing for me to betray her" (V.ii.p.100). The moral tone and Christian forgiveness manifested by Y.Archas are typical of the *controriformista* heroine - most evident in his valediction to Olympia on the occasion of his rejection by her:

The business of my life is now to pray for you,
Pray for your virtuous loves, pray for your children,
When Heaven shall make you happy. (IV.i.p.76.

In his preface to Middleton's The Witch,²⁰ Alexander Dyce indicates that the device of the father's skull offered as a drinking cup, Almachildes (both name and role), the bed-trick, and the murder plot against the Duke derive from the story of Rosamund and Alboinus in Machiavelli's Florentine History.²¹ Marvin Herrick notes a theatrical precedent based on the same story in Rucellai's Italian tragedy Rosmunda (1516) while David George sees the original of Isabella's deception by Sebastian in Giraldi Cinthio's Hecatommithi IV.4²² - the plot of which I summarise below:

Iphoromena is insanely jealous of her husband, Publio. She begs a Servant to tell her the truth and promises any reward. The Servant makes up a story about her best friend and her husband and says that he will substitute Iphoromena for her supposed rival in the lovers' meeting place. To avoid recognition, the room must be in darkness and she must not speak. Thus she can always take the place of her husband's lover and ensure his sexual fidelity. The Servant leads her to his cousin's house and, in the darkened room, pretends to be Publio. Iphoromena, leaving the house, sees her husband ride by, realises the trick, and stabs the Servant and herself. The noise attracts a crowd which includes Publio. The dying woman tells all and the wounded Servant is taken off to execution.

An indirect Italian source is noted by Dyce for the speeches of Hecate in *Lii* wherein she describes the techniques of witchcraft.²³ Reginald Scot's The Discoverie of Witchcraft (1584) supplies the relevant details which Scot acknowledges as proceeding from Della Porta's treatise on magic, Magiæ Naturalis. sive De Miraculis Rerum Naturalium Libri iiii (1561) - one of the works which brought the Neapolitan to the attention of the Inquisition.

The witches themselves appear to be principally a colourful device designed to display the author's occult erudition and give his audience a *frisson* of horror. Their main contribution to the advancing of the plot is to render Antonio impotent and thus preserve the reward of Isabella's virginity for the more deserving Sebastian - and an earlier discovery of Antonio's lies and philandering could equally well have obstructed their union without recourse to this sensationalist *coup de théâtre*. Their dramatically unrebuked presence in the play certainly distances it from the normal clear pattern of tragicomic morality.

The enchanted ribbon produced by Almachildes in *II.ii* has a dramatic forebear in the devil-possessed thread of the Spanish Bawd, *Celestina*, and initially seems to have a similar effect upon Amoretta and the Duchess. Its spell, however, is of short duration

since, two scenes later (III.i), the Duchess's playing of a 'double' bed-trick on Almachildes reveals the insincerity of her feelings towards him. There is no dramatic retribution either for the witches or for those who consult them. There is a real sense here that Middleton has adopted the structure and conventions of the tragicomedy while occasionally neglecting its underpinning morality in favour of staged effects.

The use of the witches as an emblem of and channel for disharmony does however obviate the need for the murderous jealousy which one might expect from the principal male protagonist, Sebastian. He has been cheated by a rival and believes his love, Isabella, to have broken faith with him. In a similar situation, his Fletcherian cousins would have drawn their swords and laid about them. Here the intermediary supernatural element and the proposed Giraldian bed-trick substitute for such violence, threatening the soul of one protagonist and the honour of another. The effect on the hero is similarly cathartic, inducing a repentance which elevates love above revenge, for "he that would soul's sacred comfort win/Must burn in pure love, like a seraphin" (IV.ii.p.313).

Isabella is the typical chaste *innamorata* to whom all moral deviation is anathema. She lacks, however, the dramatic sympathy of a *commedia grave* heroine since her virtue is put to no trials; she displays little passion; and her priggish treatment of Francisca confirms her lack of warmth.

Marvin Herrick sees The Witch as structurally bipartite, shading from romantic comedy in the first two acts to the *tragedia di fin lieto* which occupies the last three.²⁴ While I agree that the first two acts contain more in the way of comic elements, and that the play develops as a Giraldian tragicomedy, I think Herrick underestimates the impact of the witches on a contemporary audience. The dead child, stuffed with herbs and bat's blood and then boiled for its fat is a gruesome enough image for today's less credulous audience. The horrific impact it would have had on a public which believed in witchcraft would surely overshadow such comedy as Almachildes provides. Similarly, Gasparo's comments on his master's impotence (II.i) would provoke a wry smile if the condition were attributable to self-induced dissipation, but as a witch's curse it seems more designed to create a mood of apprehension: this could happen to anyone. The tone of the play

overall, and not just that of the last three acts, is full of tragic possibility. The clearly foreseeable requirement of Antonio's death as a precondition for the union of the lovers, Sebastian and Isabella, imposes a sombre note from the beginning. Knave though he may be, this "kind husband" (II.i.p.273) who "is no gamester...Nor midnight surfeiter" (II.i.p.274) seems insufficiently defined as a villain to merit such Providential chastisement.

