

**DRAMATIC REPRESENTATION OF THE POOR  
IN THE AGE OF SHAKESPEARE**

by

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## ABSTRACT

This thesis is for ‘literature from below’. I select three groups of poor people – petty criminals, prostitutes, and apprentices – and investigate their dramatic representation in three early modern plays – *The Roaring Girl*, *The Honest Whore*, and *Sir Thomas More*. To overcome their representational distortion, I carry out a tripartite dialogue between documentary evidence, dramatic allusion and poetic imagination. This thesis adopts its methodology from poststructuralist historicism, but my theoretical position on Renaissance studies diverges from it in several respects, which I elucidate in the introduction. The first chapter ascertains, by scrutinizing the hermaphroditic protagonist Moll, that her cross-dressing and protean identities represent the characteristics of early modern London. The second chapter argues that early modern capitalism combined with patriarchy plays a crucial role in giving rise to prostitution by examining the courtesan protagonist, Bellafront. The third chapter, which analyzes the 1517 Ill May Day apprentice riots in the context of the 1590s London crisis, traces the representational history of the popular insurgency and retrieves ideological implication from the early modern censorial regime. In the conclusion, I estimate ‘use value’ of Renaissance drama in our time, and from the Marxist perspective, I appraise the aesthetic appeal of the three plays.

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## INTRODUCTION

### I. Literature from Below

In the Renaissance drama, the poor are pushed aside to the peripheries, just as they were relegated to the peripheries of the early modern economy. Even if they participate, they are more present at the margins than at the centre, inducing us to pass over them. They often do not get the opportunity to speak for themselves. They fill the stage as anonymous extras; they fall out of our view with the generic terms such as pages, servants, gamekeepers, porters, commons, mechanicals, outlaws, rebels, maids, and prostitutes; or they inhabit what has conventionally been designated as ‘subplot’. When they rarely appear in the centre stage, they often embody a drama of impoverishment, as they move between workplaces, workhouses, taverns and streets. Whether in edges or in centres, exaggeration abounds, and comic distortion prevails in their translation of the real to representation. In Shakespeare, for instance, the representational marginalization and disfiguration look obvious as in Christopher Sly in *The Taming of the Shrew*, Jack Cade and his followers in *2 Henry VI*, Lancelot Gobbo in *The Merchant of Venice*, Mistress Quickly and Doll Tearsheet in *Henry IV*, Kate Keepdown in *Measure for Measure*, Diana in *All’s Well That Ends Well*, Autolycus in *The Winter’s Tale*, and the Jailer’s Daughter in *The Two Noble Kinsmen*. Plays focus on kings and queens, lords and ladies, masters and mistresses, even though the poor constituted the vast majority in the early modern period. As far as representation is concerned, the demographics are completely reversed. The poor constituted the majority, but a silent majority. This is why I want to give them centre stage in my literary studies, even though I cannot restore them to the centre of the Renaissance drama or that of the historical document.

Previous scholarship has tended to be restricted to the political aspect of upward mobility with no proper consideration of poverty and dispossession, and this tendency has led

us to be blind to the counter-aspect of downward mobility. For example, Greenblatt's *Renaissance Self-Fashioning* limits itself to the rise of modern courtiers through practicing theatrical role playing, but overlooks the fact that the modernizing process for some gentry was a process of massive dispossession and disenfranchisement. Historians teach us that it was a period of immense social mobility when the rich and the poor were becoming increasingly polarized and that there was significant downward mobility (Stone, "Social Mobility" 28-35). If "as much as 95 %" of the population was below the gentry, we should give due respect to the situation of the poor (Stone, "Social Mobility" 20). If the study is restricted to the advancement of the gentry while turning a blind eye to the decline of the poor, it cannot but produce what Foucault calls "subjugated knowledge": that is, "those blocs of historical knowledge which were present but disguised within the body of functionalist and systematizing theory" (*Power/Knowledge* 82). Whether it is called modernizing process or the Renaissance, it is no more than an affirmative discourse of the successful gentry. For the tiny group of the gentry, it might have been the Renaissance, but for the vast majority, it was a period of forceful dispossession and violent expulsion from land.

To overcome subjugated knowledge, it is necessary to reveal hidden histories of the poor who were particularly vulnerable to the upheaval of economy and the regulatory measures of state authority. To disclose the harsh reality of the poor, it is indispensable to restore them to literary interpretation in a new way. I call it 'literature from below'. Unfortunately, literary studies are still dominated by a top-down model which not only centralizes the power elites but also marginalizes the poor majority. New historicism, for example, has focused on the rise of new types of political subjects who fashioned themselves for upward mobility. But literature from below is intended to focus on the mass production of the economic subjects who shifted themselves in a haphazard manner in order to survive. In a burgeoning capitalist economy, the new historicist model of subversion versus containment

is not suitable to those at the bottom of social scale, because their changing fate as economic subjects was increasingly decided by money power rather than by political power. Furthermore, the new historicist viewpoint of the early modern theatre as a part of cultural regime can be regarded as a reflection of elitism. The early modern theatre was not only a political apparatus but also an entrepreneurial business. As a commercial business selling entertainment and trading in emotion, it invited the groundling audience to identify the commonness of their dilemmas rather than to experience an Aristotelian cathartic sublimation which is supposed in an elite theatre.

Fortunately, in the discipline of history, there has already been a significant advance which derives a considerable momentum from the interest in 'history from below'. Those social historians are primarily concerned with the consequences of increasing inequalities in wealth and political power. Drawing on a social structure for which contemporary evidence provides sufficient justification, those studies see the key dividing line fall between gentle and non-gentle status (Wrightson, *English Society* 23). This model privileges differences in wealth and its relationship to social status as fundamental factors in determining the distribution of political power. It is mainly concerned with the recovery of 'the popular' in a society where the people were rendered inarticulate by inequalities in literacy and access to the written record, and, as a result, rendered invisible because of their voicelessness. It challenges an earlier historiography which too often allowed the comments of the literate elites on their inferiors to masquerade as a standard history of the whole society. It deploys not only qualitative but also quantitative techniques in order to restore corrupted texts. By moving beyond those sources in order to reach the groups below the ranks of the gentry, history from below has radically changed the subject matter of what constituted a social history and dramatically extended the range of historical topics.

Literature from below asks us to borrow from 'history from below' and to trace the



working lives of the poor behind the literary representation. But to reconstruct the lives of the poor from historical documents requires us to maintain critical distance from them: i.e. we should keep in mind the representational vacuum. The extant sources make it relatively easy to study the lives of the elites. They were in a tiny minority, who left a vast majority of documents behind. However, the further down the social scale we penetrate, the more often our subjects appear only as a faceless, depersonalized mass. For instance, William Harrison spends twenty pages in a modern edition of his *Description of England* on the detailed analysis of the social pyramid that stretches from dukes and earls down to knights, esquires and mere gentlemen, but he devotes scarcely two pages to “the fourth and last sort of people”: i.e. “day laborers” and “great swarms of idle servingmen” (118-19). Although our knowledge of the early modern poor remains inadequate, the evidence of social stratification is at least sufficient to make it clear that contemporary writers were mistaken in regarding those lower ranks as a homogeneous mass (Wrightson, *English Society* 37). The social distinction in the lower ranks must have been as complex as that of the gentlemen. They may also have appeared as indistinguishable to the lower ranks as they appeared to their superiors. That is, to read the extant documents frequently means to read them against the grain.

Along with the representational vacuum, we should also keep in mind the taxonomical confusion about the poor. If we apply to the poor the official categories that come from the elites’ comments, we are frequently baffled by a so-called ‘semantic crisis’, because the poor in most cases shifted continuously in a complicated way between occupations, households and marriages. For example, early modern conduct books and marriage manuals divide women into three generational groups; i.e. maids, wives, and widows, but frequently the poor women do not belong to any of those fixed categories: i.e. they are found to have multiple and protean identities. They did not occupy discrete economic, marital, occupational, residential or sexual identities. Instead, they shifted about at the bottom of the social scale between a

cluster of identities. The identifications such as ‘spinster’, ‘maidservants’, ‘witches’, ‘prostitutes’, ‘vagrants’, ‘lewd mother’, and ‘murdering mother’ were by no means mutually exclusive: usually, one woman occupied several of those positions at once or in quick succession (McNeill 34). Hence the term “spinster-clustering” created by the historian Olwen Hufton to describe this confused knot of the identities of a poor woman (361). The poor woman frequently sought loopholes in laws, customs, and masculine labour-markets as she tried to make ends meet. This taxonomical confusion invites us to invoke the Foucauldian concept of discourse. That is, the normative tendency of the literate elites’ social comments are rather prescriptive than descriptive, and their expressions in a visible print culture are their implementation of an ideological agenda.<sup>1</sup>

To put literature from below into practice, I will make use of the scholarly products of history from below. By putting literary representation alongside with historical evidence, I believe, I can make a recovery, if not complete, of troubling lifecycles of the poor, whose choice was not about self-fashioning for upward mobility, but about self-shifting for survival. However, I will try not to flatten literature with the messiness of historical scraps and leftovers. My argument for literature from below lies not only in the phrase ‘from below’ but also in ‘literature’. Literature is disciplinarily different from history, and poetic truth is generically distinguished from historical truth. I still believe the Aristotelian maxim: poetry is an imitation of what should be, whereas history is a reconstruction of what has been. We can no longer argue for “a secure distinction” between ‘literary foreground’ and ‘historical background’, owing to the poststructuralist reconsideration of relationship “between artistic

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<sup>1</sup> Foucault argues, in the Renaissance before the invention of taxonomical reason, the separation between language and thing did not happen, but in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the development of taxonomy turned language into a means of representation of the world, and it enabled language to form a new relationship with knowledge: i.e. knowledge began to be regarded as a linguistic ability to give a categorical identity to each thing (*Order of Things* 59). Moreover, he argues, in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, there happened the “discursive explosion”, which produced extensive new vocabularies and categories for naming desires and actions that could then become subjected to medical, legal, and other institutional interventions (*History of Sexuality* 38).

production and other kinds of social production”, but as Stephen Greenblatt concedes, “such distinctions do in fact exist”, even though “they are not intrinsic to the texts” (Introduction to *The Power of Forms* 6).<sup>2</sup> I will not aim for the correspondent point between literary representation and historical documentation, but I will try to find what should have been imaginatively reconstructed by a poet. I will make it my task to reassess the dramatic aesthetics of dispossession and disenfranchisement. For the task, I will ask incessantly these questions: how did the early modern theatre interact with the epochal shift from feudalism to capitalism?; how does it (mis)represent the poor who were driven to occupational loss, economic deprivation, legal vagrancy, and political disenfranchisement?; and what is cultural implication of the dramatic (mis)representation of the poor?

The poststructuralist theory of language will help me develop arguments in each chapter, but I will not be trapped by the deconstructionist pitfall of textuality.<sup>3</sup> I cannot contact Renaissance people directly, and I am inevitably restricted within their representation. But I believe that the referent did exist. There were the poor on a large scale in the early modern period. I will establish firmly at the centre of my studies this population of the unemployed and the underemployed whose life-trajectories were radically altered by “a seismic upheaval of unprecedented magnitude” in the early modern period (Stone, “Social Mobility” 16). Negotiating the gap between the referent and the signifier is always tricky, particularly when we investigate a medium from which the poor were excluded. But it is unavoidable to use the extant text. The early modern play is a particularly problematic source from which to retrieve the poor, because it frequently represents them in hyperbolic, stereotypical, satirical, and comical ways. We cannot expect from early modern playwrights what we can see in the modern writers, but it is reasonable to suppose that the early modern poor were as deep and

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<sup>2</sup> I will give a detailed account of my theoretical position on the relationship between history and literature in the section of History and Literature.

<sup>3</sup> I will give a detailed account of Derridean concept of textuality and my position on the problem of language in the section of Critique of Poststructuralist Historicism.

round characters as their modern counterparts. Surely, they complexly interacted with rapidly changing circumstances, and their selfhood was delicately over-determined by various desires and psychological conflicts. We should take into account their complex selfhood when we engage in a critical dialogue between the plays and other textual evidences. The composite pictures of the poor that will emerge from such a negotiation will be very different from those of comic fools, crafty crooks, or megalomaniac levellers. And they will reveal the liminality and obscurity of their lives, far from giving witness to the Renaissance men whose modern mind would free them from feudal restraints. Instead, their portraits will invite us to see that they could neither be reabsorbed into the social system which had expelled them nor could they be freed from it except by death. That is, we will see a tragic fate to which they were helplessly subjected with no other recourse than shifting with protean identities to pick up a scant livelihood.

## **II. Historical Context: Primitive Accumulation of Capital and the Production of the**

### **Poor**

The early modern period was an epochal moment in which primitive accumulation of capital took place, laying conditions which were prerequisite for a capitalist mode of production. Capitalism “presupposes the availability of considerable masses of capital and labour-power in the hands of commodity producers” (Marx, *Capital* 873), and the massive accumulation of capital and labour-power, in turn, “presupposes a complete separation between the workers and the ownership of the conditions for the realization of their labour . . . whereby the social means of subsistence and production are turned into capital, and the immediate producers are turned into wage-labourers” (Marx, *Capital* 874). The separation of the producer from the means of production is described as ‘primitive’ because it was carried out by visible, physical, and direct use of violence rather than by an invisible and latent power,

which characterizes mature capitalism.<sup>4</sup> Great masses of peasants were suddenly and forcibly torn from their lands, and hurled onto the labour-market. With the expropriation of agricultural producers from their means of subsistence, the amassed lands began to be used not for the cultivation of crops which would be consumed by the immediate producers but for the production of commodities to be sold in the market. The accumulated capital was then invested for larger-scale production.

The main driving force of primitive accumulation, as “the prehistory of capital”, was the so-called enclosure movement (Marx, *Capital* 875). Enclosure is a convenient blanket term which includes a whole range of processes of consolidating arable land which existed as strips in common fields, of enclosing waste land such as heath, fen or moorland, and of engrossing those lands into larger units, which often went hand in hand with enclosure. Both enclosure and engrossment meant the abolition of common rights whether exercised over arable or waste land (Hoyle 316-17). Former common fields were sometimes turned into pastures for raising sheep, and they were, at other times, reorganized for convertible husbandry, an improved method of alternating grazing and tillage which increased soil fertility (Wrightson, *English Society* 133). Turning into both sheep-walks and convertibles meant the introduction of market-driven husbandry to make the most of the capitalist trends of the period.

Nevertheless, the damage to small tenants and cottagers by extinguishing common rights was incalculable. Where extensive commons were lost, or where the number of agricultural holdings in a reorganized manor was reduced, the ‘improvement’ for a few was a disaster to most of the populace. Faced with frequent social disturbances by enclosure riots, which were exacerbated during the harvest failure, the Tudor government issued several royal proclamations which were intended to prevent enclosure, but they could never stop the

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<sup>4</sup> I borrow the concept of an invisible, latent, fugitive, and subjectless power from Foucault, and I will elucidate it from a Marxist perspective in the section of Economic Precedence.

inexorable drift towards capitalism. They could not restrain the depopulation of the countryside where arable communities had been converted into pastoral sheep ranches. Neither could they reverse the process whereby several tenements had been merged into one (Hoyle 314). Enclosure, as an emblem of capitalism, gained accelerating momentum to break all feudal barriers for the advance of capitalism, which would eventually be full-blown through the industrial revolution.

One of the earlier observers of this enclosure problem was Thomas More, who drew a bleak picture of the contemporary situation. “Your sheep”, warns Raphael Hythloday, the wise traveler in *Utopia*, “that were wont to be so meek and tame and so small eaters” have now become “so great devourers and so wild, that they eat up and swallow down the very men themselves. They consume, destroy, and devour whole fields, houses and cities” (28). In his subsequent description, thousands of acres of land are enclosed, the tenants are forced to move out, and they lose everything, in order to satisfy the unscrupulous greed of a few. There remains no alternative for them but to steal and “be hanged, or else go about a begging” (29). Thus, in More’s observation, economic dislocation appears to be a principal reason for vagrancy and crime. This crucial diagnosis was taken up and developed by other men of letters later in the century. Hugh Latimer, a radical preacher and sometime bishop of Worcester, in his last sermon preached before Edward VI, argues that although rebellion could not be justified, the causes should be eliminated. Referring to the rebellions in Norfolk and Devon, he points to the covetousness of the landowners as the main reason of the peasants’ uprisings: “The poorest ploughman is in Christ equal with the greatest prince that is. Let them, therefore, have sufficient to maintain them, and to find them their necessities. . . . For God’s love, restore their sufficient unto them, and search no more what is the cause of rebellion” (249). Latimer’s sympathetic treatment of the poor people’s condition and his attribution of the cause for their rebellion to the rich landowners are also shared by Robert Crowley, a

printer and radical preacher. In a petition to the parliament of Edward VI, he declares, “If the sturdy fall to stealeying, robberyng, & reueyng, then are you the causers thereof, for you dygge in, enclose and wytholde from them the earth out of the which they should dygge and plowe their lyuenynge” (164).

In addition to enclosure, the process of forcible expropriation of the populace from land received an intensifying impetus from the Reformation, and the consequent spoliation of church property. At the time of the Reformation, the Catholic church was the feudal proprietor of a great part of the soil. Through the dissolution of the monasteries under the reign of Henry VIII, and the subsequent dissolution of the chantries in Edward VI, the confiscated church estates were, to a large extent, given away to royal favourites, or sold at a nominal price to capitalist proprietors. “As many as 20,000” were forced to reconstruct their lives “in a world which they had forsaken when entering religion” (Cunich 234). Little serious research has yet been undertaken into the conversion of monastic servants such as personal valets, bakers, brewers, butlers, laundry-workers, cellarers, gardeners, and other subordinates who had constituted the overall majority of religious residents, but it is supposed that most of them should have been hurled out from their cloisters into the labour-market or simply into the street, swelling swarms of vagrants who had already been relegated to lives of lawlessness as a result of enclosure. What was worse than the direct increase of the number of vagrants was that the Reformation caused the traditional poor relief of the Catholic church to collapse, and it “created a gap in social services, making the poverty problem suddenly much worse, especially in the years before secular relief became sufficiently organized” (Woodbridge, *Vagrancy* 93).

Along with the dissolution of monasteries, the disbandment of feudal retainers also increased the reserve pool of disposable labourers. Although Edward IV attempted to limit ‘retaining’, he was by and large unsuccessful. It was Tudor kings who succeeded in

overcoming the so-called ‘bastard feudalism’ by imposing financial sanctions on feudal lords in Henry VII’s reign and passing a statute in Henry VIII’s reign, which allowed only the king to have retainers. In contrast with the dissolution of monasteries, however, royal power was by no means the sole cause of the disbandment of retainers. It was money-power that was the main driving force. For the expansion of economic advantages, the great feudal lords themselves voluntarily drove out the peasantry from land, creating an incomparably larger number of wage-labourers. After the great feudal wars, i.e. the wars of the roses, and the subsequent emergence of bourgeois culture, the power of the lord began not to depend any more on the number of his subjects and peasant proprietors. “The new nobility was the child of its time, for which money was the power of all powers. Transformation of arable land into sheep-walks was therefore its slogan” (Marx, *Capital* 879).

Not only did expropriation go hand in hand with agrarian commercialization but the population upsurge also accelerated the speed of primitive accumulation. It has been estimated that the English population in around 1300 amounted to about 5-6 million. By the middle of the fifteenth century, formidable recurrences in infectious diseases reduced it to about 2 million. For whatever reason, this trend was reversed in the late fifteenth or early sixteenth century. An estimate of 2.3 million in 1525 expanded to 4.1 million by 1600, peaking at 5.3 million in 1656, and remaining steady at about 4.9 million until the early eighteenth century through slackened pace in the seventeenth century (Slack 43-44). Specifically, the population, which roughly doubled in the sixteenth century, resulted in a much higher concentration of urban population. The best estimate of the size of urban population in around 1520 suggests that about 125,000 people or 5 percent of national population lived in towns of 5,000 people or more. By 1600 this had risen to about 8 percent, 335,000 out of a population 4.1 million (Hoyle 313). Whilst the population roughly doubled, there was no similar increase in the number of employment opportunities. As a result, prices



skyrocketed, and real wages plummeted. According to the price index compiled by Phelps Brown and Sheila Hopkins, the cost of a composite basket of consumables in southern England soared up to 685 percent between 1500 and 1600, and the real wages fell sharply down to the minimum 29 percent during the same period (29), and the historians note, “It was catastrophic. So far as we know, there is nothing like it anywhere else in wage history” (Brown and Hopkins 60).

During the Tudor period, it is estimated that no less than a third of the population lived in poverty (Slack 74). Under the excruciating social pressure caused by large-scale poverty, the sixteenth century witnessed a radical transformation in attitudes towards the poor, and in the means of dealing with them. The Elizabethan Poor Law of 1601, based on precedents stretching back into Henry VIII, established the principles and strategies of the treatment of the poor. Poor rates, outdoor relief, compulsory apprentices of poor children, a distinction between the impotent poor and the sturdy beggar, and concurrent punishment on the able-bodied poor – all were characteristic of English social policy after Tudor period, and remained unchanged until 1834. The so-called revisionist historians have raised oppositions to the familiar view that a century or so before the Civil War living standards sharply declined for the majority of the population, but all the available evidence corroborates the historical fact that there was a radical change in early modern economic formation, and it was a disastrous change for the majority of people (Slack 6). The rise of a competitive market economy was heavily involved in the growth of wage-labourers and widespread unemployment. The break-up of a feudal system, which had offered security if not comfort to the lower orders, had devastating effects on them. To sum up, the forcible expropriation of the people from the soil produced massive quantities of beggars, robbers and vagabonds.

The Tudor poor laws which underwent several revisions until 1601 are frequently called poor reliefs, but their main concern did not lie in relief but in political security by preventing

vagrants from thronging into seditious commotion. As a means of preventing riots, they stipulated savage punishments such as whipping, stocking, imprisonment, enslavement, branding, ear-clipping, putting a ring around the neck, or execution. Furthermore, the Tudor poor laws' distinction of the deserving poor from the undeserving, and its concurrent measures of harsh punishment on the latter give support to the Marxist argument that the absolutist state in the early modern period played a crucial role in the rise of capitalism. The poor laws gave an impetus to augmenting the reserve pool of wage-labourers, and at the same time they kept their wages down, which were indispensable for capitalism.

In current English, the term 'idleness' no longer carries punitive judicial associations, but in early modern England, the correction of idleness was a primary concern for those in the governing bodies. Royal proclamations used the term "idle" frequently to define a criminal form of poverty (Hughes and Larkin, *Tudor* 1: 32-34, 191-93), condemning "rouges and vagabonds wandering up and down this realm idly and insolently" (Hughes and Larkin, *Tudor* 3: 206). The proclamations reiterated numerous laws for "the restraining of idle people and vagabonds" (Hughes and Larkin, *Tudor* 3: 196). Idleness appears as a key legal term everywhere in early modern legislation on poverty. Local parish courts, guild courts, civic corporations, and Privy Council used the term as a key signifier of dangerous unemployment.

Whether idle or diligent, the poor were central to the success of early capitalism. In the workshops, guild households, markets, and streets, they underpinned the radical shift in economic formation. They worked within and beyond the livery companies' purview. They made the 'threads' that ran the cloth industry, spinning and laundering, producing and improvising as they plied their sundry trades. Many crucial tasks, including the loading and unloading of ships at the riverside and the transportation of goods which went mostly unregulated until the seventeenth century, were by and large done by the poor. Anecdotal evidence of the time suggests that ancillary jobs such as hauling supplies or moving earth

were abundant, especially in large cities. Those jobs were not under the jurisdiction of any livery company, and were likely to be done by many thousands of the poor, who could not establish formal ties to the livery companies (Ward 351). They worked everywhere in the new economy, but they were not formally or legally noticeable in its structure: i.e. the formation of early capitalism was dependent upon the presence of the poor, but its bureaucracy was constituted at the expense of their absence. They were written out of official documents, because they were not its agents but merely its objects. The documents such as legal contracts, court records, and guild ordinances exclude and exile the poor to the margins, just as most Renaissance dramas relegate them to the peripheries of the stage. The illusion is thus created that they were not there shaping the early modern social formation, but it is certain that only in bureaucracy are the poor hard to find (McNeill 10-11).

### **III. Theoretical Proposition**

#### **A. Critique of Poststructural Historicism**

As its methodology, this thesis adopts a mode of literary criticism which has been produced within the perimeters of poststructuralism since the 1980s. Yet, my theoretical position on Renaissance studies diverges from poststructuralism in several respects, and it requires me to elucidate them. Poststructuralism which first began in the field of philosophy in the late 1960s gave literary critics a powerful weapon to dismantle the theoretical premises of New Criticism which had hitherto dominated literary studies. The best way to understand poststructuralist criticism, therefore, would be to contrast it with New Criticism. Whereas New Critics presupposed the work of literary art to be an autonomous organism free from all social circumstances and historical restrictions, poststructuralist critics look upon it as historically constrained within the cultural discourses of the time. Whereas New Critics argued that literary work has its own harmonious unity and transcendental aesthetic value,

poststructuralist critics maintain that it is crisscrossed with irreducible heterogeneity and material worldliness. Whereas New Critics regarded literary work as a creation of an imaginative poet whose selfhood was hinged on unified coherence and humanist idealism, poststructuralist critics consider it as a product of a conflict-stricken subject who is as unstable and disjunctive as the fictive Hamlet and the historical Montaigne. Once New Criticism's assumptions of essentialist aestheticism were dismantled, all the subsequent processes of assessing literary texts proved to be extremely relative and subjective according to each critic's scholarship. Therefore, argues Terry Eagleton, "There is no such thing as a literary work or tradition which is valuable in itself, regardless of what anyone might have said or come to say about it. 'Value' is a transitive term: it means whatever is valued by certain people in specific situations, according to particular criteria and the light of given purposes" (11).

Arguably, the most conspicuous offsprings of poststructuralism in Renaissance studies have been new historicism and cultural materialism. They might be distinguished from each other by the different routes they take to implement the poststructuralist assumptions and by the different conclusion they draw, but both show the similar tendency to treat human subjectivity not as a receptacle of essential nature but as a cultural construction of hegemonic power, to relate literary artifact to various historical constraints, and to interpret literary discourse from politically charged perspectives. Moreover, the two critical trends share a similar reaction to the previous literary studies. In *Renaissance Self-Fashioning*, Stephen Greenblatt sets up an opposition between his own form of historicism and the previous vogue of New Criticism. He claims that the latter involves either "a conception of art as addressed to a timeless, cultureless, universal human essence" or else a conception of it as "a self-regarding, autonomous, closed system" (4). His characterization of previous criticism as sealed off in its own world of timeless verities has been echoed by cultural materialists on the

other side of the Atlantic. Jonathan Dollimore argues, in *Radical Tragedy*, “The emergence in the Renaissance of a conception of subjectivity legitimately identified in terms of a materialist perspective rather than one of essentialist humanism” leads us inevitably “to reject the view that literature and criticism meet on some transhistorical plateau of value and meaning” (249). Their similarities can be fittingly summarized by Jean Howard’s argument that new essays in Renaissance studies “do not try to seal themselves off from what is polemical by aspiring to a timeless common sense, but expose what is difficult and what is at stake in ‘making knowledge’ at *this* historical moment” (“New Historicism” 31). Drawing on these similarities, this thesis does not take their differences into a serious consideration, and treats them in the same category as poststructural historicist criticism.

There is a tendency for poststructural historicists – particularly, the American new historicists – to cast a skeptical eye on historical positivism: i.e. the tenet of old historicism that the accounts of literature should be grounded on a factual historical reality that can be recovered and related to the early modern theatres. They also tend to distance themselves from the previous critical practices which adjusted the interpretive mode to some grand design, whether Enlightenment modernity, Christian humanism or Marxist aesthetics. Both positivist and idealist versions of old historicism are abandoned in favour of a new concept of history perceived as accessible through its textual traces alone and irreducible to a single master narrative. Greenblatt argues, “Social actions are themselves always embedded in systems of public signification, always grasped, even by their makers, in acts of interpretation” (*Renaissance Self-Fashioning* 5).

This textualist attitude is heavily influenced by the French deconstructionist, Jacques Derrida. Derrida poses an extreme argument about the relationship between text and reality. He alleges that we can have no access to reality that is not mediated by language, no grasp of history that is not distorted through representation. This Derridean idea of textuality is, in turn,

derived from Saussure's proposition on language systems which he regards as independent of meaning: "Whether we take the signified or the signifier, language has neither ideas nor sounds that existed before the linguistic system, but only conceptual and phonic differences that have issued from the system" (120). Derrida pushes this Saussurean position further to the point that all historical materials are to be subsumed into the textuality of language. "The so-called thing itself", argues Derrida in *Of Grammatology*, "is always already a *representamen* shielded from the simplicity of intuitive evidence. The *representamen* functions only by giving rise to an *interpretant* that itself becomes a sign and so on to infinity. The self-identity of the signified conceals itself unceasingly and is always on the move" (49). Thus, he argues that our reading "cannot legitimately transgress the text toward something other than it, toward a referent . . . or toward a signified outside the text" (*Of Grammatology* 158). In a nutshell, he proclaims, "there is nothing outside of the text" (*Of Grammatology* 158).

As a strategy for breaking the stranglehold of conservative readings, deconstruction certainly has its merits. It can be mobilized as a levelling political strategy to dismantle the conventional hierarchy in class, gender and race. Surely, these merits have been felt in various forms of radical criticism. Its strategy has not only bred a proper skepticism about the authority of the documents the historicists deal with and the objectivity of their accounts, but it has also overthrown the platitudinous abstraction of metaphysical idealism and reformed it into the concrete concept of historical materialism. And the concept of the binary opposition which constitutes the main pillar of the deconstructionist strategy has given an insightful idea to radical materialist critics in explaining why the world always divides itself into the dominant and the marginal and how the former fashions itself by excluding the marginal. Furthermore, it can remodel the unilateral dichotomy between historical background and literary foreground into a dialectical mode in which literature can also have a formative effect

on history.

But we do not need to read far into a Derridean concept of textuality in order to appraise how easily his deconstruction could cause history to be reduced into a story, and dematerialize reality into a free-floating web of linguistic representation. As Fredric Jameson points out, “In faithful conformity to poststructuralist linguistic theory, the past as ‘referent’ finds itself gradually bracketed, and then effaced altogether, leaving us with nothing but texts” (*Postmodernism* 18). Admitting the perpetual deferral of the signified and the disappearance of reality into an abyss of semiological intervention, one of the leading exponents of Derridean deconstruction, Malcom Evans, frankly confesses, “Deconstruction permits a delirium of dissent”, but it is just a “babble of compliance, an equalizing of all voices in the irreducibility of *écriture*” (89). Noting the new historicist impasse trapped in the deconstructionist impossibility to build cogent, stable arguments, Francis Barker also argues, “Despite their logical and philosophical incompatibility”, both new historicists and deconstructionists “are frequently combined” to strike the same chord of “debilitating fatalism” (124) and “a spectatorial passivity in respect of power” (123).

When a Hitler or a Stalin wields a dictatorial power over an entire nation with inflammatory speech, it is ridiculous to treat the discursive effects as simply occurring within language. It is evident that real power is exercised through discourse, and that this power has material effects. Hence, Derrida’s stark proclamation that “there is nothing outside of the text” should be understood, along with his emphatic rhetoric, as a criticism of the traditional metaphysics which privileges the signified such as identity, idea, and the represented, at the expense of the signifier. For a safety-belt against the Derridean pitfall, we can find a more concrete conception of language in Michel Foucault who is supposed to have greater influence than Derrida both on new historicism and on cultural materialism. Like Derrida, Foucault regards language as a central human activity, but unlike Derrida, he thinks that the

world is more than a universal text or a vast sea of signification. More importantly, he makes it clear that the theory of textuality ignores the fact that language is involved in power. With his concept of discourse, i.e. a ‘power-ridden’ language, we can reaffirm that the deconstructionist reduces political forces and their ideological control to the aspects of merely signifying process.<sup>5</sup> I will discuss these two thinkers, further, contrasting their concepts of language in the third chapter of this thesis.

On the other hand, Foucault reveals how power connects itself to discourse by tracing back to the genealogy of discursive formation. In his earlier works, he demonstrates that what is generally regarded as an axiomatic truth turns out to be a culturally constructed one by disclosing “a historical *a priori*” of a discursive practice, which he calls archive (*Archeology of Knowledge* 127). Individuals working within a particular discursive formation cannot think or speak without obeying “the group of rules” that defines historical “archive” that in turn determines “systems of statements” at a given time; otherwise they risk being condemned to punishment (*Archaeology of Knowledge* 127-28).<sup>6</sup> People recognize a particular piece of theory as ‘true’ only if it fits the descriptions of truth laid down by the established order of the time. Thus, it is not enough to speak the truth; it must be spoken ‘within’ the truth, in order to be accepted as truth.

Alongside the historical argument, Foucault develops an influential account of the relationship between power and subject in his later works. Traditionally, power is regarded as belonging to someone or something, but in Foucault’s revision, neither is power possessed by

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<sup>5</sup> This line of Foucault’s thought is predicated on Friedrich Nietzsche, who argues that people first decide what they want and then fit the facts to their aim: “Thus, ‘truth’ is not something which is present and which has to be found and discovered; it is something *which has to be created* and which *gives* its name *to a process*, or, better still, to the Will to overpower” (*Will to Power* 60). That is, there is no objective knowledge or absolute truth. People recognize a particular piece of philosophic or scientific theory as ‘true’ only if it fits the descriptions of truth laid down by the political authorities of the time or by the prevailing ideologies of the contemporary knowledge. Therefore, according to Nietzsche, all truth is just an expression of the Will to Power.

<sup>6</sup> Concerning the historical archive, Foucault argues that we can discern it only by our standpoint equipped with historical hindsight, and that “it is not possible for us to describe our own archive, since it is from within these rules that we speak” (*Archaeology of Knowledge* 130).



a particular sovereignty nor does it all emanate from one specific location such as the state of the governing bodies. He abandons the model of sovereign power to free his concept of power from an originating centre. Power is beyond at once any individual control and the “choices or decisions of an individual subject” (*History of Sexuality* 95); but it is “imbued, through and through, with calculation: there is no power that is exercised without a series of aims and objectives” (*History of Sexuality* 95). Hence, “power relations are both intentional and non-subjective” (*History of Sexuality* 94). This revision of traditional notions of power can be summarized in his famous short phrase: “Power is exercised, rather than possessed” (*Discipline and Punish* 26).

Another revision developed by Foucault in the conventional concept of power is the so-called anti-repressive hypothesis. He insists that power is not repressive but “productive” (*History of Sexuality* 86). Power is traditionally seen as a repressive mechanism against what it finds unproductive, deviant, or subversive. Foucault argues, however, modern power produces the very categories it intends to regulate. Before an act is prohibited, it is not singled out as something separate and identifiable. His productive concept of power is exemplified by his genealogical study of homosexuality. According to his comments on the medical categorization of homosexuality in 1870s, Victorian power was discursively deployed to produce homosexuality when it separated out and labelled as homosexual certain actions previously included in the blanket term, sodomy, which also included bestiality and some non-reproductive heterosexual acts (*History of Sexuality* 42-44).

Furthermore, the modern view of homosexuals indicates a dramatic shift in the very conception of selfhood. It is in modern society that actions begin to be taken as evidence of a deep-rooted and persistent identity. Foucault’s argument is that through this connection of ‘actions’ to ‘being’, of ‘what I do’ to ‘what I am’, modern power produces subjects who have identities, thereby enabling its grip on us. The enunciation of both category and law identifies

certain actions and affords them a heightened presence. Through continuous expansion of classification, surveillance, intervention and distribution, modern power penetrates everywhere, giving a specific name to every possible variant of human action so as to master the world and leave nothing unexamined, unknown, and un-catalogued. No matter how temporarily interrupted, this productive power defines a discursive circuit in which it loops back into itself so as to form a strategic instrument of social control. This is why his conception of power often takes on a conspiratorial mien. The disciplinary network “takes back with one hand what it seems to exclude with the other. It saves everything, including what it punishes. It is unwilling to waste even what it has decided to disqualify” (*Discipline and Punish* 301).<sup>7</sup>

Foucault negates the conventionally celebratory narrative of the rise of individual in modern societies by connecting that rise with a drastic decrease in freedom. *Discipline and Punish*, in particular, presents Foucault’s bleak portrait of modern society as a great “carceral network” which captures every minute element of the individual such as “his body, his gestures, his behaviour, his aptitudes and his achievements” and subjects them to “the normalizing power” (304). His famous adaptation of Jeremy Bentham’s Panopticon shows his concept of ubiquitous power vividly. Power is everywhere. “There is no outside” (*Discipline and Punish* 301). This view of omnipresent power can be explained in our use of the term ‘subject’ as at once a noun and a verb. Individuals get to occupy ‘subject’ positions only through a process in which they are ‘subjected’ to power. That is, individuals are constituted by power as subjects prior to having any standing as individuals. He stresses modern power’s “capillary function”, its ubiquitous reinforcement of the norm at every step, and its moulding

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<sup>7</sup> This conspiratorial concept of power has flourished in new historicism, which frequently argues that reigning power strategically provokes subversion so as to re-contain it all the better. Subversion and resistance are shown to find forceful expression in some of Renaissance plays, but these are turned out to be sophisticated ruses of the ruling ideology. In Stephen Greenblatt’s words, “Shakespeare’s plays are centrally concerned with the production and containment”, but they only put authority into question in order to uphold it all the more effectively in the last instance (*Shakespearean Negotiations* 40).

impression upon docile bodies (*Discipline and Punish* 198). This concept of trans-individual power will lead me through the whole discussion of this thesis. It is particularly pertinent to the second chapter about prostitution.

Compared to Derrida's textualist deconstruction, Foucault's theory of power is seemingly promising for radical criticism. In terms of truth-claims, however, Foucault is as fatalistic as Derrida. The ubiquitous power leaves nothing outside dominant discourse. Whether selves, desires, knowledge, or truth, all are within discursive network by which they are identified. Thus, we can never possess an objective truth. Claims to objectivity made on behalf of specific knowledge always come from the discursive formation of the time: i.e. there is no absolutely 'true' knowledge, only a more or less influential one. The truth to which dissidents appeal is no less a product of tendentious knowledge than the truth spoken by the dominant discourse which they oppose. Foucault's position seems to reduce all politics to a mere battle that can be waged only on the field of propaganda. The diffusion of power through the capillaries of the social system obliterates the active model of all political actions. As a result, many dissidents that may seem to oppose power are ultimately 'complicitous' with it, reinforcing rather than contesting its dominance. He insists repeatedly that there is resistance everywhere throughout the history which he regards as constructed by discursive power, but, by his own logic, such resistance is no more than an offshoot of power. In his discussion about the leftist intellectual's critical role, he concedes that the traditional images of revolution are no longer appropriate (*Power/Knowledge* 126-33).

A group of scholars who gathered around Greenblatt in the late 1970s tried to bring Foucault's ideas into their literary studies. These exponents of new historicism saw their priority as disclosing "the effectiveness and complexity of the ideological process of containment" (Dollimore, Introduction 15). They posited the historical function of Renaissance literature as an elaborate cultural project through which the discursive machinery

of reining power helped secure the *status quo*. Unsurprisingly, in this account of the cultural deployment of political power, literary works are regarded as conspirators in plots hatched by power to secure subjection. Even when literary works are allowed to signify the opposite of what they are subjected to mean, the overriding implication is that they have nothing subversive to say to the *status quo*, since they are eventually neutralized or absorbed by omnipotent power. Francis Barker's critique on new historicism gives a summary account of how detrimental Foucauldian pessimism has been to Renaissance studies: new historicism "tends at best to offer the political effect of leaving everything as it is, when it doesn't actually debilitate the very idea of opposition in the name of all subversion being a necessary condition of the functioning of power as such" (124).

Foucault's concept of ubiquitous power ought not to be regarded as an insurmountable precondition for cultural analysis, and the power/knowledge nexus should not lead us to conceive that a cultural artifact is a helpless agent. Louise Althusser argues, "(1) There is a 'relative autonomy' of the superstructure with respect to the base; (2) there is a 'reciprocal action' of the superstructure on the base" (*Lenin and Philosophy* 135). That is, each level or instance of a social formation – political, ideological, cultural, economic, etc – possesses its own characteristic structures, temporalities, and effectivity. These instances or levels interact with one another in a complexly over-determining manner, and as a result, the domination of a structure over subordinate structures "cannot be reduced to the primacy of a *centre*, any more than the relation between the elements and the structure can be reduced to the expressive unity of the essence within its phenomena" (*Reading Capital* 99). When we apply this Althusserian concept to cultural discourse in relation to generic power, it enables us to maintain that generic power is not exactly the same as cultural power, and that cultural discourse may generate effects of either domination or subversion by means of its relation to other relatively autonomous areas of a social formation. Cultural discourse can achieve relative autonomy

from dominant power even though it is predominantly containing rather than subversive and is frequently circumscribed by reigning power. This Althusserian concept of relative autonomy frees us from the Foucauldian axiom that ‘power is everywhere’,<sup>8</sup> and I will develop it further in the concluding chapter of this thesis.

### **B. Controversies between Presentism and New Materialism**

Another critique against new historicism is its presentist attitude. Kastan argues, “New Historicism is neither new enough nor historical enough” (29). According to Kastan, this paradox emerges from the new historicists’ “theoretical sophistication, which forces them to acknowledge the situatedness of the critic” in the present, and which leads them to ask the present-oriented questions of the past (17). As a result, “their ‘presentist’ commitments are not only visible from the first but also part of their very understanding of how the past is logically conceivable” (17). Thus, the new historicists show the present needs and anxieties rather than they reconstruct those of the early modern period. From Kastan’s viewpoint, furthermore, the new historicists’ presentist commitments are deployed by their “abstraction and idealization of power”, and their mystification of the “effect of discourse”, alienating the literary works from the material history in which they are embedded (18).

Kastan’s discontent with the new historicists’ preoccupation with power derives from his traditional concept of politics: “The assertion of what no doubt is true, that what had been assumed to be objective literary facts are actually produced by an interested and subjective value system is not necessarily itself a political act, or is so only by an attenuation of the very idea of politics” (27). Kastan would like to keep the conventional concept of politics, which is

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<sup>8</sup> Raymond Williams also argues that the Foucauldian notion of power is monolithically totalitarian. Williams draws the distinction in a given culture between dominant, residual and emergent discourse, and argues that there is always oppositional discourse which cannot be subsumed by reigning power. He concedes that most cultural artifacts are contributory to dominant power, but he maintains that “no mode of production and therefore no dominant social order and therefore no dominant culture ever in reality includes or exhausts all human practice, human energy, and human intention” (*Marxism and Literature* 125).

generally regarded as a public act. Based on this stance, he delivers a sweeping attack on political criticism: “If one’s ultimate goal is to address the massive evidence of the unequal distribution of wealth and power that is so poignantly available in all parts of the world, publishing an essay in *Critical Inquiry* or *Textual Practice* seems a remarkably indirect and ineffective way of pursuing it” (27). This stance is fundamentally different from that of new historicists who, following Foucault, expand politics into every interested and subjective value system which is discursively categorized and controlled. To them, the very private sector is the most political, and cultural arena such as education, publication, media industry, art and entertainment industry is one of the most significant political battlegrounds, because the most intransigent form of power is the latent, fugitive, and invisible one which is diffused in this cultural arena.

As a remedy for new historicism’s presentist fallacy, Kastan argues for “the necessity of returning literary studies to history” (28). By this means of a ‘return to history’, he wants to establish “historical specificity” (16), that is, to reinsert literary works into the historical moment in which they were produced, circulated and consumed. He argues, for example, that playbooks came into being not merely as products of the playwright’s imagination “but as the result of the sustaining activities of the playhouse and the printing shop, and once in the world they immediately sought attention from the public frequenting the theater and the bookstalls” (19). Kastan’s historical commitment to investigate the commercial circulation of the playbooks rather than their aesthetic artistry has its merit, not only because the commercial aspects of the play were largely unexamined by the new historicists but also because in early modern England plays were regarded not so much as the dignified art-forms created by the highbrow poets, but as ephemeral commodities produced by the commercial playhouses. Indeed, compared to other literary genres, dramatic work was “always radically collaborative both on stage and in print”, and was “the least respectful of its author’s intentions. Plays

inevitably register multiple intentions, often conflicting intentions, as actors, annotators, revisers, collaborators, scribes, printers, and proofreaders, in addition to the playwright, all have a hand in shaping the text” (Cox and Kastan 2). Thus, as Kastan argues, it would be more appropriate to focus on the material specifics in which the playbooks were produced and sold than on their poetic features which were imaginatively constructed by playwrights.

In spite of its noticeable merits, however, Kastan’s relentless historical stance brings forth several strands of debate. One of such strands is his static conception of history by which he fixes the past as an unchangeable fact. It is, thus, liable to the regressive mode of historical studies that would refuse to link the studies of the past with those of the present or that would tie texts solely to their moments of production and consumption. Despite his awareness that “the approach to the past can neither be value-free nor immediate” (28), his radical focus on the objects of the past leads him to lose the insight of dialectical relationship between the past and the present, and the interactive connection between objects themselves. This lack of dialectical insight is caused by his anti-theoretical stance, as suggested by the title of his book, *Shakespeare after Theory*. He does not want to accept the unavoidable phenomenon that the historian’s inescapable involvement in the present flows unstoppably back into the events of the past, colouring how he perceives them and modifying his sense of what they signify (Grady and Hawkes 5). Owing to his resolute insistence on the concrete objects and their material production and use in daily life, he regards the new historicists’ theory of the critic’s situatedness in the present as an irrevocably contaminating obstacle to forthright contact with the past. Furthermore, this anti-theoretical stance leads him to depoliticized materialism. It produces a domesticated, largely flattened version of new historicism, at once stripped of much of its theoretical edge and regressed to conservative positivism. In their *Presentist Shakespeares*, Hugh Grady and Terence Hawkes argue, “If this materialism is ‘new’, it is so precisely because of its indifference to any engagement with the

politics and way of life of our own day on which an older materialism insisted” (2).

Another strand of disapproval is the fragmentary and unanchored forms of historical inquiry. The new materialists are prone to be relegated to localism owing to their zeal for historical facts. In *Marxist Shakespeares*, Jean Howard and Scott Shershow complain, it has spawned a swarm of “demon fry – forms of criticism that fetishize the local, the particular, and the unmediated materiality of books, objects, and ‘things’ at the expense of considering ‘big pictures’” (3). Anything, however localized and isolated, can be welcome, as far as it is concerned with historical facts. Local, institutional, transactions are analyzed without asking what general conditions serve as their specific condition of possibility. Hence, attention is paid to clothes, pots and pans, needles and pins, and to books and manuscripts as material objects. They are, after all, stuffs and materials, we can touch them, and thus they look like concrete reality, which do not need any theoretical maneuverings. “The outcome is a kind of textual anthropology, no longer focused on literature or even on writing” (Sinfield 4). It runs the risk of plunging literary studies into aimlessly navigating in an infinite sea of historical scraps and leftovers. Greenblatt warns, “The problem is not only lack of patience but a sense of hopelessness: after a thousand, there would be another thousand, then another, and it is not at all clear that we would be closer to the understanding we seek” (*Renaissance Self-Fashioning* 6). Any historiography inevitably involves selection and conceptualization which are determined by the historian himself and by the age he lives in. Therefore, the argument that positivist commitment to historical facts can give an accurate objective account of the past is untenable.

The third strand of critique is the new materialists’ dehumanized concept of materials by which they cannot see commodities as the “congealed quantities of homogeneous human labour” (Marx, *Capital* 128). Marx argues, “The products of labour, in so far as they are values, are merely the material expressions of the human labour expended to produce them”



(*Capital* 167). The new materialists' resolute commitment to historical facts veers towards the literary version of what Marx calls the fetishism of commodities. Regarding sophisticated presentism as a sinister hazard to historical scholarship, Kastan argues that the remedy to ward off this presentist infection is facts: i.e. the facts about the market place and the facts about the material circumstances in which plays were performed, and playscripts were actually produced, distributed and sold. According to him, "A sharper focus on the material relations of discourse to the world in which it circulates would give its cultural analysis more historical purchase, fixing it more firmly in relation to the actual producers and consumers of those discourses, locating it, that is, in the world of lived history" (18). From his viewpoint, thus, literary studies "might better be defined not as the uncovering of the author's uniquely privileged meaning concealed somehow within the text but as the discovery of the text itself as it speaks the corporate activities that have brought it into being" (38).

Yet, "facts do not speak for themselves. Nor do texts" (Hawkes 3). It is always only the historian positioned in the present that makes the past speak. Nor does the fixed focus on the particular text reveal it as the product of human desire and design. It is 'our understanding' of the text as the product of human desire that makes it disclose its lived history. Every product, including the literary text, is the result of human labour which is practiced upon the materials furnished by nature. Its cultural value is produced by socially necessary labour time, and its commercial transaction is objectified in the market by "the money-form" through which the social relationship between human beings is also externalized (Marx, *Capital* 183). The visible commodity is merely the externalized objectification, and the invisible human labour hidden within the commodity is true reality. That is, the finished form of the world of commodities "conceals the social character of private labour and the social relations between the individual workers, by making those relations appear as relations between material objects" (Marx, *Capital* 168-69). This recognition of commodities as the crystallization of human

labour commands literary critics to move further from material commodities into the array of cultural meanings and practices in which the commodities are involved. By this humanized approach to material commodities, we can overcome the fetishized materialism which demotes “the end of literary study as an undialectical historicism whose telos is genuflexion before the fleshless skull of the past” (Howard and Shershow 14).

Concerning new materialists’ notion of materialism, I would like to give a brief account of how Marxist materialism operates in the formation of knowledge. It is true that Marxism supposes the primacy of material over theory, but it admits the distinction between the material process and the process of thought. Surely, theoretical work, whatever the degree of its abstraction, is always a work bearing on the material process, but since only the theoretical work produces knowledge, it is wholly situated in the process of thought. That is, theoretical work proceeds from raw material, which consists not only of the ‘real-concrete,’ but also of information, notions, and ideas about the material, and deals with it by means of certain conceptual tools. It can be said that, in a strong sense of the term, only real, concrete, singular materials exist. Nevertheless, knowledge of these materials does not presuppose an independent existence of raw materials, because knowledge of a concrete material is precisely the result of a process which Marx explains in terms of a ‘synthesis of a multiplicity of determinations’. Neither a concrete material nor an abstract idea can serve as the singular and univocal determinant of knowledge. In other words, although the process of thought presupposes the knowledge of real-concrete materials as its final purpose and justification, it does not always bear directly upon these materials: i.e. it also bears upon ideas which can be termed ‘abstract-formal’. In other words, ideas do not exist in the strong sense of the word, but they are the condition of the knowledge of real-concrete materials (Poulantzas 12-13). Hence, contrary to Kastan’s innocent belief in new materialism, without theory, his “sharper focus on material relations of discourse” alone would not “give its cultural analysis more

historical purchase” (Kastan 18).

