

EARLY MODERN LITERARY STUDIES



**'I haue paid the Duty to the Sonne, which I haue vowed to the Father':
Serving the Father in John Ford's *'Tis Pity She's A Whore***

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Introduction

In his commentary on the body of critical responses to the play, Martin White observed that: '[d]espite the fact that it only occupies around a third of the running time, the majority of performances and critical responses to *'Tis Pity* (1633)¹ have focused on the incestuous relationship of Annabella and Giovanni and, in particular, the balance between approval and criticism in Ford's treatment of the characters'.² Even though the incestuous relationship at the centre of the play continues to receive attention out of proportion with the space it occupies in the play, as White suggests, there has recently been a turn away from this restrictive focus and an increasing openness to addressing other topics raised by the play. Questions of the play's relationship to the increasing interest in the period in the culture of anatomy and the interior of the human body,³ of gender, of its relationship to Catholicism,⁴ to the Sacrament of Penance, and of Ford's dramaturgy have been the focus

¹ There is no debate on the year of publication of the play, but there is little agreement among critics as to when it was written. The period of 1629-33 is accepted by many critics. Derek Roper, in his Introduction for his edition of the play, holds that it 'may have been written at virtually any date before 1633', p. xli. For a detailed account of the different opinions about the dating of the play, see Derek Roper, *'Tis Pity She's a Whore: John Ford* (London: Methuen, 1975), pp. xxxvii-xli.

² Martin White, *Ford, 'Tis Pity She's a Whore: A Guide to Text and the Play in Performance* (Houndmills: Palgrave MacMillan, 2012), p. 98. This obsessive interest in the incestuous relationship and what it potentially suggests about the playwright dates back to the late seventeenth century. In 1691, Gerard Langbaine objected to what he saw as Ford's too sympathetic attitude to the incestuous couple. See *An Account of the English Dramatic Poets* (London, 1691; reprinted Hildesheim, 1968), p. 222.

³ This interest has been fired by the publication of Jonathan Sawday's book, *The Body Emblazoned: Dissection and the Human Body in Renaissance Culture* (London: Routledge, 1996). See also Christian Billing, 'Modeling the Anatomy Theatre and the Indoor Hall Theatre: Dissection on the Stages of Early Modern London', *Early Modern Literary Studies*, Special Issue 13:3 (2004), pp. 1-17.

⁴ In *John Ford's Political Theatre* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1994), Lisa Hopkins argues for Ford's own catholic leanings. In the same vein, see also Laurel Amtower, "'This idol thou ador'st': The Iconography of *'Tis Pity She's a Whore*", *Papers on Language and Culture*, 34. 2 (1998), 189-93 (pp. 191-2).

of recent critical assessments.⁵ Ford's re-working of themes and characters found in earlier plays, notably *Romeo and Juliet*, *Othello*, and *Dr Faustus*, has proved a fruitful angle from which to examine the play.⁶ The incestuous relationship has itself been rescued from moral judgments and freshly approached as, in one instance, a trope for contemporary anxieties about alliances between different classes.⁷ Feminist readings of the play have focused on Annabella and her refusal of objectification in the marriage market.⁸ Emblem books and culture have been fruitfully drawn upon for the purpose of unpacking the image of the heart on the dagger that materializes in Act V, Scene vi, this approach having been first taken by Huston Diehl and later developed further by Michael Neill, whose work has enriched our understanding of the play's depiction of patriarchy and the assertion of masculine power over the dissected, hence subjected, female body.⁹ This brief overview of new directions the criticism of the play has taken demonstrates the long way it has come since Stuart Pratt Sherman condemned *'Tis Pity* as Ford's 'Contribution to the Decadence of the Drama' in 1908.¹⁰ Much of this criticism has illuminated the play and enriched our appreciation of it, and my intellectual debt to this scholarship will be apparent throughout this work and dutifully acknowledged. Ford's play, however, for me, still has a lot to say. Despite the fact that many aspects of the play, previously unattended to, have received attention, one particular aspect remains puzzlingly absent from critical accounts: the experience of household servants. Prominent and instrumental as they are in the play, the servants remain silent in criticism directed at it.¹¹ This article offers an original contribution to the already considerable body of critical responses to *'Tis Pity*, seeking to fill in this gap and address this lack.

⁵ See Lisa Hopkins (ed.), *'Tis Pity She's a Whore: A Critical Guide* (London: Continuum, 2010).

⁶ See Cyrus Hoy, "'Ignorance in Knowledge': Marlowe's Faustus and Ford's Giovanni', *Modern Philology*, 57:3 (1960), pp. 145-154; Richard Ide, 'Ford's *'Tis Pity She's a Whore* and the Benefits of Belatedness', In *Concord in Discord: The Plays of John Ford, 1586-1986*, ed. by Donald K. Anderson, Jr. (New York: AMS Press, 1986), pp. 61-86; Raymond Powell, 'The Adaptation of a Shakespearean Genre: *Othello* and Ford's *'Tis Pity She's a Whore*', *Renaissance Quarterly*, 48:3 (1995), 582-592; Introduction to Simon Barker's edition of *'Tis Pity She's a Whore* (London: Routledge, 1997), pp. 112-120.

⁷ See Terri Clerico, 'The Politics of Blood: John Ford's *'Tis Pity She's a Whore*', *English Literary Renaissance*, 22 (1992), 405-434.

⁸ See Pompa Banerjee, 'The Gift: Economies of Kinship and Sacrificial Desire', in *'Tis Pity She's a Whore'*, *Studies in the Humanities*, 29.2 (2002), pp. 137-49; Susannah B. Mintz, 'The Power of "Parity" in Ford's *'Tis Pity She's a Whore*', *The Journal of English and Germanic Philology*, 102:2 (2003), pp. 269-91.

⁹ See Huston Diehl, 'The Iconography of Violence in English Renaissance Tragedy', *Renaissance Drama*, 11 (1980), 27-44; Michael Neill, "'What Strange Riddle's This': Deciphering *'Tis Pity She's a Whore*", in Michael Neill, ed. *John Ford: Critical Re-visions* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), pp. 153-79. See also Lisa Hopkins, 'Speaking Sweat: Emblems in the Plays of John Ford', *Comparative Drama*, 29: 1 (1995), 133-46.

¹⁰ This appeared as an introduction to Willy Bang, *John Fordes Dramatische Werke*, in the series *Materialien Zur Kunde des alteren Englischen Dramas* (Kessinger Publishing, 1908).

¹¹ Roger Warren writes that it is '[i]n performance', rather than in critical accounts, that 'the servants in *'Tis Pity* emerge at least as strongly as the masters'. See Roger Warren, 'Ford in Performance', in *John Ford: Critical Re-visions*, ed. by Michael Neill (Cambridge: Cambridge University press, 1988), pp. 11-27 (p. 13).

The Institution of Domestic Service in Early Modern English Culture and Criticism

Domestic service occupied a central position in early modern English society, culture and thought systems. 'It could be said that service', as Peter Laslett writes, 'was practically a universal characteristic of pre-industrial English society'.¹² This was a society, according to Kevin Sharpe, 'organized around service relationships'.¹³ This idea was best captured by a contemporary moralist who stated: 'euen they who are superiours to some, are inferiours to others: [...] The master that hath seruants under him, may be vnder the authoritie of a Magistrate'.¹⁴ According to Michael Neill, when service is broadly understood, early modern society could be seen to have featured 'an unbroken chain that stretched from the lowliest peasant to the monarch (who himself owed service to God)'.¹⁵ Household service, the focus of this paper, was undertaken by, according to historians' estimates, no less than '60 per cent of the population aged fifteen to twenty-four'.¹⁶ They were to be found in 29 per cent of all households in the period.¹⁷

Who was the servant in early modern English thought? A contemporary divine offered a definition:

This title (*Seruants*) is a generall title, which may be applied to all such as by any outward ciuill bond, or right, owe their seruice to another: of what sex soeuer the persons themselues be: or of what kinde soeuer their seruitude is: whether more seruile or liberall. *Seruile*, as being borne seruants, or sold for seruants, or taken in warre, or ransomed; [...] *Liberall*, as being by voluntary contract made seruants, whether at will, as some seruing-men, iournie men, and labourers; or for a certaine terme of yeeres, as prentises, clearkes, and such like.¹⁸

The type of service that concerns me here is the second, the 'liberall', the one entered into as an act of free will. Servants, understood in this sense, were ubiquitous. They were, as Mark Thornton Burnett observes, 'perhaps the most distinctive socio-economic feature

¹² Peter Laslett, *The World We Have Lost: Further Explored* (London: Taylor & Francis e-Library, 2001), p. 19.

¹³ As in David Evett, *Discourses of Service in Shakespeare's England* (Houndmills: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), p. 19; David Schalkwyk, *Shakespeare, Love and Service* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), p. 19.

¹⁴ Gouge, sig. B3r.

¹⁵ Michael Neill (ed.), *Othello, the Moor of Venice* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), p. 161.

¹⁶ See Ann Kussmaul, *Servants in Husbandry in Early Modern England* (Cambridge: Press Syndicate of the University of Cambridge, 1981), p. 3; Laslett, pp. 13-16; Alan Bray, *Homosexuality in Renaissance England* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995), pp. 45, 51.

¹⁷ Mark Thornton Burnett, *Masters and Servants in English Renaissance Drama and Culture: Authority and Obedience* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1997), p. 1.