The *fin lieto* leaves one man dead and a coven of murderous witches at large while the usual Giraldian dispensation of justice and mercy is so briefly rendered as to seem an afterthought. Middleton, in broadly following the Giraldian pattern, provides evidence of its pervasiveness in the theatre of his time. Notwithstanding, he does not seem as comfortable in this genre as he does in his tragedies and lighter comedies.

Philip Massinger

Edwards and Gibson give the principal sources of The Bashful Lover ²⁵(c.1635) as, for the main plot, the tale of Queen Erona in Sidney's Arcadia II.13 and, for the nomenclature and secondary plot, the chapters on the Dukedoms of Milan and Florence in André Favyn's Le Théâtre d'honneur et de chevalrie (1620) translated into English by 'I.W.' in 1623. I reproduce their extract from the translation which gives the narrative base of the secondary plot:²⁶

By his wife *Blanch Maria*, Bastard daughter to *Phillip*, he [*Galeas Maria*] left six Sonnes and two daughters. The Sonnes were named *Galeas*, *John*, *Phillip*, *Ascanio*, *Cardinall*, *Lodowicke Sforza*, and *Octavius*, all Sirnamed *Maria*...*John Maria*, the sixth Duke of *Millaine*, succeeded in the said Dukedome, being onely aged nine yeares; remaining in the Tutelage of his Mother, and of his Uncles *Lodowicke*, *Ascanio* and *Octavian*. The State affairs were ordered and managed by one named *Cico de Calabria*, a man trained vp in the House of *Frances Sforza*. But such was his nature, as being vnable to endure so many Companions, and winning the favour of *Bonna of Sauoye* [wife of *Galeas Maria*]: *Lodowicke* and *Ascanio* (by this meanes) were banished from the State of *Millaine*, the two other yonger brethren put to death, and the plots and deuises of all such preuented, as could make any head against him. (pp.475-6)

To their observations I would add that the wandering transvestite *Ascanio/Maria* and her lover/deceiver *Alonzo* surely derive from the *Cardenio* pastoral interlude in Cervantes's Don Quijote.

Marvin Herrick, while listing no sources, has no hesitation in placing The Bashful Lover firmly in the mainstream of Italo-English tragicomedy:

The *Bashful Lover*, the most chivalric of Massinger's plays, is a *tragedia di lieto fin*, English style. There are a few touches of comedy and consistently lively action, but it nevertheless resembles some of the romantic Italian tragedies of the sixteenth century. It also contains nearly every device used in tragicomedy.²⁷

The disguise *motif* is prominent. Galeazzo, a Prince of Milan, is disguised as a simple gentleman while Ascanio, his page and go-between, is really Maria, daughter of the exiled general Octavio. Her role as *mezzana* is a passing one, merely effecting an introduction between Galeazzo and the Princess Matilda (I.i.) which, given the spotless chastity of both characters, can hardly be said to have disturbed the moral tone of the play.

The principal *innamorati* in fact inhabit the same high moral plane as their forebears Mirtillo and Amarilli in Guarini's Pastor fido while, like Silvio with Dorinda, Alonzo wounds Ascanio/Maria (in this case metaphorically) before realising his love for her. It is this secondary type of love intrigue which, as we have seen, predominates in the Fletcherian model of tragicomedy. This is perhaps, as I have noted above, related to the Spanish equation of blood and honour in the *capa y espada* drama which seems to have attracted Fletcher and here Massinger's apparent use of the Cardenio plot also attests a Spanish influence on the English theatre.

The *commedia grave*'s close relation of chaste love tested by adversity to a Providential reward is apparent in the Galeazzo/Matilda love intrigue. Galeazzo's apparent rank as Gentleman is too lowly to allow him to contemplate marriage with Matilda and even his real status as an heir apparent is far below that of his rivals, the incumbent monarchs of Florence and Parma. Aware of this, he desires only to look upon Matilda and assure her that "I never did yet with a wanton eye/Or cherish one lascivious wish beyond it" (I.i.203-204). His love moreover is as intense as it may be while escaping any suggestion of idolatry since he loves her "Next to heaven, Madam,/And with as pure a zeal" (I.i.236-237). Matilda, similarly constrained by rank and obligation, cannot admit her love for Galeazzo until her father's defeat and her flight into the forest seem to have rendered such considerations irrelevant. The scene in which Galeazzo wins this admission is an evident adaptation of the episode at Diana's fountain in Tasso's Aminta in which Silvia is tied to a tree by Satiro who intends to rape her; the rape is foiled by the arrival of

the shepherd, Aminta, who attacks the satyr and unbinds Silvia. Massinger emphasises the connection by having Galeazzo, dressed as a shepherd, call Alonzo a "Libidinous monster, Satyre, Fawn" (III.iii.88). Alonzo defeated loses his satyric characterisation and, in the vein of Shakespeare's Proteus, abruptly repents,

My lust!