Because of Kastan’s limited concept of historical materialism, on the other hand, some critics inexcusably argue for presentism. Terence Hawkes regards only the presentist approach as genuine historical scholarship: “The present ranks, not as an obstacle to be avoided, nor as a prison to be escaped from. Quite the reverse: it’s a factor actively to be sought out, grasped and perhaps, as a result, understood” (3). Hugh Grady also maintains that the only way to revive “theoretical aspects of cultural materialism and cultural poetics that are in danger of disappearing” (213) is “a straightforward ‘presentist’ self-situation in the postmodernist era on the grounds that there is no other choice, except that of disguising the set of concepts which one inevitably uses to approach and ‘read’ an alien culture” (7). There may be no historicism without a latent presentism, because we cannot make contact with a past unshaped by our own concerns. Furthermore, the trend to historicize Renaissance studies on the axis of a fossilized past is so prevalent in current academia that the more presentist-oriented approaches may be desirable in order to keep the original vitality of historical materialism from being lost.

But, neither is the past a mere *carte blanche* that we can subject to whatever interpretive violence seems expedient, nor can we manipulate Renaissance texts in order to make them say whatever we want them to say. Historicism does mean that unless the historian first understands the historical dimension of the past, never can he claim to account for it at all: i.e. he is merely using the past as a peg on which to hang his own idea. Historical knowledge must inform our interpretation of the cultural values embedded in the works of the past. To disregard the past alterity of Renaissance texts is not only to disregard the academic achievement of the last 30 years which new historicists have produced through their struggles against theoretical premises of New Criticism but also to give up the academic professionalism which the old historicists had tried to establish in the early twentieth century. Surveying the history of literary hermeneutics, we can say, it was through historicism that

literary studies began to overcome academic naiveté.<sup>9</sup> Hence, to disregard historical limits of literary text is not liberating, but in fact it is nothing more than to make literary scholarship regress into amateurism and to render it “defenseless before the charge of being arbitrary and anachronistic” (Ryan, *Shakespeare* 6). Therefore, in this thesis, I try to pay attention to the playwright’s boundedness in cultural discourse and the text’s confinement in historical context, while I avoid, at the same time, the fetishized mode of new materialism.

### C. History and Literature

Confronted with Renaissance literary scholars’ controversy over historicism, we can raise a skeptical question: why do they now bother with historical methodologies which historians left behind long ago; what do they have new to say; where do they want to go?<sup>10</sup> These questions are related to the poststructuralist trend of the last 30 years, which has worked against the traditional boundary between academic disciplines. On the one side, historians have avowedly asserted the fictionality of historical writing, because they have found it always entangled in literary tropes; on the other side, literary scholars have scrambled

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<sup>9</sup> Historicism became popular early in the twentieth century because it provided a semblance of ‘objective’ knowledge and a methodology which is the hallmark of professionalism. It was regarded as the chief solution to the question of how to professionalize English studies. Literary scholars sought a more rigorous disciplinary stance to find their place among the disciplines of the highly positivistic academia, and brought about the so-called old historicism as a result of their professional endeavours (Grady 5).

<sup>10</sup> The controversies over historical efficacy between positivism and presentism which were provoked by Terence Hawkes’ declaration of presentism to counter Kastan’s initiation of pragmatic historicism remind me of the theoretical disputes between historians which began more than a hundred years ago. In the nineteenth century, Leopold von Ranke (1795-1886), tried to formulate historical practices into a verifiable science with his famous dictum that historians should represent the past *wie es eigentlich gewesen*. But in the early twentieth century, Benedetto Croce (1866–1952), discredited Ranke’s idea of scientific objectivity as a mere illusion, by declaring “all history” is “contemporary history” (19), and Croce’s presentist historicism was echoed by Hans-Georg Gadamer who argued all historians have a “historically effected consciousness” and that they cannot be free from their own history (341). Subsequently, the French *Annales* school, who wrote from the inter-war period onward, and the so-called ‘new historians’ of the 1920s and 1930s in America produced a lengthy and complex apologies for presentist historicism. However, in spite of the long sequence of relentless critique on Ranke’s positivist empiricism, some respects of his legacy have remained largely untouched. I think that the Sisyphean effort to reach historical truthfulness can be best summarized with the acclaimed maxim of E. H. Carr in 1961: history is “a continuous process of interaction between the historian and his facts, an unending dialogue between the past and the present” (24).

towards history by recognizing that literature is ultimately constrained by history. As a result, it is now regarded as a hallmark of academic modishness not to observe this disciplinary demarcation. Yet, is there really no difference between literature and history?

In the field of history, it was Hayden White in 1970s who represented the trend of historiographical fictionality. White argues that history and literature are, in important respects, the same thing: “It is sometimes said . . . that the difference between ‘history’ and ‘fiction’ resides in the fact that the historian ‘finds’ his stories, whereas the fiction writer ‘invents’ his. This conception of the historian’s task, however, obscures the extent to which ‘invention’ also plays a part in the historian’s operations” (*Metahistory* 6-7). He continues to explain how, in giving form to their narratives, historians work much the same as poets or dramatists would do, casting their stories in the form of “Romance, Tragedy, Comedy and Satire” (*Metahistory* 7). In his later essay, “Historical Pluralism”, he declares “the dominant opinion among professional historians themselves nowadays” is that their “narrative representations are to be accorded the status of literary, by which is meant ‘novelistic’ or ‘fictional’ accounts of the matters of which they treat” (486).

However, the fundamental difference between fiction and history cannot be obliterated simply by the fictionality of historiography. Lamarque and Olsen argued in 1994, “As long as one talks about *fiction*, this confusion between the object sense and the description sense of the word does not matter: the events are invented, imagined, constructed, and they come into existence (or such existence as they have) through the construction of the verbal expressions that make up the story” (308-309). But “when one uses the word ‘history’”, Lamarque and Olsen continue to argue, “A confusion between [the object sense and the description sense] is fatal; such a confusion would mean that one talked about history in the object sense as if that could be constructed too. In other words, the confusion would legitimize a conclusion that in constructing an account of the past one was also constructing the past” (309). At this point,

they make the disciplinary distinction clear: “This is exactly where the analogy between the concept of fiction and the concept of history breaks down” (309).

On the other hand, in accordance with White’s argument for disciplinary crossover, Greenblatt in 1980s represented the field of literature by blurring the borderline between literature and history. In *Renaissance Self-Fashioning*, Greenblatt defines what he is developing for Renaissance scholarship as a “poetics of culture” (5), and this alternative term for new historicism denotes his intention to align the historicity of texts with the textuality of history. And it bears an obvious testimony to his poststructuralist historicism which is designed to deconstruct old historicist hierarchical differentiation between literary and non-literary texts. Instead of elevating one cultural practice above the rest and sealing off its texts for special scrutiny, new historicists deploy an “interdisciplinary campaign to track the culture’s chief tropes as they move back and forth between its various discursive domains” (Ryan, *New Historicism and Cultural Materialism* xiv). As a strategy to deconstruct New Criticism’s premise on autonomous artwork, such an approach has an obvious attraction. By seeing literature as part of a larger cultural regime, under which the semiotic system of literature operates, it can rewire literary works back into all other cultural discourses (Ryan, *New Historicism and Cultural Materials* xiv). At the same time, it can accord poems, plays and novels an active role in shaping their time as is ingeniously testified by Greenblatt himself with Elizabeth I’s petulance over the production of *Richard II* in the wake of Essex’s abortive rebellion (Introduction to *The Power of Forms* 3-5).

Contributive as it has been to dismantling the traditional demarcation between literature and history, however, the levelling effect of new historicism is far from settled and its side effect is also obvious. In addition to the polemics by Lamarque and Olsen above, the main argument lies in the fact that even though both historiography and literature reconstruct the past in order to understand it, their final aims are generically different. For the majority of

modern historians, the most enduring feature of their studies is the continuing belief in the importance of accuracy and impartiality which can be guaranteed by cultivating the detachment of their present concerns from establishing historical facts. That is, they are unwilling to countenance the complete collapse of the categories of fiction and history into one another. Therefore, the best understanding of White's claim for the 'fictionality' of historiography is to regard it just as a rhetorical manner to assert not the fictionality of historical facts but the fictionality of narrative reconstruction of those facts. In short, 'historians cannot make up facts'. On the other hand, literature is generically definable as a fiction for the age-old Aristotelian concept of aesthetic pleasure which is independent of any historical accuracy or factual truth-claims, and it has been the very business of literary critics to explain what aesthetic pleasure literary texts produce and how they do so. For example, nobody reads Holinshed's accounts of Richard III for aesthetic pleasure, but Shakespeare's *Richard III* may have produced more pleasure because of his imaginative creativity at the expense of its historical accuracy. As a corollary of this difference, historians assume that anything in the past could be explained if its full history could be retrieved, but literary critics cannot expect that everything in literature could be explained even if its full history could be retrieved.

About the current Renaissance literary scholarship slanted predominantly to 'historicizing', Hugh Grady warns, the "elevation of the trend towards contextualism and 'local' historical readings to the level of *disciplinary requirements* would amount to disciplinary suicide, eventual irrelevance, and a new antiquarianism" (24). In addition to Grady's argument, I would like to maintain that neither can we expect that every historical detail will be retrieved nor will the full recovery of historical details explain literature. *Pace* Greenblatt who dreams of the illusion of "whole reading", even if we had enough time to retrieve historical details, as far as literature concerns, we could not "illuminate every corner

of the text and knit together into a unified interpretive vision” (*Shakespearean Negotiations* 4). Thus, I would like to argue that we should deliberately attempt to focus on the aesthetic features of literary texts rather than to make a documentation of them with a myriad of historical details. The “flattening of the literary work” with historical documents will inevitably cause it to be “emptied of its rich signifying potentiality” (Howard, “New Historicism” 24). For readers and spectators, Renaissance literature such as Marlowe’s, Shakespeare’s and Jonson’s come to matter much more than medical treatises, travel literatures, penal records and guildhall documents. As Greenblatt concedes, “Among artists the will to be the culture’s voice – to create the abstract and brief chronicles of the time – is commonplace” (*Renaissance Self-Fashioning* 7), and the special status of literature as a voice of cultural pattern derives from the fact that literature has its own relative autonomy, even though it cannot be, of course, as watertight as presumed by New Criticism.

Concerning the controversies over presentism in recent Renaissance scholarship, I would like to emphasize that what gives presentism cogent validity is the distinctiveness of literature from history rather than an historian’s situatedness in the present. Unlike historians, literary critics have to come to terms with the paradoxical presentness of past literature, because it has aesthetic properties which continue to produce meanings in historical moments different from those in which it was begotten. Unlike history, literature allows even the reversal of hierarchies such as primary/secondary sources and past/present effects. For example, literary scholars are fully entitled to make it their main business to ask not how Shakespeare had influence on Marx or Freud but how Marx or Freud had influence on Shakespearean reception. Literature also allows a critic to begin with a present-day anecdote deliberately, to set his interrogative agenda by it, and to deploy crucial aspects of the present in the interpretation of the past in order to stress the aesthetic presentness.<sup>11</sup> Particularly in

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<sup>11</sup> By this argument, I mean the reversal of the narrative strategy of Stephen Greenblatt, who



drama, its performative quality widens the critic's latitude to amplify its present implication. Accordingly, it can activate the potential of past artworks for 'now' rather than 'then', and put into action the strategies of reading the Renaissance drama from the exigencies of the twenty-first century. A literary critic does not only "desire to speak with the dead" (Greenblatt, *Shakespearean Negotiations* 1), but he "will aim, in the end, to talk to the living" (Grady and Hawkes 4). From this position of presentist literature, I will argue for Marxist aesthetics as an alternative to French poststructuralism in the conclusion of this thesis.

#### **D. Economic Precedence**

From the perspective of dialectical materialist urgency, new historicists' negligence of the economic aspect of power would be a more serious side-effect than the levelling discourse of literature and history. In new historicist approaches to the Renaissance drama, it would not be wide of the mark to say that their studies have been focused on the visible power exercised by the ruling class. As Richard Halpern notes, "Much of the significant work of new historicism" has concentrated on the analysis of "those mechanisms of power which radiates out from political sovereignty: censorship, punishment, surveillance and above all spectacle", which were frequently staged both punitively and celebratorily in the public space (3). They have illustrated that "the power of sovereignty works primarily by making itself *visible*; it promulgates and extends itself through public progresses, entertainments and propaganda, on the one hand, and overt force or threats of force, on the other" (Halpern 3). Greenblatt argues, "Elizabethan power depends upon its privileged visibility" (*Shakespearean Negotiations* 64). If there is a polemical point here, the new historicist focus on visible juridico-political power has largely resulted in the neutralization of the difference between medieval feudalist power

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frequently starts with the remotely obscure anecdotes of the past in order to stress the pervasiveness of reigning power through the capillaries of the societies of the time. For example, see his "Invisible Bullets," *Shakespearean Negotiations: The Circulation of Social Energy in Renaissance England* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1988) 21-65.

and modern capitalist power. It would not be a wrong approach, from a viewpoint of repressive state apparatuses which deployed both political and cultural power for a monarchical sovereignty in the early modern period, but from a more sensitized ideological viewpoint, it is a reductive reading of power, when we consider the emergent capitalism which would eventually transform power politics from the visible sovereign into the invisible economic.

Greenblatt explains his “poetics of culture” as an interpretive mode which tries to see the cultural practice of power as a metaphoric circulation of “social energy” among various levels of social instances (*Shakespearean Negotiations* 5-6). But to conceptualize all cultural phenomena as a general process of metaphoric circulation risks obliterating the specificity of economic power. In order not to be misled by misty cultural metaphors, any theory of symbolic circulation should not over-hastily cancel the economic materiality of power (Halpern 14). Greenblatt’s loss of the specificity of economic power, arguably, derives primarily from Foucault, and generally speaking, his cultural poetics can be regarded as a reductive reformulation of Foucault’s concept of power. Like Greenblatt, Foucault is also interested in the social regimes that circulate power/knowledge through discourse with the centrality of “juridico-discursive” coding (*History of Sexuality* 82). As in Greenblatt’s cultural poetics, disciplinary power in Foucault pervades every capillary of society through discourse. Unlike Greenblatt, however, Foucault does not lose the invisible, if misty, aspect of power (*History of Sexuality* 87-91). In Foucault, “disciplinary power” generated in a capitalist society is conceptualized as being implicit rather than explicit, latent rather than patent, and invisible rather than spectacular (*Discipline and Punish* 187). In Foucault, furthermore, power which operates not through “the deployment of alliance” but through “the deployment of sexuality” aims not at restricting or immobilizing but at “proliferating, innovation, annexing, creating” and at “expanding at an increasing rate” (*History of Sexuality* 107). This productive,

expansive power became dominant in the Enlightenment period and supplanted the restrictive mode of power, because it lost “its importance as economic processes and political structures could no longer rely on it as an adequate instrument or sufficient support” (*History of Sexuality* 106).

When we see it from Marxist viewpoint, it is clear that this notoriously obscure concept of productive power is a psychosomatic reformulation of Marx’s concept of capital. In *Discipline and Punish*, Foucault shows more clearly that his concept of productive power has derived from Marx’s concept of capital by arguing: the development of power “marks the appearance of elementary techniques belonging to a quite different economy: mechanisms of power which, instead of proceeding by deduction, are integrated into the productive efficiency of the apparatuses from within” (*Discipline and Punish* 219). When Foucault contrasts the “old principle of ‘levying violence’, which governed the economy of power”, to the “principle of ‘mindless-production-profit’”, it is obvious that the Marxist notion of econo-formational transition from feudalism to capitalism inspires Foucault’s theory about the productive mode of power (*Discipline and Punish* 219). The principle of “mindless-production-profit” corresponds to the capitalist mode of invisible money-power which produces and expands surplus value. Foucault quite directly aligns the old principle of visibly violent power with what Marx calls primitive accumulation by his observation of the pre-capitalist state as “levying on money or products by royal, seigneurial, ecclesiastical taxation; levying on men or time by *corvées* of press-ganging, by locking up or banishing vagabonds” (*Discipline and Punish* 219).

Marx’s theoretical inquiry into the method of extracting surplus value in capitalism sheds light on Foucault’s concept of invisibly expanding power. According to Marx, one of the most distinctive features of capitalism is its method of producing and exploiting surplus value. Feudalist social formation required visible political power to transfer the value

produced by labourers to the ruling elites. But in a capitalist social formation, such extraction of value occurs entirely within the economic mechanism itself, without the need for visible political or legal coercion. As a result, capitalism deploys a historically unprecedented form of social power which is opaque to analysis with the models derived from the political. In his early chapters of *Capital*, Marx catches hold of the fugitive origin of surplus value, and ultimately elucidates the hidden system of extracting it in the free market. That is, even if the buying and selling of labour power operates as freely and equally as any other exchange of commodities does, it is an ever-expanding process of continuous production and extraction of surplus value, while buying and selling of other commodities is merely a constantly equal exchange of value.

It is frequently understood as a sarcastic remark when Marx describes the exchange of labour power between capitalists and workers by saying, “The sphere of circulation or commodity exchange, within whose boundaries the sale and purchase of labour-power goes on, is in fact a very Eden of the innate rights of man. It is the exclusive realm of Freedom, Equality, Property, and Bentham” (*Capital* 280). But it is not entirely sarcastic. It explains a marvelous ‘truth’ of capitalism, if ‘truth’ concerns only the visible surface of the capitalist system. Both capitalists and laborers in a free market are formally free and equal, “because both buyer and seller of a commodity, let us say of labour-power, are determined only by their own free will” (Marx, *Capital* 280). Unlike in a feudalist society, no direct compulsion, violence, or hierarchical obligation forces the labour contract. The reason why this ‘free’ contract nevertheless ensures dominance of one class over the other is that the labour power itself is unique among commodities. The ‘consumption’ of labour power by a purchaser gets more value invisibly than it costs him; but in consuming this commodity he acts as all other purchasers do; i.e. he apparently pays for it as fully. Thus, the moment of capitalist extraction remains invisible or fugitive even when the worker steps into the factory. In the capitalist

workplace, neither physical nor psychological manacles tie the worker to his machine. But the worker produces more than he is paid, the resultant delta value is continuously added to the original one, and it leads to the ever-expanding production of profit. This capitalist mechanism concealed in the transaction between capitalists and laborers is deployed by Adam Smith's concept of the 'invisible hand' in a free-market, but this invisible hand is obvious enough to explain the unprecedented expansion of economic production in human history and the astronomically widening economic gap between capitalist and labourer in a so-called democratic state.<sup>12</sup>

It is beyond the scope of this thesis to enumerate all the aspects of how Foucault appropriates Marx's concept of capital into his theory of power. In a limited space, what I can say is that without referring to Marx, it would be difficult to catch Foucault's inversion of the traditional concepts of visible and repressive power into invisible, subjectless and productive power.<sup>13</sup> Greenblatt's concept of "the cultural circulation of social energy" does not also look entirely different from a Marxist theory about the circulation of capital (*Shakespearean Negotiations* 13). Moreover, when Greenblatt posits the demarcation among various social practices as semi-permeable, he does not suggest a concept dissimilar from the Marxist concept of relative autonomy.

From the perspective of Marxist aesthetics, however, I would like to raise two moot points in his cultural poetics. First, as Richard Halpern argues, "the boundaries between economic and noneconomic regions are not merely imperfectly permeable but also asymmetrically so" (14). Even though Greenblatt treats "money" as "only one kind of cultural capital" in the circulation of social energy (*Shakespeare Negotiations* 12), "capital in the

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<sup>12</sup> For details of Marx's reformulation of Smith's invisible hand, see "The Transformation of Money into Capital," and "The Production of Absolute Surplus-Value," *Capital: A Critique of Political Economy*, trans. Ben Fowkes (London: Penguin, 1976) 245-339.

<sup>13</sup> Foucault's concept of power has been frequently criticized for its mysteriousness by anti-Foucauldian scholars. For example, see David Kastan, *Shakespeare after Theory* (New York: Routledge, 1999) 18.

restricted sense defines the conditions under which other kinds of cultural material or ‘energy’ can enter its domain” (Halpern 14). Furthermore, the predominance of economic over non-economic energy should suggest the prevalence of invisible power over visible power, when it is concerned with containing the subversive energy of cultural domain. For example, the invisible economic power meted out to the early modern theatre by means of ‘not funding’ politically provocative productions might have been more effective than visible censorship or legal prosecution. Second, social energy does not just circulate, but it also expands, because every investment of capital is an investment of desires, and every circulation of capital is an expansion of desires. In particular, capitalism in the early modern period made a radical metamorphosis in regard to feudalism: it set free energies and desires that had been restrained by the Catholic church and feudal economy.

However prevailing economic power is as an ultimately decisive agent among the various modes of power, my argument for ‘economic precedence’ should not be understood as economic determinism. Granted that economic determinism is typically framed as the characteristic pitfall of Marxism, I would like to emphasize once again that Marxism is the logic of dialectical materialism. Furthermore, this anti-materialist revulsion against Marxism can incur a slippage back into idealist detachment. Dollimore deplores, “The truth that people do not live by bread alone may then be appropriated ideologically to become the truth that spiritual nourishment is an adequate substitute for bread and possibly even preferable to it” (*Radical Tragedy* 251). Agreeing with Herbert Marcuse, Dollimore continues, “But most importantly, the revolutionary force of the ideal, which in its very unreality keeps alive the best desires of men amidst a bad reality is lost, displaced by ideals of renunciation and acquiescence” (*Radical Tragedy* 251). I admit that all knowledge begins inevitably from a simplified set of theoretical dictums, but I emphasize that any fixed doctrines or petrified dogmas, whatever their theoretical credentials, are no longer Marxism. The single most

important point in Marxist theory is to regard all things in the context of a continuous process or perpetual fluidity.

As Frederic Jameson emphasizes, Marxism can never be identified “by specific positions (whether of a political, economic or philosophical type), but rather by the allegiance to a specific complex of problems, whose formulations are always in movement and in historic rearrangement and restructuration” (“Actually Existing Marxism” 19). As it is well noted, Marxism is composed of three basic theoretical allegiances: historicism, materialism and dialectics, which negate the concepts of trans-historical ontology, metaphysical idealism, and unilateral causality respectively. As historicism and materialism are widely known, I would like to emphasize Marxist dialectics in order to prevent dogmatic determinism. Whereas causality explains an entity as an effect of a cause, dialectics puts each entity in dynamic reciprocity with others and accounts for every phenomenon as a result of over-determination. Thus, as its analytical premise, dialectics presupposes the relative autonomy of each level or instance of a social formation. As a corollary, Marxist materialism should not be understood as economic determinism.<sup>14</sup> In this thesis, my argument is motivated by the position of economic precedence, and it is deployed by and large according to the linear logic of causality. But I try not to lose the insight of dialectical reciprocity between concrete material and abstract idea, and I am sometimes obliged to write according to the circulatory logic of dialectics.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> For dialectical materialism, refer also to my argument about Marxist notion of knowledge formation, which I discussed above.

<sup>15</sup> We are accustomed to the linear logic, and academic convention recommends us to follow linear logic. But Marx’s writings are dialectic. That might be the reason why his argument is difficult to follow and frequently simplified into economic determinism. In Renaissance studies, arguably, Stephen Greenblatt is one of the exemplary scholars who not only understands dialectics but is also able to practice it in his writing. For the cultural dialectics, see his *Shakespearean Negotiations* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1988). For the supreme example of materialist dialectics in general, see Marx’s *Capital*, trans. Ben Fowkes (London: Penguin, 1976). Specifically, confer its first three chapters, pp. 125-244.

#### IV. Previous Studies on the Poor

Previous studies about the poor in the Renaissance drama focused on Shakespeare. In *The Populace in Shakespeare* (1949), Brents Stirling tries to posit Shakespeare's political attitude towards the poor. His studies can be regarded as an extended gloss on Coleridge's theory of Shakespeare and the mob. He surveys the critical tradition between Coleridge and himself, defines most of his predecessors including Coleridge as apologists for Shakespeare's hostility to the crowd, and advances his critical inquiry into the mob scenes by way of assessment of Shakespeare's historical environment in order to identify his anti-popular attitude. He concludes that Shakespeare's condemnatory picture of the mob was "typical of a conservative position which sought to discredit both moderate and extreme dissent" (151). His argument for Shakespeare's conservative stance is corroborated by a wide range of evidence in his drama, but it cannot be free from the critique that his argument presupposes Shakespeare's political attitude as static rather than dynamic. It would be reasonable to suppose that the dramatist's attitude was in constant movement in his theatrical career and had changed from Jack Cade's scenes in *2 Henry VI* through *Julius Caesar* to the plebeian's scenes in *Coriolanus*.

Adopting a historicist approach similar to Stirling's in her *Shakespeare and the Popular Voice* (1989), Annabel Patterson delivers a sustained challenge to the notion of Shakespeare as an anti-democratic hierarchist and a supporter of the Elizabethan order. For Patterson, Shakespeare began as a cautious believer in the Elizabethan establishment before moving towards political skepticism and then to a mature radicalism. Her analysis highlights the complexity of representation in the plays, which she approaches with an analytical term she calls "ventriloquism" (41), by which a dramatic text gives voice to social problems indirectly even though it may not be within its apparent intentions. The highly dramatic rebellion of the crazed prophet William Hackett in July 1591, for instance, gives a ventriloquist edge to the



rebellion of Jack Cade in 2 *Henry VI*, and the consecutive harvest failures and the midsummer disturbance of silk weavers can recast the festivities in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Lear's confrontation with a Bedlam beggar, Prospero's long years of inability to transform Caliban, the reference to the Earl of Essex in *Henry V*, and the Midlands Uprising at the time of *Coriolanus* – all are historical events and material conditions that invite Patterson to deploy her ventriloquist analysis. And such events are not viewed as temporarily subversive moments which would be ultimately subdued by containment as in Stephen Greenblatt's new historicist account of conspiratorial power, but they are viewed from a perspective of dramatic effect as ruptures and discordances of the representational text where the pressure of Shakespeare's populist feelings have broken through a more conventional storyline and have introduced new poetic forces into the plot.

In *Fat King, Lean Beggar* (1996), William Carroll applies a deconstructionist twist to the previous new historicist account of the poor. By surveying the social and economic history that would account for the condition of the poor, Carroll illuminates his principal aim to identify a series of competing representational strategies that exploit the 'beggar' as a sign. Hamlet provides the defining binary opposition for the growth of Carroll's study when he says to Claudius that "Your fat king and your lean beggar is but variable service – two dishes, but to one table" (4.3.23-24). Carroll argues, "Each term of this habitually paired inversion thus requires the other in order to mount a full definition of its own identity" (9). For other examples of the binary inversion, Carroll links the meeting between King Henry and Simpcox in 2 *Henry VI* to the later conjunction of King Lear and Edgar, suggesting that "both scenes reveal the monarch's inability to 'read' an inversion of his own image" (154). But in the emaciated figures of Lear and Edgar, Carroll argues, "Lear's remarkable prayer is part of a powerful dramatic process that exposes the arbitrariness of class, power, wealth, and so identity" (184-85). In addition to Shakespeare's plays, Carroll applies his non-essentialist

analysis of identity to a variety of non-Shakespearean literature. In particular, Thomas Harman's rogue pamphlet, *Caveat for Common Cursitors*, constitutes the focus of his analysis. It is interesting to read Carroll's deconstructionist argument that the representation of the vagrant accorded with a contemporary 'othering' process, but it would be difficult to be exempted from the critique of the deconstructionist approach: i.e. its indulgence in sign-play frequently causes it to overlook the fact that 'othering' process is also an 'ordering' process along the axis of unequal binarism between the subject and the subjected, and that it always leads to the latter's punishment, exclusion and execution. For example, Carroll reminds us that the praise of beggary for its freedom in such plays as *The Blind Beggar of Bednall Green* and *A Jovial Crew* is a dramatic fantasy which was "not available outside of the theaters" (214), but he cannot recognize that such rogue pamphlet as *Caveat for Common Cursitors* served for contemporary excuses which justified the savage punishment on vagrancy in Tudor poor laws.

Linda Woodbridge's book, *Vagrancy, Homelessness, and English Renaissance* (2003), can be regarded as a critique of Carroll's depoliticized deconstructionist approach to the poor from the perspective of radical materialism, even though she abstains herself from directly criticizing him. In her broad research into cultural manifestations of vagrancy, Woodbridge addresses the ways in which vagrancy functions not only as a Renaissance 'otherness' but also as a comic literary diversion from more pressing issues of material deprivation. She convincingly demonstrates dialogic interaction between, on the one hand, rogue pamphlet descriptions and anti-poverty legislation and, on the other, romanticized literary representations and ideological debate. Her argument that rogue literature "influenced statutes" (4) is well supported in the chapter on Thomas Harman, where she shows that his *Caveat for Common Cursitors* "may have influenced high echelons of Elizabethan officialdom, and . . . left its mark on important social legislation" (41). On the other hand, by consistently

interrogating the interdependent relationship of the images of beggars to the larger fields of semantic investment such as stratification, marginalization and demonization, she is empowered to demystify the established ideology on divine order of social hierarchies: “Insistence on the fixity and divine sanction of boundaries . . . actually helps to produce essentialist pronouncements about the immutability of such boundaries” (115), and as a corollary early modern construction of vagrants functioned as ideological bedrock whereby the settled found in vagrants “qualities they disowned in themselves” (16), whilst the homeless offered a “mute reproach” to home-owning complacency (166). Her study fascinates literary students not only because she posits the representation of vagrants in a broad context of material investment but also because her investigation into early modern representations frequently alludes to our present-day controversies such as crime and welfare policies, bringing into wonderful relief her nuanced dialectics between the past and the present, but it is difficult to deny that her analytical focus is slanted towards history rather than towards literature.

In *Poor Women in Shakespeare* (2007), Fiona McNeill delivers a feminist re-appraisal to previous scholarship which has hitherto adopted sexually undifferentiated methodologies. Building on the pioneering works of Alice Clark, Frances Dolan, Laura Gowing and Natasha Korda, McNeill searches for “traces of real historical women behind their dramatic representation” (16). Through her attention to the linguistic fluidity of early modern English, McNeill launches a vital investigation into often hidden and misunderstood women of meager economic means. By elaborating on Orsino’s request for a song chanted by “the spinsters and the knitters” and “the free maids that weave their thread with bones” (2.4.43-44), by investigating the representation of spinsters on “baser currency” in the early modern economy (64), and by paying attention to the serving maid in *The Shoemaker’s Holiday*, she gives us a chance to read early modern dramas with new perspectives. Her introductory chapter

convinces us of the ubiquity of poor women in and around the early modern theatres. McNeill's 'poor women' belong to a category that defies the official definition: i.e. stable categories such as 'wife', 'widow' and 'maid' were a fantasy of the domestic order propagated by conduct manuals and court records. The overall structure of the subsequent chapters traces the life-trajectory of the poor women who were first forcibly subjected to the domestic ideals as in *The Taming of the Shrew* but eventually transported by the Virginia Company to Jamestown, which invites us to invoke the island of *The Tempest*. Thus, it reminds us of Shakespeare's theatrical career, and it suggests that Shakespeare's shifts in genre, from pastoral romances and the histories, through the comedies and tragedies, at last to the later romances, not only reveal his own shift of consciousness but also correspond to the dispossessory shifts to which poor women were subjected as England went through the transition from late feudalism to early capitalism and to the New World empires (16). It is interesting to read this tripartite dialogue, but like Woodbridge she is not critical enough about the poststructuralist dismissal of the disciplinary boundary between poetic truth and historical fact.

## **V. The Outline of the Following Chapters**

I have selected three groups of poor people – petty criminals, prostitutes, and London apprentices – and tried to see how they are shaped by their dramatic representations in the early modern theatre. Their analysis in the following chapters aims to overcome the widespread prejudice against the poor, which diverts the problem of poverty from the socio-economic system to their individual morality constructed by the Tudor establishment: i.e. idleness, roguery, wastefulness, and a reluctance to repent. In order to locate the systemic problems which inevitably produce the poor, I will borrow theoretical tools not only from Marxist theoreticians but also from a wide range of poststructuralist thinkers. For the study of

the literary representation of each group of the poor, I have inevitably avoided Shakespeare's canon because his plays often give only passing references to the poor, and generally relegate them to the margins of the stage. Instead, I have chosen three other plays; i.e. *The Roaring Girl*, *The Honest Whore*, and *Sir Thomas More*, which not only adopt the poor as their subject matter but also place them at the centre stage.

*The Roaring Girl* and *The Honest Whore* are so-called city comedies which were popular in the early decades of the seventeenth century. They have a significant and vital relationship to the development of London capitalism and its concurrent political change: i.e. the effect of the sharp price-rise and the spread of the speculative money-management which produced a disruptive force in the religious, moral and psychological life of the London residents as well as in London political economy, and caused a shift in power from the Crown to Parliament, merchants and industrialists. As the consciousness of money-power heightens, so the emblem and the ambience of the stock market and its related money transactions become central in the city-related plays. As early as the 1930s, L. C. Knights already emphasized in *Drama and Society in the Age of Jonson* that the age witnessed the "taking shape" of the "capitalist system" which destroyed traditional morality (176). Yet, he argues that none of the plays written in the age "is a dramatization of an economic problem or consciously intended as propaganda for this or that form of economic organization" (6). However, almost all of his subsequent critics regard one of the distinctive features of city-related plays as their realistic dramatization of economic problems of the City and its affiliated moral ethos. For example, Theodore Levinwand argues, "Surely all these plays pitting merchants against gentry, and prisons, and directed at identifiable public and coterie audiences, constitute a very explicit and effective discussion of contemporary 'propaganda' itself" (15).

The sources of city comedies include classical New Comedy, Italian *commedia*

*dell'arte*, medieval morality plays, Elizabethan satires, interludes, jest books and rouge pamphlets. In his groundbreaking work, *Jacobean City Comedy* (1968), which is widely regarded as the first book solely devoted to city comedies, Brian Gibbons defines them as a distinctive literary genre which has urban settings, business-minded characters and money-related incidents, excluding “material appropriate to romance, fairy tale, sentimental legend or patriotic chronicle” (24). He regards thirty-three dramas produced between 1597 and 1616 as befitting to the genre which reached its climax with Jonson, Marston and Middleton (1968: 25). In his second edition of the book (1980), he argues, “it becomes recognizable in Jonson’s humour plays of 1598 and 1599, and once the conventions of city comedies proper are established by about 1605 they are widely recognized” (2).

In *The City Staged* (1986), which makes the definition of the genre more coherent and narrower than that of Gibbons, Leinwand argues that the city comedy has as its mature characteristic a dramatic triangle which is formed by merchant-citizens, gentleman-gallants, and various female characters, and that it gives satiric commentaries on the predetermined role-plays among the three groups, and according to this definition, he excludes from the genre *The Shoemaker’s Holiday* on the ground that its ethos is celebratory rather than satiric, and *Bartholomew Fair* because it does not fit the dramatic triangle of the three groups of characters (7-9). Other critics on city comedies might disagree with Leinwand’s narrow postulation of the dramatic triangle, but almost all of them focus their studies on the London middling-sort, especially on the merchant-citizens, and they disregard by and large their social underlings such as rogues, servants, maids, prostitutes, crooks, swindlers and other petty criminals, understandably because the protagonist of the genre is usually a London bourgeois.

On the other hand, critics would readily agree to the postulation that city comedies interrogate inexorably the topological ethos of London locales. Indeed, in her recent book, *Theater of a City* (2007), Jean Howard demarcates each chapter according to London

geography: i.e. Royal Exchange, London Counters, London whorehouse, and ballrooms or academies of manners (23). In terms of geographical setting, *The Roaring Girl* can be appreciated as a representative city comedy, even though its protagonist is not a merchant-citizen. The two parts of *The Honest Whore* are set in Milan according to the early modern theatre's common fashion of geographical displacement, but the thinly-disguised pretense of Italian color is stripped off at the end of each part, revealing their topological identity to be London: i.e. the first part ends at Bedlam, and the second part at Bridewell.

Compared to other genres, the distinctive feature of the city play is its realistic description of urban life. T. S. Eliot, in his essay on Middleton, praises his play's photographic picture of human nature: "We feel always a quiet and undisturbed vision of things as they are and not 'another thing'" (167). As a critical realist, the dramatist seeks to shape characters and incidents in order to bring the underlying social and moral issues alive through the specific and local experiences. The dynamics of such an art springs from creative dialogics implicit in the dramatist's criticism of urban life and the age. When the dramatist presents the situation of a merchant-citizen who is ambitious to become a country gentleman, on the level of comedy of manners it seems to be conventional, but what makes his play significant is that the conventions are enriched with contemporary metaphors. Its realist characteristics lie in its transformation of the typical elements of city life into significant patterns, deploying a satiric criticism and suggesting deeper sources of conflict and change. The merchant-citizen embodies a capitalist spirit which the playwright frequently represents as a dominant force. The gentleman-gallant's witty deceit to acquire sex and money expresses a materialist ethos in London, whilst the play's stress on detailed, recognizably familiar locations and on the texture of contemporary urban life guarantees its dramatic potency. Though its comic resolution frequently swings between the poles of jovial fulfillment and bitter mockery as in New Comedy, the city play makes us recognize the aspect of absurdity and dehumanization of

contemporary urban life.

*Sir Thomas More*, presumably written several years earlier than the decades of city comedies, is properly called a history play which adopts Holinshed's accounts of the 1517 Ill May Day as its source, but a wealth of its topological allusions to London bears a close resemblance to city comedies. In the third chapter, I will argue for the relationship between the play and city comedies. In terms of the literary genre, thus, I can group the three plays under a tentative name of city play or city-related play.

In all three plays' characterization of the poor, the representational distortion is pervasive. Not to be tricked by its representational contamination, I will try a tripartite dialogue between dramatic allusion, and documentational evidence, and poetic imagination. I have made each chapter relatively self-contained: i.e. it has its own introduction, main body, and conclusion. In the introduction of each chapter, I will provide the specific socio-historical circumstances of each group of the poor and the theatrical context of each play. In the main body, I will carry out a close reading of each play in question. With the exception of Shakespeare's plays, it is widely accepted as an academic convention to deal with several plays under one thematic heading, but I will try to focus on a single play in each chapter, because I think the play has its own due right to be treated as an autonomous artwork. In addition, I think that my focus on a single play will help the reader to be assured of my basic position that in spite of French poststructuralism aesthetic autonomy cannot be dispersed into the socio-historical heteronomy. In the conclusion of each chapter, I will not repeat the argument of the main body. Instead, I will try to draw a bigger picture of cultural implication from each poor group by applying a theoretical model to the result of my previous discussion.

Chronologically, I should have placed *Sir Thomas More*, *The Honest Whore*, and *The Roaring Girl* in order, but I have put *The Roaring Girl*, *The Honest Whore*, and *Sir Thomas*



*More* subsequently.<sup>16</sup> The reason for placing *The Roaring Girl* in the first chapter is that I regard its main character Moll Cutpurse as an iconic figure of the London poor whose protean identities were disruptive to the taxonomical establishment. I place *Sir Thomas More* in the last chapter, not only because it is a generically different play, but also because its London protesters, who challenge the ruling ideology, are different from the other groups of the poor who usually internalize it. The first chapter attempts to demonstrate, through the analysis of the hermaphroditic protagonist Moll, that to adapt the petty criminal's transvestism to political idealism is erroneous, and that her protean identities represent the characteristics of early modern London. The second chapter argues that early modern capitalism combined with patriarchal culture plays a crucial role in giving rise to prostitutes by examining the protagonist of *The Honest Whore*, Bellafront. The third chapter, which views the 1517 Ill May Day apprentice riots from the perspective of the 1590s London crisis, traces the representational history of the economic disturbances and tries to elucidate the oppressive mechanism of the early modern political regime which mystified institutional flaws with a recourse to the notion of disorderly human nature.

In the general conclusion of the thesis, I will risk staying away from an academic convention. Instead of giving a summary account of the previous chapters, I will discuss the Renaissance drama's function for today. In terms of its connection with the three previous chapters, it may be unconventional, but in the context of general import, I think, it will make the thesis more coherent. From the presentist viewpoint, I will appraise the use value of the Renaissance drama in our time, and try to overcome the French poststructuralist fatalism by arguing for a positive agency of human selfhood and a critical function of art. And according to Marxist aesthetics, I will try to evaluate the poetic appeal of the three plays. To judge the beauty of literature is now by and large regarded as an outmoded style of literary studies, but I

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<sup>16</sup> I will discuss the date of each play in detail in the following chapters.

think it is an undue side-effect from the French poststructuralist preoccupation with social heteronomy and its replacement of the New Critics' premise of literary autonomy. As I have argued above, even if we cannot keep literature tightly sealed from other disciplines, we still cannot deny its relative autonomy. And I admit that to judge is frequently to apply a prejudice, but as Gadamer says, "understanding begins" by "foregrounding a prejudice" (298). Thus, by allowing our own prejudice to confront a literary text, we can put the prejudice at risk and participate in a continuous revision of our prejudice. That is, the judgment we eventually will make may not necessarily accord with the prejudice we started with, and this valuable process of dialogue is dependent not on reluctance to make judgment but on willingness to do so and thereby to bring it into adjustment. Indeed, it is inevitable that we encounter the text with a prejudice, but the prejudice is not restricting but liberating.

# CHAPTER 1. PETTY CRIMINALS

## MOLL, A TRANSVESTITE FOR PROVOCATION AND A METONYM OF LONDON IN *THE ROARING GRIL*

### I. Introduction

#### A. Pro-City Writers and Anti-City Writers during the Expansion of London

“The fashion of play-making”, writes Middleton in his epistle “To the Comic Play-Readers” of *The Roaring Girl*, “I can properly compare to nothing so naturally as the alteration of apparel” (1-2),<sup>17</sup> but it was not only fashions in clothes and play-making that were undergoing rapid change. London itself was changing at an unprecedented rate. Its population growth was remarkable: at the beginning of the sixteenth century, its population numbered little more than 50,000, a century later it grew into 200,000, and by 1650, it exploded into 400,000 (Hoyle 313).<sup>18</sup> This demographic dominance was matched by its commercial hegemony. In the first half of the sixteenth century, its share of English cloth exports rose from 60 percent to 80 to 90 percent, and in the second half as the cloth trade faltered, its commercial preeminence became more import-led, functioning as the supplier of luxuries to the expanding and wealthier elites (Dyer 335).

London’s inhabitants consisted of three groups. At the apex of these groups, as might be expected in the country’s dominant trading centre, were the merchants who are shown in act 1 scene 2 of *The Roaring Girl*. They were the smallest in number, but were both the richest economically and the most powerful politically. Below this group were large numbers of shopkeepers and artisans, as is shown by the view of three small shops in act 2 scene 1, where

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<sup>17</sup> All quotations and scene divisions cited in this thesis are from *The Roaring Girl*, ed. Paul A. Mulholland (Manchester: Manchester UP, 1987).

<sup>18</sup> The difference between London and other parts of the country cannot be overstated. In the first decade of the seventeenth century, the next largest city, Norwich, could only boast a population of 15,000.

both retailing and manufacturing were carried on. Between the rich merchants and the small shopkeepers were a substantial number of professional groups who engaged in learned professions such as law, religion, medicine, and education. Further down the retailer group existed another stratum, an undifferentiated mass of the laboring poor such as day-laborers, artificers, servingmen, and vagrants.

London was also a highly attractive destination for those who sought a better life as well as those who were trying to escape poverty. The gentry visited to pursue business at Court and their law suits during term-time, and the young gentlemen came to attend a finishing school in the Inns of Court. But its attraction lay not only in such practical matters. The City provided a chance to take dancing and fencing lessons, to view the latest fashions, to visit the bookstalls at St Paul's, the theatres and the brothels in the suburbs, to gamble at cockfights and to view the bear-baitings across the river (Seaver 72). In addition, London, with its rich potential for employment, became a magnet for the unemployed. Formal and informal sectors of the economy within and beyond livery companies' purview provided job opportunities for the poor. In spite of poor sanitation and high mortality rates, the wages for the laborers were about 50 percent higher, and bread prices were lower than elsewhere (Seaver 60-61).

This growth of London inspired the writers of the period to be actively engaged in it, and their responses show the different ways in which London was represented. Thomas Adams, a Jacobean preacher, says in his "City of Peace" (1612) that London "may not unfitly be compared to certain pictures, that represent to divers beholders, at divers stations, diverse forms" (108). Pro-City writers, such as the chronicler John Stow and the poets employed as City chronologers or as pageant writers for the Lord Mayor's inauguration, highlighted the integration of the City into the fabric of national life, stressed the incorporation of its diverse populations into a proper civic hierarchy, and glamorized the City by associating it with

Jerusalem or Troy (Knowles xxiv-xxv). Thus the mayoral pageants, in particular, combined celebrations of its wealth with ideological insistence on its outpouring of industry and the dispersal of wealth to the whole nation. In *The Triumphs of Honour and Industry* (1613), Middleton apostrophizes, “The mighty power of Industry it shows, / That gets both wealth and love, which overflows / With such a stream of amity and peace, / Not only to itself adding increase, / But several nations where commerce abounds / Taste the harmonious peace so sweetly sounds” (79-84). Dekker’s *Troia-Nova Triumphans: London Triumphant* (1612) represents London as a New Troy, a conceited title which John Stow also affords to the City in his *Survey of London* (33), invoking an aura of classical glamour. Dekker glorifies the City with speeches of Virtue and Fame, while celebrating its charitable unity. And through “The Speech of Ivstice”, he expresses a hope for the Lord Mayor’s equitable governance:

The Rich and Poore must lye  
In one euen Scale: All Suiters, in thine Eye  
Welcome alike; Euen Hee that seems most base,  
Looke not vpon his Clothes, but on his Case.  
Let not Oppression wash his hands ith’ Teares  
Of Widows, or of Orphans. (542-47)

The emphasis on the fair-minded use of wealth suggests a mythology of urban charitable civility which operates both within and outside the City, consolidating a vision of the City as a unified and unifying place which benefits the poor and the rich alike. Civic propagandists also analogized London to a faithful wife in supporting the King and the monarchy, inviting us to associate the harmony between the City and the kingdom with the conjugal bliss.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> For the details of the personification of the City as feminine, see Lawrence Manley, “From Matron

Yet the other side of the City led writers to express a contrary view. The sudden growth of London and its sprawling expansion caused much concern amongst ruling classes, who feared the City's potential for social unrest, especially amongst its poor immigrant workers and idle and masterless men. Moralists and preachers associated this unruliness with moral depravity and religious sinfulness, equating the City with Babylon or Sodom. With them, London might suggest an origin of all sin, danger, and disorder, whose commercial hegemony depleted rather than benefited the nation and whose civic structures and culture threatened national security. Kept from entering the City because of the 1603 plague, James I issued a proclamation, noting "that the great confluence and access of excessive numbers of idle, indigent, dissolute and dangerous persons, And the pestering of many of them in small and strait rooms . . . have been one of the chiefest occasions of the great Plague and mortality" (Hughes and Larkin, *Stuart* 1: 47). Perhaps the ugliness of London is most extremely expressed by Ben Jonson in his "On the Famous Voyage" (c. 1610), a mock-heroic epic in which two 'knight-adventurers' attempt to navigate Fleet Ditch. The Fleet was formerly a river rising in the Highgate and Hampstead hills, and flowing into the Thames at Blackfriars, which had once been easily navigable as far as Holborn Bridge, but by the age of Jonson, it had become a common sewer. Jonson deplores its state of filth, stench and noise, comparing it to the Styx.

All, that they boast of Styx, of Acheron,  
 Cocytus, Phlegeton, our have prov'd in one;  
 The filth, stench noise; save only what was there  
 Subtly distinguish'd, was confused here.

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to Monster: Tudor-Stuart London and the Languages of Urban Description," *The Historical Renaissance: New Essays on Tudor and Stuart Literature and Culture*, ed. Heather Dubrow and Richard Strier (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1988) 347-74. I will also discuss it more in the conclusion of this chapter.

Their wherry had no sail, too; ours had none:  
 And in it, two more harrid knaves, than Charon.  
 Arses were heard to croak, instead of frongs;  
 And for one Cerberus, the whole coast was dogs. (7-14)

As the knight-adventurers set valorously out to row their ferry through the monstrous river filled with stenchful sewers and the outcries of the damned, the nightmarish images of the squalid and corrupt City are heaped up until the adventurers return. To Jonson, in this poem at least, the City constipated and overflowing with endless sewage is a hellish Inferno rather than a new Jerusalem or a reformed Troy in pro-City texts (Knowles xxviii).

### **B. *The Roaring Girl* and the Rogue Pamphlets**

There might have been nowhere, however, so vigorously responsive to the sprawling City as in the theatre, where Londoners saw their lives represented and debated. According to Larry Champion, “Comic fashion on the English stage in the early years of the seventeenth century turned in large part from romantic comedy to city comedy” (55). Unlike romantic comedy which usually takes as its protagonist upper-class nobility in pastoral settings, the city comedy predominantly depicts the life of the middling sort in an urban culture and significantly adopts many elements from the subculture of the lower class. As a popular genre, it engaged with contemporary debates about the explosive expansion of the City and its nationwide impact. Its depiction ranges from that which condemns the City as Sodom-on-Thames to that which praises it as a new Troy or Jerusalem, and its characters from those who revel in its richness and liveliness to those who fall victims to its destitution and crowdedness.

In particular, *The Roaring Girl*<sup>20</sup> encompasses more various facets of London and a

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<sup>20</sup> *The Roaring Girl* was premiered at the Fortune by Prince Henry’s Men “sometime in late April or

wider range of ‘character portraits’ than we find in most city comedies, interpreting the novel phenomena of urban mass culture. Like London’s demographic picture, the characters of the play are heterogeneously diverse, ranging from the upper-class nobility through middle-class merchants to petty criminals of the underworld. Their lives distinctively touch upon the clash between emergent capitalistic social relations based on money or commercial transactions and the residual feudalistic organization based on status or degree. The feudal nobilities are portrayed as being caught on the wrong foot by “the emergence of an entrepreneurial middle class, ‘middling sort’”, who are represented as getting off on the right foot thanks to “enclosure movements” and to “the putting-out system of cloth manufacture” (Howard, “Crossdressing” 421). These upstart urban gentries not only show their economic wealth but also give a glimpse of the growing luxury markets. In his topography of London (1611), John Speed describes the City as “the mart of the world: for thither are brought the silk of Asia, the spices from Africa, the balmes from Grecia, & the riches of both the Indies East & West” (29). The urban gentries who thrived on the burgeoning luxury markets of the period can be regarded, as James Knowles argues, as “the forerunner of consumerism” (x).