¹⁸ Gouge, sig. L8v.

of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century society'.¹⁹ Their ubiquity could be explained by the fact that those youths who met certain criteria were legally enjoined to serve. The 1563 Statute of Artificers stipulated that

every person being unmarried, and [...] under thage of thirtie yeres [...] and not havinge landes, Thenementes, Rentes or Heredyamentes, Copyholde or Freholde, of one estate of inherytaunce, [...] nor havinge a convenyent ferme, or other holdinge in tyllage, whereupon he maye employe his Labor, shall [...] be reteyned and shall not refuse to serue according to the tenor of this statute, uppon the payne and penaltie hereafter mencioned.²⁰

Household servants occupied positions that ranged widely from the humblest kitchen maid to the officials of the noble and aristocratic households, stewards, gentlemen ushers and ladies-in-waiting, pulled from the ranks of the gentry and nobility.²¹ In this paper, guided by the servant characters who populate the play under examination, I am not interested in the high ranking domestic servants and officials, but in those lowest members in the household hierarchy, the servants who attended sick beds, nursed their masters when infants, dressed and undressed them for bed and for social interactions, carried messages, answered doors, warmed beds, lit fires, and were ever at their masters' and mistresses' beck and call.

As R. C. Richardson has observed, 'Drama of the early modern period [...] has a distinctive way of pushing servants into a prominence that most other sources conceal or deny'.²² This important observation has both built on and led to fruitful investigations of parts of servants in early modern drama. In foregrounding and re-positioning centre-stage the roles of servants in Ford's play, I participate in those critical efforts that are being exerted for the purpose of writing history from below, of recovering the stories of the marginalized, the voiceless and the vanished. My project is enabled by the combined efforts of previous literary critics, social historians, and researchers of the private and the domestic who have enriched our understanding of the meanings of early modern service, domesticity, and privacy.

¹⁹ Burnett, p. 1.

²⁰ R. H. Tawney and Eileen Power (eds.), 'An Acte towching dyvers Orders for Artificers Laborers Servantes of Husbandrye and Apprentises', in *Tudor Economic Documents: Being Select Documents Illustrating the Economic and Social History of Tudor England*. Vol. 1 (London and New York: Longmans, Green, 1924), pp. 339-340.

²¹ Burnett, p. 1.

²² R. C. Richardson, 'Social Engineering in Early Modern England: Masters, Servants, and the Godly Discipline', *Clio*, 33:2 (2004), 163-87 (p. 163).

The centrality of the institution of service to early modern English culture and literature has only recently begun to attract critical attention. Before 2000, only two critics had explored the topic. Mark Thornton Burnett pioneered research into the area with *Masters and Servants in English Renaissance Drama and Culture: Authority and Obedience* (1997), in which he drew on an extensive list of primary texts, employing a cultural materialistic approach to explore master-servant relationships in early modern non-Shakespearean plays and popular literature. As Burnett's subtitle reveals, he was pre-occupied with balances of power, authority and subordination between master and servant, configuring the relationship chiefly as one of exploitation on the master's part and resentment and resistance on the servant's. Michael Neill, in a similar vein, produced essays that drew attention to the centrality of relationships of service to Shakespeare's *Othello*, *King Lear* and *Hamlet*, and the corresponding importance of the institution of service to early modern English society and culture. The year 2005 saw three publications that examined the topic in the works of Shakespeare, significantly modifying our understanding of it. David Evett's *Discourses of Service in Shakespeare's England* alerted us to the rather reductionist framework within which Burnett and Neill confined the master-servant relationship. Evett drew attention to the fact that the relationship was not necessarily exploitative or fraught with feelings of resentment and dissatisfaction, but rather potentially based on mutual love, respect and loyalty. He argued that servants mostly entered service by an act of free will or, 'volitional primacy', as he put it,²³ emphasizing the fact that a period spent in service was viewed by contemporaries as a transitional, educational phase that prepared the young person to be a master or mistress in his or her own household later on.²⁴ Evett's book coincided with the publication of Linda Anderson's *A Place in the Story: Servants and Service in Shakespeare's Plays*, a study of the servant characters in the entire Shakespearean canon that made it its aim to address the 'lack of attention paid to the role of servants' in early modern drama.²⁵ Alongside Evett's study, Anderson's work threw light on the limiting approach of authority and resistance that was earlier employed to explore early modern literary output, arguing that it rendered critics who used it generally 'oblivious' to representations of virtuous, obedient servants.²⁶ Judith Weil's *Servants and Dependency in Shakespeare's*

²³ Evett, p. 185.

²⁴ Walter Darell instructed servants in 1578: 'We may not thinke to liue alwayes in seruice, but at the last to haue house and familie of our owne: then the experience which we haue learned through our diligence, shall instruct vs the better, what belongeth to the duetie of our owne seruantes'. See *A short discourse of the life of seruingmen*, sig. C1r. A number of early modern proverbs communicated the same notion: 'One must be a Servant before he can be a master'; 'He that has not Served knows not how to command'. See Morris Palmer Tilley, ed., *A Dictionary of the Proverbs in England in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries: A Collection of the Proverbs Found in English Literature and the Dictionaries of the Period* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 1966), p. 593.

²⁵ Linda Anderson, *A Place in the Story: Service and Servants in Shakespeare's Plays* (Cranbury: Associated University Press, 2005), p. 9.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 27.

Plays appeared in the same year, examining relationships of service in twelve Shakespearean plays in light of other types of early modern relationships of dependency—those of wives upon husbands, of children upon parents, and of friends upon one another. The same year saw the appearance of *The Shakespeare International Yearbook*, edited by Michael Neill, dedicating its annual section to the exploration of themes summed up in its title, ‘Shakespeare and the Bonds of Service’. ‘In a single year’, as David Schalkwyk observes, all these publications helped establish the topic of the service relationship in the Shakespearean canon as ‘a major issue in its own right’.²⁷

In what follows, I explore contemporary theorization of the roles of domestic servants, what moralists and commentators conceived of as the servants’ duties—what, in a sense, were the job description and personal qualifications of the youth entering service. I put together this picture by examining surviving early modern documents and writings on the domestic and by exploring contemporary ideologies and discourses informing the institution of domestic service: household manuals, domestic guides, treatises, sermons, conduct books, and advice literature. It has to be acknowledged, though, that such primary materials have their limitations. They offer an image of the *ideal*, rather than the real; the desired, rather than the actual and lived. ‘It cannot be assumed’, as Susan Dwyer Amussen writes, ‘that people acted just as the theoretical writers would have wished’. ‘[T]he didactic literature’, however, she reflects, ‘provides at least a framework for their [people’s] behaviour’.²⁸ It is exactly this ‘framework’ of behaviour, the ideal and the wished for, that I want to re-construct for the purpose of reading the servants’ roles in the play against the expected.

Domestic Servants’ Duty to Obey

One particular duty of servants that conduct literature, domestic guides, and household manuals circulating in the early modern period stressed was that of obedience. Time and again, servants were urged to *obey* their masters: obedience was ‘their maine, and most peculiar function’, as the moralist William Gouge put it in 1622.²⁹ This duty of obedience was not only to be performed to just and kind masters, but also to unkind ones. Writers on the household repeatedly drew on the Bible to make this point: ‘servauntes obeye your Maisters with all feare, not onely if they be good and curteous, but also thogh they be

²⁷ Schalkwyk, p. 4.

²⁸ Susan Dwyer Amussen, *An Ordered Society: Gender and Class in Early Modern England* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988), p. 7.

²⁹ Gouge, sig. Qq6v.

frowarde'.³⁰ Servants were defined by their position of subjection in relation to their masters: William Perkins, an influential puritan divine, for example, defined the servant in 1609 as 'a person in the family subiect vnto his master'.³¹ For Perkins, the servant's identity was synonymous with his or her social inferiority and subjection to the master. Early modern discourses of service configured the household servant as subsumed into the master's social identity: 'for the time that the seruant hath couenanted to be a seruant with his master [...] a seruant is part of his masters goods, and possessions', Gouge stated, emphasizing the object-like status of the servant and the master's claim to ownership of the servant as long as the service relationship stands.³² Writing in 1613, Thomas Fosset described the servant as the master's 'alter ego'. '[A] domestic servant', he elaborated, 'is [...] another my selfe'.³³

Emphasizing the loss of the servant's individual will for the duration of the service relationship, Fosset stipulated that the servant ought to

be in subiection, to haue no will of his owne, nor power ouer him selfe, but wholly to reseigne himselfe to the will of his Master, and this is to obey; for what is obedience, but [...] a voluntarie reasonable sacrificing of a mans [*sic*] owne will, voluntarily, freely, and without any constraint.³⁴

In the same vein, Thomas Overbury wrote in 1616: 'A Seruing-man *IS* a creature which though he be not drunken, yet is not his owne man. Hee tels without asking who owns him, by the superscription of his liuerie [...] he values himselfe higher or lower, as his master is'.³⁵ The servant had no identity other than that of being his or her master's servant: the servant's very definition of self depended, according to Overbury, on the status and social standing of the master—how 'high' or 'low' in the social hierarchy a servant was to count himself depended on the status of the household to which he had attached himself in service.

An important symbol of the servant's loss of independence and of his or her subsumption into the master's identity was the livery to which Overbury refers. The practice of providing household servants with livery was, as Peter Stallybrass's research reveals,

³⁰ See, for example, John Jewel, *The second tome of homilees* (1571), sig. Mm3r.

³¹ William Perkins, *Christian oeconomie: or, A short survey of the right manner of erecting and ordering a familie according to the scriptures* (1609), sig. L6v.

³² Gouge (1622), sig. Vv4r.

³³ Thomas Fosset, *The servants dvtye or the calling and condition of servants* (London: G. Eld, 1613), sig. C6v.

³⁴ Fosset, sig. B7v.