The fruit that grows upon the tree of lust!

With horror now I taste it. (III.iii.203-205)

- an agnition which prepares the way for his union with Ascanio/Maria and the restitution of her honour.

Matilda is to some extent responsible for this change of heart since her virtue, like that of Marina and Spaconia, is capable of affecting even the most corrupt. Thus Alonzo, although not deviating from his rapacious intent, has been forced to admit "I feel/The moist tears on my cheeks, and blush to find/A Virgins complaints can move so" (III.iii.67-69). When Matilda is captured by Lorenzo, he confesses himself vanquished by her beauty and purity and, without obligation on her part, restores her father to his former position. As a Type of chastity and a powerful intermediary for good, Matilda has a marian aspect which contrasts with Ascanio/Maria's magdalenic role of the fallen woman returned to grace.

The restitution of the *status quo* leads to the Love contest which, although won by the overwhelming force of Galeazzo's merit, is declared null and void by Farneze who cites a law which forbids the heir of Mantua to marry unless the state is thereby strengthened. Once more virtue is challenged by adversity and only the Providential arrival of the Ambassador with news of Galeazzo's brother's death saves the day. Uberti and Lorenzo successively acknowledge the justice of Providence:

UBERTI: There's no contending against destiny,

I wish both happiness. (V.iii.179-180)

LORENZO: Fortune here hath shewn

Her various power; but Vertue in the end

Is crown'd with laurel (V.iii.189-191)

John Webster

Webster's The Devil's Law-Case²⁸ is constructed, using that author's well-known reliance on his common-place book, on a diversity of sources. No single plot-source is known but Elizabeth Brennan finds analogues for Leonora's lawsuit and Contarino's cure. The story of a mother convicted by a wise judge of falsely disowning her own son ultimately descends from an Italian source, the De Origine Urbis Gestique Venetorum (1492) of Bernardo Giustiniani (*alio* Laurentius Venetus), is repeated in Joannes Magnus's De omnibus Gothorum Sueonumque Regibus (Rome, 1554), and developed by Nicholas Caussin in La Cour sainte (Paris, 1624). A dramatic parallel is found in Lust's Dominion or The Lascivious Queen (which Brennan identifies with The Spanish Moor's Tragedy by John Day and Thomas Dekker, entered in Henslowe's books in February 1600) in which the Queen-Mother of Spain furthers the plans of her lover, the Moor Eleazar, by having two friars publish the false story of the illegitimacy of her son, King Philip. A similar story is told, in William Warner's Continuance of Albion's England (1606) XVI.cv, of Nest, Lady Brecknock, who, because of strife between her son and her lover, swears to King Henry II that her son is a bastard and has the inheritance transferred to her daughter.

The method of Contarino's cure is of Classical provenance and is mentioned by Pliny, Cicero, Seneca and Plutarch. Brennan sees the immediate source as probably Simon Goulart's Histoires Admirables (Paris, 1600), translated by Edward Grimeston as Admirable and Memorable Histories (1607), wherein a man on the point of death is stabbed by his enemy, a vengeful Italian, and has his recovery attributed to the therapeutic effects of bleeding.²⁹

R.W. Dent cites a multitude of sources for individual lines and *motifs* relating them to the Classics, to Webster's own dramatic contemporaries, to the French authors Delamothe and Montaigne, to Italian sources like Stefano Guazzo, Machiavelli and John Florio, and to Sidney's Italianate pastoral, the Arcadia.³⁰

There are echoes of the Oddian structure of *attività* and *passività* in the play's pattern of punishment and reward. In the case of Ercole and Contarino, their swordfight represents a fall from grace to be reprehended by their mutual wounding. Ercole has

fought to maintain his reputation rather than for love. Providence therefore requires a complete repentance of him - a repentance which, as the Capuchin notes, is "divinely informed" (II.iv.7):

ERCOLE:

I fought for one, in whom I have no more right,
Than false executors here in orphan's goods,
They cozen them of; yet though my cause were naught,
I rather chose the hazard of my soul,
Than forgo the compliment of a choleric man. (II.iv.8-12)

Contarino's wounds represent a Providential rebuke for the breaking of his oath to Jolenta (I.ii.255-266) a cause-and-effect relationship seen in the fact that two of those whom he swore to spare have stabbed him. The risk of death which he and Ercole face in the final duel is also preceded by a breaking of faith with Jolenta when the two erstwhile rivals misinterpret her letter to mean that she has committed incest with Romelio (V.ii.31-36).