The play especially draws upon the London underworld which formed part of the living place of the poor. This sub-social group, which comprised rogues, tricksters, cutpurses and pickpockets, did not always have a clear-cut distinction from the pool of day-laborers. Their informal nature provides historians with too little evidence to discuss in detail, but certainly they were created on a large scale by the disruptive changes in the economic structure, and were forced to do whatever they could for survival. As Knowles maintains, the size and the growth of London allowed of the creation of a murky underworld group “with their own dress

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early May 1611” (Mulholland, “Date” 30), which was the period between Ben Jonson’s “On the Famous Voyage” and Dekker’s *Troia-Nova Triumphans*. And in the same spring of the same year, Simon Forman saw *The Winter’s Tale* at the Globe, in which Autolycus, Moll’s rural counterpart, features. For more details, see Paul A. Mulholland’s seminal article, “The Date of *The Roaring Girl*,” *Review of English Studies* 28 (1977): 18-31.



codes, jargons, social rituals, and literature”, and “the presence of such significant cultural blocs within early modern London” might have been a hotbed for “the complex cultural interactions which typified London culture” (Knowles x). Students of Shakespeare rarely read about such sub-cultural groups, for the simple reason that Shakespeare by and large disregarded them in his plays, but many playwrights of the time, particularly the Jacobean period, did write about them.<sup>21</sup> Thus, “whereas most modern historical and literary scholarship concentrates on court politics and court culture, i.e. on the intellectual and cultural production of a tiny minority (perhaps 2 percent) of early modern society”, as Knowles argues again, *The Roaring Girl* with its featured characterization of a living person of contemporary notoriety offers “an important corrective, providing images of sections of society largely ignored in many studies of early modern culture” (ix). This bias reflects not only the partiality of extant literature but also the interpretational incompleteness of the Renaissance.

*The Roaring Girl*, which is rich in low-life elements, is closely associated with rogue pamphlets which responded earlier than the theatre to the London underworld. Of all rogue pamphlets, John Awdeley’s *Fraternitie of Vagabonds* (1561) is perhaps the most influential in setting conventions for subsequent pamphlet writers. Adopting the German *Liber Vagatorum* (1510) as his specimen of rogue pamphlet, Awdeley makes pseudo-classifications of criminals and their tricks, merges various low-life anecdotes found in the early jest books, sets them within a frame of moral comment, and employs sensational narrative techniques analogous to those of stage comedy. The conventions made by him were used repeatedly. Thomas Harman’s *Caveat for Common Cursitors* (1566) is an expansion of *Fraternitie* with emotional colouring. Robert Greene’s two parts of *Coney-Catching* (1591, 1592) enrich it with racy and fast-moving dialogue and brilliant dramatic imagination. Thomas Dekker’s *The Bellman of*

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<sup>21</sup> As distinctive theatrical examples similar to *The Roaring Girl*, we may specify Jonson’s masque, *The Gypsies Metamorphosed* (1621), Middleton’s *More Dissemblers besides Women* (1621), Fletcher and Massinger’s *Beggars’ Bush* (1622), Dekker and his co-authors’ *The Spanish Gypsy* (1623), and Brome’s *A Jovial Crew* (1641).

*London* (1608) and its sequel, *Lantern and Candlelight* (1608), are probably the most famous versions of it, tinged with Dekker's characteristic yeoman-like satire. And Samuel Rid's *Martin Markall, Beadle of Bridewell* (1610) is an anecdotal supplement to it.

The rogue pamphlet disguises itself as a truthful text, but it is as much fictional as a dramatic text. Most pamphlet writers were also repertory playwrights who made a living from their pens. It is certain that such writers contributed to the boom in low-life pamphlets in the late 1590s while in pursuit of financial reward. The pamphlet writers constructed vagrancy with their commercial purpose and literary skill, and made its colours, lights, and people visible through images, rhythms and motifs. At most, 'real' vagrants provoked a writer to mobilize his vision, but they rarely guided him. This 'coney-catching' pamphlet, a phrase coined by Greene, usually assumes the pretence of reporting a directly observed event. For example, Greene frequently begins with flat statement, "a gentleman, a friend of mine, reported unto me this pleasant tale of a foist", which he then supports with visual details of the London geography, "Their (nips' and foists') chief walks in Pauls, Westminster, the Exchange" (*Coney-Catching* 167; 162). This assumed "accuracy of detailed observation" makes it difficult for the reader "to dismiss the fantastic artifice", but they are shaped by almost the same conventions of the dramatic works (Gibbons, 1980: 167).

The low life representation of the coney-catching pamphlet can be characterized in terms of taking commercial gain in exchange for giving transgressive pleasure which is at once amplified by exotic romanticism and simultaneously rationalized by pseudo-didacticism. The stylistic technique to arouse transgressive pleasure is sensationalism profusely dotted with superlatives. The narratives insist on the amazing villainy which is being unmasked. An obvious and crude merry-tale episode is usually shrouded in satiric attitudes to the surroundings and followers of the ring-leader as in Dekker's pamphlets. The physical details of place and character are dressed in the obligatory robes of earnest moral reproach, usually

giving the fantasy of a picturesque verisimilitude like Greene's *Cony-Catching* and sometimes leading to tedious tumidity in style like Harman's *Caveat*. On the other hand, paradoxically, it is also in the interest of these writers "to make trickery attractive and crime glamorous" (Gibbons, 1980: 163); if there is comedy to be found they do not ignore it. The perpetual alertness to the possibilities of absurdity in what they write is the life-line of its commercial success. Thus, they invite their readers to enjoy, under the moral cloak of vicariousness, "the pleasures of knavery, and then to enjoy the pleasure of self-righteous condemnation of it" (Gibbons, 1980: 163).

### C. The Previous Studies and the Viewpoint of the Chapter

*The Roaring Girl* has invited the critical appraisal in two ways: in generic terms, to appraise it as a city comedy, and from feminist perspectives, to focus on its titular character, Moll Cutpurse. Generally, Middleton and Dekker's characterization of Moll has been much praised, though the credit for it has been somewhat misleadingly given to Middleton.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> *The Roaring Girl* was co-authored by two streetwise Londoners, Thomas Dekker and Thomas Middleton. Andor Gomme's New Mermaids edition (1976), on which the work was actually done in 1973, before the advent of the main-stream feminist criticism in 1980s, played an important role in reviving critical interest in the play, but his introduction did not overcome the received notion of the authorship by accepting a series of the previous arguments of A. H. Bullen, T. S. Eliot, Una Ellis-Fermor, M. C. Bradbrook, L. C. Knights, R. B. Parker, G. R. Price, D. M. Holmes, and A. W. Ward who see Middleton as the main author, but by excluding the opinions of R. H. Barker, Alfred Harbage, F. G. Fleay, and Fredson Bowers who regard Dekker as the leading writer. As to Moll's characterization, Gomme argues, "her passionate energy is akin to that which . . . invests the portraits of Beatrice and Bianca in Middleton's two great tragedies", which are in contrast with "a characteristic Dekker heroine such as Jane in *The Shoemaker's Holiday* or the conventionally upright wives in *Westward Ho!* and *Northward Ho!*" (xxxiv). Elizabeth Cook contradicts, however, "Dekker's play *Match Me in London*, written around 1621, has a heroine whose radical chastity has something in common with Moll. She would rather kill a monarch than be a whore and she is armed with a stiletto and poniard" like Moll is (xvii). Furthermore, the derogative epithets of "Dekker's relaxing, sentimental hand" and "his easy pity and boundless tolerance", cited by Gomme (xxxiii) and Bradbrook (125) respectively, may be applicable to Jane in *The Shoemaker's Holiday* (1599-1600), Grissil in *Patient Grissil* (1599) or Bellafront in *The Honest Whore* (1604), but those epithets are not to be valid when we consider other female characters in Dekker's co-authorship or sole-authorship plays such as the Queen Mother in *Lust's Dominion* (1600), Thetis in *Bloody Banquet* (1609), Dorothea in *The Virgin Martyr* (1620), Tormiella in *Match Me in London*, Paulina and Onaelia in *The Noble Spanish Soldier* (1622), and Carintha and Armante in *The Welsh Ambassador* (1623). For more details, see Cyrus Hoy's treatise, *Introductions, Notes, and Commentaries to Texts in 'The Dramatic*

Swinburne's response (1908) was negative, with his smiling at the dramatists' representation of Moll "as a virginal virago" (159). Interestingly, both the Victorian editor A. H. Bullen and the modernist poet-critic T. S. Eliot opened the critical way to feminist interpretation, sharing an uncritical fascination with Moll. To Bullen she is an "Amazon of the Bankside" with "the thews of a giant and the gentleness of a child" (xxxv). Eliot was one of the character's most fervent critical admirers. In his 1927 essay, hugely influential in the subsequent criticism but gravely erroneous in the authorship of several plays,<sup>23</sup> Eliot explicitly compares the superiority of its central figure to its inferior citizen-plot: "In *The Roaring Girl* we read with toil through a mass of cheap conventional intrigue, and suddenly realize that we are, and have been for some time without knowing it, observing a real and unique human being" (162). Una Ellis-Fermor, in her chapter on Middleton in *The Jacobean Drama* (1936), notes approvingly that Middleton "can see simultaneously the fierce, active virginity in a character like Moll, the Roaring Girl, and can draw it clearly, in all its individuality and its significance, without scoffing at it as a pretence or a fantasy" (150). In 1938, L. C. Knights commenced the socio-economic approach to city comedy, but he completely ignored Moll in his critical analysis, concentrating solely on the intrigues of citizens and gallants. In 1968, Brian Gibbons did not discuss the play at all in his seminal book about city comedy. Five years later Alexander Leggatt's book on city comedy broke this critical silence on Moll, arguing that the playwrights make her chastity not a docile submission to prevailing mores but "the assertion of an individual will" (109). Leggatt's analysis mixes the generic approach with feminist perspectives, but he does not mention Moll's male dress at all.

With the advent of the poststructuralist feminism in late 1970s, critics began to

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Works of Thomas Dekker' *Edited by Fredson Bowers*, vol. 3 (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1980) 9-13.

<sup>23</sup> T. S. Eliot's telling appraisal of *The Roaring Girl* is faulty in so far as it denies Dekker a share in Moll's characterization by arguing, "Nowhere more clearly than in *The Roaring Girl* can the hand of Middleton be distinguished from the hand of Dekker" (167). When he proceeds to describe Dekker's hand, furthermore, he illustrates the passages from *A Fair Quarrel* in which he makes another mistake in regarding Middleton's collaborator as Dekker rather than William Rowley.

concentrate on Moll's transvestism and Mary Fitzallard's cross-dressing as well, demonstrating that their cross-dressing reveals the plurality, fluidity and cultural-constructedness of gender, thus toppling the essentialist binarism that was used to hold women in an inferior place. The essays by Mary Beth Rose (1984) and Jean Howard (1988, 1992) set the issue of cross-dressing in the context of a hierarchical social system which tried to regulate both class and gender under the intense pressure of economic and cultural change. In her analysis of Moll's cross-dressing in the context of the *Hic Mulier* / *Haec-Vir* controversy in the 1620s, Rose argues that, despite the pamphlet's late date, Moll can be considered a direct dramatic parallel of the transvestite in *Hic Mulier*, where "the figure of the female in male attire" inspires "simultaneous admiration, desire, abhorrence, and fear" (368). Rose maintains that the play renders clear the authorial sympathy with "sexual non-conformity, female independence, and equality between the sexes" (385). Positioning herself in materialist feminism in her 1988 article, Howard analyzes the contradictory effects of female cross-dressing and raises a question about other feminist critics' arguments for the subversiveness of transvestism: "Were women who crossdressed . . . successfully challenging patriarchal domination?" (419). Shifting her interest from gender to sexuality in her 1992 essay, Howard focuses on the untrammelled flow and the constructedness of sexuality by arguing for homoeroticism, denoted in Moll's transvestism, and autoeroticism implied in Moll's rendition of a viol. In a stimulating study (1981), Simon Shepherd considers the play and its heroine in relation to a tradition of warrior women, viewing Moll as an avatar of the classic literary type, but like Rose and Howard, he reads that type in terms of a social contest over what gender means. Majorie Garber (1991) interprets the play as a manifestation of cultural anxiety about masculinity as much as femininity, i.e. a play which, fascinated with fashion and clothing, theorizes in them the fashioning of gender. Yet unlike Rose and Howard, who adopt materialist and historicist feminist approaches, Garber applies a psychoanalytic

feminist methodology, focusing on “transvestism’s relationship to the embodiment of desire” (221). Garber argues that Moll is projected as Mary’s alter ego in the subconscious of the play and is thus inseparable from Mary. She maintains that Moll constitutes the signifier of “the phallus, the mark of desire in the Symbolic” (227). Stephen Orgel (1993) looks at the performative aspects of Moll’s dual gender identity as part of an interplay among various cultural representations of gender, and he reaches a conclusion that Moll’s transvestism is not restricted within the narrow limits of the protection from her potential sexual predator.

The modern cause of feminism and the re-evaluation of women’s place in society have undoubtedly spurred a renewal of interest,<sup>24</sup> but to interpret the play in that light alone is to risk serious distortion. Some of *The Roaring Girl*’s many aspects of interest may be timely in speaking to modern feminist concerns and issues, but the overall interests of the play are more accessibly bound to the larger issues of the early modern period. Gender hierarchy was part of a class system wherein the ecclesiastical polemicists and secular authorities of the period tried to posit each individual. However, with the advent of early modern capitalism which caused increased social mobility and the rise of the merchant bourgeois, the rhetoric of the divinely ordered class hierarchy was put into question, and it is those cultural anxieties surrounding the crumbling of the feudalist hierarchical system in which *The Roaring Girl* is intricately involved. In this chapter, therefore, the feminist issues of the play are to be investigated as part of the broad cultural anxieties of the period over the class-hierarchical system.

Another undesirable ramification of feminist criticism has been over-enthusiasm for Moll’s transvestism. It is true that *The Roaring Girl* is exceptional in that Moll’s idiosyncratic clothes constitute a direct “‘comment’ on the cross-dressing debates” of the period, whereas

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<sup>24</sup> *The Roaring Girl* had been by and large an ignored work during the era of New Criticism in the 1950s and 60s before the advent of the politicized approach of feminist critics in the late 1970s. Mulholland complains, thus, the qualities of intrinsic merit of the play such as imagery, symbolism, parallelism, characterization, structural unity, themes, etc, are yet to be investigated (Introduction 21). For the detailed analysis of those concerns of the New Criticism, see Paul Mulholland’s extensive Introduction, *The Roaring Girl*, ed. Paul Mulholland (Manchester: Manchester UP, 1987) 1-65.

most Renaissance plays with the cross-dressing motif do not, in any direct way, pose a comment on the debates (Howard, “Crossdressing” 429). It is also true that female cross-dressing, simply by having women successfully play male roles, however temporarily, or by making women’s roles the objects of self-conscious masquerades, raises a question about the naturalness of men’s position in the gender hierarchy. As Jean Howard argues, however, “female crossdressing on the stage is not a strong site of resistance to the period’s patriarchal sex-gender system” (“Crossdressing” 439). Insofar as cross-dressing women simply tried to pass for men, they were conforming to gender norms. Therefore, rather than blurring gender difference or challenging male domination, the female transvestite often strengthens notions of difference by stressing what the disguised woman cannot do, or by solidifying often those feelings held to constitute a female subjectivity. In terms of protecting women’s body from men’s predatory sexuality, furthermore, the effect of female cross-dressing was contradictory as well. It is presumed that only when the cross-dressed woman disguised herself successfully as a man could she be protected from a man’s sexual assault. According to the dominant rhetoric of transvestism of the period, if she was still recognized as female in spite of her male dress, she could be more vulnerable, because her male-dressed body was regarded as sexually more provocative. Those contradictory effects of female cross-dressing suggest that cultural issues surrounding transvestism are resistant to a sweeping generalization. In this chapter, thus, I raise a question regarding the feminist account of Moll’s cross-dressing, and I try to demonstrate that the multivalent effects of female transvestism should be sorted out in view of the specific material condition of the individual woman in question and of the class position of the transgressor.

Along with feminist criticism, the fascinating life-story of the real Moll Cutpurse<sup>25</sup> has

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<sup>25</sup> For more detailed information about the real person Mary Frith, see Randall S. Nakayama, ed., *The Life and Death of Mrs. Mary Frith, Commonly Called Moll Cutpurse, 1662* (London: Garland Publishing, 1993), and Gustav Ungerer, “Mary Frith, Alias Moll Cutpurse, in Life and Literature,”

made a great contribution to the renewed interest in *The Roaring Girl*, but it has also given rise to a thick mist which blurs the boundary between the fictional myth and the factual biography. It is true that the living figure of Mary Frith is the inspirational heart of the play, and it is very probable, as Mary Rose notes, that Dekker and Middleton were “attempting to benefit from the *au courant* notoriety of actual Moll in the timing of their play” (379). Yet, based on the circumstantial evidence that the printed version of the play entered in the Stationers’ Register on 18 February 1612, nine days after Mary Frith appeared at Paul’s Cross to do penance for her misdemeanor, it is risky to argue that Moll’s questionable stage appearance at the Fortune Theatre was at the same time as the play was performed in late April or early May of 1611. Furthermore, relying on the commercially-motivated remarks of the play’s epilogue that if what the writers and actors have done “cannot full pay your expectations, / The Roaring Girl herself, some few days hence, / Shall on this stage give larger recompense” (35-36), it is highly conjectural to argue that the real Moll played a cameo role of singing a song accompanied by her lute in the play’s performance.<sup>26</sup> If she had made an actual appearance in the play, it should have been at once a scandalous incident and a great commercial incentive to Prince Henry’s men, which might have caused the rival companies to react jealously. As far as the documentary evidence is concerned, however, there has yet to be found any crucial source which can confirm Moll’s actual involvement in the play as an immovable fact.

It is proven, as Kastan and Stallybrass argue, that “there was no English law forbidding [women] to act” on the stage even before the Civil War (8), but women’s appearance on the stage constituted a moral misdemeanor for corrupting public decency, which incurred

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*Shakespeare Studies* 28 (2000): 42-84.

<sup>26</sup> The real Moll Frith’s appearance in the production of the play at the Fortune is considered as an acceptable truth by Coppélia Kahn (721), Michelle O’Callaghan (47-48) and Natasha Korda (82-83); and to be plausible by Jean Howard (“Crossdressing” 440), and Mark Hutchings and A. A. Bromham (50-53).



disciplinary punishment.<sup>27</sup> According to “Officium Domini Contra Mariam Frith” from the *Consistory of London Correction Book* in 1612, Moll’s appearance on the stage of the public theatre constituted a part of the misdemeanors for which she was taken into custody in Bridewell (Mulholland, “Date” 31). The fact that there has been found no documentary evidence of the disciplinary action concerning this play suggests that Mary Frith’s actual appearance on the stage should have had nothing to do with the production of the play. The Epilogue’s remarks are likely to have been a sly glance backward at her scandalous appearance which happened prior to the date of its production rather than a genuine offer to display Moll’s body again for public delectation, or to have been the theatre-wise playwrights’ commercial advertisement to capitalize on her notoriety with no real intention to keep their words as in the case of the Epilogue of 2 *Henry IV* in which Shakespeare promises Falstaff’s reappearance in his next play.

I will use Moll’s controversial appearance on the stage as a subtext, which would have made a multifaceted interaction with her dramatic representation in the play, giving the contemporary audience an unmasterable image of her blended by the real-life Moll and the stage Moll. In the two main sections of this chapter, I will raise questions regarding the feminist interpretation of Moll’s cross-dressing, and I will place her provocative cross-dressing in the context of the low-life’s economic situation. In the conclusion, I will project her contradictory images into the multi-facades of early modern London which comprised the antithetical images of Sodom-on-Thames and *Nova Troia*, and borrowing a theoretical model from Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, I will try to overcome a fragmentary picture of petty criminals by deducing a cultural inference in general from the intractable images of Moll and London.

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<sup>27</sup> This contradiction between codified statute and legal practice will be elucidated later in this chapter.

## II. Cross-dressing for Provocation

*The Roaring Girl* is composed of the main plot concerning the romantic love-affair between Sebastian Wengrave and Mary Fitzallard, and the subplot dealing with the marital frictions of three citizen couples. The main plot is a mixture of city comedy with a variation of the prodigal motif and the New-Comedy formula with clichéd generation conflicts. The subplot is a stereotyped city comedy with illicit liaisons and wanton escapades between city gallants and citizen wives, only reversing the conventional moral code of the gender between the married couples. The structural conjunction between the plots is maintained with heaps of disguise, pretence, deception, trick, and mockery, which constitute the stock ingredients of city comedy. Typically enough, at the opening of the play, Mary Fitzallard “disguised like a sempster” makes her initial appearance to reprove Sebastian for his neglect of their marriage vows, “a bond fast sealed with solemn oaths” (1.1.1s.d., 56). Sebastian’s reply to her involves disguise as well. He says that he aims to secure his father’s consent of their marriage with “a side wind” of counterfeiting affection for the allegedly contemptible “Mad Moll” (1.1.96, 99). Sir Alexander Wengrave also responds to his son’s schemes by mounting a series of counter-deception. Although he stops short of disguising himself to spy on his son, he twice enters secretly to eavesdrop (2.2.4ff.; 4.1.106ff.). His employment of Trapdoor as an infiltrator serves a similar dramatic function of disguise (1.2.185ff.; 2.1.344ff.). Sir Alexander’s fraudulent ploy reaches its highest point in act 4 scene 1 where he tempts Moll into theft by placing an expensive watch and a gold chain in her way. Sebastian’s counterfeiting culminates in act 5 scene 2 where his mock marriage to Moll not only induces Sir Alexander at last to approve his genuine marriage to Mary but also renders him stripped of his prejudice about Moll.

The subplot is more abundant than the main plot in falsehood, treachery, betrayal, deception, and dissimulation, which T. S. Eliot calls “a mass of cheap conventional intrigue”

(162). Laxton, Goshawk and Greenwit, for example, give false initial impressions to their potential dupes. Laxton pretends to pander to Mistress Gallipot's vanity, while he actually has a passion for Moll. Secretly despising Mistress Gallipot and holding her merchant class in contempt (2.1.89-93; 3.1.13-16), he tantalizingly dangles the promise of sexual pleasure before his benefactress but refuses to deliver the goods (2.1.132-45). The jaded gallant cynically congratulates himself on his serpent's role in inciting Mistress Gallipot to deception when her improvised precontract tale prompts her husband to a business solution (3.2.141). In pursuit of more cash Laxton develops her precontract invention further, but overreaches himself, and like the other schemers, is finally hoist with his own petard. Along with Laxton's ill-fated playlet, Greenwit's disguise as "a sumner" also fizzles out, disclosing his imposture (4.2.235.s.d.). More conventionally sparked by straightforward lust, on the other hand, Goshawk takes perverse pride in his special talent for falsehood: "a gift of treachery . . . to betray my friend when he puts on trust in me" (2.1.29-30). But the gallant cannot fool Openwork, who engineers a counterplot to test Goshawk's friendship and to dispel his wife's jealous fits (2.1.300ff.). "False faces" provided by Goshawk bring the deception into focus (4.2.86), but another form of dissimulation brings about Goshawk's own unmasking. The Openworks stage a scene of conjugal friction which eventually humbles the unwitting gallant into repentance: "Mine own shame me confounds" (4.2.211).

Although the cross-dressing in the play has dominated poststructuralist feminist criticism since the late 1970s, it constitutes only part of the various disguises as shown above. While Moll appears in seven of the total eleven scenes of the play, she wears hermaphroditic, male, and female clothes. While Mary Fitzallard appears only in three scenes, which is too scanty for a female protagonist, she dresses like a seamstress, a page, and a bride. Moll's first appearance at the beginning of the citizen plot in act 2 scene 1 has caused interpretational controversies about her costume. Some critics argue Moll's costume in the scene is woman-

like,<sup>28</sup> but it is correctly described as a hermaphroditic dress. According to the stage direction, “Enter Moll in a frieze jerkin and a black safeguard” (2.1.175.s.d.). In early modern fashion, the “jerkin” was a short coat with a collar, usually with sleeves which was normally worn by men. The “safeguard” whose name was probably derived from its purpose of protecting ladies’ costumes from dust and soil during horse-riding was usually worn by women. Moll’s dress in the scene is, thus, hermaphroditic in combining elements of the dress of both sexes. In act 2 scene 2, where Moll is approached by Sebastian who wants to get help for his marriage, there is no stage direction stipulating her dress. Presumably, however, she is dressed in the same hermaphroditic fashion as in scene 1, which may be, furthermore, her normal dress when there is no specific stage direction. In act 3 scene 1, dressed like a man, specifically like “some young barrister”, she fights with Laxton at Gray’s Inn Fields (3.1.49). In act 3 scene 3, where she interrupts the judicial procedure to help Jack Dapper to “fly” away from the sergeants, she probably enters in her normal dress, i.e. in the hermaphroditic (3.3.210). In act 4 scene 1, where she pretends to be a music teacher, Moll appears “dressed as a man”, probably like a musician, while Mary is dressed “like a page” which is the conventional Renaissance stage role for a woman who dresses like a man to protect herself (4.1.38.s.d.). In act 5 scene 1, Moll “dressed as a man” encounters figures from the London underworld, mingling with gallants and petty criminals and “canting” in rogue slang (5.1.1.s.d.; 177). In the final scene where Sebastian at last achieves his marriage to Mary, Moll appears twice: first “dressed as a man” to relieve Sir Alexander of the fear that she is not an expectant bride, and second “in female dress”, probably in the costume of a bride, to deceive Sir Alexander into believing that she has already been married to Sebastian (5.2.97.s.d.; 129.s.d.).

Many critics have emphasized the distinctiveness of Moll’s transvestism from other female characters’ disguises in Renaissance drama. Generally speaking, as Stephen Orgel

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<sup>28</sup> For example, Jean Howard describes Moll: “Dressed as a woman she enters the merchants’ shops” (“Crossdressing” 437).

argues, literary heroines often disguise themselves as males, but their transvestism is invariably represented “as a protection, and more strikingly, as an index to virtue, a way for women to live or travel in safety”, and thus their disguise is intended specifically “for a defense against male sexuality, which is conceived as the chief danger to female integrity” (18). In *The Roaring Girl*, however, precisely the opposite assumption lies behind the effects of Moll’s transvestism. She does not wear male apparel to escape from danger or to pursue a husband but almost always to arouse men’s ‘abnormal’ sexuality. She rarely attempts to conceal her sexual identity with her male clothing. Whether in breeches or her frieze jerkin and black safeguard, she is usually read as a woman. Mary Rose argues, “in short, she is not in disguise” (386). Coppélia Kahn adds to Rose’s argument, “Unlike the Shakespearean comic heroines who disguise themselves as boys so that they can covertly pursue the men they love, but abandon their assumed identities when obstacles to marriage are overcome, Moll never conceals her socially ascribed identity as a woman, doesn’t stop dressing like a man, and refuses to marry” (722). Moll is indeed a different cross-dresser from Julia in *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, Portia and Nerissa in *The Merchant of Venice*, Viola in *Twelfth Night*, Rosalind in *As You Like It*, and Innogen in *Cymbeline*. Moll is what sexologists today call a continuous or constant cross-dresser. Other transvestite heroines almost invariably shed male clothes with their accompanying male prerogatives at the end of the play, in order to accept the customary social role of wives, although they wielded male power and male authority with male clothes in the course of the play. In addition to Moll’s difference from Shakespeare’s romantic heroines, Kahn has also noted the difference from her most salient source-figure, Long Meg of Westminster, a cross-dressing woman in Henry VIII’s London.<sup>29</sup> Long Meg’s

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<sup>29</sup> Critics have illustrated several transvestite women as Moll’s sources: Britomart in Edmund Spenser’s *The Faerie Queene*, the female Christian warrior Bradamante in Lodovico Ariosto’s *Orlando Furioso*, warrior women Amazons, and Long Meg of Westminster in the popular ballads and in a fictional biography. Among the diverse sources, I think, Long Meg is the closest to Moll in that her hierarchical status was of the same lower-class as Moll’s. For more detailed relation between Moll and

motive for assuming men's clothes is love, like Shakespeare's transvestite heroines, but she disguises herself not as a page but "as a warrior who challenges and defeats a braggart male in a swordfight, then reveals herself as a woman by removing her helmet and letting down her long hair" to show him up as less than a man and thus humiliate him (Kahn 724). At the same time, however, her return to a female appearance results in an ironic effect of reaffirming the established gender hierarchy. In contrast, Moll does not doff mannish clothes to accept a patriarchal gender role at the end of the play, which is one of the reasons why so many feminist critics have paid special attention to Moll's cross-dressing.

The feminist critics give us a critical insight when they argue for Moll's idiosyncratic transvestism, but they still leave us much room to debate, because they disregard the fact that her male dress is intended for erotic seduction.<sup>30</sup> It is suggested in the play that the chief purpose of her male dress is to produce the very effect of sexual provocation with its invitation of the voyeuristic sight of male followers. In act 2 scene 1 where all gallants including Laxton turn up for secret liaisons with citizen wives or to shop for luxury goods, they respond enthusiastically to Moll's hermaphroditic appearance, greeting her in ecstatic terms, treating her to "a pipe of good tobacco" and trying to accost her. (2.1.181). Laxton is the main dupe of Moll's sexual attraction. To him, her gynandrous features produce an irresistible appeal. When he spots her, he makes an aside: "Methinks a brave captain might get all his soldiers upon her, and ne'er be beholding to a company of Mile End milksops, if he could come on and come off quick enough. Such a Moll were a marrowbone before an Italian" (2.1.190-93). Moll's manlike clothes enhance her innately muscular constitution, which Laxton considers to have not only the prodigious female reproductive capacity of providing a

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Long Meg, see Simon Shepherd, "Roaring Girls," *Amazons and Warrior Women: Varieties of Feminism in Seventeenth-Century Drama* (London: Harvester, 1981) 67-92.

<sup>30</sup> For example, along with Mary Beth Rose and Coppélia Kahn, Jean Howard overlooks the sexual enticement Moll's clothes produce by emphasizing the feminist cause of her cross-dressing as a strategy to assert freedom: "Moll adopts male dress deliberately and publicly; and she uses it to signal her freedom from the traditional positions assigned a woman in her culture" ("Crossdressing" 436).

captain with a whole regiment of soldiers but also an aphrodisiac potential like “a marrowbone before an Italian”. His lust for Moll, thus, might be to seek a compensation for his lack of reproductive ability to which his name, ‘lack stone’, alludes (Garber 224).

Moll’s gynandrous appearance makes her sexually appealing to other male characters as well. In addition to the city gallants, Trapdoor and Openwork are attracted to Moll. Of her sexual appeal, Trapdoor remarks, “I’m bound already to serve her, though it be but a sluttish trick” (2.1.344-45). Openwork secretively advances and proposes an assignation to her: “We’ll have a pint of the same wine, i’faith, Moll” (2.1.391).<sup>31</sup> The sexual magnetism of Moll’s epicene features might be the reason why the citizen wives feel so jealous of her. When her husband invites Moll to his shop before his proposal mentioned above, Mistress Openwork reacts with pique: “How now? – Greetings! Love terms, with a pox between you!” (2.1.225-26).

The potential of women’s cross-dressing which can provoke a sexualized aggression from men is also indicated by Mary’s male dress, which invites Sebastian’s erotic fantasies. When Moll, watching Sebastian kiss Mary, comments, “How strange this shows, one man to kiss another” (4.1.45); Sebastian replies, “I’d kiss such men to choose, Moll, / Methinks a woman’s lip tastes well in a doublet. . . . As some have a conceit their drink tastes better / In an outlandish cup than in our own, / So methinks every kiss she gives me now / In this strange form, is worth a pair of two” (4.1.46-47, 53-56). Sebastian takes double delight in kissing Mary who is dressed like a page. The exchange of kisses between Sebastian and Mary simultaneously calls attention to the strangeness of a seemingly same-sex erotic embrace, and also to its desirability.

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<sup>31</sup> This incident indicates that Mistress Openwork’s suspicion about her husband’s illicit affair is not groundless, even though Openwork talks to Goshawk as if his wife’s jealousy were derived from her shrewish disposition. Overlooking this textual evidence, many critics have denounced Mistress Openwork’s escapade with Goshawk or have apologized for Openwork’s test of his wife’s fidelity. For examples of overlooking this scene when they interpret the citizen plot, see Andor Gomme (xxx), Paul Mulholland (Introduction 39-40), Viviana Comensoli (“Play-making” 255), and Cyrus Hoy (3: 10).

When it comes to Moll's transvestite sensationalism, on the other hand, it operates in two opposite ways, i.e. repelling vs. appealing. To some characters, it incites an extreme temptation, but other characters respond with an outrageous aversion. To Sir Alexander who knows Moll is a woman in spite of her going "in breeches" (1.2.225), she is "a monster with two trinkets", or "a codpiece daughter" (2.2.77, 93). Mistress Gallipot characterizes Moll: "Some will not stick to say she's a man, and some, both man and woman" (2.1.209-10). To other characters, Moll's hermaphroditic appearance mixing woman and man provokes ambivalent passion mixing sympathy and antipathy. In a paradoxical expression of horror, repugnance, pleasure and fascination, Goshawk exclaims upon her transgressive attractiveness: "'Tis the maddest, fantasticaest girl!" (2.1.204). As with any social practice which varies with the circumstances of its occurrences and with the particulars of personal and cultural sites of its involvement, Moll's cross-dressing is positioned in a crisscross of contradiction and diversity. Yet, even if her transvestism is conceived and interpreted in various ways, it can be said to have the same effect of highly sexualized provocation. In terms of sensationalism, the onstage Moll is in accord with the offstage Moll. Based on the criminal record of ecclesiastical court of 1612 which charged the real Moll with public immorality, Stephen Orgel gets to the point: "It is evident that for Mary Frith to dress as a man was in general inflammatory, in particular sexually, and that her habitual costume (hardly a disguise) formed a large element in the success of both her actionable theatrical performance and her continuing fascination for a variety of male inquisitors, formal and informal" (12).

What was, then, the cultural context which made Moll's mannish dress so sexually provocative? Orgel argues that the historical Moll's greatest notoriety coincided with "a growing public concern over what was seen as a significant masculinization of feminine style", which began to cause public controversies in about 1570s (14). In 1609 when Ben Jonson produced *The Masque of Queens*, Inigo Jones designed the costume of the Countess of



Bedford who played the Queen of the Amazons. In her costume, as the Devonshire Collection shows, Jones adopted profusely the elements of masculine style that constituted *haute couture* in the period, including stilettos, poniards, and short-shorn hair.<sup>32</sup> In 1620, John Chamberlain reports in his letter to Dudley Carleton, “The bishop of London called together all his Clergie about this towne, and told them he had expresse commaundment from the King to will them to inveigh vehemently and bitterly in their sermons against the insolency of our women, and their wearing of broad-brimmed hats, pointed doublets, their hair cut short or shorn, and some of them stilettos or poniards” (286-87). These various masculine styles, which were probably borrowed from French or Italian fashionable upper-class women, would have been representatives of the chic trend of women’s clothing in the period. Yellow ruffs seem to have also been in vogue at the time. According to Chamberlain’s letter in March of the same year, “The Deane of Westminster hath been very strict in his church against Ladies and gentlewomen about yellow ruffes, and wold not suffer them to be admitted into any pew” (294). Linda Woodbridge argues that the popularity of masculine female clothing of the period culminated in the controversy between two pamphlets published in 1620, *Hic Mulier*, an attack on women in male dress, and *Haec-Vir*, a reply defending manly woman (*Women* 139-51). The woodcut of Moll in the title-page of the 1611 Quarto, which shows her feature with a broad-brimmed hat, short-cut hair, a modish ruff, a pointed doublet, and a stiletto or poniard, gives vivid evidence that Moll might have imitated the masculine style of the fashion-mongering upper-class women of the period. Eavesdropping on the conversation between Moll, Tailor and Sebastian, Sir Alexander also testifies to the fashionable and provocative style of Moll’s costume: “Here’s good gear towards! I have brought up my son to marry a Dutch slop and a French doublet” (2.2.91-93).

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<sup>32</sup> For the masculinized costume of the Countess of Bedford, see the figure in page 17 in Stephen Orgel, “The Subtexts of *The Roaring Girl*,” *Erotic Politics: Desire on the Renaissance Stage*, ed. Susan Zimmerman (London: Routledge, 1992) 12-26.

Why is then a mannishly-clad woman so sexually thrilling? To Laxton and Sebastian, the gap between the semiotic signals of their dresses and their well-known biological identities seems to render their hidden bodies transgressively alluring. In Sebastian's case, what makes the kiss "worth a pair of two" is the very fact that he is kissing what looks like a boy (4.1.56). It might be the potential quality of a man lurking in the young woman's body that could constitute the fascinating object of Sebastian's desire. Moreover, dressed as a page, Mary enacts the role of a gentleman's servant, one of the social positions most often marked out as constituting a culturally sanctioned object for a master's erotic investments. While Mary's erotic attraction in a page's clothes constitutes the androgynous allure of the charming young boy, Moll's male apparel produces the hermaphroditic eroticism of "the more frightening, but alluring" muscular adult (Howard, "Sex and Social Conflict" 181). Indeed, Mary's and Moll's hermaphroditic attraction might be generally regarded as homoerotic, but the comparison between them indicates that they can be divided into different types of homoeroticism.

Moll's attraction derives not only from her manly clothes but also from her manlike behaviour and sturdy physique. To Laxton, she "has the spirit of four great parishes, and a voice that will drown all the city!" (2.1.188-89). She is a loud, roving, and tobacco-smoking roarer.<sup>33</sup> Goshawk responds to her plucky appearance: "I never knew so much flesh and so much nimbleness put together" (2.1.204-05). Though the gallants know she is a woman, they address her as "sirrah" (2.1.186) or "Master Captain Jack" (5.1.1). When Moll attacks and defeats a Fellow who appears "with a long rapier by his side" and interrupts the wrangle between Moll and Mistress Openwork, Laxton, who watches Moll's prowess, swears that he will "love" her "forever" for her manliness which is performed "gallantly" and "manfully"

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<sup>33</sup> The gallants offer her tobacco which she praises and asks, "'Tis very good tobacco. How do you sell an ounce?" (2.1.199-200). In early modern England, smoking was a male pastime and was regarded as morally inappropriate for women, hence the ecclesiastical court's charge that the real Moll frequented "Tobacco shops" in the *Consistory Book* (Mulholland, "Date" 31).

(2.1.244.s.d., 261). The Tailor comments on her thigh: “It is a lusty one. Both of them would make any porter’s back ache in England” (2.2.100-01). When Sir Alexander overhears the Tailor designing a costume for her, he realizes that the design is not only for a pair of breeches, but, in effect, for a phallus, one that will “stand round and full”, and “stiff between the legs” (2.2.86, 88). Even when she is not clothed in male dress, she is hermaphroditically appealing. Mistaking her for Sebastian’s bride, Sir Alexander responds to her appearance in female dress: “Now has he pleased me right. I always counseled him / To choose a goodly personable creature: / Just of her pitch was my first wife, his mother” (5.2.129-32).

Such moments in the play raise the possibility that for some men erotic desire and pleasure are most intense when directed at and satisfied by other men or by women whose appearance is mannish. This intense erotic passion is what we would now call homoerotic. Recently, cultural critics have emphasized the socio-cultural utility of investigating sexuality as a relative system of cultural meaning and site of social struggle, one that cannot simply be subsumed under an analysis of biological properties. If recent feminist criticism has encouraged us to see gender as a socially constructed category, the gay and lesbian movements have questioned the natural essentialism of sexual identity and helped us to see that sexuality might also be less a biologically given than a socially constructed, historically variable set of practices and ideologies (Kastan and Stallybrass 4). This invites us to presume that erotic desire and practice in the early modern age cannot quite be mapped in twentieth-century terms. At least for men, there seems to have been more fluidity in object choice than our current ideology of fixed sexual identities allows. Thus, the manifest contradictions surrounding the play’s representations of transvestite practice and erotic desire suggest that they have been contested cultural phenomena, which has been the source of anxiety and threat to the establishment.

Why was, then, the woman who contravened the accepted conventions governing

female dress and behavior regarded as morally loose and promiscuous, and ultimately liable to be punished for being a harlot or a prostitute? Of course, the apparent reason is that female transvestism incited male sexual provocation as discussed above. Yet, that is not a sufficient answer, because the dress code was controversial and ideologically unfixed, and was itself a site of social struggle conducted through the discourses of ecclesiastical polemics, secular tracts, and royal proclamations. A more profound answer which can be derived from those ideological controversies over clothes is that the cross-dressed woman seemed to pose threats and disruptions to the hierarchical order of early modern society. She was considered to produce anxieties about the woman in a wrong position, the woman who was not in her 'divinely sanctioned and naturally given' place, but was gadding, gossiping, and engaging in extramarital sex and exercising threats to the fragile patriarchal authority. Moll is an exemplary case of those anxieties. She takes on mannish clothes openly and intentionally, transgressing the conventional *loci* ascribed to a woman in the patriarchal order. Not only is the onstage Moll, therefore, frequently denounced as a whore by the other characters but also the offstage Moll was punished for whoredom by the ecclesiastical court. Furthermore, the ideological ramification of Moll's controversial dress reveals the discursive construction of a woman in the early modern period, which involved seeing her as a creature of ungovernable appetite. A woman's strong sexual desire was at once supposed to be a mark of her inferiority and mobilized for a justification of strict patriarchal control. In his conduct book (1617), William Whately writes that a woman is like a horse to be broken in, and she is properly trained only when "shee submits herself with quietness, cheerfully, even as a well-broken horse turns at the least check of the riders bridle, readily going and standing as he wishes that sits upon his backe" (43). Indeed, when a woman put on a man's clothes, she symbolically left her disciplined position, and she became an untamed beast. The freedom which cross-dressing might give a woman was read as the eruption of her uncontrolled sexuality. As a result,

discipline and control of the woman's body were central patriarchal preoccupations in the early modern period.

On the other hand, worries about the unruly woman, as well as the various means of control devised to contain the threat she posed, were cultural signs that early modern England was in the process of economic upheaval which caused not only considerable social mobility but also significant instability in the feudalist moral system. With the rise of capitalism, fundamental changes in the family occurred. The family ceased to be the economic unit of production. It was this process – the decline of a household production – which led family life to be reduced to a consumption unit and thus resulted in the domestication of a woman, which has become a norm and a commonplace in the modern-day family (Hamilton 19).<sup>34</sup> In terms of family life, therefore, the development of capitalism meant making the home the centre of patriarchal control and institutionalizing the wife and the daughter within the domestic sphere. As evidence for this symbiotic relationship between the rise of capitalism and the domestication of the woman, argues Jean Howard, “social historians have found that in some areas, particularly where economic change was most rapid and the changes in family form most pronounced, the disciplining and restraint of women increased during this period, sometimes taking the form of an increased regulation of women's sexuality” (“Crossdressing” 425). In his poem (c.1604-17), Samuel Rowlands claims, “Salomon's Harlot . . . Is noted to be full of words, / And doth the streets frequent, / Not qualited as Sara was, / To keepe within the tent” (102). Indeed, the early modern conduct-books abound in moral injunctions upon a woman to abstain herself from both outgoings and outspeakings. Howard comments, “both the open door and the open mouth” signified “sexual incontinence”, and “the orifices of that body were to be policed” (“Crossdressing” 424). This patriarchal enclosure of a woman's

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<sup>34</sup> For more details of the relationship between the rise of capitalism and the domestication of women, see Roberta Hamilton, *The Liberation of Women: A Study of Patriarchy and Capitalism* (London: Allen, 1978) 15-22.

body was a measure commensurate with the capitalist enclosure of common lands. Peter Stallybrass concludes, “The enclosed body, the closed mouth, the locked house” were culturally constructed into “a normative ‘Woman’ within the discursive practices of the ruling elite”, and thus “Economically, she is the fenced-in enclosure of the landlord, her father, or husband” (127).

Ironically enough, however, the stigmatization of the male-dressed woman as a harlot or a prostitute not only reveals a patriarchal anxiety over a man’s own intractable sexuality, not a woman’s, but also discloses the discursive strategy of patriarchy to maintain a man’s sexual prerogative by hierarchizing male sexuality over female. The title of the play, ‘roaring girl’, was designed to give an oxymoronic effect to the audience, inverting a gender stereotype. When initially used, the epithet of ‘roaring’ was generally attached to a ‘boy’. Being widely used, the term, ‘roaring’, came to be generalized as a marker of a man’s nature or a sign of virility, even though ‘roaring boy’ was sometimes read as a riotous youth who was subject to punishment for juvenile delinquency. In his treatise on education (1531), Thomas Elyot stereotypes gender identity: “A man in his natural perfection is fierce, hardy . . . appetizing by generation to bring forth his semblable”, but “the good nature of a woman is to be mild, timorous, tractable, benign” (fol. 83<sup>r</sup>). As the easy conjunction of ‘roaring’ with ‘boy’ and Elyot’s gender categorization inadvertently disclose, it was not a woman but a man who was potentially aggressive and sexually intractable. And patriarchal discourse tried to conceal this by garnishing it with appellations of manly quality or muscular “appetite to bring forth his semblance”. Thus, the fact that a mannish woman who smoked a pipe, carried a sword, and donned French slops was frequently regarded as a whore shows how much anxieties about a woman’s sexuality were actually a projection of a man’s own sexuality onto a woman. Indeed, one of the reasons why the woman in masculine dress was considered a harlot was that mannish dress was looked upon as empowering the wearer to be a man. This discursive

maneuvering reveals that patriarchy tried to set a double standard between man and woman and that a man should monopolize sexual freedom by denouncing a woman's independence from a man's control as a sign of a harlot.

Coppélia Kahn is amiss when she argues, "Moll's male dress isn't designed for sexual enticement", but she is on the right track when she adds, "and she rejects all sexual advances" (722). Thus rises another question: why does she wear sexually provocative clothes but never accept any man's proposal? In the feminist argument for Moll's cross-dressing as her emancipatory strategy, it is frequently suggested that, as far as sexual provocativeness is concerned, it is the onlooker's response to her clothes, not her intentional purpose. However, this is wide of the mark. Moll has a good knowledge of various sartorial effects, keeps them under her full control, and manipulates them at her own discretion. She wears manlike clothes on purpose to attract a man's voluptuous eyes. She sometimes goes incognito by disguising herself with clothes. For instance, when she takes off her usual hermaphroditic dress and makes an appearance in barrister's dress in Gray's Inn Fields, both Laxton and Trapdoor cannot recognize her: "I see none yet dressed like her. I must look for a shag ruff, a frieze jerkin, a short sword, and a safeguard" (3.1.32-34). Conversely, when she appears in female dress, Sir Alexander mistakes her for his daughter-in-law (5.2.129-32). These incidents demonstrate not only that her customary hermaphroditic dress, "a frieze jerkin and a safeguard", is a well-known indication of her identity but also that she can disguise herself at her own free will by divesting herself of these acknowledged clothes.

In his epistle "To the Comic Play-Readers: Venery and Laughter" in the 1611 Quarto, Middleton also intimates that Moll's clothes produce the effect of sexual attraction at some times and that of camouflage at other times: "For venery, you shall find enough for sixpence, but well couched an you mark it. For Venus, being a woman, passes through the play in doublet and breeches: a brave disguise and a safe one" (14-16). About these enigmatic lines,

Mulholland glosses in his edition: one of the meanings of “venery” is “practice or pursuit of sexual pleasure” (*Roaring Girl* 68, n.). Middleton might have imagined Moll as Venus who would adopt a cross-dressed appearance. Thus, Middleton’s “stated purpose of the text of *The Roaring Girl* is the provision of erotically charged mirth to the reader” through Moll’s provocative cross-dressing in exchange for sixpence (Heller 151). At the same time, Venus might be also read as a Moll who wears a man’s clothes for “a brave disguise and a safe” protection. This double intimation of Middleton’s epistle is in accordance with the real Moll in the court records as well. The *Consistory Book* describes her costume as one of the causes for which she was punished: “She hath usually in the habit of a man . . . and in her boots, and with a sword by her side . . . many of them were of opinion that she was a man, but if any of them would come to her lodging they should find that she is a woman” (Mulholland, “Date” 31). It indicates that the transvestite Moll was sometimes deceptive enough to make onlookers mistake her for a man even if she wore the customary hermaphroditic clothes. To sum up, all these dramatic and extra-dramatic evidences suggest that Moll should have a full scope of knowledge about the effects and ramifications of her idiosyncratic dress. As a related consequence, it also indicates that the striking aspect of Moll’s transvestism would have been not so much her blatant challenge to the patriarchal dress codes, as argued by the feminist critics, but her sexually charged employment of them.

Again, then, the question: why does she harness the transgressive clothes which she knows should incite sexual provocation, running the high risk of being punished? It is not to the point once more to answer that she wants to reap the benefits of male freedom, as is argued by most feminist critics, because in most of the cases her transvestism is not intended to deceive, as is suggested by feminist critics,<sup>35</sup> but it rather renders her under the constant

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<sup>35</sup> Following Mary Beth Rose (386), almost all feminist critics, including Jean Howard (“Crossdressing” 436), Majorie Garber (231), Coppélia Kahn (722), have posited their interpretations on the premise that Moll does not wear male dress for disguise.



observation of onlookers who recognize her to be female in spite of her male clothes. Related to the seemingly self-detrimental manipulation of her clothes, act 3 scene 1, where she fights off Laxton's lascivious importunity, should be given special consideration, because it hints at an answer to the question, disclosing her precarious economic condition. Prior to the duel, being allured by her seductive airs in mannish clothes and anticipating sexual favours, Laxton gives her ten angels in advance which he swindled out of Mistress Gallipot: "There's ten angels in fair gold, Moll: you see I do not trifle with you – do but say thou wilt meet me, and I'll have a coach ready for thee" (2.1.287-89). When he meets her at Gray's Inn Fields for a coach-ride to the Three Pigeons at Brentford,<sup>36</sup> Moll changes her attitude suddenly from seductress to duelist and challenges him, laying a wager of ten angels: "Ten angels of mine own I've put to thine: Win 'em and wear 'em!" (3.1.67-68). Grabbing the prize money as a reward of the duel, not as a gratuity of prostituted service, she declares, "She that has wit and spirit / May scorn to live beholding to her body for meat" (3.1.133-34). Indeed, her case is altered, and she works in a different way.