³⁵ Thomas Overbury, *Sir Thomas Ouerburie his wife with new elegies vpon his (now knowne) vntimely death: whereunto are annexed, new newes and characters* (London: Edward Griffin, 1616), sig. E1r.

attended to by all but the most impoverished of early modern households.³⁶ Originally encompassing sustenance, lodging, and apparel provided by the household master, in the early modern period, livery came to refer solely to clothes,³⁷ *marked* clothes,³⁸ that inscribed the servant's situation of dependency on his body. (Francis Bacon classified livery among 'badges of factious dependence'.)³⁹ Livery, as Catherine Richardson writes, 'stitched' the servant to a certain household.⁴⁰ In an age when clothes constituted identity, when the monarch became the monarch by putting on the robes of monarchy,⁴¹ the moment that a young person put on the livery was one of transformation: a servant was created and an identity of subordination formed. Wearing the livery was '[a] gesture of incorporation', to borrow Catherine Richardson's phrase.⁴² Clothed in livery, the servant became visually subsumed into the 'social body'⁴³ of the master.

The servant's duty to obey the master, as critics have recently shown us (notably, David Evett), did not necessarily define the relationship as one of exploitation, coercion and subsequent resentment, nor did it exclude the possibility of affection and warmth in the service relationship.⁴⁴ Master-servant relationships, at least theoretically as is suggested by many household guides, could be based on mutual love, respect and loyalty. In fact, this was the ideal that preachers recommended to masters and servants. John Dod and Robert Cleaver specifically instruct servants to 'learne what dutie they owe to their maisters, mistresses, and dames: namely, to loue them, and to be affectioned towards

³⁶ Peter Stallybrass, 'Worn Worlds: Clothes and Identity on the Renaissance Stage', in *Subject and Object in Renaissance Culture*, ed. by Margreta de Grazia, Maureen Quilligan and Peter Stallybrass (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), pp. 289-320. Surviving household accounts suggest that early modern masters spent lavishly on their servants' livery: Ralph Josselin, a seventeenth-century householder, paid his servants an average of about £2. 10s. a year, but he spent £10 a year on their livery. See *Clothing Culture, 1350-1650*, ed. by Catherine Richardson (Hampshire: Ashgate, 2004), p. 19. Amanda Bailey's research conducted on sixteenth-century household records revealed that 'grants of livery were "more than adequate"' and the value of finery awarded to servants often far surpassed the total value of their wages'. See 'Livery and its Discontents: Braving it in *The Taming of the Shrew*', *Renaissance Drama*, 33 (2004), 87-135 (p. 92).

³⁷ Schalkwyk, p. 113; Richardson, p. 5.

³⁸ Amanda Bailey writes: 'Livery in the narrowest sense referred exclusively to the marked or colored clothing worn by household servants' (p. 78). But livery did not *have* to be marked, 'any "gift" of clothing from master to servant counted as livery in the broad sense—as did food and lodging'. See Stallybrass, p. 205.

³⁹ Stallybrass, p. 290.

⁴⁰ Richardson, p. 78.

⁴¹ *Ibid*, p. 2.

⁴² *Ibid*, p. 5. This idea is registered in Gervase Markham's report that a master, incensed at a servant, would undress the man, stripping him of connection to the household, and thrust him out of doors: 'off goes the Lyuerie-Coate, or Cloake, and packe out of my doores you arrant knaue, I wyll haue your betters to beare more then this at my hands'. See Gervase Markham, *A health to the gentlemanly profession of seruimgmen; or, The seruimgmans comforts* (1598), sig. I2v.

⁴³ Richardson, p. 18. See also Schalkwyk, p. 113.

⁴⁴ See Evett.

them, as a dutifull child is to his father'.⁴⁵ This configuration of the master-servant relationship as a parent-child one, suggestive of not only warmth, but also of the parent's right to instruct the child and guide its steps out of love and care is particularly relevant to the master-servant relationships that Ford dramatizes, as I shall show.

Despite the subjection to the master's will that early modern ideologies of service instructed the servant in, obedience was not absolute. First, masters had to earn the obedience of their servants. A master to whom obedience was due was one who is 'able well to rule his owne house [...]', as William Gouge held.⁴⁶ The master's ability to exercise his authority was a prerequisite for servants' obedience and faithful service, for '[n]ot one seruant of a thousand, that is not kept vnder authoritie, will doe good service'.⁴⁷ In order to deserve their servants' obedience, 'masters', as Gouge elaborates, ought to 'carrie themselves worthy of their place, and worthy of that honour which is due to them: which may best be done by making themselves a patterne of such good things as in their places appertaine to them'.⁴⁸ Household masters, by definition, according to Dod and Cleaver, are ones who 'by diligent instruction and good example, [...] bring vp their seruants and housholds, in honestie and comely manners, and in all vertue'.⁴⁹

Second, contemporary preachers stressed the fact that obedience to one's household master was limited and qualified, and that service was distinguished into good and bad. Should a servant obey an evil order? was one of the questions frequently posed in early modern household guides and manuals—a fact which perhaps suggests that service relationships were being abused, with servants being made to perform corrupt service and masters stepping beyond the limits of their authority. Masters and servants were repeatedly urged to recognize some line separating good service from bad and marking the limits of masters' authority and servants' subjection: 'for if the *dominion* of the one be *limited*, so must the obedience of the other', Mathew Griffith wrote in 1633.⁵⁰ Limits were drawn in accordance with religious restrictions: any order that contradicted God's commands was neither to be issued by masters nor obeyed by servants. In such cases, disobedience was encouraged: '[L]et vs belieue vndoubtedly', the Archbishop of Canterbury, Thomas Cranmer, instructed, 'that we may not obey Kynges, Magistrates, or any other (though thei be our awne fathers) if thei would co[m]maunde vs to do any thyng,

⁴⁵ John Dod and Robert Cleaver, *A godly forme of houshold government* (London: Felix Kingston, 1598), sig. Aa5r.

⁴⁶ Gouge, sig. Tt5v.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Dod and Cleaver, sig., Z6v.

⁵⁰ Matthew Griffith, *Bethel, or A forme for families* (London: Ro. Allott and Hen, 1633), sig. Cc2r.

contrary to Gods co[m]maundeme[n]tes'.⁵¹ Dod and Cleaver emphasized the need for obedience to be qualified, stating: 'seruants are straightly charged, reuerently, and faithfully to obey their bodily maisters, mistresses, and dames, in all things which may be done without offence to God';⁵² 'if their maisters shall command them to do any thing that is vn honest, vnlawful, wicked, vniust, or vngodly, then they must in no wise obey it'.⁵³

Baldassare Castiglione's highly influential *The Book of the Courtier* (published in Italian in 1528; translated into English in 1561), considered the issue within a courtly context: a question as to 'whether a gentleman is obliged to obey the prince he is serving in everything that may be commanded, even if it is dishonourable or shameful' is answered: 'In dishonourable things we are not bound to obey anyone'.⁵⁴ A more detailed question, 'if I were in the service of a prince who treated me well and was confident that I would do everything possible for him, and he were to command me to go and kill a certain person, or something of the sort, should I refuse?', is met with no less decisive a recommendation for disobedience: 'not only are you not obliged to do it but you are obliged not to do it, both for your own sake and to avoid ministering to your master's shame'.⁵⁵ In this rhetoric, the servant is endued with a sense of personal judgment to recognize that carrying out this kind of service will bring the master shame. The servant is empowered to act on his or her own judgment as a form of obedience and duty to the master, rather than as one of disobedience. Obedient service in this context only guarantees the master's shame. Disobedience, on the other hand, protects the master's reputation ('to avoid ministering to your master's shame') and saves the servant's credit ('for your own sake'). The servant, in other words, who was supposed to be subsumed in his master's identity, is put here in a superior moral position to his master and granted the right to decide what serves the interests of his master and himself best.

'The master is to rule ouer the seruant in iustice', Perkins insisted, clarifying that 'Iustice' does not include orders that 'will not sta[n]d with the course of nature, with the abilitie of [the] seruant, or with the word of God'.⁵⁶ If a servant is given an order that falls under any of these categories, his or her duty is to disobey, 'for in these cases a man must rather obey God then man'.⁵⁷ '[K]now', Matthew Griffith instructed servants, 'that his [a master's] command, or his profit is no warrant for thee, that art his servant, to say or doe

⁵¹ Thomas Cranmer, *Certaine sermons, or homelies appoynted by the kynges Maiestie, to be declared and redde, by all persones, vicars, or curates, euery Sondaye in their churches* (1547), sig. S1v.

⁵² Dod and Cleaver, sig. Aa5r.

⁵³ Ibid., sig. Aa6v.

⁵⁴ Baldassare Castiglione, *The Book of the Courtier*. Trans. George Bull (London: Penguin, 1967), p. 131.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Perkins, sig. L5v.

⁵⁷ Ibid, sig. L8r.

what is unjust'.⁵⁸ Servants 'must please and obey', of course, 'but in the Lord, in all good, honest and lawfull things, so far as the Lord in his word doth will, command, or giue them leaue [...] and no further'.⁵⁹

Such injunctions place God's will above a master's and instruct servants in the priority of the first. The spiritual equality between masters and servants and their collective subjection to one master constituted two of the tenets of the early modern ideologies of service making the servant as much as the master individually responsible before God and, hence, creating a space for the servant to exercise his or her agency and lawfully refuse to obey. William Gouge is representative. There is, he stated,

an equality betwixt masters and seruants in relation to God. As God is the masters (sic) of seruants, so he is the master of masters *also*. As seruants are the Lords *freemen*, so masters are the Lords *seruants*. In this respect they who are made rulers, and they who are vnder them, are called *fellow seruants*. For howsoeuer in outward dignity there is great difference betwixt master and seruant, yet as the seruants of God they are of a like condition.⁶⁰

Commentators' instructions to servants to disobey orders they judge 'wicked', 'vn honest', or 'vnjust' and contending that a master's order is no excuse for performing evil service, however, *subvert* other tenets of these same early modern ideologies of service. For the servant to decide what counted as 'vnlawful' or 'wicked', he or she had to exercise personal judgment, to rely on a definition of right and wrong, good and bad, which might not accord with his or her master's. The servant had, in other words, to claim a space of individuality and independent judgment usually denied him or her in early modern discourses of service that preached the loss of the servant's independence of identity and his or her incorporation into that of the master.⁶¹ This gap in the service ideologies does not seem to have bothered preachers, moralists and other commentators.