Leonora and Winifred are rebuked for their perjury by the loss of their reputation while the latter, as Sanitonella points out, runs the risk of being whipped "at a cart's tail" as a bawd (IV.ii.481). Winifred has the bawdy character traditionally associated with the older female servant, cf. Juliet's Nurse, but her well-intentioned advice to Jolenta and Contarino, "get you instantly to bed together" (I.ii.250), is rebuffed by the virtuous *immamorata's* "Fie upon thee, priethee leave us" (I.ii.253) and her later narrow escape from a whipping underlines the authorial disapproval of bawdry. Both Leonora and Winifred are given a chance to do what the First Surgeon calls "some excellent piece of honcsty,/To recover your good name" (V.iii.10-11) in revealing Contarino to be alive and thus stop the trial-by-combat. Their reward for this is to be marriage: Winifred to the Surgeon, and Leonora, most surprisingly, to Contarino.

Leonora's marriage also rewards her unwavering devotion to Contarino. Her fidelity contrasts with that of Jolenta who, while otherwise virtuous, has given credence to her brother's assertions of Contarino's perfidy and agreed to aid in his plans (III.iii). Ercole, who loves her, has proven the more self-sacrificing of the two rivals and thus, by the Providential laws of cause and effect which govern this play, deserves to be Jolenta's

husband. There is also the matter of Jolenta's oath which, sworn in the strongest possible terms, renders a marriage to Contarino impossible:

ROMELIO: But were Contarino living, -

JOLENTA: I do call any thing to witness

That the divine law prescribed us to strengthen

An oath, were he living and in health, I would never

Marry with him. (III.iii.151-153)

It might be thought that Romelio's acts merit greater dramatic censure than those of Ercole and Contarino but, since Romelio is manifestly a knave, there is no question here of a tragic fall from grace. He does receive a formal dramatic retribution in his mother's bringing of the court-case against him. There appears, however, to be little love lost between them and it is hard to feel any concomitant sympathy. Romelio is, at bottom, a rather one-dimensional character resembling nothing more than the traditional Vice. His last-minute doubts which cause the Capuchin to be freed, thus revealing all, and his inclusion in the general dispensing of a merciful justice owe more to the tragicomic structure of the play than to any logical development of his character.

The latter development of the play does, in fact, very much follow the pattern of Measure for Measure in that there is a virginal heroine, a distressed woman who has a moral claim on the villain's affections, female protagonists pledged to a nunnery who are instead to be married, the appearance of one thought killed by the villain, the ordered marriage of the villain to his lover, and a general dispensing of justice by a wise judge acting for Providence. It is notable that all of Ariosto's 'punishments' relate to the maintenance and defence of Christian faith and charity, condemning usury and enforcing Christian marriage:

You, Romelio,

Shall first deliver to that gentleman,

Who stood your second, all those obligations

Wherein he stands engaged to you, receiving

Only the principal...

Next, you shall marry that nun...

Contarino, and Romelio, and yourself [Ercole]

Shall for seven years maintain against the Turk

Six galleys, Leonora, Jolenta,
And Angiolella there, the beauteous nun,
For their vows' breach unto the monastery,
Shall build a monastery. Lastly, the two surgeons,
For concealing Contarino's recovery,
Shall exercise their art at their own charge
For a twelvemonth in the galleys (V.vi.63-67,74,81-89)

Thomas Heywood

The sub-plot of Heywood's A Challenge for Beauty³¹ shows a definite debt to Italian literature. A precedent for the triumph of friendship over love may be found in Boccaccio's tale of Tito and Gisippo (Decameron X.8) which, apart from a generic resemblance, also contains the *motif* of the substitution in bed of the friend for the husband on the wedding night. The raid on the bedroom may have been suggested by Bibbiena's La Calandria (see previous chapter). A dramatic precedent, and, I would suggest, a direct one, is found in Oddi's Erofilomachia. The bases of the relevant love intrigues and the origins of the friendships are identical, although Heywood's subsequent plot development, apart from the Boccacesque bed-trick and the bedroom-raid, appears to be his own: Amico buys Leandro from the Turks and sets him free/Valladaura buys Ferrers from the Turks and sets him free; Leandro, to discharge his debt and prove his friendship, agrees to act as Amico's go-between with Flamminia/Ferrers, as proof of his nobility and gratitude, is similarly constrained by friendship to act as a go-between for Valladaura with Petrocella; Leandro and Flamminia are in love/Ferrers and Petrocella are in love.

In the main plot, the story of the female paragon whose reputation is traduced by a foreign villain who travels to her country and steals her ring as proof, derives from Decameron II.9, the story of Bernabò, Ambrogiuolo and Zinevra - also used by Shakespeare in Cymbeline. The vanity of the Queen and its admonition also suggests an origin in some kind of moral *exemplum* story and has an obvious generic resemblance to the Snow White tale. Bonavida's search for the perfect woman is reminiscent of the quests common to chivalric romance but may also owe something to Decameron VII.7 wherein

Lodovico travels from Paris to Italy on hearing of the perfect beauty of madonna Beatrice - a device re-used in Machiavelli's La mandragola as the explanation for Callimaco's journey from Paris to Florence.