The title-page of the 1611 Quarto displays a wood cut of Moll in lavish male attire accompanied by the caption: "My case is alter'd, I must worke for my living". Feminist critics have generally read her altered "case" in reference to her sexual identity as a cross-dressed woman. Of course, Moll's reference to her "case" carries sexual innuendo in early modern English: the term was common slang for the female genitals. And the play repeatedly suggests that her sex has been altered by her male apparel, as in Sir Alexander's defamatory responses (1.2.225; 2.2.77; 2.2.93). In reading her altered "case" in exclusively gendered terms, however, Moll stands only as a figure for sexualized discourses, which restricts her various uses of

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<sup>36</sup> In early modern London, Brentford or Brainford was a notorious spot for illicit liaisons. In *Westward Ho* and *Northward Ho*, it is also used as a place for extramarital assignations (*Westward Ho* 2.3.71; *Northward Ho* 1.3.19). In contrast to those earlier plays, however, it is reached by neither Laxton with Moll nor Goshawk with Mistress Openwork, and it remains elusively remote, emblematic of thwarted sexual longings in this play. It was located on the bank of the Thames between London and Greenwich.

cross-dressing. Such readings thereby result in the occlusion not only of Moll's ingenious means of living but also of the diverse forms of female labour that existed in the commercial landscape of early modern London.<sup>37</sup> In this respect, Natasha Korda's reading of Moll's altered "case" in terms of her "exigency to work for her living" shows a more advanced insight than the previous feminist interpretation (72), but she still falls short of recognizing that the title-page motto is specifically linked to Moll's dodging maneuvers in act 3 scene 1.

Furthermore, her attitude to Laxton in the scene draws a neat parallelism with Laxton's attitude to Mistress Gallipot. Laxton tantalizes Mistress Gallipot with imminent sexual gratification, only to filch money from her while dawdling away the time and refusing to consummate their affairs.<sup>38</sup> Interestingly, the dramatic instances of Moll's ingenious means of subsistence in the play make an evocation of the extra-dramatic living of the real Moll as well. Reviewing an extensive amount of the "factual fictions" of "pseudobiographers", Gustav Ungerer argues (43, 45):

Contemporary studies have invariably focused on the representation of Moll Cutpurse's sexuality and gender and have thereby turned a blind eye to the fact that the real-life Mary Frith was creating, for gain, her own public persona as a cross-dressing performer. Cross-dressing was her professional signature. I am arguing that she was a liminal figure striving to carve a niche for herself, however marginal, in the entertainment

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<sup>37</sup> For example, Majorie Garber argues that Moll's cross-dressing exemplifies "the constructedness of gender in a disconcertingly literal way through the construction of bodies – and of clothes" (224), but she overlooks the fact that Moll's sartorial behaviour typifies the shifty subsistence of the underclass woman.

<sup>38</sup> In front of Gallipot's apothecary, gloating over ten angels which he fleeced of Mistress Gallipot, Laxton makes an exultant aside:

The other night she would needs lead me into a room with a candle in her hand to show me a naked picture, where no sooner entered, but the candle was sent of an errand; now I, not intending to understand her, but like a puny at the inns of venery, called for another light innocently: thus reward I all her cunning with simple mistaking. (2.1.136-42).

Laxton gives a voyeuristic pleasure to the audience both on and off the stage by mocking Mistress Gallipot's strategies to induce him into bed.

business of Southwark and the City of London. (45-46)

Show business seems to have constituted an important part of Moll's *ad hoc* business for subsistence, which the *Consistory Book* testifies: "[She] also sat there upon the stage in the public view of all the people there present, in man's apparel, and played upon her lute and sang a song" (Mulholland, "Date" 31). Moll in the play also features twice as a music entertainer, singing bawdy songs and playing "the viol, an unmannerly instrument for a woman" (4.1.96).<sup>39</sup> Disguising herself as a music master for Sebastian, she picks up pin money in return for her performance: "Your way of teaching does so much content me, / I'll make it four pound; here's forty shillings, sir" (4.1.156-57). As Beverly Lemire argues, our knowledge of early modern women's work has been limited by "the standard male paradigms of employment" dictated by the guilds (118), but the "'disorderly' commercial practices were as common as they were reviled", and formed a "vast network of commerce, which must be integrated into our concepts of the market" (120). In these contexts, Moll's notoriety for an *ad hoc* entertainer is particularly interesting, when we consider that the rising entertainment industry flourished in London's suburbs and Liberties as informal networks of business outside the guild structure.

The conspicuous feature of Moll Cutpurse is probably not her successful manipulation of the gender codes, but her ability to manipulate them from within her lower-class status.

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<sup>39</sup> Compared to the lute which was regarded as a woman's instrument because it was able to be played beneath the breast, the viola da gamba was generally considered as a man's instrument in the period which the musician stroked with the bow while holding the instrument between his legs akimbo. As Linda Austern has shown, women playing musical instruments – usually the small stringed instruments or the virginals – were considered to be erotically stimulating to men, the combination of feminine beauty and the beauty of harmonious sound acting together to arouse uncontrollable passion (427). Consequently, it was looked upon as morally proper for women to play the instruments only in private, for either their own recreation or the delight of family and husband, and never in public. The real Moll was thus charged with playing the lute on the stage by the ecclesiastical court. In the light of female morality, the theatrical Moll is even more erotically provocative in that she plays not the lute but the viol in act 4 scene 1, especially by her posture of playing it between her legs akimbo. Meanwhile, the difference between the lute of the Consistory record and the viola of the play makes it difficult for me to agree to the argument that the real Moll might have been featured in the play.

Even if she imitates the fashionable costume of upper-class ladies, she is not upper-class at all. Although the play does not assign Moll a specific class and rank, it is evident that her position in the Jacobean social hierarchy is in a liminal area of the society. As a member of marginal group of London underworld, she should do whatever she can to keep the pot boiling. It is suggested that she deals even in stolen goods. While she goes with other roarers to celebrate Jack's freedom by feasting and carousing at Pimlico,<sup>40</sup> she encounters two cutpurses in the street and orders them by enlisting her underworld credentials: "Heart, there's a knight, to whom I'm bound for many favours, lost his purse at the last new play i' the Swan – seven angels in't: make it good, you're best; do you see?" (5.1.303-05). Margaret Dowling's investigation into the history of the real Moll's life sheds an interesting light on this aspect of the theatrical Moll, and it makes us confuse the historical Moll with the theatrical Moll. Dowling has found a legal document in the suit pleaded by Mary Markham on June 4, 1621. According to the document, Henry Killigrew asked Moll to trace his stolen goods for him (Dowling 69-70). Perhaps the playhouse was her specialized area where she employed underworld trickeries for her haphazard subsistence. The play also associates her underworld credentials with the theatre. The secret that she can see through the gallant disguise of the cutpurse and identify him is that she "took him once i' the twopenny gallery at the Fortune" (5.1.283-84). Gustav Ungerer argues that the historical Moll carried on a profitable business as a broker of stolen goods while also serving as an intermediary between pickpockets, their victims, and the authorities (54).

Female cross-dressing in early modern England might have been just as routine as the rhetoric of divinely ordered hierarchies which was frequently marshaled to quell it. In England, where female cross-dressing has not yet been fully researched, about 50 instances

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<sup>40</sup> About Pimlico, Jack Dapper says, "that nappy land of spice-cakes" (5.1.57-58); Cyrus Hoy refers to it as "A place of entertainment in Hogsdon, much resorted to by the Londoners of the 17th century for the sake of the fresh air and the cakes and ale for which it was famous" (3: 49).

are known, while in Holland 119 cases of women living or trying to live as men over a period of years have been documented (Kahn 722). It is difficult to tell the class position of many of these women. Most appear to be unmarried women of the lower class making a precarious living in London. Those in Holland who dressed and lived as men were usually poor, laboring-class women under the age of twenty-five, orphaned or in conflict with their families, and away from home in pursuit of work (Kahn 722). Some may have been driven to prostitution by economic necessity, with their cross-dressed apparel becoming a demonized sign of their sexual promiscuity. Thus, it is tempting to speculate that if upper-class women of the period assumed men's clothes as a sign of their wealth and independence, lower-class women might have assumed them from a sense of their economic destitution, and eventually turned to prostitution, marking their cross-dressing as a sign of their sexual availability.

One of the undesirable aspects of the feminist perspectives on *The Roaring Girl* is that they put too much emphasis on gender system while not taking into full consideration the importance of the class hierarchy, which has entailed a critical confusion over the interpretation of transvestite controversies of the early modern period, including confusion over the theatrical convention of the cross-dressed boy actor's role as a female character. In the early modern period whose distinctive feature was the overall dislocation of the feudalist social order, it was the class system rather than the gender hierarchy that was the major site of anxieties, and controversies over clothing are to be understood as part of anxieties over the levelling of ranks. Clothing in the early modern period was a sign distinctive more of social rank than of gender difference. However, feminist critics have frequently made categorical confusion by putting the gender system above the class hierarchy or merely juxtaposing them, and they have sometimes interpreted the sumptuary laws as typical anti-transvestite regulations.<sup>41</sup> However, the chief purpose of the sumptuary laws was to keep the class

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<sup>41</sup> For example, Majorie Garber puts stress on the anti-transvestite aspect of the sumptuary law by

hierarchy, and Elizabethan royal proclamations reiterating the rhetoric of the sumptuary regulations were meant to maintain such ‘essential’ distinctions as class and rank in the face of unprecedented social mobility. In May 1562, for example, a proclamation was specifically directed against the “monstrous abuse of apparel almost in all estates, but principally in the meaner sort” (Hughes and Larkin, *Tudor* 2: 193). As Orgel argues, “it was not illegal for women to dress as men; sumptuary legislation concerned itself with violations of class, not violations of gender” (14). The primary rhetoric of the author of *Hic Mulier*, often cited by feminist critics as evidence for anti-transvestism, was also to denounce the disintegration of the class system rather than the breakdown of sexual polarity. The voice of *Hic Mulier* gives dire warnings against a collapse of all social difference by asking: “Must but a bare pair of shears pass between noble and ignoble, between the generous spirit and the base mechanic? Shall we all be coheirs of one honour, one estate, and one habit?” (B4<sup>v</sup>). However transgressive the breakdown of sexual distinction and the unleashing of homoerotic desire might appear as a consequence of women’s appropriation of manliness in dress, they did not preoccupy the writer of the pamphlet as much as did questions of social status and hierarchy.

Furthermore, there was a profound difference in punishment for cross-dressers between classes. For a lower-class woman who found herself in the Consistory Court or the Aldermen’s Court, it was not just a husband’s chastisement or a preacher’s diatribe, but the whip, pillory, and prisons of the state’s repressive apparatuses such as Bridewell and Newgate that constituted her as a guilty subject and effected her imprisonment. In the case of an upper-class transvestite, however, even King James had to be content with a moral injunction as is cited above in the anecdote of 1620. King James was, John Chamberlain reports, obliged to retract from his initial hard-line, when he was appealed to by the fashionable high-class parishioners who were in protest against the Dean of Westminster’s measures to restrict them

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viewing it as the prohibition against both cross-gender and cross-class dressing: the code of sumptuary laws “prohibited both cross-dressing and sartorial class-jumping from one station to another” (222).

from the church services: “The King moved in yt, he is come to disavowe [the Dean of Westminster], and sayes his meaning was not for yellow ruffs” (294). In the light of this double standard of regulations against cross-dressing women, we can now elucidate the editors’ contradictory glosses on the controversial phrase of Middleton’s epistle to the play-readers: “Venus . . . passes through the play in doublet and breeches . . . if the *statute* untie not her codpiece point” (14-16, the *italic* is mine.). Hoy considers “the statute” in the lines to be “the sumptuary law that forbade women to wear male attire” (3: 15). Mulholland denies Hoy’s gloss by arguing “the sumptuary laws were repealed in 1603” (*Roaring Girl* 69, n.). McLuskie and Bevington try to reconcile the contradiction of the two editors: “Laws on precise regulation of dress according to status were repealed in 1603. However a general sense that cross-dressing was illegal remained” (*Roaring Girl* 152, n.). These reconciliatory glosses are still not clear enough, however, unless we take into consideration the social rank of the cross-dressed woman. In terms of legal punishment, the criminality depended not on whether the sumptuary laws were abolished or not but on whether the cross-dressers were of the lower-rank or the upper-class. As far as documentary evidences are concerned, we cannot find any record of judicial cases in which upper-class cross-dressers were prosecuted by sumptuary legislation when it was in effect until 1603, but we know that there are records of cases in which lower-rank women cross-dressed like Moll were still punished even after the laws were abolished in 1603.<sup>42</sup> Related to the class discrimination of the anti-transvestite rules, the theatre convention of the boy actor’s performance as a female character is also to be considered in terms of the actor’s social rank rather than whether the juridical statutes were in effect or not. Even though there was no English law prohibiting women from performing on the public stage before the Restoration period, as is proved by several Renaissance literary

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<sup>42</sup> Of course, she was not arraigned in a criminal court, but, as is shown above, the Consistory defined her cross-dressing as one of her offensive misdemeanours.

scholars,<sup>43</sup> the woman who appeared on the stage was liable to be prosecuted not because she was a woman but because she was a lower-rank, as is shown above by the case of Moll's punishment in 1611. These inconsistencies between absence *de jure* and punishment *de facto* are to be expounded only by the double standard based on class discrimination.

### III. Moll as an Underworld Figure

There are three easily recognizable groups within the play, each more or less distinct and homogenous, and all are characterized by the single pursuit of materialist values and a busy determination to get ahead in the world of a money-hungry society. The first group – the elderly knighted urban aristocracy with their conservative mores – are already established in the pride of riches, and their aim is to keep what they have. They are the familiar stock of close-fisted age, wagging their heads at the evil of the times but ready enough to corrupt justice for their own ends. As the banquet scene unfolds, the urban aristocrat's household is like an extension of a money economy. From the evidence of his thinly disguised account of himself, we can see that Sir Alexander is a self-made man whose prosperity presumably has a mercantile base in accord with early modern capitalist trends: "You ha' seen / Blessings to rain upon mine house and me: / Fortune, who slaves men, was my slave; her wheel / Hath spun me golden threads, for, I thank heaven" (1.2.73-76). He shows his guests an opulent gallery which rivals that of any traditional aristocratic house (1.2.10-32). His habitual parlances are rich in commercialist and consumerist allusions, and the multiple references to commerce and money-transactions expose his paranoid preoccupation with affluence and

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<sup>43</sup> For the details about the transvestite boy-actor's role as a woman character and its judicial restrictions, see Pamela Allen Brown and Peter Parolin, ed., *Women Players in England, 1500-1600: Beyond the All-Male Stage* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005); Stephen Orgel, "Nobody's Perfect: Or Why Did the English Stage Take Boys for Women?" *The South Atlantic Quarterly* 88 (1989): 7-29; Lisa Jardine, "'As boys and women are for the most part cattle of his colour': Female Roles and Elizabethan Eroticism," *Still Harping on Daughters: Women and Drama in the Age of Shakespeare*, by Lisa Jardine (Sussex: Harvester, 1983) 9-36; Phyllis Rackin, "Androgyny, Mimesis, and the Marriage of the Boy Heroine on the English Renaissance Stage," *PMLA* 102.1 (1987): 29-41.



materialism. The relationship between host and guest, for instance, is underscored by the metaphor of usury, as in Sir Alexander's advice to Greenwit concerning the young man's desire to leave his banquet sooner than decorum permits: "If you please to trust my age with more, / It shall pay double interest – good sir, stay" (1.2.37-38). Even the expression of old age is couched in business terminology: "An aged man upon whose head was scored / A debt of just so many years as these / Which I owe to my grave" (1.2.64-66). His wealth, his knighthood and his office of Justice of the Peace place him among the Jacobean class of the rising gentry. In the reign of Elizabeth particularly, and then James, many London J.P.s were successful merchants and they prospered to become a wealthy and influential element of the ruling class. The play describes their psychological traits as covetousness, avarice, ambition and conservatism. Even though Sir Alexander is made at last to show signs of compunction, as when he realizes how he has wronged Moll because of his prejudice (5.2.242-50), conventional assumptions usually get the better of him, and they are given more weight than even his concern with his soul after death (2.2.125-31). The gallants, who appear to be sycophants to the rich old men in act 1 scene 2, are the younger generation of these urban aristocrats. Even though these flush youths usually revolt against the worldly-wise patriarchs, they are of a decidedly meaner mould than the self-sufficient older generation. They are lecherous but not virile enough. Laxton in particular merely toys with Mistress Gallipot in order to swindle her, but shows no spirit of his own; Goshawk is as much lewd with his "gift of treachery . . . to betray my friend" when he is most trusted (2.1.29-30).

The emergent middle class, the less affluent but still moneyed citizens, make up the next group who will soon become part of the City's upper-class, replacing the landed gentry by engrossing the land itself. These shopkeepers' world of buying and selling is, as in many city comedies, at the heart of this play and a central description of what human relations have become. Mistress Openwork's initial street cries constitute the bartering idiom current in the

citizen plot: “Gentlemen, what is’t you lack? What is’t you buy?” (2.1.1-2). An association between commerce and sexuality characterizes various transactions in them.<sup>44</sup> Gallipot’s solution of his wife’s presumable precontract typifies the parallel transactions between commerce and sexuality (3.2.141). Gallipot stretches the equation further by unflatteringly equating his wife with material goods (3.2.246-47; 250-51). His willingness to pay out to save their marriage, on the other hand, indicates that he has a lot of money available. He is a rich man who owns a ship, engages in trade on large scale enough to employ a factor, and can easily afford to rebuild his barns at “Hockley Hole”, if they are “consumed with fire” (3.2.96). In spite of his wealth, his status as husband is undermined by his uxoriousness and sexual deficiency. Openwork is as rich as Gallipot, but his class inferiority to his wife hinders happy conjugality. Mistress Openwork thinks that her marriage has downgraded her social standing: “’Tis well known he took me from a lady’s service where I was well-beloved of the steward. I had my Latin tongue and a spice of the French before I came to him” (2.1.334-35). In contrast with Gallipot’s lack of virility despite his conjugal fidelity, Openwork’s adultery suspected by his wife in spite of his potency causes connubial bickering. Facing their husbands’ inadequacy, the wives engage themselves in the extramarital trickeries with city gallants, though in the end,

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<sup>44</sup> The play’s sarcastic tones about sex and money have been the main reason for critics to attribute the main playwright to Middleton, but Dekker’s *The Noble Spanish Soldier* and his collaborated *Lust’s Dominion* and *Bloody Banquet* can be as grim and harsh as Middleton’s *Michaelmas Term* and *A Chaste Maid in Cheapside*. In terms of the two playwrights’ attitudes to middle-class merchants, moreover, Andor Gomme argues that Dekker treats them more genially than Middleton (xx), but I think that their difference would be the result of the playwrights’ consideration of different audiences in different venues rather than the result of the authors’ intrinsic moral attitudes. Middleton’s city comedies such as *Michaelmas Term*, *A Mad World, My Masters*, and *A Trick to Catch the Old One*, which were written around in 1606-07, were all premiered in the indoor theatres by the Children of Paul’s. Although *A Chaste Maid in Cheapside*, first produced at the Swan by Lady Elizabeth’s Men in 1613, shows as sarcastic a tone as the previous plays, it can be regarded as the result of the spill-over effect of his previous indoor plays, and as an attestation of changed ambiance of the theatrical culture, in which romantic comedies were in downward trends, while city comedies or humour comedies, of which Ben Jonson was in the vanguard, established themselves as a mainstream genre in the 1610s. Moreover, Dekker and Webster’s city comedies *Westward Ho* and *Northward Ho*, premiered in the indoor theatres around in 1604-05, are as sardonic to the middle class as Middleton’s. Therefore, the genial hand to the citizens cannot be the crucial evidence to identify Dekker’s share of *The Roaring Girl*.

of course, they seem to realize how important it is to keep their matrimonial allegiance. Even Mistress Gallipot is forgiven for regarding her fussy and uxorious husband as tiresome and for improvising her precontract tale to dupe her husband.<sup>45</sup> Yet the innuendos in the conversation between Mistress Gallipot and Mistress Openwork are so broad and flippant (4.2.54-69), especially, Mistress Gallipot is not sincere and forthright enough to her solicitous husband to the last, that we cannot believe they have altogether given up the search for new extramarital pleasures.<sup>46</sup>

Murky figures of London underworld make the basest string of the social hierarchy in the play. Unlike the two classes above, this group does not keep any fixed residence. Owing to their continuous shifts and opportunist utterances, their identities are extremely difficult to posit. In order to survive, they constantly change the *loci* from street to street, extemporizing their shapes into “poor soldiers”, pickpockets, cutpurses, “whipjacks”, “anglers, ruffers”, “cheaters, lifters, nips, foists, puggards, curbers”, etc. (5.1.64.s.d., 131, 154, 327). For their economic constraints, these low-lives should do anything either legal or illegal, but they are not completely devoid of moral sensibility.

The first comer of this group is Trapdoor who introduces himself as early as in act 1 scene 2 prior to any of his low-life fellows. He finds himself the servant of two masters and

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<sup>45</sup> A. H. Bullen argues that the feigned precontract between Laxton and Mistress Gallipot “is a repetition of the device in *A Trick to Catch the Old One*”, and that “the conduct of Laxton and Gallipot is precisely the same as that of Witgood and Hoard” (xxxvii). Along with Bullen, Gomme maintains that “Middleton’s dominant driving purpose may be felt to lie behind and explain this trickery” of Laxton (xxi). However, the other citizen plot, in which Openwork tests Goshawk’s sincerity by allowing him to seduce his wife, is almost the same as the one which was already devised by Dekker and Webster in *Northward Ho*, in which Mayberry tricks Greenshield into the pitfall of being cuckolded by the counterplot of making him seduce his own wife. Gomme is reminded of *A Trick to Catch the Old One* or *Michaelmas Term* by *The Roaring Girl*’s techniques of “tricks and intrigues” which are “attempted and rebound to discomfit the intriguers”, and “disguise of many kinds” which is “constantly turned to” (xx-xxi), but Dekker and Webster’s *Westward Ho* and *Northward Ho*, and Dekker’s *If this be not a good play* (1611) are also abundant in those trickeries and disguises.

<sup>46</sup> The reconciliatory mood of the Openwork/Goshawk plot is rather clear, compared to that of the Gallipot/Laxton plot. In addition to Mistress Gallipot’s insincere attitude, the omen of the Gallipots’ unhappy wedlock arises from Laxton’s attitude in the final moments. Laxton’s eulogy on Mistress Gallipot’s chastity after the collapse of his extortionary ruse of the precontract tale (4.2.303ff.) is not compatible with the crooked courses of their previous escapades.

correspondingly vacillates between the pull of mercenary instincts and the urgings of a moral rectitude. Moll's material conditions are based on this underworld. Orgel puts her class as "a good bourgeoisie", commending her attitude as "a model of middle-class feminine behavior" (24), and argues that the historical Moll was "a middle-class child, daughter of a shoemaker in the Barbican district of the City of London" (20), but Moll both on and off the stage holds the position of the under-class. Typical of the underworld figure, she shifts her "lodging so often" from "the Temple" to "Chick Lane" that even her low-life fellow, Trapdoor, cannot "meddle with [her] for that trick" (3.1.164, 161, 163). Belonging to the lower-class, she exhibits a special ability to move carelessly at ease among people in all ranks of society: she knows the ways of thieves but is on familiar terms with the upper nobility like Lord Noland, though a degenerated nobility whose name suggests that all his lands are sold. When Moll is given a pseudo-proposal of marriage by Sebastian, she puts forward her destitution as the chief reason to refuse the rich suitor: "Sir, I am so poor to requite you, you must look for nothing but thanks of me: I have no humor to marry" (2.2.35-36). Encountering the two low-lives whom she mistakes for wounded soldiers before unmasking their knavery, she exhibits a sympathetic comradeship: "Come, come, Dapper, let's give 'em something; 'las, poor men, what money have you? By my troth, I love a soldier with my soul" (5.1.79-81). However, she is neither a constant advocate for the poor, nor does she show an invariable class partisanship. She sometimes shows an anti-populace attitude by despising the lower class. When the porter carrying her viol in his back does not know what kind of instrument it is, she quips with disgust: "Fiddle, goodman hog-rubber? Some of these porters bear so much for others, they have no time to carry wit for themselves" (2.2.22-24).

Modern criticism of Moll has been fraught with not only the upgrade of her hierarchical position but also the idealization of her morality. T. S. Eliot's eulogy of Moll in 1927 was the water-shed moment of her moral white-washing in critical responses to her. Eliot finds her "a

type of the sort of woman who has renounced all happiness for herself and who lives only for a principle” (167). Bullen, Champion, and Orgel have consecutively contributed to Eliot’s moral sanitation of Moll, disregarding or sacrificing other evidences. Bullen argues, “She moves among rowdies and profligates without suffering any contamination” (xxxv). Champion maintains, “She is the paragon of morality and virtuous conduct” (84). And Orgel also avers that Moll “is, indeed, with the exception of Mary Fitzallard, the only unquestionably virtuous woman in the play” (24). Holmes, Gomme, and Mulholland not only clean up her morality but also canonize her as the moral spokeswoman or the ethical standard in the play. Holmes argues, Moll is an agent of “universal justice” by which to judge all other characters, and “no blame” attaches to her (103). Gomme maintains, “She is the moral centre . . . against which all actions and intentions are to be judged” (xxvi). And Mulholland asserts, “She is the play’s moral spokesman; . . . All her energies are bent to the service of virtue, we are spared any concomitant teasing moral dilemma” (Introduction 20; 27). In his address to “To the Comicke-Play Readers”, Middleton takes pains to distinguish the onstage character from the real Moll, hinting that the play will present an idealized interpretation of her: “’Tis the excellency of a writer to leave things better than he finds ’em” (21-22). Indeed, Dekker and Middleton have attempted to decriminalize Moll, proving her neither prostitute nor thief with two trial scenes: i.e. act 3 scene 1 where she beats off Laxton’s sexual advance and act 4 scene 1 where she baffles Sir Alexander’s ruse to snare her into theft.

However, she still remains in the play exceptional to society’s accepted morality, standing “as a placeholder for the energies of transgression” (Garber 230). As her name, Moll Cutpurse, implies, the real Moll was an underworld figure, notorious as a thief, bully, whore, bawd, brawler, pickpurse, fortune-teller, receiver, and forger, and the play shows that the playwrights drew heavily on the habits and physical appearance of the real-life Moll, with her brawling, singing, and smoking, her lute, her boots, her sword, and above all, her breeches.

Her forcible intervention in the judicial procedure to rescue Jack from the sergeant's arrest (3.3.199-213) is "a very serious crime" which "could under Jacobean law lead to a long imprisonment" (Comensoli, "Play-making" 261). In the aftermath, neither Moll nor Jack repents the crime; instead, Moll describes her part as a "perfect one good work today" (3.3.224). Mulholland argues, "Jack is an innocuous simpleton, endearing enough to merit a rescue by Moll and Trapdoor" (Introduction 18), but he is a profligate and spendthrift who lives on credit, lavishes his money on tobacco and wine, and associates with prostitutes and catamites (3.3.60-68). Mulholland argues again, "although his father reports his misdeeds (3.2.60ff.), we witness none" (Introduction 18), but we clearly witness he is "such an ass . . . to lose all [his] money" in a "false dice" of gambling (3.3.205-07), and that he makes "a boon voyage" to Pimlico to treat Moll and other "whorish masters" with reveling and wenching there in gratitude for his rescue (5.1.58; 66). With our hindsight suggested by Jack's returning courtesy to Moll's deliverance, we get a glimpse that Jack might be one of the sources of Moll's revenue and that there might be a clandestine link between them. Sinisterly, after the felonious disturbance of the judicial order, Moll begins to be called by her street-name, "Jack" (5.1.1, 30; 5.2.97-98, 213, 15). According to Comensoli, "Jack functions dramatically as Moll's double" ("Play-making" 260-61).<sup>47</sup>

With the modern cause of feminism, Moll has gained another appellation as a feminist proponent. Margot Heinemann argues, the playwrights take "a popular feminist stance", by presenting "a bold, coarse-spoken, aggressive woman in breeches as the liberator and defender of her sisters" (100), Champion regards her as "a feminist par excellence" (84),

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<sup>47</sup> As another example of his prodigality, Jack Dapper seems to be an illicit lover of Mistress Tiltyard, whose liaison might have constituted a third citizen plot of the original play. Dekker and Middleton would have cut it out in the revision of the original in order to allot space and time for the canting parade of act 5 scene 1. We can find a fossil of the third citizen plot in Moll's response to Jack Dapper in front of the Tiltyards' feather shop: "The purity of your wench would I fain try: she seems like Kent unconquered, and I believe as many wiles are in her" (2.1.314); and in the fragments of Moll's mysterious aside: "I'll try one spear against your chastity, Mistress Tiltyard, though it prove too short by the burr" (2.1.342-43).

Shepherd depicts her as one of the representatives of “the seventeenth-century feminists” (92), Rose thinks of her as a “champion of female freedom” (381), and Kahn looks upon her as an “adamant” opponent of “patriarchal discourse” (724). The iconization of Moll as feminist proponent by a number of critics is largely thanks to her three powerful speeches of act 3 scene 1, act 2 scene 2 and act 5 scene 2, ignoring or excluding other textual evidence. Many audiences may well have been delighted in Moll’s tough, athletic rhythms in act 3 scene 1 by which she puts down the disgusting Laxton and proves him such a coward that he must end by begging her to spare his life. She first destroys him verbally and then fights him, and her speech frames an entirely different attitude to women and female sexuality. To his lecherous advance, she says defiantly:

In thee I defy all men, their worst hates,  
 And their best flatteries, all their golden witchcrafts,  
 With which they entangle the poor spirits of fools.  
 Distressed needlewomen and trade-fallen wives.  
 Fish that must needs bite, or themselves be bitten –  
 Such hungry things as these may soon be took  
 With a worm fastened on a golden hook:  
 Those are the lecher’s food, his prey. (3.1.90-93)

Rather than denouncing Laxton’s individual depravity, Moll turns attention to the social realities that cause conditions for the sale of sex. If the master narrative of the ecclesiastical polemicists and the civic authorities is that “women’s sexual looseness stems from their unnatural aspiration beyond their assigned place, that is, beyond the control of the male, Moll argues that women are unchaste because they are poor” (Howard, “Crossdressing” 437).

Moll's feminist speech is especially powerful because she gets to the point that female capitulation to venality is ultimately not a matter of individual responsibility but a problem of the socio-economic system. As the cause of the fall of women at the lecher's "golden hook", i.e. money, her speech clarifies the destitution of women victimized by the changing economic situation, i.e. "distressed needlewomen and trade-fallen wives".

As I have argued earlier, however, her speech in the scene gives an occasion to reflect on her material condition. Not only winning the ten angels' prize money but also holding Laxton's "purse and body" at her "disposing" through the triumph over the lecherous opponent (3.1.123; 122), she asserts, "She that has wit and spirit / May scorn to live beholding to her body for meat" (3.1.133-34). Even though her assertion could be "the basic feminist maxim", as summed up by McLuskie (22), it makes us ask retrospectively, in the period of early modern London, how many women might have been among "distressed needlewomen and trade-fallen wives", who had enough "wit" like Moll not to sell their bodies and had enough "spirit" like Moll herself to subjugate male predators with physical force. Declaring her spiritual superiority to her body, what is worse, she proclaims, "Base is that mind that kneels unto her body / As if a husband stood in awe on's wife" (3.1.137-38). Paradoxically enough, it turns out that her alleged most powerful feminist declaration in the play is couched in a patriarchal discourse which regards husband's mastery over wife as a natural and essential order. In addition to this, the most disruptive point to the feminist extollment of her would be her utterances in front of the citizen shops:

'Tis impossible to know what woman is thoroughly honest, because she's ne'er thoroughly tried. I am of that certain belief there are more queans in this town of their own making than of any man's provoking: where lies the slackness then? Many a poor soul would down, and there's nobody will push 'em! (2.1.318-23)



Even though these words have the obvious dramatic efficacy of foreshadowing Mistress Gallipot's prevarication of her precontract with Laxton prior to his instigation, they are so disconcerting to the feminist agenda that they have frequently suffered, along with the line mentioned above (3.1.138), the fate of excision from modern productions.<sup>48</sup> Indeed, some of Moll's words pass over the extent of an anti-feminist attitude, veering into a misogynist stance.<sup>49</sup> In spite of his inappropriate eulogy of Moll's morality, Mulholland gets to the point: "So far as womankind is concerned the play is traditional in its attitudes" (Introduction 57).

The second powerful feminist speech by Moll is delivered in her misogynist response to Sebastian's marriage proposal. Before she knows it is only Sebastian's sham to deceive his father, she rejects it because marriage denies a woman freedom to act:

I have no humour to marry, I love to lie o' both sides o'th' bed myself; and again, o'th' other side, a wife, you know, ought to be obedient, but I fear me I am too headstrong to obey, therefore I'll ne'er go about it. . . . I have the head now of myself, and am man enough for a woman, marriage is but a chopping and changing, where a maiden looses one head, and has a worse i'th' place. (2.2.36-45).

Moll refuses the conventional subordination required of a wife. She views marriage as a threat to a woman's autonomy: i.e. marriage is an exchange of one "head" for another in that a wife replaces her "maidenhead" of independence with her husband's head of sovereignty. Contradictorily, however, this strong feminist speech also embraces the patriarchal order which she regards as natural and standard: "a wife, you know, ought to be obedient" (2.2.38).

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<sup>48</sup> For example, see the promptbook of the 1983 RSC production directed by Barry Kyle, which is preserved in the Shakespeare Centre, Stratford-upon-Avon.

<sup>49</sup> See her long diatribe (2.1.314-25), with which she condemns the citizen wives' promiscuity, while she mixes and sides with the notorious misogynists, i.e. the prodigal gallants.

It would be, thus, a more appropriate interpretation that the general import of her remarks above is to explain her personal singularities to Sebastian as a reason for her refusal, rather than to denounce the patriarchal ideology of husband's supremacy in the marriage. Hence does she not feel any incompatibility of the role in which she helps Mary Fitzallard to marry while she refuses it.

As the third evidence of Moll's feminist stance, many critics have cited her telling speeches in the final moments of the play. Her words reiterate her misogynist standpoint. They counter the dominant discourse of the early modern period which idealizes marriage and procreation. Asked by Lord Noland when she will marry, Moll replies:

When you shall hear  
 Gallants void from sergeants' fear,  
 Honesty and truth unslandered,  
 Women manned but never pandered,  
 Cheaters booted but not coached,  
 Vessels older ere they're broached;  
 If my mind be then not varied,  
 Next day following, I'll be married. (5.2.217-24)

Critics and editors have interpreted her speech in the discursive tradition of social protest based on a utopian vision. Howard interprets, "Enigmatic, like the fool's prophesy in *Lear*, Moll's prophesy is clear in its utopian aspiration, clear in making the ending of women's oppression a central part of a more encompassing utopian vision of social reform" ("Crossdressing" 438). McLuskie posits Moll as "a utopian figure who promises to become fully integrated into society only when the city itself becomes utopian" (27). Comensoli

comments, “Moll indirectly flouts Mary and Sebastian’s wedding by prophesying she will marry only when society undergoes seemingly impossible reformation” (“Play-making” 260). For Gomme as for Comensoli, Moll’s utopian vision is a “list of impossibilities to be got over before she can marry” (xxvii). Indeed, Lord Noland replies in alarm, “This sounds like doomsday” (5.2.224); and his alarmed response is parried by Moll with a witty quip, “Then were marriage best, / For if I should repent, I were soon at rest” (5.2.225-26).

Critics and editors have deduced her general import from the speech, but their elucidation is not sufficient when it is considered in the context of Moll’s actions, which is admitted in Howard’s acknowledgment that her speech is “enigmatic, like the fool’s prophesy in *Lear*”. The line, “Gallants void from sergeant’s fear”, might literally mean that gallants have enough money not to be in debt for their sumptuous life-style as is suggested by many editors,<sup>50</sup> but it might be related specifically to her rescue of Jack Dapper from the sergeants. Thus it might show that she does not feel any compunction for her criminal interruption of the legal procedure. In early modern London and in this play as well, sergeants would not have been regarded as honorable agents of the public good. As the sergeant Curtalax himself says, “All that live in the world are but great fish and little fish, and feed upon one another” (3.3.140-42); they might have been rapacious, corrupted and opportunistic in early modern London. Moll’s attitude to them is also sarcastic: “No bankrupt would give sevenscore pound for a sergeant’s place” (3.1.40). Yet Jack Dapper is prodigal enough to be disciplined by his father, and Moll knows that Jack Dapper is a profligate gallant. Furthermore she knows that gallants’ frequent defaults to citizens such as mercers and tailors oblige them to resort to the law. She admits, “the corruption of a citizen is the generation of a sergeant” (3.1.39).<sup>51</sup> Thus

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<sup>50</sup> For example, see Kathleen McLuskie and David Bevington (*Roaring Girl* 263, n.) and Coppélia Kahn (*Roaring Girl* 776, n.).

<sup>51</sup> In early modern London, the vicious sequence concerning a profligate gallant and a bankrupt citizen happened frequently as follows: “A citizen is not paid by a gentleman, goes into bankruptcy, and is thus forced to make money by becoming an arresting sergeant, thereby driving up the cost of

the line embraces the implication of her criminal history rather than her wish for the gallants' economic welfare.

The next line, "Honesty and truth unslandered", is associated in general with the traditional theme of appearance versus reality; i.e. the theme of the danger of being deceived by surfaces and the consequent need to penetrate to the truth beneath. Yet it might be a specific assertion by which she defends herself against public prejudice which regards the cross-dressed woman as a whore or a bawd. As I have shown above, however, it is difficult for Moll to clear herself from the sexual accusations which are made against transvestite women, even if prejudicial and class-discriminatory, because she takes advantages of her provocative appearance to extort money from those seduced by her cross-dressing.

The next line, "Woman manned but never pandered", would be Moll's protest against the patriarchal prejudice in which a woman's love affair with a man without marriage was regarded as prostitution or whoredom in the early modern age. Yet it might be a more appropriate interpretation to relate it to Moll's denouncement against women's sexual depravities. As I have shown above, Moll delivers a sexual indictment against Mistress Openwork (2.1.237-43) and against Mistress Gallipot (2.1.314-25). That is, Moll might mean by the line that women are prone to fall in illicit affairs by themselves without others' instigation.

The next, "Cheaters booted but not coached", has been the most baffling line to critics and editors.<sup>52</sup> To comprehend it properly, I think, we should excavate the metonymic meaning of "booted" and "coached". The metonymic meaning of "coached" is suggested in

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fees paid by those wishing to become sergeants" (McLuskie and Bevington, *Roaring Girl* 196, n.).

<sup>52</sup> For example, Paul Mulholland glosses, "*Booted* commonly signifies in the s.dd. of contemporary plays that a character has come from riding. . . . Moll apparently awaits the time when cheaters are allowed the expense of a horse (or simply footwear), but not extravagance of a coach" (*Roaring Girl* 243, n.). Andor Gomme explains, "the precise meaning of this line is not [clear]. 'Booted', in addition to the obvious sense, can mean cured and also thrashed; 'coached' might mean trained. Perhaps she wants them made honest but not rich" (*Roaring Girl* 142, n.). Kathleen McLuskie regards the line as an example of theatrical fantasies of "a harmonious social world" (27).

Moll's sarcastic response to Laxton's flirtation earlier in the play. When Laxton offers her a lascivious excursion to the outlying towns of London by coach, "Nothing but be merry and lie together; I'll hire a coach with four horses" (2.1.279-80); she cynically retorts, "You may leave out one well: three horses will serve if I play the jade myself" (2.1.281-83). Her cynicism invites us to associate 'riding a coach or a horse' with sexual connotations. In Gray's Inn Fields, when she says to Laxton, "you shall know me now!" with removing her hat and cloak; Laxton responds with embarrassment, "The coach is better; come", misinterpreting her word, "know", and her action, 'undressing', as preliminaries to sexual service (3.1.59-61). Shedding light on Laxton's response, John Taylor, the so-called 'water-poet' in early seventeenth-century London, attests the use of a coach for sexual purpose: A coach "is neuer vnfurnished of a bedde and curtaines, with shop windowes of leather to buckle Bawdry vp as close in the midst of the street, as it were in the Stewes, or a Nunnerie of Venus Votaries" (241).<sup>53</sup> These references lead us to presume that coaches, equipped with a bed and a curtain, run by four horses, were sometimes used for illicit sex in early modern London. Therefore, hiring a four-horsed coach might be a metonym of enjoying promiscuous sexual affairs, including those with courtesans, while riding a single horse, as quipped by Moll, might mean keeping within monogamous conjugality. On the other hand, the word 'booted' in the line might mean literally "thrashed" or 'kicked', as is suggested by Gomme (*Roaring Girl* 142, n.). To sum up, the line might mean that cheaters should not be allowed to enjoy illicit sex but punished, and it is intended to denounce sexual cheaters like Laxton for their swindling of money.

The last line, "Vessels older ere they're broached", means literally that wares or receptacles are made conscientiously enough not to leak before they become old. Figuratively, however, it might mean that a woman becomes older and is naturally past sex and procreation

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<sup>53</sup> In addition to John Taylor's allusion, Follywit in *A Mad World, My Masters* describes the manner of a courtesan as moving "most commonly coached" (3.3.54).

rather than becoming venereally diseased through promiscuous intercourses.<sup>54</sup> In conclusion, Moll's speech in act 5 scene 2 is more to defend her reputation and sexual chastity and to denounce others' sexual profligacy, both men's and women's, than to lodge a feminist protest against the patriarchal gender system or to express a utopian aspiration for social justice.

Even though Moll critiques material institutions and oppressive hierarchies which exploit distressed women, "it is not always perfectly clear that she embodies a consistent social philosophy or class-gender position", as Jean Howard argues ("Crossdressing" 438). Furthermore, even though she is reformed and glamorized in the play, compared with the real Moll, "her portrayal is not entirely innocuous and sanitized" (Howard, "Crossdressing" 438). In her shift from one feature to another, her identity becomes as contradictory, multifaceted, amorphous, and metamorphic as the play is crisscrossed and traversed by heteroglossia and paradoxical discourses. Her central ambiguity hinges on the contradictions embodied in her attitudes towards marriage, which constitutes the pivotal storyline of the play. Throughout the play the dramatists underscore Moll's protean nature, which cannot be understood by those who conceive of the world two-dimensionally. She is not to be posited by the binary hierarchical concept such as moral versus amoral, feminist versus misogynist, philo-gamist versus misogynist, upperworld versus underworld, mannish versus womanish, legal versus illegal, acceptable versus unacceptable, and containing versus subversive.

Her protean nature encompasses her proficiency as musician, her mastery of a different kind of music, namely dream-songs accompanied on the viol (4.1.102ff., 113ff.) and canting-songs sung with fellow rogues (5.1.214ff., 256ff.). Her fullness and complexity are exposed especially through her second dream-song. As she plays on the viol for Sebastian, she sings of her dream at the core of which is a subtle tension between denial and desire. She describes the sexual adventures of an adulterous woman, a fantasy which gives Moll phantasmagoric

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<sup>54</sup> In support of this interpretation, Elizabeth Cook suggests that "the vessel" in the line should be a metaphor for female genitalia (*Roaring Girl* 135, n.).

pleasure, although she is careful to distinguish between her dream-life and reality: “Hang up the viol now, sir: all this while I was in a dream: one shall lie rudely then; but being awake, I keep my legs together” (4.1.126-28). She chooses independence for herself, but concurrently she is aware of the loss which her independence necessitates. It brings into relief a compromise between her sexual longing and her sexual renunciation. She knows she should sacrifice her sexual longing in order to resist subjugation to predatory male sexuality or to escape from subordination to a patriarchal husband. Her dream-song suggests, “We are viewing neither a symbol of virtue nor the two-dimensional virago of the *Hic Mulier* pamphlet, but a complex individual” whose self makes incessant negotiations with the world (Comensoli, “Play-making” 259).

What makes Moll’s identity complex is not only her contradictorily multifaceted portrayal within the play but also the continuous evocation of her real presence outside the theatre. Whatever her speech and actions may have been within the theatre, the preconceptions of the real Moll would have actually prevailed in constituting her image for the contemporary audience. While her stage representation bridges the internally explored worlds of illusion and reality, the character’s mirrored contact with her original links the play continuously with the real world outside. The frequent allusion of the play to her real-life story makes her extratheatrical presence ubiquitous in the play. As a result, her identity is rendered an unmasterable excess. Indeed, Dekker and Middleton deliberately make Moll Cutpurse a nexus of interchanges between the fictional character and the living woman, the performed and the real. A lot of plays in early modern theatres make the onstage and the offstage implicated with each other, but there are not so many which give incessant allusions to an extratheatrical figure as explicitly and directly as this play. As mentioned earlier, the production of the play itself calculatantly capitalized on the audience’s curiosity, at a time when the theatrical referent, the real Moll, was the hot news. The contemporary audience’s

reception of Moll's image, thus, if not ours in modern productions, would have come not only from the fictional Moll who strutted and shouted on the stage but also from the factual Moll who tramped and scampered in the bustling streets of the London underworld. At any moment in their efforts to fix her dramatic representation in a certain way, the audience should have found her metamorphic ambiguities unmasterably multiplied owing to the continuous negotiation between the fictive and the real. "Like a fat eel through a Dutchman's fingers" (2.1.206-07), Moll would have slipped between the fiction and the reality, between the onstage and the offstage, and between theatricality and extratheatricality.

Among all the extratheatrical facts, names, incidents and practices, Moll herself, the exciting scoundrel in real life, constitutes the most conspicuous allusion in the play. The prefatory epistle of the Quarto leads the play's various invocations of the real Moll and makes a balance between them, lending a teasing jab at the "obscene fellow" who "would have ripped up the most nasty vice that ever hell belched forth and presented it to a modest assembly" ("To the Comic Play-Readers" 22, 26-28). Following the preliminary invocations, the Prologue continues to connect the dramatic Moll with her real-life story, drawing attention to the glamourized version of her and the effect it could have on the mind of the audience: "None of these roaring girls is ours: she flies / With wings more lofty" (25-26). In the main action of the play, when we are led by Sir Alexander to the "galleries" in the centre of his house (1.2.14), we are not shown the collection of such paintings as portraits and landscapes but shown the *trompe-d'oeil* of the Fortune filled with theatrical spectacles, including even the real Moll's fellow cutpurses: "Whilst with obsequious ears / Thronged heaps do listen, a cutpurse thrusts and leers / With hawk's eyes for his prey" (1.2.25-27). The episode of Moll's singing and playing upon a viol in act 4 scene 1 may also refer to her lute-playing incident recorded in the *Consistory Book*.

In addition to the allusion to the real Moll, the spectators are frequently reminded that



they are watching a play, deliberately being awakened from the dramatic illusion. When Openwork catches his wife and Mistress Gallipot running-off with Goshawk, he asks “what’s the comedy?” They reply “’Tis *Westward Ho*” (4.2.136, 138). The audience’s awareness that the real Moll might coexist with the fictive Moll is once more consolidated, when they are alerted to their attendance in the theatre by Gallipot who refers to another comedy in his anxiety to know the truth of his wife’s precontract tale: “I pray, who plays *A Knack to Know an Honest Man* in this company?” (4.2.283-84). The Epilogue completes the accumulation of numerous allusions to extratheatricity by dissolving the artifice of the fictive Moll in the anticipation of the real one (35-36). Through all of these references and allusions, Moll’s existence outside of the play makes a blaring assertion in defiance of the domestication or taming of her image within the play, or delivers a strong argument on behalf of an ambiguous undercurrent overflowing the theatrical boundary.

Moll’s extratheatrical presence is overwhelmingly evoked in the canting scene, which is a *tableau vivant* of the underworld. The playwrights give the onstage Moll special opportunities to excuse her past underworld life (5.1.316-21), but, for the audience of the time, her real-life reputation would have become a looming exhibit, which cast suspicion on their judgment based on the experience of her on the stage. Her underworld credentials are clearly established in the scene, disclosing her history as a ringleader of thieves and cutpurses or at least a figure with a considerable clout among them. However, she does not look like a dangerous figure, because “the underworld” is “romanticized” (Berlin 117). Instead, the scene serves to give her a chance to enlarge the circle of her acquaintances and to introduce her upper-order counterparts in a class-levelling congruence of the upper and lower worlds. The romanticization of the underworld partakes of the same spirit seen in other representations such as Shakespeare’s *Autolycus*, Fletcher and Massinger’s *Beggars’ Bush*, Middleton’s *More Dissemblers*, Jonson’s *The Gypsies Metamorphosed*, Dekker and his co-authors’ *The Spanish*

*Gypsy*, and Brome's *A Jovial Crew*, but the romantic mood in this play is decidedly urban rather than pastoral. There is a good deal of fun to be had from it, and it is featured with Moll's penetration of the underworld business by bringing to the forefront the professional sharpers who had previously only passed quickly across the stage. Trapdoor's and Tearcat's disguises do not fool her, and Moll expeditiously sizes up the sleeky cutpurses and brings them to heel. At his re-introduction in the scene, Trapdoor, who has been a villainous figure in the play, undergoes romantic glamourization, shifting allegiance from Sir Alexander to his mistress. He and Tearcat act out "underworld exoticism" with the outlandish behaviors and languages of the gangsters who live on the margins of ordered society (Mulholland, Introduction 32). They are given enough opportunity to show their rogueries, cheatings, "jabbering", "canting" and "pedlar's French", which have given rise to their "black ill name[s]" (5.1.106, 177, 179, 342).

However, both their transgression and their social exclusion are presented as a performance which is distanced from the possibility of any real engagement with the problems of the London underworld. "The terrible fate of the urban poor, the casualties of war and social upheaval, are translated into a comic performance" (McLuskie 26), and "within the commonwealth of rogues, Moll improvises as a dispassionate arbiter who exercises fairness, resolution and mercy in the trial situations she encounters" (Mulholland, Introduction 32). Even her dealing in stolen goods is decriminalized into an exercise of justice. At her scarcely veiled menace, the First Cutpurse promises to help recover the stolen purse and plans to call a "synagogue" – some sort of underworld tribunal (5.1.307). The City's underworld curiosities are exhibited for the pleasure of the audience. The combination of fascinating canting terms and songs, and Moll's translation of them turns the gipsy-thieves into objects of wonder and amusement. In effect, "the City is translated from wilderness into Wunderkammer, a cabinet of human curiosities" (Knowles xxxviii).