As well as instructing servants in the duty to disobey when given an evil order, early modern commentators reminded masters that their authority was limited and circumscribed by divine laws: 'Masters are but subordinate ministers vnder God: they must therefore command nothing against his law'; 'when [they] command and forbid any thing against God, they goe beyond their commission, and therein their authoritie

⁵⁸ Griffith, sig. Cc2r.

⁵⁹ Fosset, sigs. C5v-C6r.

⁶⁰ Gouge, sig. Yy2r.

⁶¹ Gouge anticipated objection to his description of the servants' inferiority, stating: 'A politipue [sic] inequality is not against a spirituall equality'. See *ibid*, sig. Qq1r.

ceaseth'.⁶² Being recognized as a master, then, was, in one sense, dependent on the master's willingness to abide by God's limits; going beyond God's laws stripped the master of authority and entitled the servant to refuse obedience: 'in no vnlawfull thing may he [the servant] obey'.⁶³

Servants in *'Tis Pity She's a Whore*

These ideologies prescribing ideal behaviour on the parts of household servants frame the portrayal of servants in *'Tis Pity She's a Whore*, not only when the servants follow them, but also when they transgress them: Poggio, Putana, and Vasques mostly serve their masters loyally, support their choices, safeguard their interests, lament their misfortunes and, in the case of Vasques, fulfil the master's desire for avenging his honour when he can no longer do so himself. All three servants face similar difficulties in their relationships with their masters, and all decide to act in similar ways. Faced with masters who are less than the examples of virtue, wisdom, and chastity that contemporary moralists envisioned, the servants do not pause to ponder about the lawfulness of service rendered to wicked or otherwise defective masters, continuing to serve their respective masters while also managing to achieve some sort of personal satisfaction out of that service, material or otherwise. Poggio finds himself in the service of a foolish, 'innocent' master (sig. B4r; I.ii.130),⁶⁴ who behaves more like a child than a master. Their relationship seems to turn prescribed dynamics of the master-servant relationship upside down, thus, far from being a mere 'comic relief', as some critics of the play have described it,⁶⁵ it serves as a parallel to the more developed and, thus, more dramatically important relationships of Putana and Annabella as well as Soranzo and Vasques. Vasques finds himself in the service of an adulterer, a vow breaker, a deceptive and scheming master who does not hesitate to give orders that go against God's laws, asking for no less than the murder of his wife's lover. Vasques does not hesitate to prioritize obedience to his master's wicked orders, from which he seems to gain some sort of satisfaction, over contemporary injunctions to lawful disobedience to such a master.

⁶² Gouge, sigs. Tt7v; Ss7v.

⁶³ Ibid, sig. Tt7v.

⁶⁴ John Ford, *Tis pittie shee's a whore Acted by the Queenes Maiesties Seruants, at the Phaenix in Drury-Lane* (London: Nicholas Okes, 1633). All subsequent references are to this edition of the play, unless otherwise stated, and are given in brackets.

⁶⁵ Donald K. Anderson, Jr., for example, describes Bergetto as being 'intended as a comical booby', who is 'more tiresome than funny and does not serve as an effective parallel or foil to either Giovanni or Soranzo'. See *John Ford* (New York: Twayne, 1972), p. 105. Arthur C. Kirsch calls the scenes involving Bergetto and Poggio 'low comedy,' contending that they do not have relevance to the play. See *Jacobean Dramatic Perspectives* (Charlottesville: The University of Press of Virginia, 1972), p. 121. Earlier on in the twentieth-century, Muriel Bradbrook held that there is no connection between the play's comic and serious characters. See *Themes and Conventions of Elizabethan Tragedy* (Cambridge: CUP, 1935), p. 256.

Putana, finding herself in the service of a similarly transgressive mistress, makes the same decision to remain faithful and obedient while at the same time, like Vasques, making sure she benefits from the situation. Annabella, Putana's mistress, in engaging in incest with her brother, Giovanni, challenges God's laws forbidding incest (as Ford's powerful opening scene, outlining the position of religion on the question of incest, eloquently shows), thus proving to be no godly mistress or exemplar of chastity and, hence, potentially loses her right to her servant's obedience. Like Poggio and Vasques, however, Putana remains at her mistress's side, paying a high price for her subscription to that mistress's bid for feminine independence and self-ownership and, especially, for the deconstruction of patriarchy and patriarchal ties that the incestuous relationship constitutes.

The relationship of service between Poggio and Bergetto displays certain elements that are picked up and developed by the other two service relationships in the play. Poggio's master, like Vasques's and Putana's, has departed from conventionally accepted and moralistically prescribed notions of masterly behaviour and proper bearing: Bergetto, Poggio's master, is the fool of the play. He is described by his uncle as an '[a]sse' (sig. C3r; I.ii.79; sig. E2v; II.vi.76), an 'innocent' person (sig. B4r; I.ii.130; sig. C3r; I.iii.85), a '[c]oxcombe' (sig. E2v; II.vi.58), one who 'wu't marre whatsoever I [the uncle] make' (sig. D4r; II.iv.4), one who carries 'a fooles head o'thy owne' (sig. D4r; II.iv.7). Bergetto is described by Putana, looking down with her mistress from an upper level platform theatrically imagined as Annabella's balcony, as a 'brave ape in a silken coat', suggesting the wearer's lack of worth and dignity. Annabella calls him an '[i]deot' (sig. B4r; I.ii.122). For most of his appearances, always in the company of Poggio, Bergetto is portrayed as a child after whom Poggio looks diligently, performing the role of guardian and father. In his first appearance in Act I, Scene ii, Bergetto, tapping into the innocence of a child proud of his new outfit, asks his servant while commenting on the violent opening events of the scene: 'Did'st thou thinke *Poggi[o]*, that I would spoyle my / New cloathes, and leaue my dinner to fight [?]' (sig. B3v; I.ii.106-7). Bergetto is so childish that he marvels at hobby-horses and other seemingly magical shows ('And this fellow has a strange horse [...] whose head, to the wonder of all Christian people, stands just behind where his tail is', he describes a performance he witnessed to his uncle (sig. C2v; I.iii.37-40) who ridicules it as mere 'motions and fopperies' (sig. D4v; II.v.43-4)). Bergetto is called outright a 'great Baby' by his uncle (sig. C2v; I.iii.47). In the face of an act of aggression he suffers at the hands of a stranger in the street, Bergetto's reaction is to weep, 'see[ing] the blood runne about mine eares [...] I could not choose but finde in my heart to cry' (sig. E2v; II.vi.78-80). Indicative of his child-like character, Bergetto feels elated at receiving a 'box of Mermalade' as a gift (sig. E3v; III.i.12). Bergetto's foolishness is demonstrated best in his encounters with the wealthy lady his uncle intends to get him

married to: he writes to her that he ‘can board [i.e. mount sexually] where I see occasion’, ‘I will marry you in spight of your teeth; [...] commending my best parts to you [the genital sense present]’ (sig. D4r; II.iv.24, 26-7). Poggio reports that, meeting the lady, ‘my Maister said, that hee loued her almost a[s] well as hee loued Parmasent [cheese]’, assuring her ‘that shee wanted but such a Nose as his was, to be as pretty a young woeman, as any was in *Parma*’ (sig. C3r; I.iii.60-3). All these details combine to produce an image of a master who has departed from conventional masterly behaviour, a master who is childish, foolish and far from being the parent figure that moralists envisioned masters to embody.

In the company of this master, Poggio, foreshadowing other servants in the play, not only remains loyal, but also playfully reverses the conventional dynamics of the servant-master relationship, acting as a parent rather than the child-like servant that commentators conceived of as being the servant’s role, as we saw earlier. Acting like an authority figure, Poggio both cares for his master’s welfare and censors him, supports him emotionally and polices his behaviour, obeys and instructs him, comforts and mocks him: in Act I, Scene ii, as the two are being watched by Putana and her mistress from above, Poggio mocks his master’s foolishness and affected manner of walking: ‘Marke my pace, Poggio’, Bergetto requests his servant’s approval, only to receive the insulting answer: ‘Sir I haue seene an Asse, and a Mule trot the Spannish [p]auin with a better grace, I know not how often’ (sig. B4r; I.ii.119-121)—a reply that disturbs conventional master-servant dynamics. Learning of his master’s plan to choose a wife for himself against his uncle’s wishes, Poggio instructs Bergetto: ‘let him [i.e. the uncle] not bobbe you off like an Ape with an apple’, encouraging his master’s bid to autonomy (sig. E3v; III.i.3). Poggio, foreshadowing another relationship of subverted master-servant dynamics in the play, sharpens his master’s resolve: ‘there’s no way but to clap vp a marriage in hugger mugger’, ‘should you be afraid of your Vnkle?’ (sigs. E3v-E4r; III.i.13-4, 18). He even gives his master a direct order: ‘lose no time’ (E4r; III.i.20). A parent figure, Poggio also offers emotional support to his master against the demeaning and insulting attitudes of the community of Parma: In Act I, Scene iii, Poggio verifies his master’s stories about the wonders of the town in the face of the sarcastic uncle: ‘Yes indeede Sir’, ‘So the Barber swore for sooth’ (sig. C2v; I.iii.32, 42). Poggio, like a concerned mother of an ailing child, offers advice to his perplexed master: when Bergetto complains of ‘a monstrous swelling about my stomacke’, Poggio advises: ‘You shall haue Phisick for’t sir’ (sig. F3r; III.iv.45-7). The mother-like role of Poggio, subversive of the prescribed dynamics of master/parent and servant/child as it is, is picked up again at the moment of Bergetto’s mistaken murder: In Act III, Scene vii, witnessing his master’s final moments, Poggio frantically laments: ‘Oh my Maister, my Maister, my Maister’ (sig. G1r; III.viii.37). It is indicative of the warmth and affection of this relationship that when

Bergetto is thus stabbed, he calls out not to his betrothed who is present at the moment on stage, but to his servant: 'Poggio' (sig. F4v; III.vii.9), dying with Poggio's name on his lips, 'Poggio—Oh—Oh—' (sig. G1r; III.viii.33). Significantly, in a masterly detail that foreshadows another servant's bid for justice for his murdered master, it is Poggio who knocks at the gate of the Cardinal's house, to which Bergetto's murderer has fled, successfully gaining sanctuary, to ask for justice: 'knock someone at the gate', the dead Bergetto's uncle instructs. It is Poggio's hand that does the knocking: 'I'll knocke sir' (sig. G1v; III.ix.25). Poggio's demand for justice for his wronged master goes unheard, the Cardinal prioritizing offering shelter to the 'nobly borne' murderer over avenging the innocent victim (sig. G2r; III. ix.57). Poggio disappears from the play at this point, theatrically 'dying' with his master, but this element of this service relationship, the servant's bid to avenge the wronged master, the hand knocking at the gate of justice to demand retribution, among others, gets picked up later on by another servant to successful ends, as we shall see.