The characterisation is in accord with that of *commedia grave* and the *pastorale*. Hellena is a model of chastity and beauty who, like Oddi's heroines, is capable of great passion - as she proves in her moving defence of her reputation:

And Princes, as you hope to crowne your heads
With that perpetuall wreath, which shall last ever,
Cast on a poore dejected Innocent Virgine
Your eies, of grace and pittie: what sinne is't?
Or who can be the patron to such evill?
That a poore innocent Maid, spotlesse in thought,
And pure in heart, borne without spleene and gall;
That never injur'd creature: never had heart
To thinke of wrong, or ponder injurie;
That such a one in her white innocence,
Striving to live peculiar in the compasse
Of her owne vertues. Notwithstanding these
Should be sought out by strangers, persecuted
Made infamous, even there where she was made
For imitation, hist at in her Country,
Abandoned of her mother, kindred, friends:
Deprav'd in forren Climes, scorn'd every where,
And even in Princes Courts, reputed vile:
O pittie, pittie this. (V.i.p.73)

Not only passionate but intelligent, she ingeniously turns the tables on Centella and Pineda before the Spanish Court, employing a device worthy of Shakespeare's Portia: claiming that they have robbed her of her virtue she forces them to admit that they have never seen her before; she then reveals her identity and thus proves that they could not have received the ring from her hand.

As is normal in the Fletcherian style of tragicomedy, the hero is given to doubts and thereby attracts dramatic admonition before the truth is known and reconciliation takes place. Convinced by the production of the ring that Centella and Pineda have enjoyed his

innamorata, he begs the Queen to grant his request that he be executed. His life is saved only by Hellena's proof of the falseness of her accusers and by her moving rhetoric. The Queen is moved to humility by Hellena's virtues and orders her accusers from the Court swearing to abjure the company of sycophants for ever.

The threat of death which gives tragicomedy its darker tone again manifests itself when we are led to believe that Petrocella has killed Ferrers mistaking him, in her bed, for Valladaura. In fact, it transpires that she is getting her own back on Valladaura for his testing of both her and Ferrers - the blood on her sword is that of a turtle.

Ferrers himself is a typical *controriformista* hero who must patiently suffer every trial which presents itself before Providence, in this case represented by Valladaura, relents and grants him his just reward. His self-sacrificing characterisation is more Oddian than Fletcherian and, as I have indicated, he is probably modelled on Oddi's Leandro.

John Ford

While John Ford's The Lover's Melancholy³² has no single specific Italian source, there are sufficient generic similarities, both in structure and sentiment, to declare it part of the Italo-English tragicomic mainstream. In addition, a number of Italianate *motifs* are apparent which descend, directly or through an intermediary, from the Italian Romantic Comedy.

The transvestite Parthenophil and Thamasta's misguided passion for her/him find dramatic ancestry in Bibbiena's La Calandria (1513) in which Santilla masquerades as her brother Lidio and is loved by Fulvia. The name of the other transvestite page, Grilla, recalls that of the comical turnkey, Grillo, in Oddi's Prigione d'amore, whose close association with the transvestite Erminia may therefore have partially suggested the role. The characterisation has a more probable and obvious derivation however in the device of the disguised boy-bride used in Aretino's Il marescalco, recycled by Jonson in Epiccoene, which features the same kind of mocking intent proposed by Pelias.

A separating sea-journey, an *innamorata* believed dead but disguised and playing a servant's role, a melancholy lover who fails to recognise her, elevated passions and total

mutual fidelity are features which characterise the love intrigue between Palador and Eroclea/Parthenophill. Whether Ford has derived this from the obviously analogous situation in Oddi's I morti vivi or not, the plot conforms to the *commedia grave* type in its emphasis on the spiritual and sentimental aspects of the love relationship. The constancy of the lovers is emphasised by their wearing of each other's images next to their hearts (II.i.p.40 and IV.iii.p.98), while the chaste nature of their love is shown in their elevation of filial duty above sensual gratification in the very moment of their reunion:

ERO.: O, but my father!

PAL.: Fear not: to behold

Eroclea safe, will make him young again;

It shall be our first task. Blush, sensual follies,

Which are not guarded with thoughts chastely pure!

There is no faith in lust, but baits of arts;

'Tis virtuous love keeps clear contracted hearts. (IV.iii.pp.98-99)

Eroclea's virtue, like that of Marina and Spaconia, exerts a power over others. Her Orphic ability charms the birds and breaks the heart of the nightingale (I.i.pp.15-16) while her presence is the final touch which restores her father's sanity (V.i.p.113).

Palador's secondary role as an agent of Providence is seen in his dispensation of betrothals in V.i - the Providential involvement confirmed by his valediction:

Sorrows are changed to bride-songs. So they thrive,

Whom fate in spite of storms hath kept alive.