Along with glamorization, translation functions as another way of decriminalization of the underworld. The language of anti-social rogues is appropriated into the ordered upper-society through translation, bringing about delight in “linguistic jugglery” of the underworld figures (Gomme xxxi). The scene is carefully staged to show as many canting terms as possible and to familiarize the audience with them. Trapdoor’s recent induction into this underworld gives an excuse for the lengthy display of thieves’ slang, which is virtually “a dramatized version of a canting dictionary” (Gomme xxx). The dramatic consumers who were the play’s first audience did not need to go abroad, or even beyond the City, to enjoy exotic linguistic commodities. Jack Dapper and Lord Noland listen to Moll, Trapdoor and Tearcat converse in thieves’ cant, and Jack Dapper says, “Zounds, I’ll give a schoolmaster half a crown a week, and teach me this pedlar’s French” (5.1.178-79). The companions’ eager interest serves the apparent dramatic purpose of prompting Moll to exhibit her glossary of pedlar’s French. She hilariously gives her upper-class companions a crash course in the cant and educates the audience as well, leading them to feel street-wise. Indeed, her decoding of the underworld’s baffling language produces the effect of dispelling the fear and distrust associated with the underworld. Once the language barrier is crossed, the theatre audience is reassured that the threat of violence and social instability by the underworld figures is not serious. The play sets aside, furthermore, a special time for Moll to decriminalize herself by giving her a chance to explain away her superior knowledge of the London underworld and her proficiency in rogues’ cant: i.e. she has acquired this knowledge for the sake of alerting the unwary. She compares her situation with that of a visitor to Venice, who was initiated into “all the close tricks of courtesans” by some pander (5.1.336).<sup>55</sup> In spite of the excessive

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<sup>55</sup> The visitor to Venice in the line refers to Thomas Coryat who had his famous travelogue, *Crudities*, published in 1611, the same year as the premiere of *The Roaring Girl*, with the financial patronage of Prince Henry, who was also the patron of the company of the Fortune, which produced the play.

length of the scene,<sup>56</sup> the underworld chic tamed by the scene gives much pleasure, along with the comfortable sense that “a little whiff of brimstone” serves for the safety of the overall soul (Cook xxviii).

Accompanying the romanticization of the underworld, its idealization has also taken place as in the case of Moll’s portrayal. Thus, critics see it as a dramatic substitution for the corrupt and covetous upperworld. Knowles argues, “Disorder stems not from the City and its marginalized groups but, rather, from the older, supposedly respectable City gentry” (xxxviii), and Cook affirms that the quasi-laws over which Moll presides as a supreme justice in the underworld is “a more immediate, necessitous, and vital kind than those to which Sir Alexander and Sir Davy apply” (xxxiv). It is true that Sir Alexander and Sir Davy seek to take advantage of their legal offices as J.P.s to further their own interest. While instructing Trapdoor to set a snare to trap Moll, Sir Alexander says, “I’ll find law to hang her up” (1.2.234). While planning to correct his son’s prodigality, Sir Davy also appropriates the legal *status quo* by mobilizing two sergeants to imprison Jack Dapper. However, the underworld is not an ideal substitute for the absurd upperworld, and Moll is not an agent for justice alone. At a glance, she seems to instill justice when she orders the cutpurses to recover the stolen goods

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<sup>56</sup> The scene amounts to 358 lines. In terms of dramatic unity, this lengthy canting scene has displeased many critics. Normand Berlin complains, “The entire scene is packed with information which has no relation to the plot of the play, except that Moll once again plays the heroine. It is irrelevant and undramatic” (117); D. M. Holmes grumbles, “The canting scene has little connection with the rest of the play” (109); and Andor Gomme criticizes, “The canting scene is an almost complete irrelevance to the remainder of the play” (xxx). However, Larry Champion defends the scene: the canting episode “serves through its linguistic hilarity to prevent a tone of heavy sentimentality in the reconciliation scenes that both precede . . . and follow” (85); and Comensoli sides with Champion: “The canting scene . . . is crucial to the play’s thematic and structural design”, in that it is “interposed between the resolution of the citizen-plot (IV. ii) and the glorious epithalamic ending (V.ii)” (“Play-making” 261). Paul Mulholland poses a neutral stance: “Though it has dramatic weaknesses, the scene integrates with the play’s imaginative scheme and makes an essential contribution to its design” (Introduction 32). It would be difficult to deny, I think, that the main purpose of the scene is to minister to the contemporary spectators’ itch for rogue literature. In order to make time and space for the scene, the two theatre-wise playwrights have curtailed not only the third citizen plot between Jack Dapper and Mistress Tiltyard, as mentioned above, but also the second ruse by Sir Alexander to trap Moll with “four angels marked with holes” (4.1.204). Thus, we encounter the unintelligible remarks by Moll in the conclusion: “Here be the angels, gentlemen: they were given me / As a musician; I pursue no pity - / Follow the law, an you can cuckold me, spare not” (5.2.251-53).

in the Swan, but she also acts in her own interest. She mentions that the reason to redress the theft is that the abused gentleman is her benefactor, “to whom I’m bound for many favours” (5.1.304).

Indeed, the underworld is merely a mirror image of the class-exploitative upperworld. With a Greenblatt-style viewpoint of self-fashioning, William Carroll argues, “The working principle . . . of all the rogue pamphlets . . . is one of mirroring and inversion. A sixteenth-century equivalent to the supermarket tabloids of today, the rogue pamphlets represent beggars and vagrants as the irremediably Other, yet these vagrants can only be seen on an ideological grid that has been projected by, and thus deeply resembles, the dominant culture” (71). Asked by Lord Noland about her superior knowledge of the London underworld, Moll replies, “I know they have their orders, offices, / Circuits, and circles, unto which they are bound, / To raise their own damnation in” (5.1.330-32). She gives the sense of a social hierarchy at work even within marginalized groups. Such words lead us to be reminded of the canting literature of the time. John Awdeley and Thomas Harman would have us believe that the society of the underworld was as tightly knit and highly organized as that of the upperworld. Division of labour, demarcation of areas, prompt disposal of goods and the systematic training of recruits were as much a part of the underworld as they were of the wealthiest and most respectable livery guild. Particularly, Dekker’s *Lantern and Candlelight* contains a “Canter’s Dictionary”, a source for the canting scene in *The Roaring Girl*.

Against this, however, we must remember that their information came from those who had their own self-serving reasons for making the underworld appear at once more glamorous and more formidable than it actually was. The apparent working principle of ‘the Elizabethan tabloids’ was commercial motivation, as I have argued earlier. In order to boost popular appeal and to capitalize on the reader’s voyeuristic curiosity, the writers sometimes transform the petty criminals struggling to survive by clinging to the margins of society into the

prosperously well-heeled basking in luxuries. For example, Nicholas Jennings, another underworld celebrity in early modern London, is introduced by Thomas Harman as a professional “counterfeit crank”, i.e. epileptic pretender, who earns in a day up to total of 13s. 3½d., an enormous sum for the ordinaries of the period (88).<sup>57</sup> Hence the serious consequences of both glamorization and commercialization of the underworld: i.e. the con-catching pamphlets served as an inadvertent vindication of the judicial authorities’ severe punishment of the petty criminals’ struggle for subsistence, and they contributed to drawing an unintended covering-up over the defects of the socio-economic system which actually gave rise to the problems of rogues and vagabonds. As I have argued in the introductory chapter, they were produced by the capitalist enclosing of fields which expelled a massive number of feudal peasants from land; the multitudinous soldiers mobilized for the frequent wars overseas but discharged without proper reimbursement; the dissolution of the monasteries which rendered the monastic servants homeless vagrants; and the defective poor laws which were revised several times to little avail in redressing poverty and vagrancy. In conclusion, however glamorous and free Moll’s shifting sisters and brethrens appear to be in commercial literature, they could never be well-off nor be they liberated from oppressive state apparatuses. In order to survive, they simply sought loopholes in the law at the bottom of the social scale (NcNeill 14).

#### **IV. Conclusion**

The important unifying agent in the play is Moll, about whom the intricate intrigues and complicated interests revolve. She binds the various actions together not merely by her engagement in them, but also by her combined galvanic force of personal magnetism and vigorous spirit which pervade the play at large. Her positive role in the main plot of

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<sup>57</sup> A labourer’s daily wage in early modern England is estimated to have been 6d. a day. Thus, Nicholas Jennings’s earnings amount to twenty times the average daily wage of a labourer.

Sebastian's marriage and her active involvement in the sub-plot of the city gallants' sexual intrigues position her at the centre of the play, drawing together the play's otherwise thinly-related plots. Crisscrossing her large circle of acquaintances and knitting the upper and the underworld together, she shows the privilege of equal footing with all ranks of society. Her virtuosity ranges from her skill in singing bawdy songs to the viol to her ability in talking canting jargon. Even when she does not appear in the scenes, her influence spills over to the others on the stage. Like a magnetic field, her presence is made perceptible not only by her actuality which shows her personal appearance on the stage but also by her potentiality, both fictional and factual, off the stage. To critics such as Majorie Garber, thus, Moll is "the phallus", i.e., the master-signifier which helps all signifiers achieve a unity with their signifieds (227).

Moll's central position in the play, however, does not assure that it can give a unified meaning to the play, because her protean multiplicities resist any classification or signification. Her multiplicities are amplified by the early modern theatrical convention. Dekker and Middleton's use of relationship between the fictional Moll and the factual Moll in the process of their dramatic representation is provisional and self-conscious. As in Robert Weimann's analysis of Shakespearean dramaturgy, *The Roaring Girl* shows "a changing use of *locus* and *platea* conventions" ("Biofold Authority" 416). We are accustomed to the modern theatre, especially the naturalist dramaturgy, which stands guarantee for the *locus* dimension and stabilizes the play's meaning by seamlessly correlating theatrical spaces, language, and social facades. But "the supple art of crossing from *locus* to *platea*" in *The Roaring Girl*, which centrally involves Moll's characterization, is employed in terms of dissipating her identities, producing her multifarious features, and distracting the signifying process of the play (Weimann, "Biofold Authority" 416).<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>58</sup> For the discussion of the *locus* and the *platea*, see Robert Weimann, "Bifold Authority in

Moll is represented not only as a transvestite usurping male sexuality and a hermaphrodite transcending the borders of sexuality but also as a transgressor of class boundaries and a violator of moralizing norms. Yet she is not always outside the norms of society in that she is shown as a chaste woman. Her features are contradictory. Her main role in the play is to facilitate a marriage, but she declares herself a misogynist. She looks at times like a class-leveller, but she sometimes behaves like a class-exploiter. She speaks on occasion like a proto-feminist, but she sometimes makes misogynist remarks. Her incoherent language and incompatible attitude undermine whatever representational status of feminism, idealism or moralism would normally demand of a character, constantly dispersing and revising the meanings. The frequent epithet of her as “mad” endowed with multiple associations sets an epitomizing example which shows that the difference between masculine and feminine, moral and amoral, justice and injustice, good and evil, and any binary oppositions collapse (Prologue 30; 1.1.99; 1.2.200; 2.1.204; 2.2.196; 3.1.151; 3.3.13; 5.1.36, etc.). The resulting effects of her signifying practices are quite unsettling and produce a great indeterminacy of the play.

Theatrical Moll’s connection to the London underworld and extratheatrical Moll’s presence on the stage expand the margin of indeterminacy and extend recalcitrant confusions in critics’ attempts to recover a stable meaning of her features. Her words and attitudes are overwhelmed by irreducible materials of signification and non-signification. In spite of critics’ effort to pin down Moll’s identity as a unifying signifier, she is not allowed to be absorbed into any predictable demarcation. Deleuze and Guattari argue that a “rhizome”<sup>59</sup> represents

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Shakespeare’s Theatre,” *Shakespeare Quarterly* 39 (1988): 401-17. Weimann gives a brief summary of the bifold authority of the theatrical representation in the early modern London stage: “One, the locus, was associated with the localizing capacities of the fictional role and tended to privilege the authority of what and who was *represented* in the dramatic world; the other, the *platea*, being associated instead with the actor and the neutral materiality of the platform stage, tended to privilege the authority of what and who was representing that world” (409).

<sup>59</sup> A rhizome is a subterranean stem, for example, the tuber of potatoes. It is different from a root or a radicle. The rhizome spreads with horizontal and trans-species connections, and Deleuze and Guattari



this intractable being which is resistant to signification (3), and their theory invites us to think that Moll's features are like those of a 'rhizome'. Considering her multiplicity and indeterminacy, it is difficult to regard her as "the phallus", which allows all signifiers to make a unity with their signifieds. Rather, it is better to think of her as a rhizomatic being, which is not yet repressed by discursive normality. Both her desire and existence are reckless and improvisational. They can be understood as large flows of energy and matter which are plugged into the world like a mobile, varying, and multiple flux. Moll no longer dichotomizes in terms of masculine and feminine, good and evil, or moral and amoral. The critics, who would interpret her through binary logic, however, are considered to be gripped within limits which the semiotic system imposes. In order to produce a writing workable in an academic society, critics are bound to work within signifying regimes, semantic orders that assign meanings and identities to their writing. All such stabilizations or codings constitute territorializations in that they establish boundaries of identity which restrain the free flow of Moll's desire and existence. Therefore, critics' attempt to categorize Moll's rhizomatic being is doomed to fail. Critics try to territorialize her, but she always deterritorializes their semiotic horizon.

As Middleton says in his epistle to the readers, the theatrical Moll is not an image of the real Moll. The traditional literary theory of mimesis, thus, does not work as an appropriate analytical model to understand Moll. The concept of mimesis relies on a dichotomy between the representing and the represented and supposes a retrievable parallelism between them, but the disparate sets of interaction between the dramatized Moll and the real Moll are fraught with unattributable multiplicities beyond representational dimension. As in Deleuze and Guattari's concept of the connection between the rhizomes, there happens "an aparallel

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regard it as the closest to nature itself, which is not composed of stable entities, but filled with sets of flows moving in all directions at various speeds. On the other hand, the root or the radicle spreads with vertical and binary connections, which they consider as an analogy of Platonic dualism and hierarchical signification.

evolution” between the fictional Moll and the factual Moll (10). This is not to say that Middleton and Dekker’s writing really breaks with dialogic negotiation, with the complementarity between onstage Moll and offstage Moll, and between conceptual Moll and perceptual Moll. However, the conformity between them is constantly transformed and thwarted in the onstage Moll, while a new type of conformity appears only temporarily. The play has no stable axis, and Moll frequently veers to an uncategorical direction of ambivalence or overdetermination, borrowing a supplementary and subversive dimension from that of the real Moll.

The canting scene exemplifies Moll’s rhizomatic characteristic in terms of her linguistic performance. Deleuze and Guattari’s view of language is different from other poststructuralists’ concept in that they regard language as a typical example of a rhizome. Deleuze and Guattari accept language’s hegemonic power over the material world, but they do not agree to the idea that language is a unified and consistent system which operates only within a fixed pattern called grammar. They consider language as an assemblage of jumbles, which are as heterogeneous and inconsistent as the material world. They argue, “A semiotic chain is like a tuber agglomerating very diverse acts, not only linguistic, but also perceptive, mimetic, gestural, and cognitive”, and they continue to argue, “There is no language in itself, nor are there any linguistic universals, only a throng of dialects, patois, slangs, and specialized languages” (7). Attesting this concept of language, Moll’s unintelligible chats and canting songs with other underworld figures show that there is no homogeneous linguistic community. Their “pedlar’s French” is not a unified consistent system with a tuned-up grammatical rule (5.1.106). In spite of her expertise about the underworld, Moll’s deficiency in translating the underworld slang into recognizable language shows that language is only a patchwork of identifiable signs surrounded by nebulous throngs of unidentifiable signals. Rhizomatic elements such as gestures, motions, signals, gesticulations, utterances, enunciations,

exclamations, and ejaculations ceaselessly connect the sign and the object, thwarting the dividing line between the signifier and the signified. Deleuze and Guattari argue, “Semiotic chains of every nature are connected to very diverse modes of coding (biological, political, economic, etc.) that bring into play not only different regimes of signs but also states of things of differing status” (7).

Furthermore, Moll’s disconcerting language and her haphazard life are part of the wider constellation of social, political, and cultural multiplicities. Her protean nature corresponds to London’s multifarious features. The play positions her at the crossroads of transitional discourse and changing cultural modes of London. Her ability to traverse the social territory between citizens and gallants gives her theatrical power associated with a city comedy hero. The other characters who people the play serve to provide her with a comparable array of urban diversities, clothed in features distinctive of their London milieu. In other respects than the characters, the play also goes to considerable lengths to depict various features of City life. Topographical references, topical allusions, street scenes involving typical London figures, and a lively shop scene establish onstage the ambience, the manners and by-ways familiar to the audience. So palpable is London’s presence in the play that the City can be thought of as the playwrights’ geographical protagonist, while Moll as a cultural protagonist rambles in the bustling streets of the City. With her shift from one perspective to another, the spectator participates in the play’s process of creating a multifaceted London which is as varied and paradoxical as her. Written for the Fortune, with its lower-class audience, the play produces especially a complex *mise-en-scene* which, rather than utilizing a pro/anti-civic binary, opens up the socio-cultural differences within the City and amongst citizens. The City landscape is shown in an ambiguous fashion, open to its varieties full of pleasures, curiosities, dangers, monsters, and prodigies. As “a park in which all the wild beasts of the city run head by head”,

rather than “the temple” in which “Inns-o’-court men” study to be lawyers, the City is displayed as a mobile, varying, multiple flux (5.1.45; 3.1.161; 3.1.32).

In these terms, we can suppose that London adopts Moll as its metonym in the play. One side of London faces the strata or the planes of consistency, which makes it a kind of organism, signifying totality, or determination attributable to an identity. That is, it has the lines of its territory, its governing body, its social role and its political status within the kingdom, which makes the City a signifying totality. At the same time, however, London has lines of flight, movements of deterritorialization and destratification, as does the amorphous Moll. The rhizomatic side of London is beyond any classification and categorization, continually dismantling the signifying totality. We do not know what the rhizomatic dimension of London entails until it is reterritorialized. In this respect, the moralized view of the pro-City writers and the demoralized discourse of the anti-City writers are both to make a signifying entity of the amorphous London. Whether represented as a New Jerusalem/Troynovant, or as Sodom/Babylon, the striking feature of civic discourse is a case for seeking a pivot-unity which forms the basis for a set of biunivocal relationships, or follows the law of a binary differentiation. However, London is inherently resistant to this conceptualization.

As a part of signifying London, civic writers often personified London as a woman, drawing on an iconographical tradition which depicted the City as female. As for the feminization of the City, Thomas Dekker draws a contradictory picture: “Thou hast all things in thee to make thee fairest, and all things in thee to make thee foulest; for thou art attir’d like a Bride, . . . but there is much harlot in thine eyes” (*Seven Deadly Sinnes* 9).<sup>60</sup> Civic

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<sup>60</sup> As for other examples of the feminization of London, in his “The City of Peace” (1612) Thomas Adams says, “Looking one way ye see a beautiful virgin; another way, some deformed monster” (108); in his verse eulogy of the City (1616), Richard Niccols apostrophizes, “This Queene of Citties, Lady of this Ile, . . . / Upon her lap did nurse those sonnes of Fame, / Whose deeds do now nobilitate her name” (60).

propagandists argued that London could serve as a chaste wife or a submissive matron who nurses the kingdom. They emphasized the subordinate and subservient position of London to the kingdom. Such feminization of the City was based on the Renaissance medico-social theories which regarded women “as being subject to greater physical flux than man” and thus as being “in need of greater, masculine and rational, control” (Knowles xxvii). It encapsulated much of the anxiety which surrounded London, and it was a discourse through which “the spatial divisions and discontinuities that manifested the city’s true historic dynamism” could be conceptualized and identified (Manley 349). Just as women should be ruled by men in the family, so the City gendered as female should be subordinate to the male control of the monarch. Thus, the contradictoriness of the metropolitan capacity to give both great pleasure and great danger, and, as a result, the hybrid experience of urban life “could be explained through an already familiar series of binarisms and discursive patterns” of gender hierarchy (Knowles xxvii).

However, like Moll’s hermaphroditic state, London does not allow itself to be assimilated within the hierarchy of gender discourse. The gendering of the City as female only explains how quickly the discourse around London slides into images of monstrosity and sexual ambiguity. It is nothing more than a discursive product of civic writers whose reflexive and intellectual construction added a supplementary dimension to London and made it into a comprehensive unity which compensated for the rhizomatic being of London. In order to conceive London as it is, therefore, it is required to abandon the Platonic tradition of thinking of the world in binary oppositions such as men and women, form and matter, culture and nature, logos and pathos, and so on. Rather, it is necessary to think of London as a transverse ambivalence or multi-valence that underlies all of these oppositions. More importantly, the purpose of such a thinking practice is to reconstruct the world of matters before the Platonic speculation projects them into a realm of oppressive identification.

**CHAPTER 2. PROSTITUTES**

**PATRIARCHAL CAPITALISM AS A GENDERED DISCOURSE ON**

**BELLAFRONT'S PROSTITUTION AND CANDIDO'S PATIENCE**

**IN *THE HONEST WHORE***

**I. Introduction**

The prostitute seems to have an aberrant sexual disposition distinctively different from that of the normal woman, as Robert Greene in 1592 gave a brief but excellent definition: a harlot is one “whose quiuer is open to euery arrow, who likes all that have fat purses, and loues none that are destitute of pence” (*Disputation* 200). Greene’s definition aptly identifies three essential features: indiscriminate intercourse, the absence of real love or affection, and pecuniary gains in return for giving pleasure. However, if we want to apply those categorical features to the individual practitioner, his definition turns out to be highly controversial. Imperia’s compassionate love-affair with Fontinelle in *Blurt, Master Constable*, Doll Hornet’s infatuated adoration of Bellamont in *Northward Ho*, Franceschina’s tragic pursuit of passion for Freevill in *The Dutch Courtesan*, Kate Keepdown’s innocent love duped by Lucio in *Measure for Measure*, Doll Tearsheet’s transient affection to Falstaff in *Henry IV Part II*, and Bellafront’s inflammable ardor for Hippolito in *The Honest Whore*, – all of them flatly contradict Greene’s theory of the absence of real affection, and almost all of them, particularly the high-class courtesans, are very selective in bestowing their favours. In addition, Zeal-of-the-Land Busy’s flirtation to Dame Purecraft in *Bartholomew Fair*, the Allwits’ hospitable favours to Sir Walter Whorehound in *A Chaste Maid in Cheapside*, and Gertrude’s marriage to Sir Petronel Flash in *Eastward Ho*, – all invite us to suppose that the female-male relationship in the early modern period by and large was heavily influenced by mercenary motivation.

When it comes to the taxonomical definition of prostitution, it also raises a serious

confusion. About the difference between prostitution and other forms of sexual misdemeanor, Laura Gowing seems to give an elucidating account: in early modern London, the most widespread verbal insult was “whore”, indicating a woman who committed various forms of sexual misconduct such as adultery, fornication, prostitution or any kind of extramarital sex, and it did “not necessarily have the financial implications of prostitution” (66). Furthermore, financial reward for selling sexual pleasure can hardly define the early modern prostitution. Faramerz Dabhoiwala argues, “Contemporary attempts to distinguish prostitution as a type of behavior were not identical with our own. . . . They focused mainly on motivation, rather than on promiscuity and payment; and they were counterbalanced by other patterns of thought that denied the very concept. . . . As a result, it is often difficult in legal records to separate prostitution from other forms of sexual immorality” (87). Thus, classifying prostitution as a type of criminal behaviour obscures the extent to which it was rooted in normal, untransgressive, social and economic patterns. In addition, Dabhoiwala argues, “Before the middle of the eighteenth century, the term ‘prostitute’ was rarely used, either as a noun or as a verb; and in any case its meaning was synonymous with that of ‘whore’, the most common term for any unchaste woman” (88). Along with taxonomical fluidity, bawdy houses were also hard to segment off from homes or legitimate places of business. Sexual promiscuity could be committed in any number of places such as “a private home or tavern or a brothel, of greater or lesser sophistication and expense” (Dabhoiwala 93).

On the other hand, when we try to retrieve the historical evidence, it comes usually from the records generated by various forms of social policy, and it depends almost exclusively on the vicissitudes of public policing. Thus, it is presumed that the majority of sexual trades rarely appeared in judicial records and that various forms of clients, casual encounters and procuring escaped prosecution through secrecy or the protection of the upper ranks. Moreover, if we turn to non-legal sources to fill out the picture, it seems to be obvious

not just that prostitution overlapped significantly with categories such as fornication, adultery and bigamy, but that this fluid pattern of sexual behaviour largely cut across social divisions. Amongst the lower ranks of metropolitan society it was subject to various kinds of public sanction, but higher up the social scale, like other vices, it was kept largely free from such legal interventions and therefore documented in other ways. That is, it is documented in diaries, letters and other personal records, as well as in the often voluminous detail of private litigation over adultery, divorce and other marital issues. Such material is rarely available for men and women lower down the social scale of the middling sort. Therefore, this difference of historical sources is a distinct reminder that contemporaries ascribed different legal standards to different degrees of people, and thus for immoral women of lower ranks, the very general term, ‘the poor’, might be the better identification than prostitutes.

*The Honest Whore*<sup>61</sup> belongs to the genre of city comedies, which made a noticeable appearance in the wake of the London playhouse’s reopening in April 1604 after an inhibition of more than a year caused by the plague. The genre with a new fashion – problematical, urban, sexy – shows its intense interest in the City’s commercial and sexual transaction. As part of its urban preoccupation, particularly, the genre frequently displays a prostitute plot. As Howard argues, it is quite remarkable that “within a few short years of the genre’s inception” this new urban drama made “this vogue for representing whores and whorehouses”, setting a continuous trend afterwards (*Theater of a City* 115). Furthermore, it is the conspicuous aspect of whore plays to dramatize “the penetration of a market economy into all areas of life”, and to present “prostitution as a business parallel to other forms of urban commerce” (*Theater of a*

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<sup>61</sup> The play is composed of two parts, both of which were premiered in the Fortune. *Part I* is a work collaborated by Thomas Dekker and Thomas Middleton, while *Part II* is a work of Dekker’s sole authorship. On the authorial share of *Part I*, Cyrus Hoy argues, “The play is largely Dekker’s . . . Middleton’s presence is most apparent in I.v; III.i; and III.iii” (3: 5), which consist of parts of the Candido scenes. Hoy does not agree with S. Schoenbaum’s argument that Middleton’s share is “negligible” (3), but he acknowledges that Middleton’s hand might be revised by Dekker. For more detailed discussion on the collaborative nature of *Part I*, see Hoy (3: 3-10), Peter Ure (188-91), S. Schoenbaum (3-4), and A. H. Bullen (xxv-xxviii).



City 115-16). A group of playwrights during these years paid special attention to the urban phenomenon of commercialized sexual transaction. For example, Marston's *The Malcontent* (c. 1604) Shakespeare's *Measure for Measure* (1604), Dekker and Webster's *Westward Ho* (1604) and *Northward Ho* (1605), Jonson and his co-authors' *Eastward Ho* (1605), Middleton's *A Mad World, My Masters* (1605) and a number of other plays, – all adopt whores or prostitutes as their important characters. Furthermore, Dekker's *The Honest Whore* (*Part I* in 1604 and *Part II* in 1605) and Marston's *The Dutch Courtesan* (1605) give the prostitute top billing in their titles.

*The Honest Whore* was staged at an important moment of cultural transition, the year following James's accession to the throne and the dreadful plague that had delayed the King's entry procession into London, killing "36,000, or over a sixth of the city's inhabitants" (Greenblatt, General Introduction 3). There is an apocalyptic tone in much of the play's representation of city life. Dekker, the main author of the play, stayed in London throughout the plague, and he published a pamphlet, *The Wonderful Year*, about the events of 1603 when the Queen died, the new King was crowned, and a pestiferous infection overwhelmed the City. In the immediate context of the City's battle with Death's armies, it seems to have been natural for Dekker to see how the "sinfully polluted suburbs" (46), and the whores, bawds, and brothels associated with those suburbs should be singled out as a sign of urban corruption and marked for discipline and correction. In 1603 one of James's first royal proclamations was an order to pull down the overcrowded buildings within three miles of London in order to drive out the "idle, indigent, dissolute and dangerous persons" pestering the City and causing plague (Hughes and Larkin, *Stuart* 1: 47). Whores and bawds were numbered among such dissolute persons. Plague, indigence, and prostitution were lumped together as a despicable feature of the corrupted City, just as the Duke in *The Honest Whore* says, "Pandors and Whores / Are Citty-plagues, which being kept alieue, / Nothing that lookes like goodnes ere

can thrive” (*Part II* 5.2.455-57).<sup>62</sup> In writing about a reformed whore, Dekker at once uses the figure of a sinful woman to signify the vices that led to urban apocalypse and takes her as a model of repentance necessary for urban restoration.

*The Honest Whore* has drawn critical attention from the standpoint of individual morality rather than from the socio-economic perspective. Traditional critics have posited the reason for Bellafront’s prostitution in her individual moral depravity and regarded her reformation as the recovery of her moral integrity. In *The Enchanted Glass* (1936), Hardin Craig makes a moralist argument mixed with the traditional misogynistic views: “It is evident in Dekker’s treatment that Bellafront is a victim . . . of the psychological theory that woman’s substance is weak and changeable” (176). Comparing Dekker with Marston in terms of their attitudes to sexual morality in “Dekker’s Whore and Marston’s Courtesan” (1967), Harry Keyishian contends, “Dekker gives victory to traditional morality, [while] Marston tries to show its weakness and its falseness to human nature” (264). In *The Base String* (1968), Normand Berlin argues that “her vanity is a strong part of her nature” (101), and that “she must pay for the sins she committed in the underworld she rejects” (98). And he parallels the long chain of miseries which Bellafront must suffer after her moral regeneration with “the trial of the legendary whore, Thais, who also turned honest and had to suffer greatly before she gained Paradise” (103). While evaluating the artistic value of the play in terms of psychological realism in *Elizabethan and Jacobean Drama* (1974), Peter Ure contends that *The Honest Whore* was right in the middle of the trendy spread in the early Jacobean era of brothel scenes which “sentimentalize vice and mock the virtues of respectable citizens” (189). In *Prostitution in Elizabethan and Jacobean Comedy* (1983), Anne Haselkorn maintains that Dekker espouses “the Puritan attitude” in the play (115), and that “Bellafront’s humility, fortitude and suffering . . . serve as a paradigm of the Christian spirit” (116).

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<sup>62</sup> All quotations and scene divisions of *The Honest Whore* cited in this thesis are from *The Dramatic Works of Thomas Dekker*, ed. Fredson Bowers, vol. 2 (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1955).

This chapter raises objections to these traditional moralist viewpoints. First, if we take this position, we are likely to ignore the historicity of prostitution. Moralist critics presuppose prostitution as a transhistorical problem, based on the received notion that prostitution is the oldest profession in human history. Though prostitution has existed through much of human history, it had historical dimensions in the early modern period, which the drama of the time reflected and projected. Sexuality itself can hardly be an *ahistorical* desire, and the problem of prostitution cannot be regarded as transhistorical. Both sexuality and its control are closely related to the contemporary ideology. Foucault argues, “Sexuality must not be thought of as a kind of natural given which power tries to hold, or as an obscure domain which knowledge tries gradually to uncover. It is the name that can be given to a historical construct” (*History of Sexuality* 105). In addition to the historicity of sexuality, he argues for the ideological implication of its deployment and its control: sexuality is “a great surface network in which the stimulation of bodies, the intensification of pleasures, the incitement to discourse, the formation of special knowledge, the strengthening of controls and resistances, are linked to one another, in accordance with a few major strategies of knowledge and power” (*History of Sexuality* 105-06).

Another problem which arises by attributing prostitution to individual immorality is that it leads to the validation of the socio-economic establishment which actually gives rise to the problem. That is, the ruling class who benefits from the establishment can be exempt from the accountability for the flaw of the socio-economic system. Furthermore, the ruling class can use the moral ugliness of the prostitute as a foil to enhance their ameliorative aspect by stigmatizing and marginalizing prostitution. It is against the discursive backdrop of vice that the ruling class is able to conceptualize what they call virtue. Stephen Greenblatt argues, “Self-fashioning is achieved in relation to something perceived as alien, strange, or hostile. This threatening Other – heretic, savage, witch, adulteress, traitor, Antichrist – must be

discovered or invented in order to be attacked and destroyed” (*Renaissance Self-Fashioning* 9).

This chapter aims to posit the problem of prostitution in the socio-economic structure by investigating the systemic bedrock of the early modern culture which drove each practitioner to sell her body. The individual is by and large helpless in the face of the historical moment and social system which circumscribe him or her. Even a great hero with few parallels in history is produced, defined, and consumed by the spatio-temporal context in which he or she is posited, let alone the ordinary individuals. We should be critical of the notion which regards individual moral flaws as a cause of tragedy. Indeed, diverting the cause of prostitution to individual morality inevitably obscures the crucial role of the economic system and cultural regime which deploy a dominant ideology in the representation of prostitution and in the distortion of what happens to the individual prostitute.

The prostitute plays are more often than not interventions in the politics of their time, and their characters are at the mercy of those interventions. By adopting the perspective of cultural materialism, I will argue that the degenerated women’s moral flaws are interlocked with the rise of capitalism which not only disrupted feudal system but also produced new gender relations as an effect of its combination with patriarchy and Protestantism. In the conclusion, I will discuss the possibility of a gap between the playwrights’ intention and the play’s meaning. It is difficult to deny that the play shows “Dekker’s conservative subscription to the prevailing morality” (Mulholland, Introduction 283), but borrowing the idea of a text and an author from Roland Barthes and Michel Foucault, I will argue that the second part at least, if not the first part, allows us to read an innovative meaning which is different from the conservative morality.

## II. The Prostitute as a Victim of Patriarchal Capitalism

According to Foucault, the history of sexuality underwent a great rupture in the early modern period: the mechanism of repression, which occurred “in the course of the seventeenth century, was characterized by the advent of the great prohibitions, the exclusive promotion of adult marital sexuality, the imperatives of decency, the obligatory concealment of the body, the reduction to silence and mandatory reticence of language” (*History of Sexuality* 115). Foucault’s argument of this great repression in the early modern period is not so much different from Lawrence Stone’s classic account of early seventeenth-century English sexuality: “English society passed through several phases; a phase of moderate toleration lasting until towards the end of the sixteenth century; a phase of repression that ran from about 1570 to 1670” (*Family* 545). These swings in the history of sexuality are generally regarded as an effect of specific changes in the religio-ethical attitude towards sexuality: i.e. the unusually high and rising standard of sexual morality in early seventeenth-century England was derived from the pressure of Puritan preaching which produced the generally accepted pattern of internalized and enforced social discipline, affected the attitudes of nearly all the propertied class, and thus seeped downward through the social hierarchy to the plebeians. The internalized repression of the period caused by the moral pressures of Puritanism is alluded to by an entry of Simon Forman’s diary in which he claims he was a virgin until the age of thirty, “I did halek com muhr” for the first time in 1598 (Qtd. Traister 149),<sup>63</sup> and his case may not have been as exceptional as one might suppose.

In accordance with the change of sexual attitude in early modern Protestantism, the management of sexuality seems to have undergone a remarkable transformation as well. Whereas in medieval Catholicism the ecclesiastical polemicists and canonists denounced

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<sup>63</sup> “halek com muhr” is Forman’s coded phrase for “had sex with a woman”. For details, see Simon Forman, “Forman’s Diary to 1602,” ms. 1<sup>r</sup>-74<sup>r</sup>, *A Miscellaneous Collection of Papers*, Ashmole mss. 208, Bodleian Library, Oxford.

sexuality and extolled abstinence, early modern Protestantism began to endorse sexual desire and promoted marriage. William Harrington in his book, *Com[m]endacions of Matrymony* (1528), advocates marriage as a positive way of channeling sexuality: “To brynge forth chyldren to be noryrsshed in the lawes & seruyce of god and that is y<sup>e</sup> moost pryncypall cause for for [sic] y<sup>e</sup> cause was matrimony made & fyrst in paradyce in the tyme of innocencye or els secondarly for remedy ayenst synne as suche as ben inclyned naturally to the synne of y<sup>e</sup> flesshe and wyll not endeuer themselfe to lyue chaste” (sig. A3<sup>v</sup>). In exchange for its allowance for libido to flow in safety through the channel of marriage, early modern Protestantism tightened its grip of repression on extramarital sex. “With the story of the Reformation replacement of Catholic asceticism”, Catherine Belsey explains, “the Renaissance romance of marriage” began to be shown “triumphant over the medieval romance of adultery” (19). As a result, argues Belsey, “in the fiction of the early modern period, adultery progressively loses its romance, and figures like Tamora, Marlowe’s Isabella or Webster’s Vittoria offer to excite horror rather than sympathy” (20).

On the other hand, in Restoration theatre, argues Harold Weber, the character of “the rake” achieved “its dramatic prominence” as a result of a remarkable transformation of conceptions of sexuality in the late seventeenth century when “the language of demonic sexuality” was “no longer animated by the same forms of demonic belief that inspired it during the sixteenth and early seventeenth century” (18). Weber’s argument for the prominence of rakish figures in Restoration dramas seems to be also historically ratified by Stone’s account of sexual libertinism: “Between the late seventeenth century and the very beginning of the nineteenth, exceptional freedom was provided for the popular expression of sexuality. Compared with the Puritan period that preceded it, or the Evangelical period that followed, it was a time when the authorities made very little effort to curb [the libertine sexual behavior]” (*Family* 621). Furthermore, in Restoration London, Samuel Pepys’s *Diary* gives a

vivid illustration of his age's libertinism.<sup>64</sup>

To what extent, however, can we accept this history of sexuality in the early modern period? First of all, we know that Simon Forman's promiscuity is as much as that of Samuel Pepys in quantity and variety. In theatre, as Weber contends, it might have been in the Restoration period when the rake figures gained the status of the dramatic protagonist, but they frequently appeared much earlier than in Restoration dramas. In the Elizabethan theatre, Falstaff and his followers show the typical trait of rakes. The three gallants in *Englishmen for My Money* also reveal libertine attitudes not only towards sex but also towards money. Bassanio is an amiable but spendthrift gambler whose plan to recoup his monetary losses involves as ridiculous a risk as that of other rakes: "In my school days, when I had lost one shaft, / I shot his fellow of the selfsame flight / The selfsame way, with more advised watch, / To find the other forth; and by adventuring both, / I oft found both" (1.1.140-44). He may "oft" recover, but he surely loses in most of the cases.

Specifically, in Jacobean city comedies, swarms of such lecherous and reckless figures frequent the scenes. Evoking Falstaff's encomiums of drinking in *Henry IV, Part II* (4.2.78-111), Freevill in *The Dutch Courtesan* pays to prostitution a tribute full of witticism and sarcasm: "A poor, decayed mechanical man's wife, her husband is laid up; may not she lawfully be laid down when her husband's only rising is by his wife's falling?" (1.1.97-100). Another eulogizer of prostitution in the same play, Mulligrub, belongs to Millenarianism, a Dutch Protestant sect, which was rumoured to practice free sex. Mulligrub's religion is dubbed "the Family of Love" in the play, and used as euphemism for Mary Faugh's brothel (1.1.139). In *The Spanish Gypsy*, Roderigo and his band of hoodlums appear in the dark street of the opening scene, drunken and hunting for the prey of sexual indulgence, and abduct and rape a virgin of noble birth, Clara. The following plot of the play shows a progressive

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<sup>64</sup> For details, see Samuel Pepys, *The Diary of Samuel Pepys: A New and Complete Transcription*, ed. Robert Latham and William Matthews, 11 vols. (London: Bell, 1970-83).

effacement of rape with the patriarchal fantasy which takes it at once natural and moralistic that women's desire is wholly subordinate to patriarchal interests.

In *The Honest Whore*, almost all male characters except Candido reveal the typical traits of rakes with adventurous spirit, belligerent manliness and aggressive sexual disposition. Fustigo "in some fantastike sea-suite" is a merchant-adventurer with prodigal panache (*Part I* 1.2.1.s.d.). Like Bassanio, he shows an absurd optimism about his risky gambling at long odds when he asks his sister for money: "I must intreate you to lend me some thirty or forty till the ship come, by this hand ile discharge at my day, by this hand" (*Part I* 1.2.38-40). Fluello and Matheo strike abrupt sparks of anger over a trivial incident involving Bellafront's refusal to entertain them (*Part I* 3.3.68-76). Matheo puts on display the teeming male lust while contrasting it with the prostitute's conversion: "It was more easie for him in one night to make fifty queanes, then to make one of them honest agen in fifty yeeres" (*Part I* 3.3.102-04). Lodovico brags of his sexual history that Bellafront was once his whore: "I was sure her name was in my Table-booke once" (*Part II* 1.1.84-85). Carolo considers usurping others' conjugal beds as a manly valor: "We all loue to heare the Cuckoo sing vpon other mens Trees" (*Part II* 4.2.66-67). Hippolito testifies the rakehell voraciousness for harlots: "Gentlemen haunt them, Soldiers fight for them, / Few men but know them, few or none abhor them" (*Part II* 4.1.286-87). Even the Duke, who functions as the ultimate mediator of justice at each end of the two parts, says that ravishing a maid into a whore can be a laudable sign of manhood: "'Tis the pride and glory of some men, / To change her to a blazing Starre" (*Part II* 4.2.51-52).

Thus, as far as the theatre is concerned, voracious and lecherous rakes cannot be confined to the Restoration age. It would be more to the point that Vice figures in medieval moralities transform themselves in a new socio-cultural context and continue to thrive throughout the early modern theatre. In particular, these figures show not only sexual voraciousness but also monetary covetousness like Bassanio, the three English gallants and



Fustigo, reflecting the burgeoning capitalist economy and its risky business. This was the period when the mercantile capitalism was accelerated by the colonization of the New World and the expanding overseas trade with continental Europe and Asia. This lucrative but risky mercantilism, as is shown by such usury plays as *The Merchant of Venice* and *Englishmen for My Money*, required the spirit of entrepreneurs who were willing to be adventurous for the fortunes. As a corollary, a speculative and aggressive masculinity would be intensified throughout this period.

When it comes to a deciding factor of sexual morality, it would be difficult to dispute that the internalized repression in the early seventeenth century was aided by the moral pressures of Puritanism, but it can be hardly regarded as an agency independent of economic substructure. The ultimate factor which leads to cultural changes is economic fundamentals, and the reason why Protestantism enjoyed the symbiotic growth with capitalism in early modern England was that it served for providing theological justification for economic welfare. The Protestant preacher of the period, John Gore, declares, “When a man’s soul doth prosper in grace and goodness inwardly, together as his estate doth prosper in wealth and substance outwardly, that, and none but that is true prosperity” (B2<sup>v</sup>). With this help of Protestant ethics for secular fortunes, early modern England underwent a decisive moment of the collapse of the feudal economy and the progress of capitalism.

On the other hand, when we narrow down to the subject of prostitution, the role of patriarchy is to be considered more decisive than the change of religious belief, for the sexual trade is almost always targeted on women’s bodies. In the early modern period, patriarchy is supposed to have been strengthened with the rise of capitalism. According to Marx, the primitive accumulation of capital served as a factor to tear asunder the feudal ties that bound man to his “natural superiors” and to leave remaining “no other nexus between man and man . . . than callous cash payment” (*Communist Manifesto* 7). “The ‘tearing asunder’ of

those relations meant the separation of labour and capital, production and consumption, work and home, work and domesticity, and public and private lives” (Hamilton 38), and early modern patriarchal capitalism began to confine women within the domestic area. Jacqueline Eales affirms that the clerical conduct-book writers of the time “put great stress on the division between the public duties of the husband and the private domestic duties of the wife” (28). Simultaneously, early modern Protestantism imposed a patriarchal emphasis on female virginity as prerequisite for marriage.

Officially, Protestant ethics demanded the equal moral conduct of men as well as of women. Chastity and fidelity were thus enjoined on women and men alike. “Precept is one thing, however, and practice is another” (Kreps 91). The equal requirement for virginity was only ecclesiastical lip service from the pulpit, and it never materialized. With a woman, to be deflowered meant not being appropriate for marriage, but for the man, losing virginity was not a hindrance to his marriage at all. Rather, “young men of the upper classes were expected to have had some or even a good deal of pre-marital sexual experience with prostitutes, serving-maids, courtesans, or foreign married women in Europe on the Grand Tour” (Stone, *Family* 543-44). This double standard in virginity constituted the cultural background with which the theatres interacted. The contrasting characterization of Freevill and Malheureux in *The Dutch Courtesan* is based on the derisive treatment of male virginity and the extollment of male promiscuity. Such mockery on male chastity also constitutes one of the main dramatic motifs in *The Honest Whore* in which Hippolito’s initial fidelity to Infelice is ridiculed by Matheo: “If you haue this strange monster, Honestie, in your belly, why so Iig-makers and chroniclers shall picke something out of you” (*Part I* 1.1.139-40). Hippolito eventually becomes a whoremonger in *Part II* as predicted by Matheo. In the confrontation between Infelice and Hippolito (*Part II* 3.1.157-94), the play tackles the double standard head-on by juxtaposing Infelice’s exhortation against Hippolito’s extramarital passion verbatim with

Hippolito's accusation of her alleged illicit relations to the Irish footman.

About the theatre's reflection on the contemporary female virginity, Anne Haselkorn argues, "in English Renaissance drama, the loss of a maidenhead would most effectively prevent her marriage" (4). In *The Changeling*, Beatrice tricks her bridegroom into sleeping with her maid on her bridal night, because she was afraid of being discovered as not a virgin. In *The Honest Whore*, the commendation of aggressive manhood and the double standard enable men to seek for female virginity like a hunter for the prey. Bellafront accuses the male aggressiveness and their desertion of deflowered women: "As spotted Leopards, whom for sport / Men hunt, to get the flesh, but care not for't" (*Part II* 4.1.311-12). And she compares the deserted woman after being deflowered with the disposed washing water: "Yourselues you flatter, / And our weake sex betray; so men loue water, / It serues to wash their hands, but (being once foule) / The water down is powred, cast out of doores, / And euen of such base vse doe men make whores" (*Part II* 4.1.317-21). The play invites us to think that once deprived of virginity, women were excluded from the patriarchal comfort of home for good, and that in frequent cases they had no other alternatives but to be a prostitute. Bellafront curses the irrevocable moment of losing her chastity, "Curst be that minute (for it was no more, / So soone a mayd is chang'd into a Whore) / Wherein I first fell, be it for euer blacke" (*Part I* 2.1.427-29); she accuses Matheo of her defloration, "You brake the ice, / Which after turned a puddle" (*Part I* 3.3.95-96); and her father, Orlando, confirms, "He taught her first to taste poyson" (*Part II* 1.2.149). Dorothea, one of the inmates of Bridewell in the play, is also presumed to be a prostitute after she was deflowered, "Say yee? weepe? yes forsooth, as you did when you lost your Maidenhead: doe you not heare how I weep?" (*Part II* 5.2.297-98).

Even if Lawrence Stone's argument for Puritan repression in the early seventeenth century can be accepted, it cannot be regarded as a general account which covers all social ranks. In summarizing the historical stages of sexual attitudes, it is necessary to distinguish on

the one hand the propertied classes who were increasingly literate and who were governed more by changing ideas than changing economic circumstances, and on the other the largely illiterate, propertyless poor, among whom economic factors predominated. Thus, the sexual pendulum oscillated with the surge and ebb of Puritan zealotry might be applied to the groups of the gentry and the middling sort, but it can be hardly applied to the mass of the poor whose economic subsistence overwhelms their sexual enjoyment. Among the lower classes, therefore, the evolution of sexual attitudes inevitably follows a different pattern, and to the subset of this mass of the poor belongs the historical analysis of prostitution.

For most women of lower rank, it is presumed that sexual trade simply grew out of, and fitted into, their economic circumstances, and that the ranks of the prostitutes were fed by and large by poverty. The increase of the prostitutes in early modern London seems to have fulfilled the so-called "Place's Law", which argues "chastity and poverty are incompatible" (*Family* 616).<sup>65</sup> Those women congregated in large cities, especially in London in profusion, due to the dissolution of rural economy and the great increase of demographic mobility (Stone, *Family* 616). In the feudal economy, the strong pressure of community feeling at the local level served both as a repressive measure to control the male sexuality and as a protective mechanism to preserve the female chastity, but the disintegration of the feudal economy disrupted the agrarian community and caused the floodgate of vagrancy to open (Hill, *Reformation* 64). With the rise of primitive accumulation, a vicious circular process developed between the increase in capital stockpile and the growth in the landless population. The first was possible in part because of the rising food prices aided by the expanding population of the time. The second was caused by the eviction of peasants from the land through enclosure acts and through the conversion of the land from tillage to pasture (Hill,

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<sup>65</sup> Francis Place (1771-1854) was an English social reformer. His reformatory efforts contributed to changing the public perception of prostitution: i.e. he asserted that prostitution was a socio-economic problem rather than a personal morality problem. For details of his life, see Francis Place, *The Autobiography of Francis Place*, ed. Mary Thale (London: Cambridge UP, 1972).

*Reformation* 64-65). In medieval agricultural communities people could get the means of subsistence as long as they remained in the land, because the land was the objective condition for the realization of their labour, but in early modern capitalist cities they could earn a living only by selling their labour, because they were totally dependent on selling their labour. Moreover, willingness and ability to labour were no longer sufficient to ensure survival. If they could not have a chance to sell their labour in the market economy, they could not eat.<sup>66</sup>

In early modern England, women were more susceptible than men to the forces of dislocation and mobility. The rise of capitalism meant not only the restructuring of economic formation but also the disintegration of the traditional family arrangement under which the majority of women experienced their alienation from the formal workplaces and, as a result, their vulnerability and dependence upon male breadwinners (Humphries and Snell 2). In the feudal economy, most women had to work long and hard every day, but those hard labors they shared with the men of their rank. The peasant woman living in a rural area generally had a vegetable garden and raised poultry, and she often helped with agricultural labour while she nursed a baby and supervised a young child (McIntosh 3). The co-location of home and work presented no spatial hindrance to her involvement in the productive work (Humphries and Snell 8). When peasant families were expelled from land, marriage ceased to be mutually beneficial to the husband and the wife. The housewife lost the means to help provide a living for her family (Alice Clark 12). She could sell her own labour approximately for two-thirds of what her husband could make,<sup>67</sup> but it would endanger her children's survival through

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<sup>66</sup> As for the devastating effect of early modern capitalism on the poor, see statistics provided by Henry Phelps Brown and Sheila V. Hopkins, *A Perspective of Wages and Prices* (London: Methuen, 1981).