Many aspects of the service relationship between Poggio and his master are picked up and developed further in Putana's relationship with her mistress, Annabella. Like Poggio, Putana makes the decision to remain by her mistress's side, despite the fact that Annabella, by engaging in incest with her brother, Giovanni, has departed from the ideal of the exemplary virtuous mistress set forth in conduct literature. Considerably older than her mistress, Putana is visually a mother figure: the servant describes herself as being old and experienced in reading female bodies, having lived in one such body for a long time. Informing the startled Giovanni that his sister is pregnant with their child, Putana cites her own experience and old years as an authoritative source of knowledge: 'How doe I know't? am I at these yeeres ignorant, what the meaning's of Quames, and Waterpangs be? [...] shee is quick vpon my word' (sig. F1v; III.iii.10-5). Putana is described as an 'old Mistresse' (sig. H3r; IV.iii.175) and later denigrated as an 'old [...] hagge' (sig. H4r; IV.iii.226). Called 'Tutresse' (sig. B3r; I.ii.68) and 'Guardian' by Annabella (sig. C4r; II.i.43), her '[c]hardge' (sig. B3r; I.ii.66), Putana treats her mistress as a child in need of instruction and guidance. Indeed, one of her first few words in the play are addressed to her mistress, asking for her opinion about the suitors vying for her hand, in just these terms: 'How like you this child?' (sig. B3r; I.ii.64). Foreshadowing Poggio's lament for his master's misfortune, Putana, like a concerned mother, bursts on stage when she learns of her mistress's pregnancy, lamenting to Giovanni: 'Oh that euer I was borne to see this day' (sig. F1v; III.iii.4).

A mostly loyal servant, Putana wholeheartedly supports her mistress's decision to enter an incestuous relationship with her brother, strengthening her resolve and banishing her fears:

why now I commend thee (*Chardge*) feare nothing, (sweetheart) what though
hee be your Brother; your Brother's a man I hope, and I say still, if a young
Wench feele the fitt vpon her, let her take any body, Father or Brother, all is one.
(sig. C4r; II.i.45-9)

Critics of the play have often read Putana's support of her mistress's incestuous relationship as, to cite a couple of examples, indicative of the servant's 'unscrupulous *mores*' and 'easy morality'.⁶⁶ She is described by Lisa Hopkins as 'venal'. Annabella's mere appearance with her on the balcony in Act I, Scene ii suggests to Hopkins that the mistress is 'already associated with taint'.⁶⁷ I, however, want to offer a new reading. Acknowledging that Putana is not represented as an epitome of faithful, devoted and selfless service (she gives a false promise to Donado, Bergetto's uncle, without her mistress's knowledge, to promote his nephew to her mistress in return for personal gain in Act II, Scene vi, for example), I believe that Ford does place emphasis on Putana's support of her mistress. Building on feminist readings of Annabella, notably Marcel Mauss's work which argues that her role is active and self-chosen, the result of her agency, I read Putana's support of her mistress as a form of standing by that woman's right to exercise agency.⁶⁸ Mauss writes that through her relationship with her brother, Annabella refuses 'to remain an object of passive masculine exchange between her father, her brother Giovanni, and her husband Soranzo'.⁶⁹ In her subscription to her mistress's right to sexual pleasure – 'if a young Wench feele the fitt vpon her' – Putana, I argue, upholds her mistress's sexual autonomy and ownership of her body—her placing of her self, to borrow a phrase from Susannah B. Mintz's reading of the play, outside 'the conventionally patriarchal acts' around her.⁷⁰ Putana's discourse seems to deconstruct patriarchy—father and brother are mere men in Putana's rhetoric—to undo the father's and brother's patriarchal authority over the 'young Wench'. Putana's statement renders father and brother, the patriarchs, equals, men with whom a woman can engage in a relationship based on her right to satisfy her urges, as opposed to the unequal patriarchal relationship based on men's right to own a daughter's or a sister's body as a form of sexual property to be exchanged in the marriage market. Mintz has written about the way Annabella's love for her brother 'symbolizes [...] "parity of condition", a way of relating to self and other that protests both paternal authority and a patriarchal sexual economy in

⁶⁶ Corinne S. Abate, 'New Directions: Identifying the Real Whore of Parma', in *'Tis Pity She's a Whore: A Critical Guide*, ed. by Lisa Hopkins (London: Continuum, 2010), pp. 94-113 (p. 99); White, p. 65.

⁶⁷ Lisa Hopkins, 'New Directions: *'Tis Pity She's a Whore* and the Space of the Stage', in Hopkins (2010), pp. 152-67 (p. 158).

⁶⁸ For a reading of Annabella as, on the contrary, passive and lacking in agency, see Catherine Silverstone, 'Fatal Attractions: Desire, Anatomy and Death in *'Tis Pity She's a Whore*', in Hopkins (2010), pp. 77-93 (p. 82).

⁶⁹ Banerjee, pp. 140-1.

⁷⁰ Mintz, p. 275.

which women are exchanged between men'.⁷¹ Putana's discourse is empowering to Annabella particularly because of the dominant ideological atmosphere of the Parma that Ford puts on stage.

Ford's Parma, as several critics have observed, is a highly patriarchal society. Marion Lomax has written that 'in *'Tis Pity* women associated with dangerous sexual passions are controlled through the mutilation of their bodies'.⁷² Alison Findlay has, similarly, observed the way women in the play are restricted in their choices and how Annabella, for instance, is reduced to 'negotiat[ing] a pathway between the various roles laid out for her by the male characters'.⁷³ In Parma, respectable women of marriageable age are cloistered in fathers' houses, kept behind doors, confined to balconies from which, concealed, they can view their suitors and experience themselves as objects of exchange between father and future husband (see Annabella in Act I, Scene ii). While Florio, Annabella's father, promises that he will 'match her to her liking', that he 'would not haue her marry Wealth, but Loue' (sig. C2r; I.iii.11-2), he does not hesitate to fix a wedding date without his daughter's consent upon her falling ill (on account of her secret pregnancy), following common wisdom advising marriage as a remedy for young women's 'greensickness', which he thinks at this point she is subject to (sig. F2r).⁷⁴ It is Putana who captures this sense of daughters being the properties of their fathers, objects that need to be protected against theft: praising her mistress on her being the object of men's rivalry and competition, Putana advises, 'you had neede looke to your selfe (*Chardge*) you'le be stolne away sleeping else shortly' (sig. B3r; I.ii.66-7). In Parma, true to contemporary ideologies of the hierarchical relationship between husband and wife,⁷⁵ even a brother who carries out an incestuous relationship with his sister, imagining that relationship as some form of marriage, conceives of himself as her 'king', hence superior: '[I] hold my selfe in being King of thee, | More great, then were I King of all the world' (sig. C3v; II.i.19-20). Parma is dominated by a system of double standards: sexual experience proves a man to be 'a man sure, else hee could neuer ha' purchast such a good name, with *Hippolita* the lustie Widdow in her husbands life time', as Soranzo's experience is lauded by Putana when he appears as a suitor under her mistress's balcony (sig. B3v; I.ii.94-6). The widow with whom Soranzo gains that much admired experience,

⁷¹ Ibid., 274.

⁷² Marion Lomax, ed., *'Tis Pity She's a Whore and Other Plays* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), p. xviii.

⁷³ Alison Findlay, *A Feminist Perspective on Renaissance Drama* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1999), p. 25.

⁷⁴ Contemporary medical opinion held that a woman who was not adequately sexually gratified fell prey to sickness and, particularly, to 'greensickness', diagnosed as the excess of a woman's seed. See Elizabeth A. Foyster, *Manhood in Early Modern England: Honour, Sex and Marriage* (London and New York: Longman, 1999), p. 67.

⁷⁵ William Gouge, for example, held that: 'He [the husband] is the highest in the family [...] he is as a king in his owne house: as a king is to see that land well gouerned where he is king, so that he is the chiefe ruler in an house', sig. S1v.

however, is denigrated as one of ‘a monstrous life’, a woman whose only future is ‘to repent and dye’ (the latter part of this prophesy proves true) (sig. D2r; II.ii.97, 100), all insults hurled at her by none other than her own unfaithful sexual partner. She is later, at the moment of her death from poison intended for the man who has thus ruined her, described as one who is ‘foule,’ (sig. D2r; II.ii.101), called a ‘deuill’ (sig. G3v; IV.i.68) and a ‘vild [...] Creature’ (sig. G4r; IV.i.86). Hippolita’s death (her own plan backfiring) is seen as a form of moral warning: ‘the end Of lust and pride’ by her own husband who, significantly, is morally compromised, having provided Bergetto’s murderer with poison for the tip of the sword with which he slays the innocent man, mistakenly believing him to be his rival (sig. G4r; IV.i.102-3).