Palador's Providential aspect and status as ruler of his country coupled with Eroclea's exalted virtue tend to create a dramatic distance between their love intrigue and the other matter of the play. Amethus and Cleophila accordingly repeat the pattern at a slightly less elevated level acting as a point of contact between the somewhat remote Princely love intrigue and the more turbulent quasi-Fletcherian relationship between Menaphon and Thamasta.

While Thamasta is virtuous, her passion for Parthenophill arouses enough suspicion of her honour for Menaphon to doubt her and for Amethus to imply that she has become a wanton (IV.i). The accusation, despite being the kind of device which would

normally imply bloodshed and/or near-death in a Fletcherian tragicomedy, is herein made for the purpose of generating an agnition in Thalama which will force her to realise how much she really loves Menaphon. The latter's doubts are likewise of little import since Thalama's plea for compassionate understanding is immediately conceded by him:

THA.: I have trespassed, and I have been faulty;

Let not too rude a censure doom me guilty,

Or judge my error wilful without pardon.

MEN.: Gracious and virtuous mistress! (IV.i.p.81)

There is an underlying theme, common to most romance based comedies, of a rite of passage in which the disharmonies of the plot are nullified in a Providential reunion after the parties have been tried and any impediments to unity purged. All three of Oddi's comedies feature this structure of trial and resolution, as do Shakespeare's Romances, and the progress 'by degrees' to a heaven-blessed perfection of the disturbed relationships within the play has an evident Christian allegorical function. In The Lover's Melancholy it is not simply the lovers who are estranged but a whole range of other characters. The melancholy of the title, since it starts with the head, has infected the body of the principality. Affairs of state are neglected, flatterers like Pelias and Cuculus infest the court, the Satire Rhetias and the Doctor Corax strive to expose and heal the ailment but with little initial success, while the elderly lord Meleander is lost in a melancholic confusion which recalls that of Lear. It is the successful conclusion of the three love intrigues which restores harmony to the court - even Cuculus, promised responsibility for the Prince's wardrobe, abjures his foppish ways:

Whilst I'm in office, the old garb shall agen

Grow in request, and tailors shall be men. (V.i.p.105)

Meleander is reunited with his daughter and, by her presence and through the collective efforts of the court officers, his sanity also returns. The sight is so moving that even the harsh Rhetias is forced to acknowledge his human affections:

The good man relisheth his comforts strangely;

The sight doth turn me child. (V.i.p.114)

And Meleander himself directs attention to the force which has dispelled this Lover's

Melancholy:

The gods, that lent you to me, bless your vows!
Oh, children, children, pay your prayers to heaven,
For they have shew'd much mercy. (V.i.p.119)

James Shirley

Sister Martin Flavin, in her critical edition of Shirley's The Wedding (used hereafter), identifies the tale of slandered innocence as originating in the story of Ginevra in Books V and VI of Ariosto's Orlando Furioso, retold by Bandello (I.22), Spenser in The Faerie Queene II.4, and Shakespeare in Much Ado about Nothing.³³ To these I would add Della Porta's version in Gli duoi fratelli rivali (see Chapter II). Sister Martin principally relates Shirley's plot to the Bandello story but considers it more likely that he used Belleforest's adaptation in his Histoires Tragiques since "There is no evidence that Shirley had access to the Bandello novella as no Elizabethan translation of Bandello is known to have existed."³⁴ Leaving aside her inexplicable omission of Painter's *novelle* translations in his Palace of Pleasure, the use of Bandello's plots by writers such as Marston, Fletcher and Webster suggest that some version of Bandello's *novelle* was available at this time in England, and Shirley's use of other Italian sources makes it seem probable that he had some command of the language.³⁵ I summarise the Bandello story below:

Timbreo de Cardona, a rich young favourite of the King of Sicily, falls in love with the poor but noble Fenicia. She at first will have nothing to do with him because of the difference in their ranks but Timbreo persuades her father, Lionato, and the two are betrothed. Gironde, his friend, also loves Fenicia. He sends a messenger to Timbreo informing him that Fenicia has been having an affair with someone else for some time and that he can witness them if he goes that night to her garden. Gironde has a servant perfume himself and dress as a maidservant. Under cover of night they place a ladder against a balcony of Fenicia's house and the 'maidservant' gives the 'lover' instructions, allegedly from Fenicia, as to how to enter the house. Timbreo is convinced. He sends a friend to Lionato's house to say that the wedding cannot take place because of Fenicia's infidelity. Lionato is sure that Timbreo is simply seeking any excuse to back out of an unsuitable marriage.

Fenicia faints and a doctor is sent for. Word goes out that she is gravely ill. After swearing her innocence and praying God to open Timbreo's eyes, Fenicia apparently dies of grief. Preparing for the funeral, her mother and aunt wash the body. Under their attentions, Fenicia regains consciousness. Lionato tells no-one but sends her to his brother's house in the country to recover thinking that in a few years, with a changed name, she could still make a good marriage. An empty coffin is buried.