<sup>67</sup> Jacqueline Eales gives statistical evidence of the lower wage rates set for women: "A royal proclamation of 1595 setting out wages in Exeter stipulated that during the hay harvest men were to be paid 3d a day with meat and drink, and 6d without. A woman was to receive 2d with meat and drink, and 4d without. Male servants aged between 16 and 20 were to receive no more than 20s a year. From the age of 20 to 24 years this rose to no more than 26s 8d and a livery, or 5s in lieu of livery. Unmarried female servants between 16 and 24 were allowed no more than 16s a year and 5s for clothing. Female servants aged 24 years upwards were allowed no more than 20s for wages and 6s 8d

withdrawal of lactation and lack of supervision. If she stayed at home, it might risk starving her family, because her husband's "money wages seldom exceeded the estimated cost of his own meat and drink" (Alice Clark 69). Her husband clearly could not afford to support his family, but his obligation to provide for his family was dictated by the Poor Laws. Thus, Roberta Hamilton argues, "For men, marriage became their duty to the state, women their burden to support", and for women, "marriage became her food ticket, and an inadequate and shaky one" (40). The phenomenon of the disintegrated family became commonplace. Even if the husbands maintained, the wives were becoming "domestic drudges for their working husbands rather than the partners in a family workshop" (Hamilton 41). Therefore, feminist scholars call this grim situation the "feminization of poverty" (McNeill 41; Eales 76, 84).

The most important industrial enterprise in early modern capitalism was the production of cloth for home and export markets. In guilds in which cloth work was foremost, women predominated, and so many unmarried women worked at spinning that they became known as 'spinsters'. Spinning as an icon of women's work forms the social background of Dorothea's appearance in the Bridewell scene with the "wheele borne after her" (*Part II* 5.2.289). The development of the textile industry was accelerated by the sprawling growth of a number of urban centres, and the towns in turn expanded themselves with the migration of the growing population of landless people who sought to sell their labour there after being evicted from land. Particularly, the growth of London was remarkable. Given the mortality rate was higher than the birth rate in London, it is estimated that the City required 6,000 immigrants annually, which means it absorbed half the surplus of births over deaths across England (Ward 353). Woman migrants were in the majority. Towns offered women opportunities to find jobs, and

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for clothes" (77-78). Based on various evidences of women's work being disadvantaged and eroded in the sixteenth century, Eales concludes that the early modern capitalism caused the "feminization of poverty" (84).

thus they harboured concentrations of impoverished women.<sup>68</sup> However, cloth-workers and maidservants were the only two major occupations open to uneducated women from poor families. These women were the group most vulnerable to sexual abuse, and least economically capable of resistance. Thus, the vast majority of prostitutes were drawn from domestic servants and textile industry workers (Stone, *Family* 646). To sum up, the effect of capitalism was to increase the potentialities of the sexual abuse of young women. Therefore, early modern capitalism was not only the feminization of poverty but also the commodification of the female bodies.

As for the occupational identification, the makeshift lifestyles of the poor women should be emphasized. Not only their sexual behaviours but also their occupations baffle our efforts to make a stable classification. Both in domestic service and in cloth industry, most women were employed only for a few weeks or months at a time, moving from one position to another, taking other jobs in between, and spending periods of time out of place and out of work. As a consequence, several thousand young women in early modern London lived on the margins of independent subsistence, relying upon irregular forms of income, credit and occasional parish grants to keep themselves going. Even as a stable income for these women, the earnings were very low, comparable in fact to levels of poor relief in more affluent City parishes. For some girls, selling their bodies was sometimes a preferable way of earning a living to working fourteen to sixteen hours a day as a seamstress or mantua-maker (Stone, *Family* 617). Thus, the selling of sex was not an exclusive or full-time occupation for many prostitutes, but merely a supplement or temporary substitute for an income from irregular jobs. That is, occasional prostitution was merely a variation on their economy of makeshifts (Dabhoiwala 94).

*The Honest Whore* reflects the grim realities of these impoverished women. Orlando

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<sup>68</sup> Censuses of the poor show a considerable imbalance between the sexes: for example, in 1587 in Warwick and in 1625 in Salisbury, two-thirds of the adult poor were women (Eales 76).

says, poverty is a lethal weapon which destroys even the boundary between heaven and hell: “Pouerty dwells next doore to despaire, there’s but a wall between them; despaire is one of hells Catch-poles” (*Part II* 1.2.169-70). Straitened in extreme poverty and venomous abuse by Matheo, Bellafront also confesses to Orlando: “That cunning Bawd (Necessity) night and day / Plots to vndoe me” (*Part II* 4.1.135-36). Those who ran the brothels took advantage of these desperate women who were on their way to the cities to find work. One of the city slickers’ notorious practices was meeting coaches from the country, luring innocent village girls into their houses and then breaking them into the service of prostitution, instead of an ordinary domestic work (Stone, *Family* 619). Bots boasts to Lodovico of his plan to replenish his flesh trade: “They weare out till no mettle bee left in their backe; we heare of two or three new Wenches are come vp with a Carrier, and your old Goshawke here is flying at them” (*Part II* 3.3.5-7). Catherina, one of three prostitute-inmates of Bridewell, accuses Mistress Horseleech: “How many Carriers hast thou bribed for Country Wenches?” (*Part II* 5.2.381-82).

London was an attractive place not only for its job opportunities but also for its exotic consumer goods. By 1604, the year when *The Honest Whore* was premiered in the Fortune, London was already a metropolis filled with fascinating sights and a plentitude of colorful commodities. As early as 1580 the City was clearly the site of commercial fascination, as evidenced by John Strype’s “Merchant-Taylors Company” in *A Survey of the Cities*, which catalogues a surprisingly long list of foreign commodities available in the London shops. Strype ends the list with the observation that these things “made such a Shew in the Passengers Eyes, that they could not but gaze on them, and buy some of the knicknacks, though to no Purpose necessary” (191).<sup>69</sup> In other words, the “very gay Shew, by the various

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<sup>69</sup> Strype’s *Survey of the Cities* is an enlarged edition of John Stow’s *Survey of London* which appeared in a number of editions, following the first edition in 1598, and each edition added materials from local archives and records. The passages cited here do not appear in the most renowned second edition of 1603, but appear in the 1720 edition which gives a vivid description to the phenomenally burgeoning commodity markets of London with the specific dates: “There were but a few of these



foreign Commodities” caused “the People of London, and of other Parts of England . . . to spend extravagantly” (191). Centrally, Strype’s concern seems to be that passengers bought exotic commodities simply for the sake of buying pleasures rather than for necessity or usefulness.

To expand the logic of Strype further, “a very gay Shew” of the exotic shops caused people – notably women – not only to spend “extravagantly” but also to lose their chaste or virtuous behaviors. The logic of cause and effect would not be so simple, but many of the city comedies, as well as secular and religious tracts and proclamations from the Court, participated in the contemporary discourse which associated the profligate ways of spending wealth with women’s craving for commodities and especially with their sexual extravagance. As Karen Newman argues, the “changes in the early modern material environment” predicated women in a special “relation to the process of commodification” (132-33). While capitalization and urbanization in the early modern period incited the newly recognized desire for money and wealth in general, the enchanting commodity markets of London in particular created new types of consumers – women. And their consumerist appetite was singled out as a sign of their sexual aberrance.

Combining his disciplinary anxiety with the conventional misogynist discourses, James I was reported to deliver irascible remarks against “those swarms of gentry who, through the instigation of their wives and daughters to new model and fashion (who, if they were unmarried, marred their reputations, and if married, lost them), did neglect their country hospitality, and cumber the city” (Disraeli 364).<sup>70</sup> In James’s view, bringing “wives” and “daughters” to the City in order to buy or learn the newest “fashion” leads to sexual

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Milliners Shops in the Reign of King Edward VI, not above a Dozen in all London. But within forty Years after, about the Year 1580, from the City of Westminster along to London, every Street became full of them” (191).

<sup>70</sup> Isaac Disraeli was the father of Benjamin Disraeli who was the Prime Minister of the British Empire in the nineteenth century. Benjamin edited his father’s book with memoir and notes. I cannot find the direct source of James I’s remarks, but it seems to me that Isaac Disraeli’s report is reliable.

aberrations and to “marred” reputations. James’s anxiety about women migrating to the City in “pursuit of fashion” mirrors Mistress Birdlime’s argument in *Westward Ho*: “Lady or Iustice-a-peace Madam, carries high wit from the Citty, namely, to receiue all and pay all: to awe their Husbands, to check their Husbands, to controule their husbands; nay, they have a tricke ont to be sick for a new gowne, or a Carcanet, or a Diamond, or so” (1.1.30-34). Birdlime, a bawd who is versed in utilizing women’s vanity, almost succeeds in hoaxing Moll Justiniano into a paramour of the lecherous Earl with “gowne”, “Iewels and Pretious Stones”, “three or four kindes of complexion” (1.1.1, 2, 11). Lazarillo in *Blurt, Master Constable* gives another example of the nexus between feminized consumerist desire and its threat to male authority. While delivering a fantastical lecture on how to know when women rule men, he teaches the courtesans at Imperia’s bawdy house: “It shall be your first and finest praise, to sing the note of every new fashion at first sight” (3.3.76-78).

If poverty was the primary cause which led to the rise in prostitution in early modern London, commodity fetishism seems to have been the secondary cause to augment those ranks of sinful women. Carried by the current of the new market economy which roused consumerist greed, many women might have prostituted themselves to meet their high expectations for luxury goods. Reminding us of Imperia’s appearance in act 2 scene 2 of *Blurt, Master Constable*, the introduction of Bellafront in *The Honest Whore* is a racy show of how she trades off her body for material luxury in the market of flesh business.<sup>71</sup> At her lush toilette, Bellafront’s erotic body is displayed like an irresistible commodity when she prepares to receive her “guests” (*Part I* 2.1.46). About the seductive display of Bellafront’s body, Viviana Comensoli comments: her outward show “parodies the motif of the ‘lady at her

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<sup>71</sup> Peter Ure argues that Imperia’s scene in *Blurt, Master Constable* (c. 1601) is one of the earliest courtesan scenes in which the morally questionable women are “depicted, with a certain bravura and loving concentration” (188); and he praises the introductory scene of Belafront in *The Honest Whore* for its realistic verisimilitude: “As theatrical journalism, the playhouse equivalent of the pamphlets about underworld behaviour, it would be hard to overrate the episode” (200).

toilette' commonly found in Renaissance iconography and lyric poetry, in which an eroticized female figure is seated at her dressing table in her closet, gazing at her beauty and grace" (*Household Business* 141). While peeping into the semi-nude Bellafront in her private toilette which is also her business showroom, the voyeuristic spectators in and out of the stage are treated to an elaborate tableau of the Renaissance striptease. In these terms, we can conclude that in the consumer market of early modern London, commodities were feminized, and inversely females were commodified.

Bellafront is a daughter of the local gentry, Orlando Friscobaldo, who paid his affection to her as if growing a plant: "I pruinde it daily, drest carefully, kept it from the winde, help'd it to the Sunne" (*Part II* 1.2.91-92). She began to keep bad company with Matheo in spite of her father's warning: "I hate her for her selfe, because she refused my Physicke" (*Part II* 1.2.149-50). Eventually, she was tricked into losing her virginity by the venal temptation of Matheo: "You were the first / Gaue money for my soule. . . . I was led / By your temptation to be miserable" (*Part I* 3.3.94-97). Recognizing her daughter to have lost virginity, Orlando turned her away out of home: "It grew crooked, it bore Crabs; I hewed downe" (*Part II* 1.2.92-93). Deserted out in the street, she became reduced to an extreme penury. She was almost starved to death, "When so many yeeres / You ha left me frozen to death" (*Part II* 4.1.124-25). Even after her conversion, she says she will be driven back to prostitution if she faces such hardships again: "I'm poore, relieue me then, / Let me not sell my body to base men. / You call me Strumpet, Heauen knowes I am none: / Your cruelty may driue me to be one" (*Part II* 4.1.129-32).

After lapsing into prostitution, her reward for carnal sin is luxury indulgence. She has enjoyed "Courtiers flattring Iewels", "Lawyers ill-got monyes", "gallants costly dyet, Silks and Veluets, Pearles and Ambers" (*Part I* 3.3.1, 3, 6-7). After her conversion, she is reminded once again of the conjunction between material luxury and flesh trade. When Hippolito

attempts to woo her back to the whore's life with gold, a ring, a purse and love-letters, she looks back to her past regrettably: "Here's baite to choake a Nun, and turne her whore" (*Part II* 2.1.237). Presumably, one of the reasons why she falls in unrequited love at the first sight of Hippolito is that she thinks she can satisfy her luxury appetite as Hippolito's lover. Indeed, Hippolito is of the highest nobility of her guests. When she first meets him, she is hinted on Hippolito's social status by Matheo and Fluello: "Count Hippolito, the braue Count"; "a most essentiall gentleman" (*Part I* 2.1.193; 195). Even while expressing her aspiration to be an honest woman who serves only one man, she attaches for her expectant husband three conditions; i.e. a gentleman who can raise her in the social scale, a sound body which can satisfy her carnal appetite, and a reasonable allowance which can gratify her consumerist appetite.

Had I but met with one kind *gentleman*,  
 That would haue purchacde sin alone, to himselfe,  
 For his owne priuate vse, although scarce proper:  
 Indifferent handsome: *meetly legd and thyed*:  
 And my *allowance reasonable* – yfaith,  
 According to my body – by my troth,  
 I would haue bin as true vnto his pleasures. (*Part I* 2.1.268-74. *Italics* are mine.)

After her determination of conversion, she realizes that the indulgent City was the source of her undoing: "I must therefore fly, / From this vndoing Cittie, and with teares / Wash off all anger from my fathers brow" (*Part I* 4.1.192-94).

With the unprecedented growth of London in the period, the geography of prostitution also underwent a rapid change. Traditionally, London's southern suburbs had been associated

with prostitution from Roman times. As the City expanded, slum areas were newly produced, particularly in the suburbs east and west of the City where the profession could easily take root. Aside from the new slums, Wallace Shugg argues, “The increasing numbers of hackney coaches afforded the prostitute a new mobility, enabling her to solicit at will in every part of the City”, and he maintains, “The presence of prostitution in and around St. Paul’s Cathedral itself shows clearly that the problem was both pervasive and ineradicable” (306). Among the various areas, Westminster seems to have been the preferred area for the up-market courtesans who could attract the wealthy clients. In *Northward Ho*, Doll Hornet schemes to move her lodging to Westminster in order to receive the upper-class guests who “pay soundly for what they take”, with expressing a scornful reaction to entertaining the penny-pinching soldiers at Tyburn (1.2.59-60). On the other hand, the common prostitutes seem to have haunted other areas such as Southwark, Smithfield, Shoreditch, Cheapside, Eastcheap, and Tyburn. Doll Tearsheet and Mistress Quickly in *Henry IV* have their brothel at Eastcheap. Ursula and Alice in *Bartholomew Fair* tap the annual market to benefit from the resourceful customers there.

The prostitutes can be divided into three tiers: “the common street prostitutes; the selective call-girl with her own rooms visited by gentlemanly clients; and the kept mistress set up in her own apartment” (Stone, *Family* 618). In legal terms, there might have been no difference between them: i.e. they could not inherit property, make legal accusations, or appear in person to answer charges. However, in return for throwing themselves down to sinful business, the up-market courtesans could enjoy wealth and luxury. They could sometimes become mistresses or wives of rich gentlemen,<sup>72</sup> and, in the theatre, they appear as the main characters. However, the common prostitutes, whose roles in the play are usually

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<sup>72</sup> Out of the high-ranking courtesans, Nell Gwyn would be the most famous who eventually became one of Charles II’s many mistresses. Nell started out as a servant girl in a bawdyhouse, and became one of the earliest English actresses. She has been called ‘a living embodiment of the spirit of the Restoration’. To her the impassioned feminist author, Aphra Behn, dedicated her play, *The Feigned Courtesan* (Haselkorn 16).

restricted to the margins, could not “look to the future but continue to service all clients until they have worn themselves out, and their persons are no longer marketable” (Haselkorn 2). More interestingly, there seems to have been a rough distinction between the indoor and the outdoor theatres. The coquettish courtesans such as Imperia in *Blurt, Master Constable*, Franceschina in *The Dutch Courtesan*, Doll Hornet in *Northward Ho*, Sindefy in *Eastward Ho*, Frank Gullman in *A Mad World, My Masters*, and Jane in *A Trick to Catch the Old One* – with the exception of Bellafront – all of them generally pleased the wealthy audience at the indoor theatres such as the Blackfriars and St. Paul’s, whereas the common prostitutes such as Doll Tearsheet in *Henry IV*, Kate Keepdown in *Measure for Measure*, Alice in *Bartholomew Fair*, Marina who barely escapes prostitution in *Pericles* and three inmates of Bridewell in *The Honest Whore* appeared by and large in the plays which were premiered at the outdoor theatres such as the Globe, the Fortune and the Hope.

Whatever their rankings were, prostitution was so prevalent in early modern London that it seems to have been almost impossible to wipe out. Haselkorn argues, “In fact, no modern English or American city of comparable size could lay claim to having more prostitution than London” (13). In *Measure for Measure*, Duke Vincentio tries to enforce a strict morality, only to find out that even his most trusted deputy, Angelo, is engaged in whoredom. In *The Honest Whore*, when Duke Trebazzi issues the decree to purge the city of all the prostitutes, the courtier Carolo gives deep misgivings: “Attach all the light heeles i’t’h Citty and clap em vp? why, my Lord? you diue into a Well vnsearchable” (*Part II* 4.2.105-06). Bots as a pander has his occupational conviction: “Is there any Gentlemen here, that knowes not a Whore?” (*Part II* 5.2.349).

When Henry VIII announced the proclamation to sweep away the London brothels in 1546, “which ended England’s only experiment in the state provision” of whorehouses, “prostitution was, of course, not wiped out” (Haselkorn 11). In fact, the proclamation itself

had the opposite effect to its intention: i.e. the abolishment of the licensed brothels scattered many of the resident prostitutes widely through the City of London, making their supervision more difficult. They moved into houses that sold ale and beer as a cover, like Mistress Quickly's Boar's Head in Eastcheap in *Henry IV*, Mistress Overdone's brothel in *Measure for Measure*, and Doll Hornet's tavern in *Northward Ho*. Or they simply frequented taverns or inns with resourceful guests, like the "ladies" in Imperia's house in *Blurt, Master Constable* (3.3.11.sd). Moreover, Fingerlock's resolution in *The Honest Whore* to continue the job in spite of Bellafront's conversion and her unfailing supply of customers may explain why the profession is the world's oldest. She declares to Roger that they will thrive "so long as there be any Tauernes and bawdy houses in *Millain*" (*Part I* 3.2.83-84). Wallace Shugg argues, therefore, "The toleration of prostitution in certain officially designated areas seems to have worked better than attempts to suppress it entirely. Until the proclamation of 1546 to close all brothels, authorities were able to confine prostitution largely to the licensed districts of Cock Lane (Smithfield) and Southwark" (305-06).

As a prostitute, Bellafront rejoices in economic independence that challenges the roles normally available to women and threatens patriarchal control. Hippolito focuses his eulogy for prostitution on the prostitute's freedom from patriarchal bondage: "The chiefe blisse / This world below can yeeld is liberty: / And who (than whores) with looser wings dare fly? . . . She's no mans slaue; (men are her slaues) her eye / Moues not on wheelles screwd vp with lealowsie" (*Part II* 4.1.273-79). Needless to say, Hippolito's argument derives not from his sincere apology for prostitution but from his intention to seduce Bellafront into his extramarital affairs. Remarkably, however, his argument which emphasizes the prostitute's liberty and independence constitutes an effective counter-narrative to the patriarchal discourse which tried to incarcerate women with the chastity belt. Against Hippolito's inducement, Bellafront defends herself:

'Tis said, she was not made for men, but man.  
 Anon, t'increase earths brood, the law was varied,  
 Men should take many wiues: and tho they married  
 According to that Act, yet 'tis not knowne,  
 But that those wiues were onely tied to one. (*Part II* 4.1.304-08).

From an intense remorse for her past, Bellafront's argument actually goes beyond justifying female chastity. She has not only internalized the conventional subordinate position of women but she has even become an advocate for male polygamy based on the bogus patriarchal logic of population multiplication. Her self-contempt, at this point, seems to be that she surpasses the due process of her adjustment to a patriarchal society. Her apologies sound like her willingness to accept Matheo's misogynist abuse in recompense for her earlier transgressions, let alone surrendering her independence and freedom. Although not acted upon on the stage, her intention to return to her father (*Part I* 4.1.192-94) has already signaled her reintegration into such a world and looked forward to her embrace of the subservient role as Matheo's wife.<sup>73</sup>

Bellafront's version of patriarchal discourse resonates with other characters' misogynist attitudes. Misogyny, much of it directed at Bellafront, links up with the traditional attitudes

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<sup>73</sup> Dekker and Middleton are due to be criticized for the textual inconsistency between Bellafront's words and her later action. Bellafront soliloquizes her intention to return to her father in *Part I* 4.1.192-94. Later in the play, however, she does not go back to her father, but appears as a disguised madwoman in Bedlam scene (*Part I* 5.2.299ff.), and becomes Matheo's wife. Actually, her father, Orlando Friscobaldo, is not introduced at all in *Part I*, and appears first in *Part II* 1.2.26ff., where he encounters Hippolito. Seen from the standpoint of patriarchal convention of the early modern, on the other hand, I think that this textual inconsistency is not significant and easy to be committed by the playwrights, because according to the patriarchal discourses of early modern Protestantism, there was no clear gender-political distinctions between 'father', 'legal institution', and 'husband'. All those three were symbols of patriarchal power, and worked in a similarly abusive way against women. Thus, we can see the conspicuous similarity between their attitudes to Bellafront in the play. In the conclusion of this chapter, I will argue further for the ideological circumscription which is beyond the control of the individual playwright's consciousness.



that associated women's bodies with the perils of moral degeneration of men. In response to Hippolito's inquiry after his daughter, Orlando argues that physical beauty of women is the way to corrupt male integrity by comparing it to wine: "The yong beautifull Grape sets the teeth of Lust on edge, yet to taste lickrish Wine, is to drinke a mans owne damnation" (*Part II* 1.2.109-11). Matheo, who appears first in the play to console Hippolito's grief over Infelice's supposed death, begins his word with the accusation of women's inborn promiscuity: "Women when they are aliue are but dead commodities, for you shall haue one woman lie vpon many mens hands" (*Part I* 1.1.88-90). Later, with the misogynist conviction of women's weak volition, he scorns at the futility of Bellafront's reformation: "Ist possible, to be impossible, an honest whore! I haue heard many honest wenches turne strumpets with a wet finger; but for a Harlot to turne honest, is one of *Hercules* labours" (*Part I* 3.3.100-02). Misogyny was related to the imputation of uncontrollable male sexuality to the female. Haselkorn argues, a man's lust was considered to be "formed and inflamed by the insatiable carnal desire of woman" in the early modern period (8). Thus, such combination of the imputed female sexuality and the misogynist attitude seems to have constituted the underpinning for the patriarchal discourse to condemn the prostitute for her personal immorality.

Ironically, in the Middle Ages, misogyny operated to the prostitute's advantage in one respect. Frances and Joseph Gies argue that "the prostitute was seen as behaving in accordance with weak female character; consequently heavier penalties were imposed on customers, pimps, and brothelkeepers" (57). In other words, she was regarded as more sinned against than sinning. In *The Honest Whore*, there are some references in which bawds and procurers are regarded as more damnable. Treating Bellafront as Lodovico's whore, Matheo quips sarcastically to her that he would rather make her to be a panderess: "It's base to be a whore: / Thou't be more base, Ile make thee keepe a doore" (*Part II* 3.2.146-47). A master in

Bridewell reports to the Duke, “The Pander is more dangerous to a State, / Then is the common Thiefe” (*Part II* 5.2.246-47). Needless to say, the more severe punishment on the brothel-keeper and the whoremonger than the prostitute herself in the Middle Ages did not reflect the contemporary magistrate’s recognition that the problem of prostitution derived from the defective socio-cultural system. At any rate, the situation was reversed in the early modern period (Haselkorn 8). With the Protestant insistence on the sanctity of marriage, extramarital affairs began to be regarded as more serious offences (Belsey 19-20), sins of the flesh took on a more damnable place in the hierarchy of evil acts (Haselkorn 17), and the primary target for punishment became the prostitute herself (Haselkorn 8). Philip Stubbes, the puritan author of *The Anatomie of Abuses* (1582), asserts that all whores should “be cauterized, and seared with hotte Iron vpon the cheeke, forehead, or some other parte of their bodie that might bee seene”, deploring his contemporary state that the authorities concerned were too lenient to punish the evils of prostitution: “The Magistrates winke at it, or els as looking through their fingers, they see it, and will not see it” (150).

In the case of a converted prostitute, it is presumed to have been a general convention to commit her to the convent during the medieval Catholicism which valued asceticism higher than marriage. With the advent of Protestantism which endorsed matrimonial sex, she began more likely to be allowed to marry (Haselkorn 8; Mulholland, Introduction 282). The Gieses argue, “The twelfth-century canonist Gratian decreed that while a man might not marry a whore who continued their trade, he could marry her to reform her” (58). The canonist Gratian seems to have been one of the earliest clerics who wished to reform his contemporary attitudes towards the treatment of the prostitute. With the positive acceptance of marriage in Renaissance Protestantism, marriage offered a means by which the prostitute could escape her plight, and was regarded as a more practical for her than the saintly asceticism (Mulholland, Introduction 282). The medical theory of the period also seems to have helped change the

attitudes towards the prostitute's marriage. According to Renaissance psychosomatics, if the woman were not to be sexually satisfied, she would be likely to go insane because her substance is too weak to endure abstinence (Cohen 3199). Two Renaissance stories about a converted prostitute, which Mulholland thinks have "a possible influence" on *The Honest Whore* (Introduction 283), regard marriage as more recommendable than her continence: in Erasmus's colloquy, "Of the Young Man and the Evil Disposed Woman", the story-line falls short of actual nuptials between Sophronius and Lucrecia, but their eventual marriage is strongly alluded to in the course of their story; and in Robert Greene's "The Conversion of an English Courtizan", a partial reworking of the Erasmus colloquy, the story ends with the marriage between the wayward courtesan and the young man who brought about her conversion.

The denouement of providing husbands for prostitutes is often used in city comedies such as Lucio for Kate Keepdown in *Measure for Measure*, Matheo for Bellafront in *The Honest Whore*, Featherstone for Doll Hornet in *Northward Ho*, and Quicksilver for Sindefy in *Eastward Ho*. In Bellafront's case in particular, the story-line goes so far as to make her an actual wife to the first man who had her maidenhead. The Duke implements patriarchal justice by ordering Matheo to marry Bellafront for the retribution of his sin against her. The patriarchal justice thus reads her defloration as a marriage and erases her subsequent sexual history. While it confers honesty on her, however, her marriage to Matheo is actually tantamount to heaping on her a legion of new tribulations, which Dekker explores in *Part II*. The stigma of her ignominious past tenaciously clings to her, and her married life is hell. Like a long-suffering Griselda, Bellafront should absorb all sorts of abuse and recrimination. Always already guilty, this virtuous wife will never defy her husband's dictation or cross his will. For her, marriage means shoring up the deficient, but culturally central, male dominance. Needless to say, though the Duke marries Bellafront off, he does not invite her to his court at

the end of the play. In this sense, her marriage carries deeper implications in its reflection of traditional attitudes against the reclaimed whore. Indeed, her tribulation is an abiding reminder of the difficulty which the converted prostitutes face in negotiating a move from the margins of society to its patriarchal heart of a happy marriage.

It has been a general critical appraisal that Matheo is an arch-villain whose cruelty causes his wife to suffer calamitous ordeals. There is a plausible reason, however, why he behaves as a wastrel husband. First, from the viewpoint of Bellafront, marriage is the implementation of moral justice by repairing her defloration and rewarding her reformation, but from the stance of Matheo, it is an unfair punishment for the culturally acceptable, if not recommendable, sexual misdemeanor, for which he is unluckily singled out as a test case for punishment. In the early modern age, being ordered to marry a prostitute was virtually equivalent to a death penalty to male reputation. When Lucio is ordered to marry Kate Keepdown by Duke Vincentio in substitution for his execution, he lodges a powerful protest: “Marrying a punk, my lord, is pressing to death, whipping, and hanging” (5.1.515-16). When Matheo is forced to marry Bellafront by the Duke, he cannot see beyond the injustice he faces: “Cony-catcht, guld, must I saile in your flie-boate, / Because I helpt to reare your maine-mast first?” (*Part I* 5.2.440-41).

Secondly, Matheo has credible clues by which he suspects Bellafront to continue whoredom after their marriage. In the initial stage of their marriage, it is not Matheo but all the acquaintances surrounding him who keep on treating Bellafront as if she were still a whore. Early in *Part II*, the courtier Lodovico voices the communal male response to Bellafront when he sarcastically refers to her as “the Blackamore that by washing was turned white” (*Part II* 1.1.89). When Matheo comes back home after release from the debtor’s prison, he behaves at first very kindly to his wife without knowing the communal prejudice against her. With Hippolito’s visit to his home, however, Matheo’s attitude to Bellafront begins to

change radically. In full view of Matheo, Hippolito behaves as if Bellafront were his mistress, and he applies an obscene kiss to her lips: "Ile borrow her lip" (*Part II* 2.1.145). In spite of his disgrace, Matheo cannot appeal to Hippolito, because Hippolito is his benefactor who saved him from execution in the prison. He says to him, "I owe you my life" (*Part II* 2.1.160). What is worse, Bellafront's attitude is also not explicit enough to dismiss Hippolito's sinister intention and to relieve Matheo of suspicious jealousy. To Hippolito's insistence on her reply to his love tokens, she dubiously prevaricates, "Now the time's not fit, / You see, my Husbands here" (*Part II* 2.1.156-57). When Matheo asks his wife later about what Hippolito whispered to her, she pretends not to understand why her husband pokes into the affairs by saying, "Nothing" (*Part II* 2.1.176). At last, Matheo gets piqued at her: "There is a whore still in thine eye" (*Part II* 2.1.185). Lodovico's visit to his home makes matters worse. Lodovico behaves in a similar way as Hippolito did. Lodovico applies a licentious kiss to Bellafront, "Pay custom to your lips, sweet lady" (*Part II* 3.2.88), and later gives money to her as if it were a payment for her sexual service. Convinced of his wife's harlotry, Matheo pathologically suspects all her acquaintances to be her illicit lovers. He is suspicious that even his servant Pacheco should be one of them: "Here in our Citty all your sex are but foot-cloth nags: the Master no sooner 'lights, but the man leaps into the saddle" (*Part II* 4.1.171-72).

The proverb, 'once a whore and ever a whore', never occurs in the play's lines, but its implications are ever-present. Throughout the play, all Matheo's acquaintances remind him obsessively of his wife's original identity. Even his father-in-law vilifies the couple's poverty by alluding to Bellafront's former profession: "You keep a good house belike, iust like one of your profession, euery roome with bare walls, and a halfe-headed bed to vault vpon (as all your bawdy-houses are)" (*Part II* 4.1.46-48). When the Duke orders the city officers to seize all the city's known whores, they include Bellafront who converted to a virtuous housewife long time ago. Orlando's protests are to no avail. To "turn a Harlot Honest", says the Duke, "it

must be by strong Antidotes, 'Tis rare, as to see Panthers change their spots" (*Part II* 4.2.45-47). Even after he confirmed the evidence that Bellafront had rejected Hippolito's persistent enticement by sending back "his Letters and his gifts" (*Part II* 4.2.37), he and his daughter Infelice try to impute Hippolito's adulterous lust onto Bellafront's seduction: "The Harlot does vndo him, / She has bewitched him, robd him of his shape, / Turnd him into a beast" (*Part II* 4.2.75-77). It is Bellafront who must perform the almost impossible task of proving to the skeptical society that her conversion is genuine and permanent, but Matheo is also beleaguered with the relentless bigotry of the patriarchal society which forces him to have the morbid suspicion of his wife's whoredom. It is undisputable that Matheo is a prodigal, and his actions are in no way justifiable, but he as well as Bellafront is a victim of patriarchal discrimination against the reclaimed prostitute.

### III. Parallelism between Bellafront's Prostitution and Candido's Linen-drapery

The seeming lack of the dramatic unity between the Bellafront plot and the Candido plot has raised controversies between critics of the play. It has been a critical custom to refer to the Candido story as subplot, and his story has been, therefore, generally evaluated from the standpoints of its comic effect.<sup>74</sup> However, in terms of its thematic seriousness and its

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<sup>74</sup> Michael Manheim thinks *Part II* is better than *Part I* according to the criteria of the dramatic unity between the two plots. He argues, "The subplot of *1 Honest Whore* lacks the unity of the subplot, or Candido plot, of *2 Honest Whore*. It is made up of two thinly-related parts" (372, n.). On the other hand, Peter Ure evaluates the Candido plot from the standpoint of its comic effect and its dramatic unity with the Bellafront plot, and he argues that *Part I* is better than *Part II* on the ground that while *Part I* achieves its dramatic unity in that "the converted shrew of the Candido scenes matches the converted courtesan of the Bellafront scenes" (196), and that the unity of action in *Part II* is disrupted because the characterization of Candido is inconsistent and botchy, particularly when he threatens to beat his wife and when "he ends up in Bridewell falsely accused as a receiver of stolen goods" (198). Dissenting from Ure, Larry Champion maintains that *Part II* is better than *Part I* on the basis that the Candido plot in *Part II* "assumes its importance from its relationship, both thematic and structural, to the major action" (47), and that "the comic perspective of Part II is carefully controlled" by Orlando Friscobaldo "who functions directly as a comic pointer" (46), while "in Part I the structure is loose and the effect disorderly" and "the spectators' perspective at times unguided and consequently blurred" (42). In a similar evaluation to Champion, Cyrus Hoy regards *Part II* as one of Dekker's greatest dramatic achievements. He argues, "Structurally, [*Part II*] is the most coherent play Dekker ever wrote"

intricate parallels with the Bellafront plot, it may not be correct to think of the Candido story as the subordinate. In both parts of the play, the Candido story is juxtaposed to that of Bellafront. The full title of the play frequently printed in Jacobean age, *The Honest Whore, With, The Humours of the Patient Man, and the Longing Wife*, might testify its significance. Indeed, in his Oxford edition, Mulholland adopts the title in which the Candido plot precedes that of Bellafront, *The Patient Man and the Honest Whore*, which is used by Henslowe in his diary and is an indication that for some Jacobean theatregoers, the linen draper was as much the focal point of attention as the reformed whore.

Any argument about the dramatic unity between the two plots ought to take account of the way Candido's commercialism and Bellafront's prostitution interact with each other. Candido and Bellafront's actions build upon the various parallels between the merchant's linen shop and the prostitute's bawdy house. Mulholland finds, "Structural, figurative, and thematic parallels and other devices link" the two actions and "confer coherence on the play's diverse elements" (Introduction 281). He continues to argue, "Imagery, styles of language, idioms, and terms associated with one action" make an appearance in another and give the audience an invitation to accept the crossover of values and attitudes (Introduction 281). Indeed, the various parallels between the two actions link the sale of flesh with the sale of cloth, grounding Bellafront's prostitution in a world of commercial marketplaces in which the prostitute and her guests take material gains from each other.

For an example of numerous parallels, the commercial scene in *Part I* act 1 scene 5, where George displays cloth at the linen-drapery shop, can be considered as a careful preparation for the immediately following brothel scene in *Part I* act 2 scene 1, where Bellafront's erotic body is displayed at her toilette. By this preparation, George, the journeyman of the shop, induces the audience to look upon Bellafront's prostitution as a

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(2: 73). He also praises Dekker's masterful characterization of Matheo and Orlando: "Matheo and Orlando are the play's great originals" (2: 74).

commercial business. Inversely, the imagery drawn from prostitution can be seen to permeate the linen-draper's shop, when the three gallants haggle with George over a virgin piece of lawn in terms borrowed from sexual procurement (*Part I* 1.5.15-37); and again, the grotesque overtones in the racy dialogue between George and his wealthy customers echoes Bellafront's trade in a bawdy market in which the prostitute and her guests are engaged in skittish exchange of lascivious words and sexual transactions. George makes a boast of linen in the terms of a fair virgin: "I, and the purest shee that euer you fingered since you were as gentleman. Look how euen she is, look how cleane she is, ha! – as euen as the browe of *Cinthia*" (*Part I* 1.5.24-26). Between the same two scenes, Candido's sale of a penny's worth of cloth to the rakehell gullers also corresponds to Bellafront's sale of a "breakfast" worth of flesh to the same rakehell customers who describe Bellafront's attractive body in terms of linen: "A skin, your satten is not more soft, nor lawne whiter" (*Part I* 2.1.57; 172).

From the perspective of cultural ethos, the parallelism is found between the two scenes as well. The prostitute's trade is similar to that of the merchant in terms of the hospitality which is extended to their customers. In needy circumstances Bellafront cannot be selective in bestowing her sexual favours even if her customers make exorbitant demands as Candido's customers do in the shop. Regardless of her personal preferences, Bellafront should please her guest, because "hee shall serue for my breakefast, tho he goe against my stomack" (*Part I* 2.1.56-57); and Candido declares in a similar vein, "He that meanes to thriue, with patient eye / Must please the diuell, if he come to buy" (*Part I* 1.5.127-28). The shopkeeper speaks of the need to show courtesy to customers, to use honeyed words to everyone in spite of his current moods. Such is the business motto both of the man of the linen market and the woman of the sexual market; not only Candido but also Bellafront displays the cool sense of the careful shopkeepers whose control over their fretful emotions is indispensable for them to be hospitable to all their customers, no matter how repugnant they are. In both Candido's and



Bellafront's shop the bond between host and guest is important for fostering commercial success through brisk trade.

In another striking juxtaposition, the scene in which Candido invites his wealthy customers to dinner (*Part I* 1.5.230-31) is immediately followed by Bellafront receiving her guests (*Part I* 2.1.57ff.). In the subsequent occasions, Roger and Bellafront's bilking of their clients of the price of a pottle of wine (*Part I* 2.1.71-146), and the haggling between Roger and Mistress Fingerlock over their respective fees (*Part I* 3.2.69-84) have dark implications for the shady business of the market economy. "After Bellafront has renounced whoredom, Hippolito's servant" continues to keep the flesh trade "in view through a range of bawdy references and by playfully impersonating a brothel door-keeper" before Bellafront makes "her entrance disguised as a page" (Mulholland, Introduction 281). The servant says, "This dull drowzy first day of the weeke, makes me . . . a Bawd: for (all this day) my office is to do nothing but keep the dore" (*Part I* 4.1.6-9). Looking closely at the similarities between the Bellafront and Candido plots reveals that the "related threads of imagery" between them – "involving the whore's body treated as vendible merchandise" – "run through the play" (Mulholland, Introduction 281). By the help of all of these parallels, correspondences, and similarities, the play makes it almost impossible to draw a stable demarcation between prostitution and ordinary commerce.

#### **IV. Candido's Patience as a New Masculinity**

City comedies not only help define femininity in relation to masculinity; they are also involved in the construction of a new form of gender and in the test of whether it is appropriate to the early modern society. *The Honest Whore* has a particular and interesting role in this project. In the Candido plot "the play explores the unusual and unlikely combination of patience and manhood", just as in the Bellafront plot it inquires into the

apparent oxymoron of honesty and whoredom (Mulholland, Introduction 281). “At the base of the various stratagems” of the other characters “bent on provoking Candido to anger” and sexual anxiety lies “a problematic of gender construction” and its identification (Mulholland, Introduction 281). The other male characters except Candido are conventionally susceptible to rage and sexual passion. Surrendering rational control, they are prone to succumb to the promptings of hot blood. Their test of Candido’s forbearance through a series of tricks and traps is equivalent to their investigation of his male identity in terms consonant with their conventional conception of manhood. With the test of Candido’s imperturbable patience, reversely, the play also “calls in question violent, aggressive”, and excessive disposition “constructed as a sign of manliness as well as its ideological” implication which can be summarized in Viola’s proverb (Mulholland, Introduction 281): “Hee who cannot be angry, is no man” (*Part I* 1.2.64).

Combining the standard misogyny of the cursed wife syndrome with Candido’s male version of Patient Griselda, the Candido/Viola plot in *Part I* carries out the test of Candido’s patience into two categories: i.e. its mercantile relevance in the capitalist market and its sexual pertinence in the patriarchal *domus*. In *Part I* act 1 scene 5, Candido’s tolerance is concerned chiefly with commercial matters. In act 3 scene 1, Candido’s meekness is put to the test by Viola in both terms of merchant attitude and sexual aptitude. In act 4 scene 3, Candido’s composure is put to trial by the disrupted civic order between master and apprentice. *Part II* continues the two categories of the test, but it reverses the structural distributions of *Part I*. In *Part II*, the Candido plot is reduced into five of thirteen scenes and his and Bellafront’s plot mingle together before the last scene, while in *Part I*, his actions involve eight of the fifteen scenes and his plot mixes with Bellafront’s only in the last scene.<sup>75</sup> *Part II* also reverses the gendered cause of domestic disorder. In *Part II*, it is the two contradictory types of husband

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<sup>75</sup> The frequent intermingling between the two plots of *Part II* is the main reason why Manheim, Champion and Hoy think of *Part II* as more closely knitted than *Part I*.

who cause the women to suffer, whereas in *Part I*, it is only Candido's wife who puts the domestic peace into turmoil. In *Part II* act I scene 3 and act 2 scene 2, Candido's meekness undergoes a test by his new bride's violent behavior at their wedding banquet. In act 2 scene 2, Candido's brief assertion of manliness with the help of Lodovico pleases his new wife and brings her happily into the role of a modest wife. In act 3 scene 3, like in *Part I* act 3 scene 1, Candido's meekness is tried in both terms of his sexual jealousy and his mercantile attitude, but the mastermind of the test is not his wife but the courtier rakes. In *Part II* act 4 scene 3 Candido's emaciated manhood is subjugated to trial in both terms once again, and the humiliation he undergoes reaches the darkest point of all his roles of gender-swapping.<sup>76</sup>

A negative implication widely permeates the Candido scenes. Candido looks insufficiently manly in the eyes of most observers. In prefiguring a new type of man and masculinity suited for the world of the marketplace, the play seems unable to conceal the contradictions that attend the emergence of the new gender-type. Although commendable for his self-control and reasonable negotiation, Candido is not always portrayed as a desirable character but as comic and sometimes even as ridiculous. Through mockery and ridicule in *Part I* act 1 scene 5, through apparent cuckoldry in *Part I* act 3 scene 1, and especially through physical and mental abuse in *Part II* act 4 scene 3, the Candido plot posits him as a butt of slapstick comedy. The entire action makes the spectators "understandably question not only Viola's motivation in her determination to infuriate her husband but also Candido's willingness to be mocked and bludgeoned in the name of patience that by any realistic standard smells either of cowardice or of stupidity" (Champion 43). Peter Ure is one of the critics who pays a high tribute to Candido's patience, but he is obliged to admit, "He is a trifle ridiculous, almost at times a fool" (199).

It is true that the play sometimes praises his patience. Fluello says, "Such a meeke spirit

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<sup>76</sup> The specific concerns of each scene which is cited in the paragraph will be discussed in the following.

can blesse a common weale” (*Part I* 1.5.229). His apprentices are especially respectful to him for his diligence, kindness and moral integrity. However, the praise is sporadic, and cannot erase the general impression that he seems to lack something important as a man. He seems to be oddly impotent and his patience looks very often like being shorn of virility. Candido’s wife indicates what is wrong in her husband. She complains, “I long to haue my patient husband eate vp a whole Porcupine, to the intent, the bristling quills may sticke about his lippes like a flemmish mustacho, and be shot at me” (*Part I* 1.2.87-90). It takes no complicated logic to interpret her remark as longing for a certain hairy wildness, a phallic potency, in her husband. In *Part I* act 3 scene 1 and in act 4 scene 3, his emaciation is accentuated particularly from the viewpoint of sexual prowess. In the former scene, according to his sister’s instigation to provoke Candido’s sexual jealousy, the simpleton seafarer, Fustigo, behaves as if he were a paramour of Viola, and delivers lascivious kisses to her lip in front of Candido. In spite of his apprentices’ appeals, Candido calms them down by comparing his wife’s body with material goods: “No matter, let ’em; when I touch her lip / I shall not feel his kisses, no, nor misse / Any of her lip; no harme in kissing is” (*Part I* 3.1.38-40). His fetishized materialism may testify why he has been so prosperous in the market economy of London, but his psychology in equating his wife’s body with wearable commodities gives the impression that he has gone too far. In the same scene, he reveals another commercialist vein. Failing in provoking her husband to sexual jealousy, Viola proceeds to hide the key of the chest which contains the senator’s gown in order to keep Candido from attending the city senate. Robed in a carpet whose middle is cut away to make a hole for the neck, Candido says, “Out of two euils hee’s accounted wise / That can picke out the least; the Fine imposde / For an vn-gowned Senator, is about / Forty Cruzadoes, the Carpet not ‘boue foure” (*Part I* 3.1.202-05). At this pathological mercantilism, Peter Ure pokes fun aptly, “There is nice calculation in the episode suitable to the decorum of his character as city merchant” (195).

In *Part II* act 3 scene 3 which constitutes the test of Candido's sexual aptitude and his mercantile tolerance, Carolo and Lodovico, determined to cuckold the "patient Linnen Draper" and flout his "fine yong smug Mistres" (*Part II* 3.3.19; 20), seek the services of Mistress Horseleech and Bots, who are themselves out to procure fresh ammunition for their back-door trade. In the same scene, the other group of rakehell gallants employ the Irish footman Brian in order to instigate the linen-draper into a fit of pique by damaging his merchandise in the shop. In *Part II* act 4 scene 3, being intent on the cheap purchase of certain linens which he could not realize Matheo and Pacheco had stolen from peddlers, Candido falls inadvertently in the middle of a wild party of gallants who contrive to have a "good fit of mirth" (*Part II* 4.3.19) by forcing him to drink, dance, and sing bawdy songs. All of those surrounding him are familiar with such sex traders as Bots and Mistress Horseleech and enjoy lewd jokes, while Candido remains very awkward and cannot recognize even the identities of the 'city slickers'. He is shown distinctly different from those who are typical with their aggressive manliness and voracious sexuality. The scene seems to give evidence that Candido's gender quality can be a solution to the problem of prostitution. Yet, it portrays his asexuality as not being desirable at all, and illustrates the most severe insult and humiliation Candido has ever suffered in the whole play. Those mockeries and ridicules he undergoes in this scene pass over the border of comedy to the ambience of tragedy so that they makes it "difficult to believe that the Candido scenes are only a farcical counterpart of the Bellafront plot, as they are frequently viewed" (Manheim 372).

Candido's emasculated gender quality proves to be insufficient to secure even his own safety. His lack of manliness requires supplementation. It is notable that he frequently wants to rely on civic institutions when he is in trouble, and that his feebleness is protected by the public agency which acts out a sanctioned violence. In *Part I* act 1 scene 5, where the rakehell tricksters enter Candido's shop demanding a "pennyworth . . . of lawne" to be cut from the

very middle of a seventeen-yard piece, and proceed to run away with “a siluer and gilt beaker” stolen from his shop, the public security officers employ the physical force he lacks (65-66, 142). Another source of physical force which he needs comes from his apprentices. In *Part I* act 4 scene 3 where Viola disrupts the civic order of apprenticeship by enjoining George to behave himself like the master of the shop and to treat Candido as his apprentice, Candido is mistaken for George and soundly cuffed by two bravoos whom Fustigo hires for revenging himself to the apprentices. Without his apprentices’ protection, he could not have been rescued. However, in the following incidence of the same scene where he is arrested for an alleged madness, and in *Part II* act 4 scene 3 where he is arrested for dealing in the stolen goods, the supplementary violence of his apprentices or of the public force clearly proves unreliable. When he cannot find the supplementary force or he embroils himself in violence misapplied by the public force, as the two scenes demonstrate, he is relegated to the helpless victim.

In the Candido plot, on the other hand, Viola has incurred almost unanimous reprobation like Matheo of the Bellafront scenes. She makes her husband undergo enormous sufferings like Matheo does to his wife. When her behavior is seen from contemporary morality rather than from personal frustration, however, she may also be a victim of patriarchy like Matheo. She is shrewish, but her longing for her husband’s manliness registers her internalization of patriarchal codes that define manhood as aggressiveness and excessiveness. Along with her conventional belief of masculinity, her shrewishness may reflect the oppressed gender-role of housewives, which was strengthened by early modern capitalism. With the advent of capitalism, the bourgeois housewives were alienated from the workplace and relegated to the confines of domesticity (Alice Clark 41; Earle 163). Jacqueline Eales argues, “In Oxford a number of wives were trading in the middle ages, but . . . between 1500 and 1800 no such cases were documented” (79-80), and agreeing with

Peter Earle, she contends, “the wives of rich citizens were withdrawing from trade and were opting for an ‘idle and frivolous’ life” (79). That is, they were deprived of the chance to realize their potential aptitudes through productive work.<sup>77</sup> In this sense, the stereotypes of female viragos in Renaissance dramas who fed the contemporary misogynists with the typically alleged moral flaws such as vanity, lust and garrulousness may be the expression of their repressed psychology or frustration over their mummified situation.

From the standpoint of economic conditions, Viola’s domesticity is very different from that of Bellafront who confronts a series of husband’s abuses under destitution. Viola is a wife of the successful and wealthy London merchant who has ever been kind to her. In terms of patriarchal domestication of women in the early modern capitalism, however, her situation is as stifling as Bellafront’s. As the daily work of Candido’s shop in *Part I* shows, male characters monopolize social company and productive work, confining females within the narrow *domus*, and as Candido’s new bride in *Part II* testifies, the tamed housewife is reduced to a sort of accessory or appendage to her husband who is hosting the banquets at home or meeting the business customers at the shop. Viola tries to be engaged in the business of the workplace, but she is frequently excluded. With Candido as their centripetal figure, the apprentices constitute a strong male-bonding, sharing the same misogynist attitudes. Their respect towards “the head man” forms a striking contrast to their collaborated despising attitudes to her (*Part I* 4.2.14). George’s response to Viola’s shrewishness is typical of patriarchal attitudes. Without any consideration of her psychological frustration except for her material comforts, George retorts to Viola, blaming her shrewishness on the good food: “You’re well enough seru’d; prouander prickt you, as it does many of our Cittie-wiues besides” (*Part I* 5.1.9-11).