In Parma, to be a woman is to be thought deceitful and inconstant: Giovanni finds it necessary to instruct his sister to remain faithful to him before she engages in a conversation with one of her suitors, asking her to renounce her sex: ‘be not all woeman, thinke on me’ (sig. E4r; III.ii.11). Female sexuality is conceived of as ugly and contaminating; virgin life, on the other hand, is romanticized and presented to one woman in the play as a ‘crowne [to] your Birth’ (sig. G4v; IV.ii.27)—a desired state of being for a woman. Annabella, her body failing to demonstrate the much-prized virginity on her wedding night, is called by her husband (none other but Hippolita’s seducer, an adulterer and potential murderer of her husband, Richardetto) a ‘strumpet’, a ‘famous whoore’, a ‘Harlot, rare, notable Harlot’ (sig. G4v; IV.iii.1, 4), a ‘whore of whores’ (sig. H1r; IV.iii.20).

‘The play’, as Corinne S. Abate writes, is ‘hostil[e] towards female sexuality’.⁷⁶ ‘Female sexuality,’ in *’Tis Pity*, Simon Barker concludes, ‘is rapacious and diseased’.⁷⁷ Women are described as lures that lead men away from the path of virtue and righteousness: revealing his true feelings to his sister for the first time, Giovanni praises her charms, drawing on the tradition of the blazon, ‘Such lippes would tempt a Saint; such hands as those | Would make an *Anchoret* Lasciuious’ (sig. C1r; I.ii.202-3)—Annabella, for Giovanni, is a recipe of disaster for devoted men and a true daughter of Eve, causing men to fall from God’s favour. The ending of the play confirms the patriarchal double standards that hold sway in Parma, as a number of critics have shown:⁷⁸ it is Annabella who is called a whore (more on this later) by the highest representative of the Church in Parma who is himself a morally compromised man (having earlier on sheltered Bergetto’s noble murderer, as discussed above). No man in the play, not even Annabella’s partner in the incestuous relationship, is insulted with reference to his sexuality.

⁷⁶ Abate, p. 109.

⁷⁷ Barker, p. 119.

⁷⁸ See, for example, Abate, p. 96.

Against this background of a heavily patriarchal society, Putana's choice to support her mistress's bid for self-ownership and sexual autonomy becomes the more significant. Putana enters a pact of secrecy with her mistress meant, significantly, to keep Annabella's active sexuality hidden from the patriarch, her father: in Act II, Scene i, just after Annabella has consummated her relationship with her brother, the father is heard calling out to her. Putana, a true accomplice, helps her mistress put on a show of domestic normality and feminine virtue, handing the woman her sewing or embroidery, her 'worke', before the father enters into the space theatrically imagined as Annabella's chamber (sig. C4r; II.i.53). The activity chosen by the two women to fool the patriarch is particularly important: Putana and her mistress tap into, and manipulate, a patriarchal discourse that commonly recommended knitting, weaving and spinning to women as a virtuous activity. The show of chastity and productive domestic activity that Putana and her mistress put on is reminiscent of the way Lucretia was proved by her husband, Collatinus, to be chaste by being found in the house spinning among her maids, as well as of Penelope, the epitome of chaste femininity, weaving by day and unweaving by night to fend off the suitors insisting that she remarry.⁷⁹ 'Clothworking', as Stacy Shimizu observes, 'provided a sort of litmus test of femininity and virtue: a weaving woman was seen as domestic, silent, submissive and chaste—and hence feminine'⁸⁰—exactly the image that Annabella and her servant have departed from at this point in the play, as the former has engaged in incest and the latter has backed her up.

Mostly a faithful servant, Putana keeps her mistress's relationship with Giovanni secret, only parting with the dangerous information when assured by Vasques, time and again, that the revelation of her mistress's lover's name will *save* her mistress from the wrath of his master, not damn her: 'all his [Annabella's husband's] madnesse is, for that shee will not confesse whose 'tis [i.e. the child] [...], and when he doth know it, I am so well acquainted with his humour, that hee will forget all streight' (sig. H3v; IV.iii.186-9). Even with this assurance, Putana does not give in easily, 'Doe you thinke so?' she asks Vasques twice (sig. H3v; IV.iii.191, 204), wishing to make sure that her revelation of the lover's name will not harm her mistress, for she 'would not betray her to any affliction for the world'; 'Not for all the world by my Faith and troth' (sig. H3v; IV.iii.198-200). She again receives the reassuring statement: 'Fo, I know't', repeated twice (sig. H3v; IV.iii.192, 205); '*In this* you should both releiue her present discomforts, pacifie my Lord, and gaine your selfe euer lasting loue and preferment' (sig. H3v; IV.iii.201-3)—greed for the

⁷⁹ I am grateful to Dr John T. Gilmore, The University of Warwick, for bringing these two examples of the conflation between 'women's work' and feminine chastity to my attention.

⁸⁰ Stacy Shimizu, 'The Pattern of Perfect Womanhood: Feminine Virtue, Pattern Books and the Fiction of the Clothworking Woman', In *Women's Education in Early Modern Europe: A History, 1500-1800*, ed. by Barbara J. Whitehead (New York and London: Garland Publishing, 1999), p. 76.

unspecified nature of ‘preferment’ that Vasques promises Putana could play a role in her giving in, of course, especially in light of her earlier betrayal of her mistress with Donado for money, as discussed above, but it is important to view this potential greed in the context of her concern for her mistress’s safety.

Putana’s eventual punishment, seen by many critics⁸¹ as severe and out of proportion with the actual nature of her involvement in the incestuous relationship and the resultant bloodshed, gains further significance when analysed in the context of this patriarchal society. Putana’s condemnation starts with her name: Putana, in Italian, as the relevant entry in John Florio’s 1611 Italian-English dictionary explains, signified to contemporaries ‘a whore, a harlot, a strumpet’.⁸² Despite being nominally branded whore, Putana does not display any expression of sexual activity, whether sanctioned or illicit, throughout the play—her only connection with sexuality being her comments on the suitors marching under her mistress’s balcony in Act I, Scene ii and her explicit comment on the consummation of Annabella’s relationship with her bother. Putana’s sharp comments on the men’s sexual abilities and, thus, potential suitability, or lack of it, as future husbands for her mistress, explicit as they are (‘one amongst twenty of your skirmishing Captaines, but haue some pryue mayme or other, that marres their standing vpright’; ‘take a husband as he is a plaine-sufficient, *naked man*: such a one is for your bed, and such a one is *Signior Soranzo* my life for’t’ (sig. B3v; I.ii.80-82, 98-101)) and her description of her mistress’s lovemaking as ‘pass[ing] vnder’ a ‘Paradise of joy’, not ‘ouer’ (sig. C4r; II.i.43-5) as Annabella initially holds, are never explained in the play as resulting from sexual incontinence, licentiousness or whoredom. This unexplained connection of Putana to whoredom is skilfully picked up in Act IV, Scene iii when Vasques, having elicited the information he needs from her, orders his banditti to lock her up in a coalhouse after blinding her and, if she yells, to mutilate her further by, significantly, having her nose marked: ‘if shee roares, slitt her nose’ (sig. H4r; IV.iii.234). A slit nose, as Laura Gowing’s and Elizabeth A. Foyster’s research shows, was the mark of the whore in early modern culture.⁸³ One possible explanation for the link the play constructs between Putana and whoredom, I suggest, is her sympathetic attitude to her mistress’s candid relationship. So damning is this support of the mistress’s right to sexual autonomy that Putana is confused with her mistress and perceived at more than one point in the play as identical to her: Putana readily identifies herself with her mistress’s disaster

⁸¹ See, for example, Mark Stavig, *John Ford and the Traditional Moral Order* (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1968), p. 120; Abate, pp. 100-106; Mark Houllahan, ‘The Deconstructing ‘Tis Pity’: Derrida, Barthes and Ford’, in *ibid*, p. 147; White, p. 86.

⁸² John Florio, *Queen Anna’s New World of Words or Dictionarie of the Italian and English tongues* (London, 1611), sig. Mm2v.

⁸³ See Laura Gowing, *Domestic Dangers: Women, Words and Sex in Early Modern London* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), pp. 80-1, 103-4; Foyster, p. 78.

when she falls pregnant, referring to herself, Giovanni and Annabella as one collective entity: 'Oh sir, wee are all vndone, quite vndone, vtterly vndone, | And sham'd foreuer; your sister, oh your sister' (sig. F1v; III.iii.1). Both women meet similar ends when the incest is discovered. Putana, having been lured by Vasques into revealing the name of her mistress's lover, experiences bodily mutilation at the hands of Vasques's banditti, as discussed above. Similarly, her mistress is mutilated, anatomized, and her heart extracted by her brother-lover in Act V, Scene v.