Timbreo begins to regret his actions - especially when he discovers that Fenicia could not have got to the room of the 'assignation' without passing through her father's bedroom. Girondo confesses all to Timbreo who forgives him on condition that he clear Fenicia's reputation. They tell Lionato the story and he makes them promise that they will only marry a woman of his choice. A year passes and Fenicia, now called Lucilla and much changed, is presented to Timbreo as his bride. At the wedding feast the deception is revealed, much to Timbreo's joy, and Girondo begs her forgiveness. Girondo marries Fenicia's sister, Belfiore. The King, hearing the story, provides the girls with a rich dowry and all ends happily.

It is tempting to see Shirley's version of the story as owing something directly to Gli duoi fratelli rivali. The terms in which Beauford and Marwood refer to each other ("coz" I.ii.23, "kinsman" I.ii.41 *et al.*) imply some sort of blood relationship and Alfred Harbage identifies this play with a title ascribed to Shirley in 1626, The Brothers, but otherwise unaccounted for.³⁶ If this identification is accepted, the similarities of title and plot would suggest Della Porta's play as a part-source for The Wedding. It may be indicative that the sword-fight between the two rivals is present in both plays but not in Bandello although Shirley's treatment of the material is quite different from that of his Italian predecessor - his duel occurs early in the play and results in the near-fatal wounding of Marwood, Della Porta's occurs late in the play and no-one is injured.

Shirley's use of a satiro-comic sub-cast perhaps also echoes Della Porta in that the duel between the braggarts Rawbone and Lodam is reminiscent of that between Captains Dante and Pantaleone in his comedy La fantesca. At any rate, there is clearly an element of the Captain in both Rawbone and Lodam which is further confirmed by their being accompanied by the traditional starving servant. Lodam is an Anglicised Captain for his girth and his interest in "Canary sack" (II.iii.125) remind us of Shakespeare's Sir John Falstaff. Isaac's punning reference to Lodam's fatness also, in its *double entendre*, underlines the Braggart's traditional dissipated life-style: Lodam is "Something given to the waist, for he lives/within no reasonable compass" (I.i.40-41). In Rawbone's case, the characterisation is conflated with that of the Parasite - "if ever he eat a good meal at his own charge, his soul is forfeit" (I.i.24-25) - while his profession of usurer recalls the merchant Pantalone in his miserly aspect. The presence of the real warrior Captain Landby provides a contrast which highlights the satirical treatment accorded the two cowards.

Haver's taking on the role of a servant in order to be near his beloved Jane

Landby is a familiar theme in Italian literature. The *topos* of the servant in love with the rich man's daughter finds Italian precedents in Decameron II.6 and V.7; Bandello's *novelle* I.26 (the Duchess of Malfi story) and III.6 both show (in both cases with tragic consequences) a servant in love with his mistress; the gentleman who takes on a servant's role in order to be near his beloved occurs in Decameron VII.7 wherein Lodovico thus becomes the lover of his employer's wife; and Bandello's *novella* II.36 has Nicuola disguise herself as a page in order to enter the household of Lattanzio whom she later marries. A closer parallel may be found in Ariosto's I suppositi (translated by Gascoigne as The Supposes, 1566) in which Erostrato becomes Damone's servant in order to be near his master's daughter, Polinesta, whom he later marries.

Decameron III.9, as in All's Well That Ends Well and Measure for Measure, probably supplies the bed-trick used by Cardona to advance the prospects of her daughter, while the Cardenio story from Don Quijote, as in Massinger's The Bashful Lover (see above), prefigures Milisent/Lucibel's transvestite disguise and the reformation and marriage of the rakish Marwood.

The main intrigue follows the Fletcherian model in its depiction of the virtuous heroine, Gratiana, whose constancy contrasts with that of her credulous lover. The latter, as in The Faithful Shepherdess *et al.*, sheds blood and brings the heroine near to death through grief. He is torn by powerful and conflicting emotions, succumbing temporarily to doubt and finally achieving reconciliation through a series of surprising revelations. Beauford's embattled psyche is the more interesting dramatically but Gratiana reveals that she has the passion typical of a *controriformista* heroine when she rails against Marwood's misdeeds and pleads for Beauford's life:

Hear me! Marwood was a villain,
A rebel unto virtue, a profaner
Of friendship's sacred laws, a murderer
Of virgin chastity, against whose malice
Not innocence could hope protection
But, like a bird grip'd by an eagle's talon,
It groaning dies.
What punishment can you inflict on him

That, in contempt of nature and religion,
 Enforces breach of love, of holy vows?
 Sets them at war whose hearts were married
 In a full congregation of angels?
 I know you will not say but such deserve
 To die. Yet, Marwood being dead, you reach
 Your fury to his heart that did this benefit. (V.ii.144-158)

The intensity of emotion which she expresses here is akin to that of Ardelia in Oddi's Erofilomachia V.iv wherein she berates Amico for his unkindness to her (see Chapter III).

¹ Marvin T. Herrick, Tragicomedy (Urbana 1955) pg.261.

² Herrick, pg.261.