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<sup>77</sup> For the relationship between the alienation of women from the productive work and the development of capitalism, see Peter Earle, *The Making of the English Middle Class* (London: Methuen, 1989) 163-66.

In its exploration of a new type of masculinity, the play suggests that Candido's suppliant and yielding nature is not appropriate in relieving the housewife's frustration and in suiting the patriarchal society. In the last scene of *Part I*, thus, the play shrinks from the whole-hearted endorsement of his patience. In a captious tone, the Duke remarks, "Twere sinne all women should such husbands haue. / For euery man must then be his wiues slaue" (*Part I* 5.2.512-13). It is true that the Duke proposes to use him as an example to "teach our court to shine" (*Part I* 5.2.514), but as Mulholland argues, "Candido's accommodation into the court is conditional on a recognition that he is unique" (Introduction 285). Furthermore, the Duke's closing words are not the commendation of Candido's patience but the warning against Viola's shrewishness: "Wiues (with meeke husbands) that to vex them long, / In Bedlam must they dwell, els dwell they wrong" (*Part I* 5.2.516-17). In *Part II* the Duke is more accommodative. However, it does not mean that the criterion for accepting Candido's patience has changed. What has changed is Candido's gender quality. Unlike in *Part I*, Candido learns to use violence in *Part II*. Whereas in *Part II* act 1 scene 2 he tolerates his wife's violence meekly during the wedding feast in which his new bride throws her wine glass away in front of the guests, Candido in *Part II* act 2 scene 2 corrects his shrewish bride into obedience by threatening her with the "yard" according to Lodovico's guidance for violence (77). The last scene of *Part II* shows, therefore, the more violent Candido becomes, the more accommodative the Duke is. In a tone different from that of the last scene of *Part I*, the Duke says, "Thou hast taught the Citty patience, now our Court / Shall be thy Sphere", with no closing remarks against the shrewish wife (*Part II* 5.2.494-95).

## V. Bedlam and Bridewell

*Part I* ends in Bedlam, the literal madhouse within the City, while *Part II* ends, with symmetry to *Part I*, inside the prominent civic institute, Bridewell. The Bedlam scene



displays the madmen who have lost their wits because of business losses or because a lover died or was untrue. In the Bridewell scene, Dekker stages some unrepentant whores with names such as Dorothea Target, Penelope Whorehound, and Catherina Bountinall. Whatever the Italian setting of the play is, these two institutions are strong agents evoking early modern London. Bedlam and Bridewell were the City landmarks, and were connected with the incarceration and the control of those perceived as socially disruptive or disorderly.<sup>78</sup> *The Honest Whore*, one of whose writers, Dekker, had first-hand experience of imprisonment for debt in the Poultry Counter in 1598, and later in the King's Bench Prison from 1613 to 1620, goes beyond the conventional stage practice of depicting Bedlam and Bridewell as merely of topographical interest. In both *Part I* and *II*, the Duke, half absolute Monarch, half Lord Mayor, comes to these institutions to dispense justice and set wrongs right. As is typical of other city comedies, marriage and its reaffirmation at each end of *Part I* and *II* signal the channeling of sexuality into socially acceptable forms. But what is not typical is that in both *Parts* the reformation of the unruly and the reaffirmation of the marriage occur against a backdrop of the unrepentant and the unreformed, those the physical incarceration alone can govern. Madmen and whores are made spectacles of the uncontrollable. In *Part I*, a man who believes he has lost his wealth in a battle between his ships and the Turkish galleys, drags a net around the stage, fishing for salmon and lost treasure, babbling incoherently. In *Part II*, three unrepentant whores sing and curse before being whipped for repentance. They are surrounded, ironically, by signs of the state power that constrains them.

There has been no controversy about the suitability of using Bridewell as a setting of *Part II*, because the play deals with the problem of prostitution and its correction was one of

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<sup>78</sup> The same emphasis on the carceral aspects of civic life is present in other city comedies with which this play is intertextually linked. *The Changeling* uses Bedlam as its setting; over half the scenes in *Measure for Measure* take place in a prison or in the Ducal chambers; and *Eastward Ho* contrives to land its unruly apprentice in debtor's prison. For details, see Jean Howard, *Theater of a City: The Places of London Comedy, 1598-1642* (Philadelphia: U of Pennsylvania P, 2007).

the purposes of Bridewell. But using Bedlam as a setting of *Part I* has brought about a heated critical controversy, because the lunatic asylum has no apparent connection with the actions of the play. George Price criticizes Dekker, “Setting the denouement in Bedlam permits Dekker to entertain his audience with a show of madmen, which has but little relation to his drama” (63). Comensoli, however, takes issue with Price. She relates the madhouse to the anti-matrimonial sentiment that rumbles ominously in several characters’ utterances, and she supports the asylum scene by interpreting it as an ironic index to the conventional happy ending: “All of the couples are reunited in marriage, a dramatic convention severely undercut by the setting” of the madhouse (*Household Business* 143). Matheo gives evidence to Comensoli by satirizing marriage: “none goes to be married till he be starke mad” (*Part I* 5.2.35). Barbara Kreps sides with Comensoli, and complements the anti-matrimonial sentiment with early modern misogynist discourses. She argues that the viewpoint of marriage as madness is derived from the male prejudice: “It is not insignificant that the conditions necessary for the formation of both these marriages are realized only at Bedlam, the locus that, from the male point of view, symbolizes marriage” (94-95). That is, she contends that the male characters regard marriage as their incarceration because misogynist culture prevents them from considering it to be companionate. Matheo is a representative of this misogynist attitude: “Let a man get the tameest wife he can come by, sheele be mad enough afterward, doe what he can” (*Part II* 5.2.421-23).

Dissenting from Comensoli and Kreps, Ken Jackson argues, “Dekker and Middleton did not use these institutions ironically” (410). Mulholland also looks upon Bedlam as conducive to the happy ending, and interprets the madhouse as an appropriate site of character transformation: “Several of the play’s central characters here experience disorientation or a violently altered frame of mind” (Introduction 284); and “the world of the insane stands in parodic relation to the allegedly sane world. . . . The asylum accordingly provides an

appropriate setting for the settlement of transgressions of various descriptions initiated in the world at large” (Introduction 285). Yet, Mulholland’s interpretation, I think, does not take into proper consideration the unhappy married life which *Part II* demonstrates. Even if *Part I* shows the happy ending, it is a very short-lived reconciliation which is possible not in a real world but only within a mad world. In this sense, Matheo both as a misogynist and as a misogynist at the end of *Part I* may forecast not only his turbulent conjugality but also Hippolito’s extramarital passion in *Part II*.

Like Bedlam, Bridewell was also found with a purpose to link the detention and the treatment of the socially unsuitable. In *A Survey of London* (1603) John Stow stresses the cooperation between the aristocracy and the citizens in the creation and operation of Bridewell: it was “founded by King Edward VI to be a workhouse for the poor and idle persons of the city, wherein a great number of vagrant persons be now set a-work, and relieved at the charges of the citizens. . . . You may read . . . of good and charitable provisions made for the poor by sundry well-disposed citizens” (436). The governors thought, by “being forced to work within the institution, the prisoners would form the industrious habits”, and “when released, it was hoped, they would voluntarily swell the labor market” (Rusche and Kirchheimer 42). Vagrants who landed in Bridewell were usually sent with a pass back to their parishes of origin. Women accused of prostitution and taken to Bridewell were whipped and put to work before their eventual release. For a time after 1618, vagrant children were shipped from Bridewell to be indentured servants in Virginia, and women incarcerated in Bridewell were sent out to become the settlers’ wives there (McNeill 46).

The new use of the workhouse as a prison was a radical departure from the conventional practices which had been based on the belief that rehabilitation would be achieved simply by the deterrent loss of individual liberty. According to Foucault, the combination of incarceration and labour as in Bridewell in the early modern period came to

possess “not only the aspect of a forced labor camp, but also that of a moral institution responsible for punishing, for correcting a certain moral ‘abeyance’ which . . . cannot be corrected by the severity of penance alone” (*Madness and Civilization* 59). In a similar vein, but putting emphasis on the ideological reformulation of the poor, J. A. Sharpe argues that the emergence of Bridewell represented a step in the criminalization of poverty and added the idea of “labor discipline” to more “conventional notions of punishment as deterrence and retribution” (179). Thus, historically, Bridewell marked a water-shed point in the legal and moral management of the criminal and the poor.

As in the interpretation of Bedlam’s effect on *Part I*, the critics of *Part II* have also expressed contradictory viewpoints on Bridewell’s import in the play. Philip Shaw and Gãmini Salgãdo contend that Dekker merely draws on the popular, idealistic conception of the workhouse as reformatory. Shaw suggests that while the episode is informed by “topographical and vocational realism . . . the penology is somewhat idealized” (369), and that Bridewell is portrayed as “a work house for correction rather than a prison for punishment” (370). For Salgãdo, Dekker’s depiction of confinement “gives an idealized picture of Bridewell both as a house of correction and as recruiting centre” for the Elizabethan military campaigns (189). Siding with the official view of Bridewell, Ken Jackson also argues, “Dekker’s celebratory description of Bridewell in act V of *Part Two* mirrors Stow’s language. . . . The language describing Bridewell is much stronger and more positive than the language describing Bedlam in *Part One*” (409). Supporting the positive function of Bridewell, the guard in *The Honest Whore* praises orderliness and diligence with which the inmates set about their daily tasks. “All here are but one swarme of Bees”, he boasts, “and striue / To bring with wearied thighs honey to the Hiue” (*Part II* 5.2.35-36).

However, in her reading of the Bridewell episode, Comensoli departs from the contentions of Shaw, Salgãgo and Jackson. Comensoli argues, “Unlike the wholesome picture

of the workhouse drawn by Stow. . . Dekker's tour of Bridewell exposes not only the prison atmosphere but also the ineffectualness of the 'work' ethic practiced there" (*Household Business* 144). Indeed, the problem of the brutal punishment is underscored in the verbal exchange between the aristocrats and the rebellious prostitute Dorothea Target. Dorothea wishes, "I had rather get halfe a Crowne abroad, then ten Crownes here" (*Part II* 5.2.293). Dorothea's longing for liberty as a prostitute rather than a forced labourer at Bridewell and her implied suggestion of a brothel as a better home invites us to be reminded of McNeill's argument: "Bridewell failed . . . to live up to its utopic projection, becoming dangerously proximate in its internal demography to the masterless households of brothels and tenements" (176). The image of discrepancy between the official view of Bridewell and its actual state is reinforced by the guard's skeptical reply to Infelice's naïve claim that Bridewell "should make euen *Lais* honest" (*Part II* 5.2.255). In retorting upon her, the guard admits to its general failure, "But (as some men whose hands are once in blood, / Doe in a pride spill more) so, some going hence, / Are (by being here) lost in more impudence" (*Part II* 5.2.257-59). As early as in act 2, Bellafront has already attributed her prodigal husband's "wilde . . . behauior" (*Part II* 2.1.49) not only to his predisposition to vice but also to his having been "spoyld by prison" (*Part II* 2.1.50).

Bridewell, with its emphasis on unruliness, repression and torture, is an inversion of an idealized society towards which domestic comedies typically lead. The implication of incarceration forestalls the conventional melodramatic ending of the marriage plot. On the surface level, the conjugal reconciliation of Infelice/Hippolito and Bellafront/Mattheo contrasts sharply with the criminalization and incarceration which the other Bridewell inmates have to undergo, but in a deeper sense, the play's denouement at Bridewell distinctly underscores the contradictions of a so-called conjugal bliss. The obtrusion of the irrepressible whores and their pimp, who are pursued by "Constable" and "Beadles" (*Part II* 5.2.214.s.d.),

functions to demystify the melodramatic effect of the final scene at the very moment when the patient wife is garnering her rewards for virtue. Unlike the lower-rank flesh traders, the high-class courtesan, Bellafront, was fortunate enough to have a chance to be converted and married, and in return for her long endurance, she will be given “house”, “meate”, “wine”, “money” (*Part II* 5.2.479, 480, 481, 482). But there is no evidence in the so-called happy ending of the play that the other male characters except her father and Candido will change their shared patriarchal bigotry against the converted prostitute which has been the main cause for her miserable married life. The destiny of the sisters of her former profession, in that sense, casts a dark shadow on her future and reminds us of the saying: ‘It is one thing to be married, and another to be happy’.

## VI. Conclusion

In *The Honest Whore*, Bellafront’s conversion occurs in the second act of *Part I* and the remaining eight acts of both parts show a chain of tribulation which she suffers. *Part II* in particular singles out her hellish married life as its main concern. Critics have regarded her suffering as penance for her earlier transgressions, and interpreted the placement of her transformation early in the play as the evidence of Dekker’s conservative subscription to the contemporary morality. For example, Normand Berlin argues, “Dekker’s antipathy to the underworld is too strong, at least at the writing of this play, to allow for an easy conversion”, and the play suggests “the road to cleanliness and moral health is a treacherous one; only the most enduring can traverse it” (98). Haselkorn also contends, “[Bellafront’s] life in Part II, which is a continuous trial, evolves largely from her need for a ‘hair shirt’ to expiate her guilt for sins committed. While Dekker is a compassionate playwright, his Puritan morality, in the case of Bellafront, demands that the sinner must suffer in order to achieve purification and true redemption” (125). Of course, there are numerous pieces of evidence in the play which

support the viewpoints of these conventional moralists. For example, Hippolito attributes the cause of Bellafront's prostitution to her excessive carnal desire: "Curse that deuil *Lust*, that so burnes vp your blood, / And in ten thousand shiuers breake your glasse / For his temptation" (*Part I* 2.1.409-11). Orlando's denunciation against her daughter focuses on her moral depravity: "A Strumpet is one of the Deuils Vines; al the sinnes like so many Poles are stucke vpright out of hell, to be her props, that she may spread vpon them" (*Part II* 1.2.106-07). Even Bellafront herself concedes that her whoredom was a felonious moral transgression and that she can hardly be acquitted of the damnation of hell: "When the worke of Lust had earn'd my bread, / To taste it, how I trembled, lest each bit, / Ere it went downe, should choake me (chewing it)! / My bed seem'd like a Cabin hung in Hell" (*Part II* 4.1.353-56).

However, no women in early modern England are supposed to have turned to prostitution for the pursuit of sexual pleasure, and Bellafront's suffering after her reformation should be interpreted as exposing socio-cultural problems which are beyond individual accountability. The play shows that patriarchal capitalism in the early modern period was efficient in turning a chaste maid into a prostitute by applying the strict rule of virginity as a prerequisite of marriage, while promoting aggressive manliness as commendable. However, the play also invites us to presume that early modern patriarchy was very reluctant to accept a converted prostitute as a normal housewife. Therefore, revising the traditional moralist's view of Bellafront's long tribulation for her transgression, therefore, we can argue that the main focus of the play is not so much on a prostitute's reformation but on the collective prejudice of the patriarchal community against the converted prostitute. Revising it again in terms of the play's structural distribution, we can maintain that the play allots as many as eight acts to illustrate the patriarchal bigotry which destroys her happiness on account of her past profession, while it takes only two acts to show her moral regeneration.

Another socio-cultural problem which the play proves to be beyond a personal

responsibility is the extreme poverty which the converted prostitute confronts. *Part II* emphasizes Bellafront's economic destitution which she suffers as a wife of a wastrel husband by contrasting it with the luxurious lifestyle which she enjoyed while in prostitution. When Orlando accuses her of a suspected harlotry, she argues, "She that's a Whore / Liues gallant, fares well, is not (like me) poore" (*Part II* 4.1.58-59). In the early modern market economy, her abandonment of prostitution was equivalent to losing her means of livelihood. Her father, therefore, asks her in order to test her resolution of conversion: "Has thy husband any Lands, any Rents comming in, any Stocke going, any Ploughs iogging, any Ships sailing? hast thou any Wares to turne, so much as to get single penny by?" (*Part II* 4.1.63-65). Confronted with starvation, Bellafront pleads to her father, "So poore, that (tho to tell it be my shame) / I am not worth a dish to hold my meat; / I am yet poorer, I want bread to eate" (*Part II* 4.1.140-42). The play convincingly supports the conjecture that she would be eventually forced to fall into prostitution again if her father had no property to bequeath to her.

On the other hand, the play shows that reformation and marriage of a former prostitute would mean the complete renunciation of any worldly pleasure, maybe on behalf of the heavenly bliss after death. Bellafront should shore up her husband's rakish abuse, the community's persistent harassment, and the penurious poverty. Her marriage which *Part II* adopts as its main story is so miserable that it leads us to draw the compromising inference that her prostitution would be better than her marriage insofar as this earthly world concerns. Besieged by a series of abuses of Matheo, she admits at last, "Like an ill husband (tho I knew the same, / To be my vndoing) followed I that game" (*Part II* 4.1.351-52). She recognizes she has at least been as much undone by her abusive husband as by her prostitution. At any rate, when she was a prostitute, she could enjoy independence: "I am in bondes to no man" (*Part I* 2.1.257), and she could at least benefit from material luxury. Furthermore, the play gives no indication that Matheo will ever change his behaviour and that Hippolito's treacherous



seduction will ever end. No relief of her misery is in sight. The reformed prostitute's suffering is so severe and persistent that it surely discourages other prostitutes from transforming. The reason why the problem of prostitution was so widespread in early modern London seems to be explained by Bellafront's situation. The play, particularly *Part II*, makes evidence that the vicious cycle of Bellafront's case will occur time and time again, if it is not accompanied with the revamping of the patriarchal prejudice against converted prostitutes and with overhauling the socio-economic structure for the poor.

In spite of textual evidence in *Part II* which supports the viewpoint that the problem of prostitution derives from the socio-cultural structure, it might not be Dekker's intention to criticize early modern patriarchal capitalism for the production of prostitution. However, it would be reasonable conjecture that Dekker might have suspected Bellafront's unhappiness when he considered the abrupt conclusion of *Part I* in which the Duke orders Matheo to marry Bellafront for the sake of her honor. According to early modern sexual morality, the honour of a deflowered woman could hardly be regained except through her marriage to the man who first usurped her maidenhead. As a result of the playwright's accommodation of such cultural convention in *Part I*, then, patriarchy which destroys Bellafront's happiness with communal antagonism to her transformed life has the chance to disclose its inherent contradiction in *Part II*. That is to say, through its dramatic representation, the socio-cultural structure which circumscribes the author is summoned to reveal, regardless of the author's intention, its latent fault-lines which the official discourses are reluctant to concede.

I do not want to presume "the death of the Author" in order to insist on patriarchal capitalism as a cause for prostitution (Barthes 148). In spite of the poststructuralist revolution in literary interpretation, I think, the author is still the potent source of meaning. It is an inevitable ramification of the poststructuralist upheaval, however, that the author has been dethroned from the status of the ultimate origin of the text. It is the cultural circumstances

with which the author negotiates that are to be regarded as the ultimate sources of the text. Reformulating Barthes's death of the author into a less stark concept of author-function, Foucault argues that it is not the author but the author-function which is "to characterize the existence, circulation, and operation of certain discourses within a society" ("What Is an Author?" 1628). Therefore, the author is no more the only authority for the interpretation of the text, and readers are allowed to open and close the text's signifying process.<sup>79</sup>

As shown above, there are a lot of words or discourses scattered in the play which support the argument that patriarchal capitalism should assume the primary responsibility for prostitution. What counts is, however, not the local evidence in the text, but the overall subconscious of the play which is brought to the surface by the interaction between *Part I* and *Part II*. Both conservative critics and revisionist critics generally agree that *Part II* writes back to *Part I*, but they disagree with each other about how *Part II* writes back to *Part I*. I think, *Part II* refers back to the already written *Part I* in a way that it encourages the reader to produce new meanings by its counter-narrative to *Part I*. As is shown above, *Part II* counters *Part I* in that *Part I*'s patriarchism demands a prostitute to reform herself, but *Part II*'s patriarchism discourages her from reforming herself. In addition, Hippolito's reversed attitude to prostitution is also a distinctive counter-narrative of *Part II*. In these terms, *Part I* might be 'a closed text' with a limited meaning, and restrict the reader to a role of a consumer of the text, but *Part II* is 'an open text' with plural meanings, and encourages the reader to be a

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<sup>79</sup> The dogmatic appraisal conservative critics would make may be not that they emphasize individual moral responsibility but to suppose that they can grasp a solid and unified truth of the text. This supposition of conservative critics is based on their conventional assumption that language is a natural, neutral, and transparent medium through which they can get to the author. It does not need, however, a far-fetched logic to demonstrate that the signifier can hardly have the solid partner of the signified. It is impossible, thus, to repress all discourses into a single meaning. Literary critics should recognize the polyphonic and polysemantic nature of all words and allow the signifiers to generate meanings at will and to undermine the censorship of the signified. By liberating the signifier from the repressive insistence of the signified on a single meaning, the critics can allow the latent meanings to rise to the surface.

producer of new meanings.<sup>80</sup> Furthermore, from an ideological viewpoint, we can argue that if we were given only *Part I*, we would be limited to the conservative morals about prostitution, but, as we are also given *Part II*, we are allowed to raise a question about those conservative morals. Therefore, if *Part I* is concerned, traditional moralists' interpretation can be acceptable: i.e. the play demonstrates Dekker's conservative moral stances against prostitution. However, when we consider the counter-narrative of *Part II*, I think, it is a more valid interpretation that the play discloses the cultural contradiction of early modern patriarchal capitalism by showing that what makes a woman fall into prostitution is not the individual moral depravity but the communal socio-cultural failures.

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<sup>80</sup> I borrowed the idea of 'open' and 'closed' text from Roland Barthes as well. Barthes uses the terminologies of 'readerly' and 'writerly' text, but the basic concept of his terminologies is the same as the more generally accepted terms of 'open' and 'closed' text. For more detailed idea, see Roland Barthes, *S/Z*, trans. Richard Miller (London: Jonathan Cape, 1975).

**CHAPTER 3. SOCIAL PROTEST**

**SEARCHING FOR A GENUINE POPULAR VOICE IN *SIR THOMAS***

***MORE* IN THE CONTEXT OF OTHER INSURGENCY PLAYS**

**IN THE 1590S**

**I. Introduction**

**A. The Crisis Age of the 1590s**

*Sir Thomas More*, coming down to us as a manuscript play jagged with censorship and collaborative play-writing, can be regarded as a dramatic equivalent of the crisis-stricken 1590s. The last decade of Elizabethan London was besieged with consecutive predicaments; i.e. devastating plague, repeated harvest failures, massive price inflation, heavy taxation to finance the war in Ireland and the Low Countries, depression both in overseas and in domestic trade, large-scale unemployment, xenophobic commotions, and escalating crime and vagrancy. “Plague stalked the city in 1592-3” with a record of “10,675 plague deaths” “in the second year” alone, which amounted to “14.3 per cent of the population” (Archer 9). Plague years were followed by the four-year-successive harvest failures between 1594 and 1597. The poor harvests were good enough to flare up a significant inflationary surge, but the more exacerbated economic straits caused by the demands of the military pushed the London poor nearly to the brink of starvation. “The price of flour, which was perhaps the most important commodity to the typical London household, tripled during that brief period” of 1593-97 (Ward 354). Based on these accumulated hardships, argue most historians, “this was clearly the worst decade sixteenth-century Londoners experienced” (Archer 11).

The tension and social stress stemming from these economic hardships harrowed late-Elizabethan London with the epidemics of popular disturbances. During the tumultuous month of June 1595, there ensued “the most dangerous and prolonged urban uprisings in

England between the accession of the Tudor dynasty and the beginning of the Long Parliament” (Manning 208), which “seemed as if the whole fabric of the urban community might be about to disintegrate” (Peter Clark 56). At least 13 riotous incidents took place in June alone. The administrative failings of the Lord Mayor of that year made the severity of the crisis worse. Roger Manning argues, “It was not merely the number and duration of the disorders that made this uprising so dangerous, but also the explicit attack upon the authority of the lord mayor” (208). Fortunately, London avoided the breakdown, but order could be barely restored only after the curfews confining apprentices to their masters’ houses, such as the one Sir John Munday in *More* attempts to enforce (Addition II C: 5a.71),<sup>81</sup> and the declaration of martial law which subjected the City for the rest of the summer.

Concerning the handling of the City disorders in Elizabeth’s reign, the attitudes of the City governors were generally distinguished from those of the Crown officers. Elizabeth and her Privy Council frequently put pressure on the City magistrates to impose harsh repressive measures and to mete out rigorous punishments, while the City government preferred to adopt paternalistic attitudes in order to avoid pretexts for further riots (Manning 205). The aldermen usually took up a mediatorial position in disturbances, recognizing the legitimacy of

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<sup>81</sup> All quotations are from W. W. Greg, ed., *The Booke of Sir Thomas Moore*, by Anthony Munday et al., printed for the Malone Society (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1911), but in modernization, I follow John Jowett, ed., *Sir Thomas More* (New York: Methuen, 2011). The reason why I use Greg’s edition as a control text in this chapter is that I would like to develop an argument about the socio-political implications of the original text by comparing it with the additions. For the convenience of my comparison, Greg divides *The Booke of Sir Thomas Moore* into two separate sections: i.e. one Original Text and six Additions. Greg finds that each section of the play’s manuscript is transcribed by a different hand: i.e. the Original Text by Hand S; Addition I by Hand A; Addition II by Hand B, C and D; Addition III by Hand C; Addition IV by Hand C and E; Addition V by Hand C; and Addition VI by Hand B. And the scholars of the manuscript have identified Hand S as Anthony Munday, Hand A as Henry Chettle, Hand B as Thomas Heywood, Hand C as the theatre scribe and annotator, Hand D as William Shakespeare, and Hand E as Thomas Dekker. In producing the Arden edition, Jowett argues, “The identifications as a whole are sufficiently compelling for personal names to be substituted in the present edition for Greg’s alphabetical identifiers” (352). On the other hand, since Alexander Dyce’s edition of 1844, dozens of scholars have produced various versions of the play. For each edition’s characteristics, see John Jowett, “An Apocryphal Play: Editions from Dyce to Arden,” Appendices, *Sir Thomas More* (London: Methuen, 2011) 461-69.

apprentice grievances. This helps explain why it was that “the presence of the lord mayor alone was often enough to persuade the rioters to return home” (Archer 5). In 1595, however, “the mediatorial position of the elite was under severe strain”, “because the lord mayor himself had become an object of apprentice grievances” (Archer 5). Sir John Spencer – ‘Rich Spencer’, as he was usually called for his great wealth – was reputed as a stern magistrate even before he became a Mayor in 1595. In popular estimation, he was the symbol of harsh justice, a civic governor more maleficent than the royal magistrates. After the Elizabethan era, the City administration became easier because James I and his Crown Court’s interference in civic matters lessened (Manning 188). The exacerbated civic disorder in 1595 due to John Spencer’s ill reputation would have made up a topical backdrop to *More* (OT: 3.390-91),<sup>82</sup> and the difference of the Court’s attitudes to civic government between the Elizabethan and Jacobean era would be an indicator of the changed theatrical circumstances in which the revision of the play would have taken place.

During the disturbances in London, the City marginals such as brothels, theatres and districts of aliens or strangers were easy targets for the expression of economic frustration by native Londoners. Anti-alien feeling in particular was significant since strangers provided a suitable scapegoat for all the ills that afflicted Londoners: i.e. they were reputed to be responsible for inflation and increases in house prices; they were regarded as taking away jobs which might be performed by the English; they were poor, and disease flourished among them. The Ill May Day disturbances of 1517, which is the historical time-set of *More*, haunted the consciousness of the late-sixteenth-century metropolitan Londoners. The tensions were particularly acute in the later 1560s and early 1570s when alien immigration was at its height, and again in later 1580s and early 1590s when economic difficulties accumulated. During the 1595 disturbances, for example, “the speed with which the aldermen moved to suppress a

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<sup>82</sup> I abbreviate the Original Text (S) of Greg’s edition to OT.

pamphlet promoted by members of the Weavers' Company expressing hostility to strangers" shows how much the City magistrates feared "the tense situation might lead to further riots against the aliens, tapping a rich vein of popular xenophobia" (Archer 1).

The aliens or strangers came mostly from France and the Low Countries in large numbers in the latter half of the sixteenth century, particularly in the era of the French wars of religion. "As many as 40-50,000 strangers migrated to the metropolis between the years 1550 and 1585", and "it is likely that the permanent settlers were [about 10,000], in other words, 5-6 per cent of the metropolitan population" (Ward 353). A large scale of immigration into the metropolis, which was struggling to manage its growth, could have been highly destabilizing. It was resented not only because the aliens threatened the employment prospects of craftsmen and competed in the same market, but also because they were thought to evade company regulations and produce substandard goods. Alien merchants were also singled out for attack because they imported goods which competed with English products. This is why London natives like Lincoln the Broker, Williamson the Carpenter, Sherwin the Goldsmith and George Betts the Shopkeeper in *More* have developed anti-alien grudges, and why Lincoln declares in his bill, "[Aliens] take the living from all the artificers, and the intercourse from all merchants, whereby poverty is so much increased that every man bewaileth the misery of other; for craftsmen be brought to beggary, and merchants to neediness" (OT: 1.84-86).

In fact, however, the alien workers were not always negative to the London economy. The immigration of aliens introduced important new skills. The benefits of alien skills in silk weaving and black armour had long been recognized. In many ways, that is to say, "the services of the aliens were indispensable" (Archer 132). Concerning England as a protestant safe haven, on the other hand, French and Dutch churches "were created in 1550, to benefit the Protestants who sought refuge in London" (Ward 353). The newly arrived immigrants who associated with one of these churches would gain an entry point not only to a familiar

community of faith but also to social networks that would provide them with important social and economic contacts within an almost exclusive alien world. Thus, “aliens were . . . seen as forming an inward-looking society of their own deliberately cutting themselves off from their hosts” (Archer 131). “Such separateness helped to fuel occasional outbursts of animosity aimed at the strangers – who, it may have appeared to many of London’s native residents, had access to a comprehensive range of social services through their churches that were denied to most other Londoners” (Ward 353). These circumstances might have constituted the sectarian background that explains why Doctor Beal agrees to publish Lincoln’s “bill of wrongs in public at the Spital” (OT: 3.396), and why Lincoln shouts to his followers, “Shall these enjoy more privilege than we / In our own countries?” (OT: 4.423-24).

In the matter of tackling the alien problems, each social group posed different attitudes. First, the Crown authorities showed themselves lukewarm towards restrictive measures against the aliens. There was, actually, a considerable amount of sympathy in the Crown Court for the plight of the aliens. In the 1590s, for example, “the council responded [favourably] to petitioning from the Dutch church to restrain the activity of informers” employed by the livery companies to search the alien shops (Archer 138). In addition, “Cecil wished to harness alien skills in his projects for import substitution; Grindal as bishop of London was a friend of the religious refugees” (Archer 137). These attitudes of the Crown Court authorities might have aggravated the anti-alien feelings of the London citizens like those in *More*. Second, in the level of the City government, the attitudes against the alien workers diverged between larger producers on the one hand and smaller craftsmen and journeymen on the other. In spite of the complaints of the craftsmen about looming unemployment, the available freemen were not always sufficient to satisfy demand. Emergencies like war created an extra demand which free labour could not satisfy. The alien labour offered not only this extra demand but also the opportunity of keeping wage costs



down.

Along with the economic utilities, the aliens could also be used as convenient scapegoats who “were to be blamed for problems the causes of which lay elsewhere”: i.e. “anti-alien feeling was one means by which tension in the times of crisis [could be diverted]” (Archer 140). This was why the City elites showed contradictory attitudes from time to time, whereas the Crown officials displayed fairly constant attitudes. As a corollary, the real victim of large scale alien immigration was the poorer artisan who could not benefit from alien skills, nor the necessity of a large pool of labour to keep costs down and satisfy irregular surges in demand. This might invite George Betts to demand, “The removing of the strangers, which cannot choose but much advantage the poor handicrafts of the City” (Addition II D: 6.193-94), and from these stratified attitudes to the aliens, it can be fairly conjectured that most of Lincoln’s followers were lower-level Londoners such as petty shopkeepers, journeymen, daily labourers, apprentices, servants, masterless men and the like.

Some historians have interpreted popular disturbances as a release-mechanism that ultimately helped to keep society on an even keel. Steven R. Smith has argued that London apprentices constituted a distinct adolescent subculture (160). On the day of traditional festivities such as May Day and Shrove Tuesday, there were traditions in London, as elsewhere, of young people making merry, not to mention making trouble, as is represented in the apprentice scene of *More* (OT: 5.453-72). However, when we attempt to attribute apprentices’ riot to the existence of an adolescent subculture, we need to take into consideration the problematic homogeneity of age and occupational status of the London apprentices. As Keith Wrightson shows, the precise vocabulary of estates and degrees favoured in legal documents and in elite commentaries on society in the works of such writers as Sir Thomas Smith, William Harrison, Sir Thomas Wilson, and Gregory King was rarely reproduced in more informal comments on social gradation (“Sorts of People” 29-30).

Moreover, the specialization of urban economies, the growth of new industries and service sectors made the traditional terminologies such as apprentices, journeymen, artisans, shopkeepers, servants, runaways, masterless men, discharged soldiers, sailors, vagrants and the like less and less accurate indicators of occupations and income sources. As a result, regardless of age groups, ‘apprentice’ was used as a blanket term to describe the amorphous London crowd for lack of a better term, and the popular disturbances were usually attributed to them in Elizabethan London (Manning 193).

The character of adolescent sub-cultural disturbances during the festive seasons remains obscure, but they do not appear to have posed a serious threat to authority. As long as festive antics remained within the accepted limits of attacking only brothels or playhouses in the areas such as Clerkenwell or Shoreditch, the rioters might expect relatively lenient punishments. Ian Archer argues, “The strictures of the aldermen in a precept of 1576 against ‘showtinges, hooping noyses, soundinge of drummes or instrumentes, shootinge of gunnes or using of squybbes’ are more suggestive of rowdy sporting competitions than any threat to authority” (3). However, it appears that festive disorder became a serious problem after 1580, because this late Elizabethan era was not only the period during which the most rapid growth in London population occurred but it was also a time when the subsistence problems of hunger and unemployment became exacerbated (Manning 191).

Most historians agree that apprentice riots related to festive disturbances were concentrated in the last decade of the sixteenth century, but some of the revisionist historians do not see this concentration of the disturbances as a sign of crisis, excluding the socio-economic element from festive disturbances. Although they are obliged to concede that the disturbances were more serious in 1595 than at other times, for example, Steve Rappaport argues that the disorders of that year reflected unusually youthful high spirits, “chiefly the antics and brawling of apprentices, youths in their late teens and early twenties” (8), rather

than intentional crowd action aiming at “the attainment of specific, realistic goals” (11). That is, his preferred explanation for apprentice disorder in the last decade is that ‘boys will be boys’. This view misinterpreted the apprentice riots of the 1590s not only because it disregarded the socio-economic instability of the period but also because it didn’t take into consideration the disputable age-group of ‘apprentice’ in the early modern historiography.

It may be an exaggeration to argue that the 1590s London crisis in general and the 1595 apprentice protest in particular were catastrophic enough to pose a real threat to the Elizabethan regime. Contrary to the revisionist arguments, however, it is obvious that the collective crowd actions in the 1590s were neither merely the expression of adolescent misrule nor violent outrages conducted by disorderly mobs. The popular disturbances were caused by food shortages and the subsistence predicament, and since their “grievances were usually quite specific”, their “use of violence was both controlled and selective” (Manning 2). The instances of popular market regulation which occurred during the turbulent June of 1595 demonstrate the so-called “order within disorder”, even though they defied authority (Hindle 140). On 13 June, the 300 apprentices who assembled in Southwark took upon themselves the office of clerk of the market, selling butter at 3d per pound, whereas the owner demanded 5d. They issued a proclamation which was intended to remind the City magistrates of their duties, but there is no evidence that they made other disturbances (Archer 6).

Concerning the popular protests of early modern England in general, Steve Hindle argues, “Overwhelmingly, it seems, they were characterized by discipline and restraint, and are best described as *demonstrations* rather than as *insurrections*”; agreeing with J. Walter, he continues, “Crowds engaged in direct action only as the very last resort in a pinching situation of serial complaints ignored in which their grievances had previously been expressed in grumbling, in appealing and in petitioning”; and he emphasizes, “Only very rarely did they involve violence” (138). Thus, rather than being the mindless “body’s members, /

Rebell[ing] against the belly” (*Coriolanus* 1.1.85-86), food riots were reasonable crowd actions, which expressed deeply felt and widely shared grievances, embedded in customary expectations for the paternalistic sympathy of the ruling elites. These grievances “operated within a popular consensus as to what were legitimate and what were illegitimate practices in marketing, milling, baking, etc. This in its turn was grounded upon a consistent traditional view of social norms and obligations, of the proper economic functions of several parties within the community”, which, taken together, can be best summarized as “the moral economy” (Thompson 188).

In his seminal study of popular appeal to “moral economy”, Edward Thompson gives us two important insights into the early modern crowd action. First, Thompson argues, the commoners based their demands on their customary rights which had been widely recognized not only by themselves but also by their governors. In order not to be tricked into the face value of the orthodox discourse, we should turn over the rhetoric of the contemporary elites and look at its undersides. “If we do not do this, we are in danger of becoming prisoners of the assumptions and self-image of the rulers: free labourers are seen as the ‘loose and disorderly sort’, riot is seen as spontaneous and ‘blind’, and important kinds of social protest become lost in the category of ‘crime’” (Thompson 72). Secondly, insists Thompson, the crowd action should not be interpreted as spasmodic reflexiveness merely to economic hardships: i.e. “true famine (where there really is no stock of food) was not often attended with riot, since there are few rational targets for the rioters” (264). As evidences for the Thompsonian critique of economic reductionism, Buchanan Sharp gives historical examples: In the pastoral North-West of England as late as the 1590s and 1620s the population appears to have suffered from famine mortality, but “the poor . . . starved to death quietly, and created no problems of order for their governors” (275). Therefore, “once the rhetorical agenda of elite, especially judicial, descriptions of riots had been stripped away, . . . a more nuanced and

realistic image of the riot could be reconstructed” (Hindle 137). Furthermore, not only in historiographical discipline but also in the field of literature, this Thompsonian formula of moral economy should be adopted as a critical pointer in evaluating the historical trustworthiness of the dramatic representation of the popular voice.

Thompson’s formative polemics on popular appeal to moral economy, unfortunately, might be reductively interpreted into the so-called ‘manipulation theory’, which attributes crowd action to power struggles within elite groups. History of popular protest invites us to suppose that, where aristocratic manipulation or gentry factionalism intercepted the crowd action, it tended to turn into power-contention which was “more sustained and less spontaneous than social protest” (Manning 2). History teaches us, however, that most crowd actions occurred because of the poor people’s subsistence crisis, and that it was a rare case for their protests to be manipulated by the divisive ruling elites. Thus, the popular protest with which I am mainly concerned in this chapter is to be categorized differently from the power-struggle which was stage-managed by the elite groups and thus contaminated by royalist historiography. In the case of popular protest, most petitioners first carried their grievances to their lords or magistrates. “They resorted to violent demonstrations only when their governors failed to heed warnings or to redress grievances, displayed partiality, or did not discharge their traditional duties of rendering justice and resolving disputes”, Manning argues, and “their motives were devoid of political consciousness and their writings or utterances did not employ political vocabulary” (2).

In the context of the field-of-force of early modern social relations, however, the so-called ‘deference hypothesis’, in which the poor were supposed to base their obedience on the paternalistic attitude of the governing elites, should not be interpreted simply with too much emphasis on the downward direction of influence as in the manipulation theory. The relations of paternalism and deference were perforce “not only *reciprocal* but *conditional*”, and both

the elite and the common were only too aware that the tradition of protests might contain within itself “an element of tacit negotiation” (Hindle 139): i.e. both the downward influence and the upward pressure dynamically coexisted in livery companies and City government. That is, the commoners might weaken the oligarchic tendencies of urban politics as well as strengthen those participatory aspects which helped to forge a common identity in the civic community. In turn, members of the governing elites, whatever their private interests, clearly found it necessary to gain the support of their lower orders, when they appealed to civic identity and to a shared rhetoric of community. In early modern London, obviously, the poorer sort of people were yet to constitute the Marxist concept of class with nationwide political consciousness, but they were not passive recipients of civic authority, as the revisionist historians argue, being unilaterally bound by hierarchical links and passively manipulated by local factionalism.<sup>83</sup> The common people themselves were capable of developing somewhat sophisticated economic attitudes, even if they were less formally articulated than those of the ruling elites.

### **B. Popular Insurgency Plays in the Crisis Age of the 1590s**

Amidst a decade of protests and revolts, the playing companies of London produced several dramatic works which touched on the feverish instability of Elizabeth’s last decade, variously interpreting the powers of the common people. On one side lie the majority of plays such as *2 Henry VI* (c. 1591), *1 Edward IV* (c. 1599) and *Julius Caesar* (1599) which depict popular protests more or less politically manipulated by the contentious elites for sovereign power, and on the other are placed a few plays such as *Jack Straw* (c. 1590-91) and *More* (c.

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<sup>83</sup> The revisionist historians propounded the manipulation theory in the 1970s, in objection to the previous orthodox historiography of which the influential scholar, S. R. Gardiner, had interpreted the Civil War as a crucial step in the structural transition from a traditional ‘feudal’ to a modern ‘capitalist’ society. The revisionists interpreted the Civil War as an accidental war resulting from local factionalism by emphasizing the downward dictation of the ruling elites. The representatives of the revisionists are Alan Everitt, Conrad Russell, John Morill, Mark Kishlansky, Kevin Sharpe and Steve Rappaport.

1592-1603) which show the commoners in autonomous uprisings due to their sustenance crisis. As for the economic grievances, all of the plays in this list register them as one or the whole of the causes of the mass actions except the Roman plebeians' commotion in *Julius Caesar*. In terms of the relationship between popular turmoil and festive misrule, all of the plays engage communal riots in certain features of folk festivities, which serves as a clue to render the collective disturbances both applicable to the theory of carnival and at the same time susceptible to the stigmatizing discourse of the many-headed multitudes' natural propensity for saturnalian anarchy.

*Jack Straw* is one of the shortest Elizabethan plays, and the general effect of its 971-line length is both fragmentary and episodic, but it sets a representative pattern of the 1590s popular insurgency plays: i.e. it features the protesters' customary stage role of gruesome but farcical comedians, their xenophobic sentiment and vandalist attacks, and the elements of political radicalism involving the church cleric as their ideological apologist. Jack Straw's revolt of 1381 was precipitated by the tax collectors' heavy handed attempts to enforce the poll tax during the reign of Richard II. The cause of the revolt and the time-setting of the play cut parallelism with those of *Thomas of Woodstock*.<sup>84</sup> According to Holinshed and Stow, the peasant farmer refuses to pay the "poll groats" for his daughter demanded by the collector on the ground that she is under age (Holinshed 2: 735). A brawl ensues in which the collector is accidentally killed and rebellion is proclaimed. The play, however, seems to be reluctant to give a full dramatization of it. Issues and motives are summarily sketched, the exposition of them is minimal. It is so cursory that the materials seem to have been deleted from the original play book (Clare 37). In contrast to most of the rebellion plays, on the other hand,

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<sup>84</sup> In spite of this parallelism, I exclude *Thomas of Woodstock* from the list of the 1590s populace insurgency plays on the ground of MacDonald Jackson's study in 2001. Jackson argues *Thomas of Woodstock* to be a Jacobean drama sometime during the first decade of James' reign. For detailed analysis of the controversies on the date of the play, see Macdonald Jackson, "Shakespeare's *Richard II* and the Anonymous *Thomas of Woodstock*," *Medieval and Renaissance Drama in England* 14 (2001) 17-65.

*Jack Straw* does not couch the commoners' insurgence in the context of the elites' power struggle.

*2 Henry VI* involves itself in the manipulation theory with the soliloquy at the end of act 3 scene 1 where York reveals his intention to employ the Kentish-man Jack Cade as his stalking-horse in his Machiavellian drive to seize the Crown (3.1.355-83).<sup>85</sup> Cade in turn pretends to be "Mortimer", a claimant to the throne through the Yorkist line, in order to test the waters for York's own bid for power (4.2.33). Cade is thus never an independent agent of the people: rather, he is the tool of an ambitious nobleman. In the inset scenes of act 4, however, the play presents the actual events of Cade's rebellion as powerfully charged with the commoners' discontent and aspiration, because out of Cade's mouth issues a critique of social and economic inequality that speaks to the living issues of the 1590s London. Historically, Cade's rebellion broke out by the Kentish peasants against unfair taxes, the ruling elites' corruption and the damaging effect of the loss of France in the festive season of the late spring of 1450, but in portraying it, Shakespeare draws on many instances of the 1590s apprentice protest. Cade's followers in the play are the urban artisans: weavers, butchers, handicraftsmen and tanners. Through Cade, their economic grievances find expression, along with the articulation of an alternative model of socio-economic organization much more radically utopian than hierarchical paternalism and moral economy which the Duke of Gloucester represents in the play.

*1 Edward IV* has an episodic structure, and nine of the first ten scenes dramatize the rebellion of Bastard Falconbridge, Thomas Neville, who leads an army of people to depose Edward IV on behalf of the house of Lancaster. The popular rebellion, mobilized by the Crown contender as in *2 Henry VI*, represents itself as mindless violence like Cade's disorder. The difference between the two mutinies is that Falconbridge's rebellion is a threat not merely

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<sup>85</sup> All quotations are from Stephen Greenblatt et al., eds., *2 Henry VI, The Norton Shakespeare: Based on the Oxford Edition* (New York: Norton, 1997) 203-90.



to the royal sovereignty but also to the citizens of London, which leads to an alignment between Crown and City as in *Jack Straw*. In possible consequences of the rebels' violence, on the other hand, the play renders it not from the perspective of the Crown but from that of the Londoners. In the suppression of the rebellion, consequently, it puts emphasis on the role of the London citizens, almost excluding that of the King and his royal army. Furthermore, the City-oriented perspectives drive a crucial wedge between the surface structure of the play which presents an orthodox definition of rebellion based on a pro-monarchy ideology, on the one hand, and the deeper level of the play which suggests the abuse of royal prerogatives, the repressive state apparatus and the fiscal expedients of the Crown Court, on the other. Ultimately, these aspects stop us from sympathizing with Tudor propaganda of anti-rebellion discourses.

*Julius Caesar* is an extreme example of the arbitrary manipulation of the common crowd. Throughout the play, the commoners are largely imagined from an upper-class perspective as politically unsophisticated and morally giddy-minded mobsters that hardly seem to merit the scrupulous civic duty of their governors. The capacity for conscious and reflective political decision-making rests in the hands of the small elite. In the opening scene the carpenter and the cobbler are dismissed as "idle creatures" who have mistaken "a laboring day" for "a holiday" (1.1.1; 4; 2),<sup>86</sup> and whose mindless wavering of allegiance from Pompey to Caesar is castigated as an indication of their political stupor. By positioning the plebs in this political paralysis, the play illustrates a paragon of the populist demagogue who knows how to indulge the plebs with bread and circuses. The commoners' vulnerable credulity is envisaged by Brutus's design of assassination, in which he will imitate "subtle masters" who deliberately "stir up their servants to an act of rage, / And after seem to chide 'em", to curry favour with "the common eyes" (2.1.175-77, 79); and by Caesar's blunt refusal of Metellus's

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<sup>86</sup> All quotations are from Stephen Greenblatt et al., eds., *The Tragedy of Julius Caesar, The Norton Shakespeare: Based on the Oxford Edition* (New York: Norton, 1997) 1525-89.

petition in which he says, “These couchings and these lowly courtesies / Might fire the blood of ordinary men / And turn preordinance and first decree / Into the law of children. Be not fond / To think that Caesar bears such rebel blood” (3.1.36-40). The populist manipulation is epitomized by Antony’s funeral oration which features Caesar’s will, i.e. the dictator’s intention to bequeath “to every several man” the potent bribe of “seventy-five drachmas” (3.2.233).

### **C. *More* as a Social Protest Play**

*More*, presumed by most scholars to be written originally in the early or the mid years of the 1590s,<sup>87</sup> shows the three basic movements of the popular tragic model known in Latin as *de casibus virorum illustrium*, following the parabolic career of the outstanding Renaissance humanist: i.e. his rise from the humble sheriff to the Crown Councilor, Lord Chancellor, resulting from his success in peacefully quelling the Ill May Day apprentice riots of the 1517, and his decline and eventual execution as a Catholic martyr for refusing to subscribe to the Supremacy Act of Henry VIII. Concerning the crisis age of the 1590s, the play deals with highly provocative topicalities, which is evident from the censorial intervention in the manuscript. Mainly motivated by Tilney’s demand for substantial rewriting, textual scholars have committed themselves to identifying the two aspects of its political provocativeness: first, how it exploits contemporary anti-alien resentment, “which was noticeable by late 1592 and led to rioting and harsh government reprisals between 1593 and 1595” (Cohen 2011); second, how it sympathetically dramatizes the life of the Catholic martyr, though the play carefully converts the volatile issue of papal versus royal supremacy

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<sup>87</sup> In his recent edition of Arden Shakespeare, John Jowett suggests a new date of around 1600. In this chapter, I am not engaged in the debate of authors and dates, but it seems to me that the more widely known theory of the date is still the early or the mid 1590s. For detailed arguments for Jowett’s new date of c. 1600, see his “The Original Text: Date,” *Sir Thomas More*, ed. John Jowett (New York: Methuen, 2011) 424-32.

into an obscure conflict between worldly authority and individual conscience. Focusing on the first aspect of the apprentice riot but redirecting it from the textual viewpoint to the socio-political question, I will argue the special seditiousness of the play which has not been recognized by the previous studies. I will especially focus on two aspects: the topographical provocation of the apprentice riot which locates its epicentre within the City of London; its allusion to the commoners' subsistence crisis of the 1590s by emphasizing the food shortage rather than the anti-alien sentiment.

In the study of *More*, its anonymity and its lack of date in the manuscript have been of dominant interest as puzzles to be solved, particularly because Shakespeare is supposed to have been involved in its authorship. Sisyphean efforts have been made to clarify its authors and revisionary questions, which have been once again narrowed down to Shakespeare's involvement. However, putting too much emphasis on its textual problems has caused the scholarship of the play to disregard cultural implications of how it interacted with contemporary London. *More* is not only an exemplary specimen for textual studies but also a signal text for its blatant involvement in the socio-political issues of the last decade of Elizabethan London. It is very unique among the social-protest plays in that it shows the apprentices' riot breaking out within the City of London, and the original text at least illustrates the pure form of their voices which are not yet contaminated by carnivalesque mockery. Furthermore, through the canonization not only of *More* but also of *Lincoln*, the play lets loose the Elizabethan grip on anti-monarchical discourse and eventually discloses the fissures of the authoritarian Tudor ideology.