The identification of the two women does not end here: critics⁸⁴ have long wondered about the Cardinal's sentence in Act V, Scene vi: 'First this woeman chiefe in these effects, | My sentence is, that forthwith shee be tane | Out of the City, for examples sake, | There to be burnt to ashes' (sig. K3v; V.vi.132-5)—who is this woman? How could Putana, whose only involvement in the incestuous relationship is sanctioning it, be 'chief in these effects'? Corinne S. Abate has observed that 'Putana's roles as governess and nursemaid do not tally to make her "chief" in this affair'.⁸⁵ In her article, 'Identifying the Real Whore of Parma', she argues that the woman referred to in the Cardinal's sentence could equally be Putana or Annabella. However, as Martin White notes, 'it is unusual to talk about sentencing someone already dead' (as Annabella is by this point in the play).⁸⁶ Thus, it is more likely that it is Putana who is the subject of this punishment. Putana pays in place of her mistress, who, being dead, is beyond the reach of the Cardinal. She, Mark Houlahan writes, 'must be punished by transference for Annabella's crimes, as Giovanni has taken his sister beyond the realm where the Cardinal can pass judgment'.⁸⁷ This is nowhere clearer than in the form of punishment the Cardinal specifies for Putana: being taken outside the city and burnt alive. Ordering Putana to be taken outside the limits of the city is an attempt to ritualistically cleanse Parma by banishing women who do not bow to patriarchal authority, claiming, instead, their bodies as their own property. The particular punishment of burning alive was meted out to, among others, 'petty traitors', women who have challenged the dominant social order and gender hierarchy by killing their husbands. After 1352 and until 1790, drawing on the commonplace early modern analogies of household/state and master/king, 'petty treason' was the category under which, among others, a wife who murdered her husband was tried. Edward Coke, senior law officer in England (1552–1634), defined 'petty treason' as a crime 'when a Servant slayeth his Master, a wife her Husband, or when a man secular or religious slayeth his Prelate to whom he oweth faith and obedience'.⁸⁸ Exclusively applicable to murders

⁸⁴ See, for example, Gillian Woods, 'New Directions: The Confessional Identities of *'Tis Pity She's a Whore*', in Hopkins (2010), p. 132.

⁸⁵ Abate, p. 105.

⁸⁶ White, p. 86.

⁸⁷ Houlahan, p. 147.

⁸⁸ Sir Edward Coke, *The Third Part of the Institutes of the Laws of England* (1669), sigs. D4r-D4v.

committed by servants, wives and inferior men of the religious community, rather than by masters, husbands or men of high positions in the Church, ‘petty treason’, generally speaking, covered acts of transgression against established hierarchy:⁸⁹ This ‘is for that the one is in subiection and oweth obedience, and not the other’, as a contemporary Justice of the Peace explained.⁹⁰ Women adjudged of petty treason were burned at the stake, a form of punishment, as Frances E. Dolan writes, that was identical to that faced by those accused of high treason, thus registering the contemporary conflation between the domestic and the political.⁹¹

Backing her mistress, Putana becomes an extension of her: Annabella has not murdered her husband, of course, but she has rebelled against patriarchal control over her body; she has transgressed against the established gender hierarchy. The rebellious woman and the woman who supported her rebellion both end up being punished and mutilated by men who seek to control women’s bodies. Annabella is anatomized by her brother who, before killing her, wonders whether her bid to end the incestuous relationship results from her husband’s superior sexual prowess (‘hath your new sprightly Lord | Found out a tricke in night-games more then wee | Could know in our simplicity?’ (sig. I4r; V.v.1-3))—a statement revealing of jealousy and constituting a claim of inconstancy and lustfulness on the part of the woman. Putana, similarly, is tortured, blinded and perhaps further mutilated by Vasques, the man who has sworn to avenge his master’s loss of control over his wife’s body. The seriousness and severity of the punishment chosen for Putana in the closing scene testifies to the way her support of her mistress’s sexual independence identifies her with that woman and, importantly, constitutes more of a threat to the social order than all the violence, bloodshed and savagery that Vasques engages in in his bid to avenge his cuckolded master, as is captured by the sentence he receives.

Vasques’s service to his master is comparable to that Poggio and Putana offer their respective masters. Like the two of them, Vasques makes a choice to serve a master who is nothing like those masters who owed their right to their servants’ obedience by being examples of virtue and godliness. By the beginning of the play, Soranzo, Vasques’s master, has already seduced a married woman, (supposedly) caused her husband’s death, broke all his vows to her, and abandoned her when another, younger and wealthier woman became available. Vasques, however, remains by his master’s side, having, he claims,

⁸⁹ Coke, elaborating on his definition, writes: ‘Petit Treason doth presuppose a trust and obedience in the offender, either Civil, as in the wife and servant, or Ecclesiastical person’ (Ibid, sig. D4r).

⁹⁰ Michael Dalton, *The countrey iustice* (1618), sig. T1r. I am indebted for this section to Frances E. Dolan, ‘Home-rebels and House-Traiters: Murderous Wives in Early Modern England’, *Yale Journal of Law & the Humanities*, 4:1 (1992), pp. 1-31; Tom Lockwood’s introduction to Martin White’s edition of the play (2007), p. xv.

⁹¹ Dolan, p. 4.

made a promise to the master's father before the latter's death to serve his son faithfully for as long as he lived (sig. K3v; V.vi.111-2). Vasques does not pause to ponder about the lawfulness of his master's orders, as moralists instructed servants given such orders to do, nor does he exercise his right to refuse obedience to wicked orders, one of which involves preparing the scene and recruiting banditti for the purpose of murdering the man who cuckolded his master. Vasques wholeheartedly embraces his master's bid to avenge his honour thought lost when Annabella is found with child on her wedding night. Vasques's support of his master's cause does not only involve his deep immersion in violence, bloodshed, deception, lies, and schemes but also, more importantly, a threatening subversion of the much policed boundary between master and servant. In carrying out his service, I argue, Vasques usurps the role of his master, reversing the conventional power dynamics in service relationships, as laid out in conduct literature. It is in the depiction of the service relationship between Vasques and his master that the recurrent motif of a servant assuming power over the master, as we saw with Poggio and Putana, receives its fullest exploration. No longer the emotional motherly figure, softly lamenting the misfortune of the master-child, the servant here steps into his master's shoes, issuing orders and enthusiastically making plans for revenge he expects his master to follow.

Vasques's embodiment of the period's ideal of the obedient servant is first introduced in Act I, Scene ii. Vasques enters on stage 'ready to fight', as a stage direction instructs. Vasques's master has been insulted by Grimaldi, a rival for Annabella's hand, and Vasques is ready to defend his master's injured honour. 'I will make thee know,' he promises his adversary, 'my Maister keepes Seruants thy betters in quality and performance' (sig. B2v; 13-14). Vasques emphasizes his intention to defend his master's honour, partly, defined by the latter's ability to draw servants from elevated social backgrounds capable of eclipsing even a gentleman like Grimaldi ('I am a Romane and a Gentleman', Grimaldi defends himself against the insult thus aimed at him (sig. B2v; 15)). Vasques is determined to right his master's wrong, however: 'fight', he challenges Grimaldi, 'or by these Hilts | I'll kill thee—braue my lord,—you'll fight', eventually overcoming him (sig. B2v; 17-19).

The fight between Vasques and his master's rival introduces not only the lengths to which Vasques is prepared to go in order to defend his master's honour. It also tentatively introduces the theme that will become increasingly prominent in relation to Vasques as the play progresses, that of the servant usurping the master's place in his bid both to carry out devoted service, as he explains, and to achieve a sense of personal satisfaction, which he fails to acknowledge. The theme is introduced by none else but Vasques's master.

Asked to explain the fight and disorder outside the doors of Florio, Annabella's father, Soranzo, the master, explains:

This Gentleman, whom fame reports a souldier
[...] riuals mee in loue
To Signoir Florio's Daughter; to whose eares
He still preferrs his suite, to my disgrace,
Thinking the way to recommend himselfe,
Is to disgrace me in his report:
[...]
For this vnworthinesse; and on this ground
I will'd my Seruant to correct thy tongue,
Holding a man, so base, no match for me
(sigs. B2v-B3r; 32-44).

According to Soranzo, his servant performs two roles: first his lowly social status (a contention that casts doubt on Vasques's earlier claim to an elevated social background) serves to humiliate Grimaldi. Pushing his servant to fight his adversary, Soranzo is making a statement: Grimaldi is a match only to my servant. Second, and more importantly, Soranzo introduces Vasques as his proxy—a figure that both represents and replaces Soranzo. Vasques only enters the fight on behalf of the master who will not fight Grimaldi. While this usurpation of the master's identity in this episode is contained by Soranzo's announcement that it was he himself who has licensed Vasques's act of usurpation, the exchangeability of the identities of master and servant gains a subversive potential as the play progresses, as we will see. This licensing of the servant's aggressive behaviour enacted on his master's part, importantly, reveals a trait that Vasques will increasingly display: the urge to gain personal satisfaction from inflicting violence on others. This is shown in Act I, Scene ii when Donado reproaches Vasques for '[being] euer forward | In seconding contentions' (sig. B2v; I.ii.28-9) and again, later in the same scene, when Florio tells Vasques, 'be you more silent' (sig. B3r; I.ii.60), as he is still incensed even after his master has appeared, the fight has ended, and Grimaldi has left.

These two aspects of Vasques's service are developed in Act II, Scene ii. The scene presents Vasques with temptation. Hippolita, a widow who has been seduced and later deserted by Vasques's master enters the space theatrically imagined as Soranzo's house. Told to despair of Soranzo's love and earlier vows ('woeman, come here no more',

Soranzo orders Hippolita as he exits [sig. D2r; 11]), the widow turns to the servant. Significantly, left on their own in the space imagined on stage as the master's study—one of the domestic spaces that stood for the master's authority⁹²—Hippolita attempts to tempt Vasques to betray his master. She appeals to a sense of a shared position of dependency on Soranzo, promising Vasques no less cruel a treatment on the part of his master in return for his service than she has received: 'Vasques, thou hast bin a too trusty seruant to such a master, & I beleue thy reward in the end will fal out like mine' (sigs. D2r-D2v; 23-4). She then tries to lure the servant into complicity in her plot against Soranzo;

[...] wer't thou mine, and wouldst bee priuate to me and my
designes; I here protest my selfe, and all what I can else call myne,
should be at thy dispose.

[...]

Giue me thy hand, now promise but thy silence,
And helpe to bring to passe a plot I haue;
And here in the sight of Heauen, (that being done)
I make thee Lord of mee and mine estate (sig. D2v; 29, 37-40).