³ in Beaumont and Fletcher Vol.II ed. J. St. Loe Strachey (London 1949).

⁴ Quoted in Herrick, pp.140-141.

⁵ Lee Bliss, "Defending Fletcher's Shepherds" in Studies in English Literature 23 (1983) pp.295-310.

⁶ V.M. Jeffery, "Italian Influences on Fletcher's *Faithful Shepherdess*" Modern Language Review XXI (1926) pp. 147-158.

⁷ Bliss, pp.300-302.

⁸ Bliss, pg.303.

⁹ in Beaumont and Fletcher Vol.I ed. J. St. Loe Strachey (London 1949).

¹⁰ Of particular note is the Intronati's Gl'Ingannati which, as well as featuring a transvestite page, shows Flaminio, like Philaster, in a violent rage when he hears that his mistress is in love with Fabio/Lelia.

¹¹ T.P. Harrison Jr., "A Probable Source of Beaumont and Fletcher's *Philaster*" Publications of the Modern Language Association of America 41 (1926) pp.294-303.

¹² Harrison, pg.295.

¹³ Herrick, pg.263.

¹⁴ Herrick, pg.268.

¹⁵ in Beaumont and Fletcher Vol.II ed. J. St. Loe Strachey (London 1949).

¹⁶ Beaumont and Fletcher A King and No King ed. Robert K. Turner, Jr. (London 1964) pp.xiii-xiv.

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- 17 In Works of Beaumont and Fletcher ed. Alexander Dyce (London 1844).
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- 21 Middleton, pp.247-248.
- 22 David George, "Thomas Middleton's Sources: A Survey" in Notes and Queries 216 (1971) pp.17-24.
- 23 Dyce, pp.259-260 fn.
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- 25 In The Plays and Poems of Philip Massinger Vol.IV ed. Philip Edwards and Colin Gibson (Oxford 1976)
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- 31 In Dramatic Works of Heywood Vol.V (London 1874).
- 32 In The Dramatic Works of John Ford Vol.1 ed. W. Gifford (London 1827).
- 33 James Shirley, The Wedding ed. Sister Martin Flavin (New York 1980) pp.23-25.
- 34 Flavin, pg.25.
- 35 Felix Schelling, in his Elizabethan Drama, 1558-1642 (London, 1908) Vol.II pg.315, indicates the plot of Shirley's The Gamester as deriving from Malespini's Ducento Noyelle and that of Love's Cruelty from Giraldis's Hecatommithi Book III.
- 36 Alfred Harbage, "Shirley's The Wedding and the marriage of Sir Kenelm Digby" in Philological Quarterly 16 (1937) pp.35-40.

CONCLUSION

While the non-tragic drama of the English Renaissance is evidently a native product in terms of its language, social conventions and sentiment, it is clear that the debt it owes to Italian literary tradition is great. This is not to deny the influence of other literatures than the Italian. The peace with Spain, for example, opened up a new range of sources to the English dramatists: Spanish *pastoral*, the *honor* school of Cape and Sword drama, the picaresque literary movement and, of course, *Don Quijote*. I have already indicated instances of Cervantes's Cardenio plot and Montemayor's *Diana* being used alongside Italianate material and Fletcher himself based no fewer than seventeen plays on Spanish sources.¹ French sources also played a part in the early seventeenth century, e.g. Belleforest and Montaigne, while the Restoration was to bring with it an influx of francophile sentiment which strongly affected the English theatre.

Rather than replacing the Italianate aspects of English theatre however, these other Continental influences, owing a similar debt to Italian sources and practice, tended to complement or modify them - the pastoral landscape as interpreted by Cervantes and Montemayor being a case in point. It is true that the changing times also played a part. Thus, for example, the Fop, in reflecting the fashionable values of the court of Charles II, was to gain a new prominence. Nevertheless, as we have observed with the Satirists, dramatists tended to construct their representations of contemporary society mainly on the basis of a pre-existing, largely Italianate typology: over and over the same types appear either as principals, mainly in the Satirical comedy, or, as in the Romantic comedy, as supporting characters to the central love plots. The main comic legacy of the Italian Theatrical Renaissance to the English Theatre was its cast-list.

While, from time to time, the Satirical comedy displays aspects of the *commedia grave*'s moral agenda (this is particularly true in the case of Jonson), its principal concerns lie in the holding-up of vice to the mirror of public gaze rather than in the presentation of moral exemplars. Accordingly, as noted above, we discern much in the way of Italianate typology but little of the high-toned moral ambience typical of a *controriformista* love

intrigue. It is left to Shakespeare and the Fletcherian tragicomic dramatists to develop their drama on the bases established by the likes of Giraldi, Tasso, Guarini and Sforza Oddi, and in so doing to transfer to the theatre of Protestant England some of the concerns and attitudes of the Catholic Counter-Reformation.

¹ See John Fletcher: A Study in Dramatic Method by Orie Latham Hatcher (Chicago 1905) p.48

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