The offer Vasques is given is one of freedom from service and marriage into wealth, social status and a position of authority (lord of the widow's estate)—a position that would make him equal with his master, head of his own household. Vasques pledges complicity: 'whatsoever your designs are', he promises Hippolita, 'or against whomsoever, I will not onely be a speciall actor therein, but neuer disclose it till it be effected' (sig. D2v; 45-6). As Hippolita exits, believing she has successfully corrupted the servant, Vasques reveals his true intentions in an aside: 'Worke you that way, old moule? Then I haue the wind of you', letting his resolve to *perform* the part of the corrupt servant while staying faithful to his master show in his description of himself as a 'speciall actor' in Hippolita's plot—the description that gets missed by the overjoyed widow (sig. D2v; 33). Vasques's faithful service to his master and the sense of satisfaction he gets from harming others, comfortable in the knowledge that his actions are licensed by the cover of loyalty to his master, are stressed in Act IV, Scene i. Acting on his resolve to reject Hippolita's offer and save his master's life, Vasques does not only reveal Hippolita's treachery, but goes further to hand her the poisoned cup she prepared earlier

⁹² Lena Cowen Orlin writes that the study was 'a space that was unique to him [the householder], that accepted his exclusive imprint upon it, that rejected the incursions of others, that welcomed him into the comforting embrace of his proofs of possession, that celebrated an identity independent of the relational responsibility [...]'; the study, moreover, was a space associated 'with valuables and with prohibited access'. See *Private Matters and Public Culture in Post-Reformation England* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1994), p.186.

for his master, relishing the opportunity to denigrate her with base descriptions and watching her die a painful death:

This thing of malice this woman, had priuately corrupted mee with promise of marriage, vnder this politique reconciliation to poyson my Lord, whiles shee might laugh at his Confusion on his marriage-day; I promis'd her faire [...] and now haue fitted her a iust payment in her owne coyne (sig. G3v; 89-95).

The most subversive aspect of Vasques's service to Soranzo lies in his usurpation of the role of master. Once he has successfully forced Putana to reveal the identity of the child's father, Vasques appropriates privileges that early modern ideologies of the domestic customarily granted the household *master*. He instructs his master in the proper course of action to take, interrupting the latter's outrage at his wife and advising in an aside: 'Sir, in any case smother your reuenge; leaue the senting out your wrongs to mee; bee rul'd as you respect your honour, or you marr all' (sig. H2r; 98-101). Vasques asks that his master be 'rul'd' by him—a term that is so loaded with meanings of authority and dominance that it symbolizes the shift in the dynamics of the relationship of master-servant that takes place at this point of the play's development. Vasques does not only demand that he be made 'ruler' in his relationship with his master, he also proceeds zealously to act on it. He increasingly uses such terms in relation to his master as 'tutor' (sig. H4r; IV.iii.240), and such imperatives as '[f]ollow this temper', '[b]ee briefe and mouing' (sig. H2v; IV.iii.115), 'goe to her [his wife]', 'vse her', 'winne her' (sig. H3r; IV.iii.158-9), '[l]et not pittie betray you', '[t]hinke vpon Incest and Cuckoldry' (sig. I1v; V.ii.23-4), '[c]all to your remembrance your disgraces', 'arme your courage in your owne wrongs' (sig. I3v; V.iv.22-4), 'be ready' (sig. I3v; V.iv.46), 'be wise and resolute' (sig. K1v; V.vi.1). In a meta-theatrical episode, Vasques directs the performance he casts his master in, praising those gestures the master makes that he deems well-performed; 'This is well', and giving further instructions to ensure the success of the performance: 'Follow this temper with some passion | bee briefe and mouing: 'tis for the purpose' (H2v; 114-6). He advises against his master's plan to force the wife into revealing the identity of the father; 'You must not doe so, let me yet perswade your sufferance a little while', instructing him to follow another course of action, instead; 'goe to her, vse her mildly, winne her if it be possible to a Voluntary, to a weeping tune' (sig. H3r; 157-160). Having successfully bribed Putana and discovered the identity of the child's father, Vasques plans on using his knowledge to 'tutor him [his master] better in his points of vengeance' (sig. H4r; 240).

Casting himself in the role of household master, Vasques appropriates one more privilege that contemporary theories of the domestic reserved to the head of the household: controlling domestic space. John Dod and Robert Cleaver, writing in 1598, to cite one

example, instructed that a ‘wise husband shall never [...] forget that he is a man, the ruler and governor of the house and of his wife, and that he is set (as it were) in a station to watch and diligently to take heed what is done in his house, and to see who goeth out and in’.⁹³ In Act IV, Scene iii, Vasques gives Giovanni permission to visit Annabella in her chamber: ‘Please you visit her; she is alone’ (sig. H4r; 252). It is Vasques who instructs his master to open up his bedchamber to Giovanni in Act V, Scene iv, instilling in his mind the plan to get him murdered while engaged in sinful intercourse with his sister: ‘Let my young Maister take time enough, and goe at pleasure’; ‘Let him haue your Chamber and bed at liberty; let my hot hare have law ere he be hunted to his death, that if it be possible he may post to Hell in the very act of his damnation’ (sig. H4v; 264-5; sig. I3v; 30-31).

Vasques’s usurpation of his master’s identity is visually registered in the murder scene, Scene vi, linking back to his fighting in the master’s place to defend his honour in the opening Act. Seeing his master has the worst in his sword fight with Giovanni, Vasques comes to the rescue, screaming: ‘vengeance’ (sig. K3r; 79). The master’s wrongs have become Vasques’s own. They get passed on from master to servant before Soranzo breathes his last. Echoing Poggio’s farewell to his servant with the latter’s name on his lips, Soranzo delivers his will to Vasques: ‘O *Vasques*, to thy bosome let mee giue | My last of breath, let not that Lecher [i.e. Giovanni] liue—oh’ (sig. K3r; V.vi.91-2). Violently re-enacting the scene of Poggio’s hand knocking on the Cardinal’s gate, asking for justice to the murdered master, Vasques runs his sword through Giovanni in his master’s name, fatally wounding him and announcing his pride at his faithfulness to his master and to the promise he made to the master’s father on the latter’s deathbed: ‘this strange taske being ended, I haue paid the Duty to the Sonne, which I haue vowed to the Father’ (sig. K3v; 110-111). Vasques has accomplished what Poggio has failed to. The master has been avenged.

Although Vasques performs a chief role in bringing about his master’s revenge, torturing and mutilating Putana and killing Giovanni in the process, his punishment does not involve the horror and cruelty that Putana’s does. Given the opportunity to explain himself and his motives, an opportunity never given to Putana, Vasques informs the Cardinal and the heads of the community gathered at this point in the play that his motif was no less than ‘honesty’ and faithful service to the masters, both father and son. Despite the fact that the Cardinal calls Vasques, having witnessed his cruelty and bloody violence first hand, a ‘wretched Villaine’, an ‘incarnate Feind’ (sig. K3v; V.vi.113), descriptions that the audience might agree with having witnessed the zeal with which Vasques carried

⁹³ Dod and Cleaver, sig. M6v.

out the various crimes he committed, he proceeds to sentence the servant to banishment from Parma, safe and sound. Several critics have found this relatively lenient punishment puzzling.⁹⁴ It is not faithful service, the play suggests to me, that merits reward. Nor is it treacherous service, or loyal service aimed at destructive and wicked ends, that invites punishment in the patriarchal society of Parma. It is, instead, the ends to which service is put that matters in the end: Putana's service aimed at upholding her mistress's right to self-determination and ownership of her body meets severe punishment. Vasques's comparable service to his master aimed at upholding men's right to own women's bodies and those bodies' very history (as is symbolized in Soranzo's and Vasques's violent reaction to Annabella's pregnancy) and to support a sense of manly honour focused on controlling women and using them as objects of exchange meets reward, rather than punishment. Susan J. Wiseman writes: Vasques 'is acting for the Father—for Soranzo's father, thence for Soranzo, and therefore for the determination of meaning in relation to the father, law and religious discourse'.⁹⁵ I would like to add that Vasques is rewarded for 'acting' on behalf of the father as encompassing the patriarchal discourse engulfing the play. The Cardinal himself, delivering Vasques's sentence, explains that it takes into account the servant's motives, not the actual nature of the offence: 'since what thou did'st, was doue | Not for thy selfe, [...] | Wee banish thee for euer, to depart | Within three dayes, in this wee doe dispense | With grounds of reason not of thine offence' (sig. K4r; V.vi.140-4)—a disturbing summation of the nature of Vasques's crimes, given the play's depiction of the servant's apparent zeal in carrying out the various acts of violence on his victims, the zeal that goes beyond doing service to his master (one can only wonder if Putana's support of her mistress was only 'done for herself' that no comparable concession was found for her.) It is no wonder that Vasques's final words in the play are ones that register a sense of triumph and pride, rather than the sense of sorrow and grief usually associated with receiving a sentence of exile: 'Tis well, this Conquest is mine' (sig. K4r; V.vi.145). Rewarded service, in the final analysis, regardless of the paths it takes and the horrors it may inflict, is service to the patriarchal system.

⁹⁴ See, for instance, Larry S. Champion, 'Ford's *'Tis a Pity* and the Jacobean Tragic Perspective', *PMLA*, 90: 1 (1975), p. 84; Verna Foster, '*Tis Pity* as a City Tragedy', in *John Ford: Critical Re-Visions* ed. by Michael Neill (Cambridge: Cambridge: University Press, 1988), p. 193, 197-8; Simon Barker, ed. *'Tis Pity She's a Whore: John Ford* (London: Routledge, 1997), p. 115.

⁹⁵ Susan J. Wiseman, 'Representing the Incestuous Body', in *Renaissance Bodies: The Human Figure in English Culture c. 1540-1660*, ed. by Lucy Gent and Nigel Llewellyn (London: Reaktion Books, 1990), p. 192.