Unfortunately, textual study itself has suffered from disregarding its socio-political context. The scholars who argue the last revision of the play happened around 1603 give as circumstantial evidence the changes in the Revels Office around the start of the Jacobean era: i.e. Sir George Buc received the reversionary grant of the mastership of the Revels on 21 June

1603, and he adopted a more relaxed stance towards censorship than Tilney. Gary Taylor suggests the presence of Buc's hand in the manuscript play *Charlemagne* as the evidence that Buc began to assume "primary responsibility long before Tilney's death in 1610" (124), but his claim is now discredited, because the date of *Charlemagne* which was postulated by Taylor in the first years of James I's reign is now re-dated to the 1610s by subsequent studies.<sup>88</sup> Yet, regardless of the controversial conjecture about whether Buc might begin to exercise some of the functions of the office immediately after this grant or not, the possibility of resubmitting the play to the Revels Office might not be restricted in the consideration of the personal difference of two masters' censorial attitudes. It should also be considered from the perspective of the changed conditions of the government of London around the start of the Jacobean era. In the first few years of the seventeenth century, not only did London recover from the crisis of the 1590s but its government became less intractable. During the last decade of Elizabethan era, as argued earlier, what made the situation more aggravated was not only due to economic disasters but also due to Crown Court's fretful reaction to City disturbances. "Something like two out of every three riots in the London area during the reign of Elizabeth occurred within the city and many were protests against harsh punishment imposed by city magistrates at the Crown's insistence" (Manning 187-88). With the beginning of Jacobean era, as I have argued above, the government of the City was eased up not only thanks to the improved economic situation but also thanks to James's lack of interest in City affairs. As a result, the apprentices' riots sharply dwindled. It invites us to presume that these changed socio-political circumstances made the topical provocativeness of the play decrease and the likelihood of the Revels Office's permission increase.

As another controversy which can be raised by the socio-historical consideration, we

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<sup>88</sup> For the new date of *Charlemagne*, see Martin Wiggins's outstanding research, *British Drama 1533-1642: A Catalogue* (Oxford: Oxford UP). Wiggins's catalogue is a multivolume work. The first volume which deals with the period of 1533-66 was published in 2012, but the remaining volumes are forthcoming.

can think of Scott McMillin's interpretation of 'apprentice' in his performance-oriented study. He argues that Shakespeare participated in the early stage of the several revisions "before Tilney censored the play and before the revisions had been performed on the apprentices" (59). For evidence, he argues that Shakespeare emphasized "apprentices" by designating the rioters as apprentices several times in his revision (58-59). As shown above, however, the term 'apprentice' in early modern historiography had a wider meaning almost the same as 'city crowd'. It is likely that Shakespeare didn't pay any attention to whether the rioters were called apprentices or not, and thus the locution, "apprentice", can hardly be regarded as a reliable evidence.

When we encounter a book presumably written by a great writer such as Shakespeare, it is difficult to avoid the question of authorship and date, because the name of a great author has a different implication from a private person's name. In a great author's case, the signifier of his name is frequently not limited to the indicative or designative function, but it produces a widely descriptive or sometimes prescriptive field of discourse beyond the indicative function (Foucault, "What Is an Author?" 1628-31). It is especially true when the author's works are richly fertile, frequently reproduced and widely disseminated, but the physical evidence of his personal life-story is scarce, or when he is anonymous. As there have been at least hundreds of types of discourses produced to identify who and what Shakespeare was, so there have been no less than tens of conjectural theories turned out about the authors of *More*. Nevertheless, it seems unlikely that those Sisyphean efforts will ever reach a final conclusion. Furthermore, considering the unsettled textual scholarship of *More*, it is very likely that the literary critics' destiny will continue to be committed to the repetitive questions: who was the real author and when did he write what?

Insofar as we do not lose our belief in the author's creative role or in the subject's autonomous agency, truly, we cannot abandon these questions entirely. However, with the

same belief in the readers' autonomous agency and productive role in the studies of *More*, I think, I can redirect the textual problems into new questions: what function is allocated to the author in question by a given culture; what placements are both visibly and invisibly determined for him; under what conditions and through what forms can an entity like the author appear in the order of dramatic discourse; and what rules does he follow both consciously and unconsciously in each type of discourse? In other words, this chapter aims to seize the "author-function", i.e. "its intervention in discourse, and its system of dependencies", which are articulated in the circumstances of its socio-political interactions (Foucault, "What Is an Author?" 1635). Through my attention to this author-function, I will try to recover a genuine popular voice from the social protest plays of the 1590s. In the conclusion, based on the result of my research into the popular voice, I will compare Derridean theory of textual truth with Foucauldian concept of discursive truth, and suggest that textual free-play should be discursive power-play.

## **II. Topographical Provocativeness of *More***

In the left-hand margin opposite to lines 1-19 of the first leaf of *The Booke of Sir Thomas Moore*, Edmund Tilney jotted down an injunction: "Leave out the insurrection wholly and the cause thereof, and begin with Sir Thomas More at the Mayor's sessions, with a report afterwards of his good service done being Sheriff of London upon a mutiny against the Lombards — only by a short report, and not otherwise, at your own perils. E. Tilney". This famous censorial intervention raises two questions. First, why should all of the insurrection scenes be cut out? We know there were several other plays in the 1590s which dealt with populace insurgency. Then, what aspect of the play's presentation of crowd action makes it politically so provocative as to oblige its whole display to be excised out? Was it a problem within the play, or in the socio-political situation surrounding the play? Or was it because of

the combined problems of both? Second, how was it permissible to render Thomas More in a hagiographic representation? In the Elizabethan era, More had already been renowned as a Catholic martyr, an exemplary recusant to Protestant England. In those turbulent years of the Tudor period, could it not be more seditious than dramatizing the commoners' revolt? To these questions, Janet Clare gives an answer representative of the play's critics. Tilney's suppression, argues Clare, "falls into two categories: the displays of xenophobic disorder in the anti-alien riots and More's role in opposing Henry VIII's break with Rome" (30). About the subdued tone of the religious provocativeness, she explains, "Even so, the latter issue is rather summarily represented in the original manuscript. The play is silent about More's opposition to the Acts of Supremacy and Succession. . . . His dramatic representation should therefore have caused the censor little concern" (30). Can we be convinced, however, that the displays of xenophobic disorder and the silence about the Supremacy Acts are satisfactory explanations of Tilney's seemingly contradictory intervention?

*More* enhances its political immediacy with its strong engagement with London topology. Lincoln's uprising is mapped on to particular London sites with its observant sensitivity to the physical features of London. Given the phenomenal expansion of the City in the latter half of the sixteenth century, it may look spontaneous that the contemporary theatre responded to it with its acute attentiveness. Yet, it was not until about fifteen years after the opening of the first purpose-built theatre in 1576 that the theatre began to show its full response with its sensitized topographical references. It was on the historiographical field that the exponential development of the City exercised its first impact. Around the mid sixteenth century, the citizen chronicles made an almost sweeping substitution for the monastic annals of the previous medieval style with their secular interests in metropolitan expansion. Following the exemplary chronicle by Robert Fabyan, the numerous chronicles by street-wise Londoners such as Hall, Holinshed, Grafton and Stow were consecutively published. Around

the early 1590s, theatre-wise Londoners began to produce chronicle plays, adopting the specific City locales from their fellow citizens' chronicles with the same pointed geographical knowledge. On this backdrop of London topology were the implications of the City locales and their particularized semiotics of *More* built.

It has been a critical convention in the study of the early modern theatre to put emphasis on the pervasive references to London localities in chronicle plays, but neither the sensitized acumen with which *More* achieved the prominent topographical symbolism nor the uniqueness of *More* in the deployment of topographical references has been properly appreciated. Most chronicle plays in the early and the mid 1590s gleaned London localities from the chronicle sources as did *More*, but they did not markedly amplify the signification of topographical specificities as blatantly as *More*. Accentuating political provocativeness of London topographicality, furthermore, the protesters in *More* are presented as the insiders of the City, whereas the other populace rebels in the chronicle plays are City outsiders. Jack Straw, Falconbridge, Jack Cade and their respective followers raise their insurrections in the Home Counties and march to London as intruders, and in *Julius Caesar* the geopolitical backdrop itself is vacated from England to ancient Rome. In addition to marking out the protesters as London insiders, *More* designates as the commoners' distresses the specific London problems such as royal favoritism to the alien artisans and the resultant unemployment of the City apprentices, whereas the other plays describe the insurgents' grievances as the result of generalized problems of the whole country such as harvest failures, common land enclosures and heavy taxes. The rebels of *Jack Straw* engage in crowd action to protest against the nationwide problems of heavy taxes and ill-administration, Jack Cade in 2 *Henry VI* wages insurrection to appeal to the public grievances against courtier corruptions and foreign policy failures, and Falconbridge takes to the street in the name of the age-old contention for royal legitimacy.



The topographical distinctiveness of *More* is clear when it is compared with Shakespeare's *2 Henry VI*. It has long been observed by critics that *2 Henry VI* veers from its chronicle sources and presents Cade and his followers not as rural peasants but as urban artisans linking Cade's rebellion with the London crisis of the 1590s, but it has not been in critical assessment that the play reminds the audience continuously that they are not London insurgents but Kentish rabbles, keeping the audience away from the identification of them with the discontent Londoners: they are "scum of Kent" (4.2.109), or "Kentish rebels" (4.4.41, 56). One of the followers is a tanner who comes from a Kentish town, "Wingham" (4.2.19), another follower is Dick the Butcher from "Ashford" (4.3.1), and a victim of Cade's vandalism is a clerk from "Chatham" (4.2.75). By positioning the rebels outside London, the play gives a geographical road-map of Cade's rebellious progress from Kent to London, strengthening the image of the Kentish rebels as external intruders to London. When the play introduces the rebels in act 4 scene 2, it locates them in Blackheath, Kent. In the next scene, Cade declares his intention to invade London, "Let's march towards London" (4.3.15-16). In the next scene, they are reported to have reached "London Bridge" through "Southwark" (4.4.48, 26). At last, Cade and his followers show themselves up upon "London Stone" of Cannon Street (4.6.2), and are depicted as going on rampages in the City. From this point the play begins to illustrate the proper names of London houses and streets which are under their violent attacks. Despite its attempt to locate Cade's rebellion within a network of conflicting civic areas, therefore, the fact remains that *2 Henry VI* presents London as a victim of extramural violence.

More significantly, whereas Shakespeare's history play gives only geographical road-maps of the Kentish rebels, it is the psychological milestones of the protesters which *More* presents to the prospective audience. Locating London both as originating and as spreading place of apprentice disturbances, the play gives a vivid picture of their aggravating situations

from unbearable insults to inevitable crowd actions. The protesters' psychological development in the play is distinctive from the politically ill-advised rebels of *2 Henry VI*, and it also contrasts with the ideologically misled rioters of *Jack Straw*. *Jack Straw* gives an account of the cause of the Kentish rebellion from the viewpoint of the commoners' exacerbated subsistence problem, but its account is so brief and cursory that it dissociates the audience from the protesters, and induces the audience to look upon Parson Ball's declaration of egalitarianism as megalomaniac hyperbole. But *More* expands the chronicles' accounts<sup>89</sup> of the cause of the apprentices' riots and delivers them in a detailed dramatization, associating the potential audience with the protesters: i.e. it enhances the dramatic impact of the various incidents scattered in the chronicle sources by merging the independent cases of foreigners' abuses which the two Londoners underwent separately into the familial insults from which husband and wife simultaneously suffer.

With the opening of the play, from one door of the stage appears a foreigner, Francis de Barde, who is haling Doll Williamson away to his pleasure while she desperately resists. From the other door turns up another foreigner, Cavaler, who is carrying a pair of doves away while Williamson, Doll's husband, is helplessly entreating him to return them with the help of his fellow, Sherwin. Sherwin also turns out to be a victim of the foreigner's sexual assault upon his wife. Not only was he deprived of his wife but he was also ignominiously forced to "pay for his wife's board" who was kidnapped away by Francis de Barde (OT: 1.12-13). In the wrangling between Londoners and aliens, furthermore, the aliens' assault upon Doll's personal body is amplified into their attack upon the whole civic body by metonymically substituting the Mayor's wife for Doll. In response to her protest, de Barde declares bombastically, "An she were the Mayor of London's wife, had I her once in my possession I

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<sup>89</sup> For the chronicles' accounts of the Ill May Day disturbances, see Raphael Holinshed (3: 617-25), Edward Hall (1548, 1550: fol. lix<sup>v</sup>-lx<sup>r</sup>) and Richard Grafton (130<sup>v</sup>). For *More*'s expansion of the chronicles' accounts, see my discussion both in the following paragraphs and in the conclusion of this chapter.

would keep her in spite of him that durst say nay” (OT: 1.38-40). Within just forty lines, the expectant London audience might have imagined that they witness an unbearable humiliation by the foreigners.

Even though the chronicle sources do not give an account of the Crown Court’s recognition of the foreigners’ insolences, the Council scene of the play (OT: 3.313-409) puts a repeated emphasis on their abuses including de Barde’s outrageous bombast. In the course of the Council meeting, it is explained how the foreigners can exercise “this high-crested insolence” to the Londoners (OT: 3.327). If the citizen commoners filed suits against the foreigners’ abuse, they would rather be put in jail by the foreign ambassadors’ intervention, let alone redressed. When Lincoln reveals the plan of revolt to his abused colleagues, the presumed audience have already seen their wrongs so graphically that they are fully persuaded into regarding the Londoners’ mass actions as inevitable. That is, the first few scenes show how the London artificers’ protest moves forward step-by-step from their accumulated grievances through the magistrates’ ignoring of their petitions to their eventual crowd actions. In this sense, the play seems to dramatize exactly what I have quoted earlier from the social historian’s reconstruction of the popular protests: i.e. crowd actions were “the very last resort in a pinching situation of serial complaints ignored” (Hindle 138).

Furthermore, in *More*, London emerges as “sharply differentiated parochial zones” (Rowland 16), and the geographical framework is almost within the City proper, “straying no further afield than More’s house in Chelsea” (Jowett 37). The entire play is dense with the specific names of London’s houses and streets. About thirty localities of the City are mentioned,<sup>90</sup> and their inclusion involves a deliberate and provocative act of choice. Even if the play employs the conventional technique of historical displacement, its scrutinized topographical references are carefully framed to elicit contemporary resonance. “The

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<sup>90</sup> It is an unprecedented number of references which can hardly be found in the other plays of the 1590s, even though I do not quantify the frequency in all the other plays of the period.

Standard” is the setting for Lincoln’s execution (OT: 7.\*574), as is the setting for Lord Say’s in 2 *Henry VI*. But its political implication is emphasized by the deliberate change of execution site from the originally planned “Tyburn” (OT: 7.\*570). Here is also added economic significance because the street in which it stands, “Cheapside”, is where Williamson bought pigeon’s meat (OT: 1.19), and where Sherwin has his goldsmith shop. As shown above, both of them are deprived not only of their properties but also of their wives by the Frenchman. It is “Cheapside” as well where the Mayor sends forces when he tries to secure the City (Addition II C: 5a.92). Long before the events of 1517, Cheapside had been the commercial hub of London as a chief marketplace both for basic food and for luxury goods, and during the period of the play’s composition it was a vital and controversial site. In June 1595 disturbances, it was there where a crowd of almost two thousand gathered, protesting the whipping of the butter-rioters. They tore down the pillories erected there and then proceeded to the Mayor’s house, where they made speeches against him, threatening to kill him and burn his house, and most graphically, erecting a gallows in front of his door (Manning 209).

In the play, the messenger reports to the Privy Councilors, “The City is in an uproar, and the Mayor / Is threatened if he come out of his house” (OT: 3.390-91). This messenger’s report of London apprentices’ animosity to the Mayor is remarkable. First, it is not to be found in the play’s chronicle sources. Rather, Holinshed emphasizes the affinities between London Mayor and apprentices and renders a detailed account of his mediatorial efforts to get royal clemency for the rioters after Ill May Day (3: 624-25). Second, as I mentioned above, it is contradictory to the generally received image of the Mayor himself. He was considered by the City commoners to be ameliorative and paternalistic, and his attendance alone in front of the rioters frequently set them in quiet. This discrepancy between the play and the historical sources guides us to the inevitable conjecture that the messenger would make a deliberate

allusion to the unpopular Mayor, John Spencer, and the apprentices' disturbances of 1595.<sup>91</sup> Thus, employing a technique which entangles foreigners' abuse with Londoners' reaction and associates onstage actions with offstage events, the play not only amplifies Cheapside's provocative implication but also evokes its heavily-charged contemporary significance.

Each time the play locates a conflict precisely in a particular street, the potential audience are offered an interpretative possibility: they are invited to reconstruct imaginatively the conflict taken place in the past into the current events of the streets in which they still live and work. To incite topographical provocativeness, the play makes a deliberate mistake of the Privy Council by putting it wrongly "at Ludgate" (OT: 4.440). Considering the playwrights were streetwise Londoners, there is no possibility that they would be in confusion as to where the Privy Council was usually held. Ludgate is the ancient west gate of the City used as a notorious debtor's prison which required a substantial and unpopular citywide tax to fund its repair in the late 1580s (Masters 75-80).

Scene 4 shows John Lincoln and his followers entering into mass action in "St Martin's" (OT: 4.418). St Martin's Lane had been a colony of foreign artisans for long time, and thus frequently a prey of anti-alien violence. Lincoln cites it as the residence of many of "these audacious strangers" such as "De Barde, Peter van Hollak, Adrian Martin" (OT: 4.418, 420). Near St Martin's is "Green Gate" where "Meautis, a wealthy Picardy" lived during the Ill May Day riots (OT: 4.419). Meautis, a Picard or Frenchman, was rumored to harbor many foreign apprentices in his house, contrary to the franchises of the citizens (Holinshed 3: 621). According to Stow, his house was robbed and spoiled not only on Ill May Day but also during the Cade rebellion (170). Following Lincoln's inflammatory speech, Doll instigates the crowd: "We'll drag the strangers into Moorfields, and there bombaste them till they stink again" (OT:

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<sup>91</sup> Based on this circumstantial correspondence, however, I would not like to argue the original text was written after the tumultuous June of 1595, because there can be many other incidental evidences proposed, contradicting this correspondence.

4.432-33). Moorfields was the marshy and unwholesome northern suburb, with its ditch notorious for, amongst other things, its laundries. At the end of the scene, Lincoln incendiarily shouts: “Burn down their kennels! Let us straight away, / Lest this day prove to us an ill May day” (OT: 4.451-52). Galvanizing the topographical reference to the foreigners’ resort of St Martin’s, this meta-dramatic speech leads the projected audience to illusionary confusion between reality and fiction by substituting their present 1590s situation for the dramatic past of Ill May Day 1517.

Scene 7, which depicts Lincoln and other leaders of Ill May Day being carted from “the stairs” of Newgate to “a gibbet” in “the Standard” (OT: 7.\*569, \*578, \*579), renders especially vivid description not only of London localities but also of judicial apparatuses, revealing the nervous anxieties of the governing officers. Newgate was a notorious prison for serious offenders including death-row convicts. Its notoriety is alluded in the play by Falconer who appeals for More to relocate him “from Newgate to any of the two worshipful Counters” (Addition IV C: 8.50-51). The Standard is just half a mile east of Newgate, but it takes a long time for the officers to deliver the prisoners, because multitudes of onlookers “stopped up” the street (OT: 7.\*585). The sheriff commands his armed officers to “make way for entrance of the prisoners” (OT: 7.\*587), and announces a proclamation: “That every householder, on pain of death, / Keep in his prentices, and every man / Stand with a weapon ready at his door” (OT: 7.\*589-91). His proclamation seems to be contradictory to the King’s Council’s intention to promulgate their exemplary punishment to as many London onlookers as possible by changing the execution site from remote Tyburn to busy Cheapside (OT: 7.\*570-74). It is understandable, however, in terms of his apprehensions about security. It frequently happened in the 1590s London crisis that a throng of apprentices broke into judicial procedures and rescued prisoners. For example, “on Sunday, 11 July 1591, under the pretext of attending the theatre, a large group of felt-makers made plans to break into the Marshalsea Prison and

rescue” a prisoner, and “when the Privy Council heard rumors of further disturbances planned for Midsummer Eve and Midsummer Night” that year, “orders were issued to close the theatres, impose a curfew and mount a watch” (Manning 207).

In the subsequent scene where the sheriff scolds his officer for delaying the delivery of prisoners, anxiously worrying about being fined by the King’s Council (OT: 7.\*595-96), the officer sheepishly excuses, “There’s such a press and multitude at Newgate” (OT: 7.\*597). When the sheriff orders him to deliver the prisoners “on foot” instead of “the carts” (OT: 7.\*600, \*598), the officer mentions the suggestion of some members of the King’s Bench: “The execution is deferred till morning, / And when the streets shall be a little cleared, / To chain them up, and suddenly dispatch it” (OT: 7.\*604-06). This conversation is also deeply embedded in the tumultuous situation of the last decades of Elizabethan London. According to Manning’s analysis, the largest segment of 14 out of the 35 outbreaks of popular disorder, which happened between 1581 and 1602 in metropolitan London, comprises what is called ‘the secondary disorders’, which the apprentices waged to protest against the punishment of the primary rioters, rescuing prisoners from pillories and prisons, rioting at an execution, and assaulting constables or judicial officers (202). The initial incident which eventually led to the prolonged turbulence of June 1595 had also much to do with this category of insurgency. For example, on 6 June when the Mayor’s servants were about to commit to Bedlam a silk-weaver who shouted “some hard speeches” at the house of the Mayor “in dispraise of his government”, a crowd of about 300 apprentices attacked the convoy and effected his rescue “without Bishopsgate” (Salisbury 249).

At last, the prisoners are brought to the gibbet in the Standard. Going up to the gallows, Lincoln cites the popular prophecy of London topology: “Lincoln should be hanged for London’s sake” (OT: 7.\*612). By replacing personal name with geographical name, this last speech suggests his execution as a martyrdom for London, producing a correspondence

between his and Thomas More's death. Reproaching More for breaking his promise to exonerate the protesters, Doll also delivers a speech which makes use of the symbolic meaning of a London locale: "We would first have locked up Leadenhall, / And there been burned to ashes with the roof" (OT: 7.\*653-54). Leadenhall was a civic store of grain in which the Corporation of London prepared its grain stock to ensure the City adequately supplied for times of dearth. During the four consecutive years of harvest failures, "the corporation financed the purchase of 10,000 quarters of grain each year, ground into meal by the livery companies and sold at slightly below the market rates in small quantities to the poor" (Archer 201). In addition to its role as a relief facility, Leadenhall was also remembered by Londoners as a symbol of civic charities, which was un-historically regarded as a beneficent donation by the London Mayor, Simon Eyre.<sup>92</sup> Eyre was renowned as a legendary figure who rose to be the Lord Mayor of London from a humble beginning as a shoemaker's apprentice. Thus, Doll's mention of Leadenhall in her last speech highlights the striking contrast between the success story of Eyre and the tragic sight of Lincoln who will be hanged in her next gallows of the Standard. That is, her speech makes the execution scene a *tableau vivant* of Londoners' frustration versus aspiration. Eyre climbed up the ladder of success eventually to be an exemplary model for London apprentices, whereas Lincoln climbs up the gibbet ladder to be hanged for treason, and Leadenhall symbolizes utopian London, whereas the gruesome gallows in the Standard represents dystopian London.

The censor Tilney seems to have known how provocative these deliberate mobilizations of topographical references would be to the potential London audience. Inevitably, the abortive circumstances surrounding the complicated enterprise of *More* would have left a

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<sup>92</sup> In *The Shoemaker's Holiday* (1599), Thomas Dekker, one of the collaborators of *More*, dramatizes the London legend that the hall was built at the cost of Simon Eyre, and that King Henry V honored him by naming it "Leaden Hall", because Eyre found the lead buried in the site (scene 21, line 133). But this explanation of the origin of the name is only a legend circulated among the Elizabethan Londoners. Historically, Eyre was the rebuilder rather than the founder: i.e. the name is recorded as early as 1296; the hall was given to the City by Sir Richard Whittington in 1411; and Eyre rebuilt it in 1419, twenty-five years before he became the Lord Mayor.



lasting effect. It is almost certain that the intractability of the censor's disapproval ensured that the play could not be realized into a public performance. The London commoners' insurgency play with its disturbingly offensive portrayal of their protests in the crisis age of the 1590s, and its exceptionally provocative representation of the City being relentlessly dotted with its topographical details throughout the play – all of these aspects would have made *More* impermissible on the public stage. Furthermore, it is plausible that the fate of *More* presented the contemporary London playing companies with a momentous censorial lesson. During the last decade of Elizabethan era, *More*'s distinctive topographical experimentation was not repeated. London made its appearance in the chronicle plays which were almost certainly produced after *More*, but its unremitting attention to the socio-political significance of London locales was not tried again. Heywood, one of the collaborators on *More*, did try the similar "topographical specificity" in *1 Edward IV* in 1599 (Rowland 15), but the originating place of the Falconbridge rebellion is not in London but in Kent, and the play's locales spread far outside of London. In general, London's sharply differentiated streets and districts receded from the public stage which dealt with popular uprisings or political rebellions. The insurgency plays seem to have needed to displace London topology with foreign lands such as Rome, Spain or Turkey. In order to make its reappearance again in the public stage, thus, London seems to have waited for a few years until the rise in popularity of a new genre, i.e. city comedy.<sup>93</sup> As I have argued in the introductory chapter, city comedy sprang up in the late 1590s, and achieved its full blown stage in the first decade of the Jacobean era. In terms of topographicality, it can be regarded as similar to *More*, but in socio-political implications, it ought be considered as fundamentally different, because its

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<sup>93</sup> William Haughton's *Englishmen for My Money* (1598) is generally regarded as the first city comedy. About the relationship of topographicality between *More* and city comedy, John Jowett argues that *More* was influenced by the new genre, by postulating the original text of the play was written around 1600 as a product of the combined influence of city comedy and the renewed vogue for chronicle plays in the late 1590s (424-32).

noticeable generic feature is its lack of political provocativeness. Therefore, it would be reasonable to argue that city comedy was a politically depleted response to the cultural impulse of the exponential growth of the City which was initially stimulated by the late Elizabethan history plays and was unprecedentedly experimented by *More*.

### **III. The Characterization of the Protesters in the Original Text and Its Corruption in the Additions**

In accord with the specification of London topology, the play also gives an individually specified characterization to each leader of Ill May Day, which is difficult to find in the contemporary popular insurgency plays. All the other plays of the period render monolithic, stereotyped portraits of the rebel leaders, denying them not only personalized individuality but also sophisticated emotional dimensions. That is, no other rebels except Lincoln and his fellows are relieved from the clichéd stigmatization of the contemporary discourse: “heinous examples of disobedience, threats to all order, authority and property and signal demonstrations of the anarchic propensities of the rude multitude” (Wrightson, *English Society* 174). Jack Straw and his sidekicks are ludicrous, xenophobic, and bloodthirsty hooligans, doctrinally duped by the megalomaniac Parson Ball. Jack Cade and his henchmen are preposterous, grandiloquent, and vandalistic barbarians. Falconbridge and his captains are selfish, vicious, and absurd rabble-rousers. Insofar as the original text is concerned, however, Lincoln and his fellow protesters are a nearly truthful dramatic version of what the historians reconstruct from the diverse early-modern accounts of them: “Rioters were more limited in their objectives” (Wrightson, *English Society* 175); and “disciplined crowds operating according to values which were shared to some extent by the elite in actions designed to remind the magistrates of their duties” (Archer 6). The Privy Councilors in scene 3 sympathetically recapitulate what the artisans suffered in scene 1, acutely reminded of their

responsibility: “Men of your place and greatness are to blame – / I tell ye true, my lords – in that his majesty / Is not informed of this base abuse, / And daily wrongs are offered to this subjects” (OT: 3.380-83).

John Lincoln is “a broker by profession” who has “long time winked at these vile enormities with mighty impatience” (OT: 1.61-63); he cautiously prepares for crowd action by prevailing on Doctor Beal to publish his bill which will call forth “compassion over the poor people your neighbours, and also of the great importable hurts, losses and hindrances whereof proceedeth extreme poverty to all the King’s subjects” (OT: 1.79-82); he decides what actions they will take after discussion with his fellow demonstrators; and he faces his execution heroically without complaining of More’s breaking of his promise to get royal pardon. George Betts is a faithful lieutenant to Lincoln, convincing the abused artisans of Lincoln’s sincerity to mass protest, rallying supporters to their actions, deploying demonstrators fit for the posts, and calling them in peace to listen to the magistrates’ proclamation in St Martin’s. Sherwin represents the reason and discipline of the protesting crowd. It is he who checks the trustworthiness of Lincoln’s plan for crowd action and prevents the demonstrators from lapsing into mob psychology by giving reasonable assessment. When Doll incites the demonstrators to set fire to the foreigners’ residence, he warns, “Stay, no, that would much endanger the whole City / Whereto I would not the least prejudice” (OT: 4.429-30). Williamson represents the weakness of the demonstrators by revealing anxiety and fear which they are inevitably subject to while committing potentially treasonous actions. Even when his wife is in a triumphant mood of mass rallies, he makes himself the butt of her deriding remark by cowardly evincing his misgivings, “Now, lads, how shall we labour in our safety?” (OT: 4.437).

Doll is like an Amazonian warrior. She is a morale-booster to her male fellows, and her voice constitutes a rallying cry for mass protest. Considering she is female, it is she who is a

*de facto* leader of Ill May Day. Out of all the participants, she is the most fervent for demonstration, the most radical in political consciousness, the most belligerent in direct actions, and the most heroic in political martyrdom. Reminding us of the feminist version of egalitarian radicalism, she says, “Why, Betts, am not I as dear to my husband as my Lord Mayor’s wife to him” (OT: 1.43), when George Betts is bowled over at de Bard’s arrogant remark that he can dispose even the Mayor’s wife to his pleasure. She spurs her male counterparts to step out for action by resorting to their manliness, “Ay, and if you men durst not undertake it, before God, we women will” (OT: 1.71). She takes to the street of St Martin’s as a female martialist “in a shirt of mail, a headpiece, sword and buckler” (OT: 4.410-11). In contrast to her husband’s sheepishness, she is confident enough to have room for poking fun during the emergency state of heated mass action, “We’ll drag the strangers into Moorfields, and there bombaste them till they stink again” (OT: 4.432-33). At the execution scene, her courageous composure enables her male counterparts to be relieved of the fear of death. To Lincoln who has the noose round his neck at the gibbet, she imparts a heroic consolation: “Bravely, John Lincoln, let thy death express / That, as thou lived’st a man, thoud died’st no less” (OT: 7.\*616-17). When Sheriff calls her husband for the next execution, she shows her undaunted spirit with voluntary forward steps: “Let me die next, sir, that is all I crave. / You know not what a comfort you shall bring / To my poor heart to die before my husband” (OT: 7.\*644-46). It is also she who tips over the audience’s sympathy both onstage and offstage overwhelmingly to the protesters’ side against the ruling authorities by delivering a tear-jerking last speech about her familial tragedy: “Only two little babes we leave behind us, / And all I can bequeath them at this time / Is but the love of some good honest friend / To bring them up in charitable sort” (OT: 7.\*673-76).

The significant change of the play after Tilney’s intervention concerns the roles of the brethren Betts. In the original text two brothers appear together on the stage at the opening of

the play, but the other is neither named nor assigned a speaking part. As one of the mute stage-fillers, he is relegated to the role of supporting the speeches of Lincoln and his brother George with affirming gestures. In the revision of Hand B, he is not only named Ralph Betts but also given the role of a clown who utters ludicrous asides to discredit the voices of the protesters. Addition II begins with his churlish shouting, "Come come, we'll tickle their turnips, we'll butter their boxes! Shall strangers rule the roast? Yes, but we'll baste the roast. Come, come, aflaunt, aflaunt!" (Addition II B: 4.1-3). His remarks sound innocent, but combined with his zany gestures, it brings about the decisive effect of deriding all the seriousness and sincerity of the demonstrators into absurd choplogic. It is also he who turns the disciplined actions of the demonstrators into indiscriminate barbarism gripped with mob psychology. In the street of the foreigners' resort, he yells, "Use no more swords, / Nor no more words, / But fire the houses, / Brave Captain Courageous, / Fire me their houses" (Addition II B: 4.25-26). Throughout the protest scenes, his contaminating effect is persistent and widespread. In the execution scene, Hand B diligently interpolates a distinctive addition between the margins of the original lines to give him the chance to blurt farcical aside to discredit every solemn remark of Lincoln and Doll. For one of many examples, when Doll extols Lincoln's heroic death, "Thou lived'st a good fellow, and died'st an honest man", Ralph waters it down with a mocking joke, "Would I were so far on my journey. The first stretch is the worst, methinks" (OT: 7.\*638; interpolation beside 7.\*638-41). From the viewpoint of popular voice, that is, he is a cancerous germ who spreads obnoxious disease throughout the whole body of the alternative politics.

What is worse, in terms of the historical trustworthiness of popular protest, which was painstakingly reconstructed by the historians, Hand D's share of Addition II is a more disastrous distortion. Because of the first lacuna,<sup>94</sup> it is difficult to compare his revision to the

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<sup>94</sup> The first lacuna in the manuscript occurs between the end of the apprentice scene (OT: 5.472) and

original text, but his share seems obviously the worst version of a protest scene in the whole play. Hand D disfigures the demonstrators indiscriminately. He uses not only the clownish figure to deflate the moral justice of the demonstrators but he also debases the leaders including Lincoln and Doll from solemn, determined characters into preposterous, freakish rabbles. By Hand D's revision, that is, all the demonstrators lose their individual distinctiveness and turn into jumbled mobsters. As an obvious evidence of his muddling of them into unidentifiable masses, the speeches of all other demonstrators except Lincoln are prefixed simply with the blanket epithet of "others". Even Lincoln's speeches are randomly headed by "Betts" and "all", which Hand C is obliged to correct into "Lincoln" (Addition II D: 6.212, 265).

In Addition II D, Lincoln is no longer a rational leader. He is demoted to just a ridiculous demagogue. In the beginning of scene 6, he says, "Peace hear me! He that will not see a red herring at a Harry groat, butter at eleven pence a pound, meal at nine shillings a bushel and beef at four nobles a stone, list to me" (Addition II D: 6.123-25). His speech has no difference from Jack Cade's vociferation, "There shall be in England seven halfpenny loaves sold for a penny, the three-hooped pot shall have ten hoops, and I will make it felony to drink small beer" (4.2.58-60). The languages are down to earth and have the implication of revealing commoners' economic grievances over the massive price rises of the 1590s, but they cannot help giving the impression that the causes of mass action are trivialized and that Lincoln is debased into a farcical clown. Lincoln's preposterous image is strengthened in the following squabbles on foreigners' import of parsnips (Addition II D: 6.130-37). Doll is also relegated from radical idealist into petty gain-seeker who subordinates the cause of political movement to her private interest: "'A made my brother, Arthur Watchins, Sergeant Safe's

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the beginning of the next scene in which More appeases the protesters (OT: 6.\*473). Greg indicates, "Here one or more original leaves are lost" (16), and Jowett argues, "The extent of the missing material is unknown, but is likely to have been a single leaf after fol. 5" (352).

yeoman. Let's hear Shrieve More!" (Addition II D: 6.165-67); and to consolidate her pettiness, her bootlicking to More for her familial gain is repeated: "I thank thy good worship for my brother Arthur Watchins" (Addition II D: 6.181-82).

By Hand D, Lincoln's followers are also reduced from disciplined demonstrators into disorderly rabbles. Lincoln grumbles over their unruliness, "A plague on them, they will not hold their peace. / The devil cannot rule them" (Addition II D: 6.176-77), provoking More's ripostes, "Then what a rough and riotous charge have you / To lead those that the devil cannot rule" (Addition II D: 6.178-79). The rioters are not only at the sway of their own whims but also at the mercy of the manipulative orators. When they are competitively shouting for the choice of listening to Shrewsbury, Surrey, or More, they remind us of the giddy-minded mobsters of *Julius Caesar*. In particular, Surrey's words to appease the agitated crowd, "Friends, masters, countrymen" (Addition II D: 6.149), have a strong resonance of Antony's funeral oration, "Friends, Romans, countrymen" (3.2.70). For an effect of foil to the debasement of the protesters into muddleheaded mobsters, Hand D places an extraordinary emphasis on the doctrines of order and obedience. It is rendered by More who falsifies the demonstrators' cry for subsistence right not only into treasonous rebellion to King but also into the sacrilegious disobedience to God by deploying Tudor propaganda of divine kingship: "You were in arms 'gainst God. . . . For to the King God hath his office lent. . . given him His own name: / Calls him a god on earth" (Addition II D: 6.218, 221, 226-27). The deceptive import of More's argument is that their desperate cry for life is the jeopardization of their very souls because it is tantamount to defiance against the divine moral code. Janet Clare pinpoints the manipulative subterfuge concealed beneath the surface of More's appeasement speech: "Casting aside the grievances of the commons, emphasis is now placed on proper respect for sovereignty and on the political commonplace that rebellion is a heinous act which is opposed to the order of a divinely sanctioned universe" (34-35).

The revision of Hand D has raised textual controversies because it seems to have ignored Tilney's injunction. Addition II D uses the term "strangers" casually and contains no less than seven references of it (Addition II D: 6.126, 142, 193, 197, 242, 253, 262), which Tilney objected to using in his censorship. The original text shows Tilney's substitution of "Lombard" in line 364 for "stranger" and "Frenchmen" in line 368. In contrast to Hand D, Hand C employs the epithet "Lombard" (Addition II C: 5a.82, 104) in the place of the original identification of the aliens as Flemish or French, which is consistent with Tilney's instruction. Then, how could Hand D ignore Tilney's objection to "strangers" and "Frenchmen", or why did Tilney ignore Hand D's reference to strangers and Frenchmen? To these questions, Scott McMillin explains: Shakespeare wrote Addition II D "before Tilney censored the play" (59). In his view, no other answer explains why Hand D was not aware of Tilney's objection. On the other hand, both Hand B and Hand D seem to have dismissed Tilney's strong prohibition of any dramatization of insurrection at all and his parsimonious permission to use the method of reporting it instead. However, most of the scenes in the first half of the play – i.e. scene 1, 4, 6, and 7 – are a vivid dramatization of apprentice insurgency at the "perils" of the playing company concerned (OT: fol. 1, Tilney's Injunction), and only scene 3 and scene 5a use the permitted method of indirect reportage. We can assume, as John Jowett suggests, the opening scene might have been abandoned because "fortunately, the play makes perfect sense without it; all the salient details are reported later on" (7), but what about the remaining insurrection scenes? Should we date the revision "after James I came to the throne", when "the specific threat of xenophobic rioting against aliens would have receded"? (Jowett 7). Then, why should we assume that the opening scene might have been abandoned even in the changed social condition in which both anti-alien feelings and the subsistence crisis of the 1590s receded? Furthermore, when we limit our interpretation to inconsistency between the Additions and Tilney's injunction, we cannot explain how other popular insurgency plays



such as *Jack Straw*, *2 Henry VI*, *1 Edward IV* and *Julius Caesar* were permissible on the public stage and what similar features those plays had with each other in order to pass Tilney's censorship. The studies of *More* have been driven to argue for either pre-censorship or Jacobean revision because of a general conviction that the Additions, particularly II D, are not responsive to Tilney's censorship. In determining the relationship of the revision to the original text, however, it seems to me that too much stress has been placed on the literal evidence and the apparent failure to obey Tilney.

In order to disclose ideological import embedded in the censorial questions, we need to re-postulate not only the evidence of the text but also the concept of the author. The author is no longer presumed to engage himself in the text as an autonomous entity detached from his surrounding discursive field. One of the most cogent poststructuralist lessons is that we should take into consideration the discursive field from which an author cannot detach himself and in which, rather, an author-function engages itself as an intermediate agent in the circulation of a certain mode of discourse. As a corollary, instead of investigating the literal incongruity between censor's injunction and reviser's addition, I think, we need to examine what particular discourse would be allowed, and what author-function might be possible in the censorial Tudor regime.

Arguably, the absence of overt compliance to Tilney's instruction has led to an overestimation of Hand D's literal breach. Even if there is no overt and straightforward evidence of censorial intervention, i.e. even when it is by no means obvious why the reviser's violation could be permitted, we ought to make allowance for contextual interpretation. In this contextual sense, both casual usage of "strangers" and un-excised dramatization of insurgency in Addition II D can be interpreted as a discursive testimony of how effective the clownish remarks are in defusing the integrity of popular protests, and of how ignominiously disfigured the demonstrators are by Hand D. Furthermore, in the context of *More*'s rhetorical strategy to

elicit sympathy for the aliens and to emphasize Tudor doctrine of order and obedience, the implication of the word, “strangers”, is radically changed. Indeed, from this contextual perspective, I think, we can reach the following conclusion: regardless of the frequent use of “strangers” and the vivid dramatization of the insurgency, Hand D’s revision in which the protesters are relegated into disorderly mobsters is the most faithful compliance to the import of Tilney’s instruction.

#### **IV. Brutalization and Carnivalization<sup>95</sup>**

The revisionary process of *More* gives us a rare chance to elucidate the censorial guideline of the Tudor regime, and delivers a significant message to the critical appreciation of the popular insurgency plays. Obviously, if the popular voices are to be represented as sound and reasonable as in Hand S’s original text, it could not be allowed to be produced on the public stage. Even if there were no direct censorial intervention, the oppressive machine of the Tudor regime would work as both conscious and unconscious mechanism to impel the commercial theatres to adopt an amenable dramatic discourse. As a result, regardless of Tilney’s direct injunction, the additions of *More* come to bear a striking similarity to other popular insurgency plays of the period: i.e. all the demonstrators lose their original voices and appear as distorted figures as in *Jack Straw*, *2 Henry VI*, *1 Edward IV* and *Julius Caesar*.

The representational scheme of theatre about popular uprisings in the crisis age of the 1590s can be roughly categorized into two modes of disfiguration even though they are closely interlocked with each other and occur simultaneously. One is the brutalization of popular protesters who are gripped in mob psychology to commit mindless violence, sexual

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<sup>95</sup> Carnivalization is a literary term which refers to “the shaping effect of Carnival on literary genres” (Selden 40), or “the liberating and subversive influence of popular humour on the literary tradition” (Baldick 48). While the isolated usages of the word ‘carnival’ occur in European literature as early as the medieval period, the adaptation of it into a literary theory is systematically developed by Mikhail Bakhtin in his *Rabelais and His World* (1965).

assault, xenophobic frenzy, and vandalism: the other the carnivalization of popular action which prevents the audience from sympathizing with the protesters and leads them to grotesque laughter by means of clownish remarks such as megalomaniac, choplogic, self-contradiction and doggerel. As a result of both brutalization and carnivalization, the popular protest scene is reduced to a black comedy which serves only for the dramatic effect of giving the audience comic relief but preventing them from being emotionally engaged in the seriousness of the protest.

In Addition II, Hand B describes Lincoln's followers as being caught up in the excitement of the mindless violence, "Fire, fire! I'll be the first. / If hanging come, 'tis welcome; that's the worst" (4.63-64). The chronicle sources give accounts that the protesters limited their violence within attacking the prison in order to rescue the prisoners alone who were put to jail for the anti-alien protest (Holinshed 3: 621), but in Addition II C the messenger reports to the Mayor at the guildhall meeting that the rioters "broke open Newgate" and delivered indiscriminately "both felons and notorious murderers" (5a.87-89). This stereotyped feature of mindless violence in the revision draws a close parallel to the rioting crowd in *Jack Straw*, in which they show the anarchic propensity and set the heinous example of disobedience to God and his surrogate, the King, suiting themselves verbatim to Tudor propaganda. Another conspicuous analogy between the two plays is that part of the rebels' violence is directed at the aliens or strangers. The anti-alien violence in *Jack Straw* comprises the final scene of the second act (lines 496-501),<sup>96</sup> but this six-line scene seems to be oddly hanging, and there is no elaboration elsewhere of the rebels' xenophobic sentiment. In the context of Tilney's censorship of the anti-alien scenes in *More*, it is conjectured that the play's original version would have included the explication of the commoners' cause which led to

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<sup>96</sup> All quotations are from Stephen Longstaffe, ed., *A Critical Edition of The Life and Death of Jack Straw*, anon. (Lewiston: Edwin Mellen, 2002). The numbers of scenes and lines are consecutive, even if Longstaffe makes the division of acts.

their anti-alien violence, based on the account of Holinshed (2: 739).

In *2 Henry VI*, Shakespeare is careful to prevent our sympathy from being carried away to Jack Cade's rebellion by showing a horrendous example of vandalism against a Clerk of Chartham who is executed because he could read and write. Cade's vandalism reaches its climax when he accuses Saye of "corrupt[ing] the youth of the realm in erecting a grammar school" (4.7.27-28). These images of Cade in Shakespeare are in distinctive contrast with what Edward Hall describes in his chronicle: a "young man of goodly stature and pregnant wit", "a subtle captain", "sober in communication, wise in disputing" (1550: fol. lxxvii<sup>v</sup>, lxxviii<sup>f</sup>). Falconbridge's rebellion in *1 Edward IV* is not a subsistence insurgency led by a commoner but a power struggle headed by an aristocrat. However, the brutish features of the rebels are not distinctive from those of other plays. The barbaric violence with which the rebels will trample down London is symbolized by Falconbridge's threat to rape Jane Shore who metonymically represents the fair body of London: i.e. Jane is "the flower of London for her beauty" (4.41).<sup>97</sup> In front of the city-gate, metaphorically before the orifice of Jane's body, Falconbridge delivers a bombastic speech to the alderman Matthew Shore, "This night, in thine own house, she sleeps with me" (4.47).

In *Julius Caesar*, the feature of the protesters is an exemplary case of the mobsters' mindless violence. In the disfiguration of populace protest, *Julius Caesar* would be the worst of all the popular insurgency plays of the 1590s. In the other plays, the people's hunger is hinted at even if in ventriloquist ways,<sup>98</sup> but in *Julius Caesar* the plebeians who appear with the opening of the stage seem to be quite happy and fairly prosperous. They have no grievances and do not feel themselves victims. Their mob violence incited by Antony's

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<sup>97</sup> All quotations are from Richard Rowland, ed., *The First and Second Parts of King Edward IV*, by Thomas Heywood (Manchester: Manchester UP, 2005). Rowland divides the scenes but does not separate them into acts.

<sup>98</sup> For a ventriloquist reading of popular voice, see Annabel Patterson, *Shakespeare and the Popular Voice* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1989).

manipulatory speech is led up to the climax in act 3 scene 3 in which they set fire to the city in their rage, and kill Cinna the Poet in their frenzied gang-attacks. They know Cinna is innocent, but they tear him to pieces simply because he is called the same name as an assassin: “It is no matter, his name’s Cinna. Pluck but his name out of his heart” (3.3.32-33). They are simply thuggish gangsters, not distressed protesters at all. The mobbish feature of the crowd is so thoroughly decisive that the play seems to forestall any interpretative attempt to try to redeem a certain nuanced indicator that the common rioters have genuine grievances beneath their external feature of muddle-headed mobs.

The customary mode of carnivalization is featuring the clown figure in order to adulterate the seriousness of the protest scene, and the basic dramaturgy of presenting him, as is exemplified by Hand B in his Addition II, is placing him in the perimeter of the stage and making him utter ludicrous remarks to the audience while the popular leader announces the cause of the demonstration in the centre of the stage. It is a so-called ‘aside’ in theatre terminology, but it is powerful enough to stigmatize the central characters because it brings about the dramatic effect of inverting the centerpiece of the stage with its perimeter by inducing the audience to strike an affinity with the clown figure when he delivers his speech to them directly. The more widespread form of carnivalization, which Hand D employs in his Addition II, is making the leader of the protest internalize the clownish element. In all other insurgency plays of the period, except in Addition II B, the rebel leaders themselves are subject to this carnivalesque strategy. It is a more malicious distortion in that it denies the protesters the least dignity by neutralizing the difference between the leader and his rabble followers. It turns all the protesters into a beastly herd of absurd mobsters. They sound ridiculous even when they make a serious argument of their grievances, and they are self-contradictory even when they postulate an ideal vision of alternative society.

In *Jack Straw*, Clown Betts’s role of the Addition II B is played by Nobs and Tom

Miller who deliver both comic and deflationary asides doggedly to contaminate the rebels' causes. When Parson Ball argues theological justice for peasant revolt, Tom Miller defuses it with the sarcastic aside, "You thinke ther's no knaverie hid under a black gowne, / Find him in a pulpit but twice in the yeare, / And Ile find him fortie times in the ale-house tasting strong beare" (1.1.51-53). The petty greediness of Lincoln and Doll in *Addition II D* is consigned to Wat Tyler and Jack Straw. Jack Straw is shown to pester Newton exorbitantly for a sword even after he is given Henry's royal sword (3.11.716-31), with which the audience cannot but quip into ridiculous cynicism. Xenophobic violence in *Jack Straw* is concomitant with carnivalesque absurdity. Nobs induces the audience to grotesque laughter in the racist scene where he kills a Flemish for not pronouncing "bread and cheese, in good and perfect English" (2.9.497-98). Jack Cade's scenes in *2 Henry VI* are broadly comic. His scenes present the festive disorder in which accepted norms are inverted and the 'Lord of Misrule' is allowed to preside over licensed Saturnalia. His followers consistently deflate his gravity. When he sternly concludes his noble lineage by saying, "Therefore am I of an honourable house"; Dick the Butcher teases it with his cynical aside, "Ay, by my faith, the field is honourable, and there was he born, under a hedge" (4.2.43-45). Furthermore, Cade is self-contradictory, and his expression of popular radicalism frequently negates itself with his chop-logic and self-messianic hypocrisy, subjecting his insurrection to ludicrous laughter. Without recognizing the contradiction between egalitarian society and feudalistic hierarchy, Cade makes a bombastic declaration: "All the realm shall be in common . . . and when I am king, as king I will be" (4.2.60-62).

Historically, Falconbridge's rebellion of *1 Edward IV* occurred in the festive season of May 1471, and the play represents it along with megalomaniac bombast, grotesque laughter, wild rampage and malapropian heteroglossia. When Falconbridge declares to his followers, "We will be masters of the Mint ourselves, / And set our own stamp on the golden coin. /

We'll shoe our neighing coursers with no worse / Than the purest silver that is sold in Cheap. / At Leadenhall we'll sell pearls by the peck" (2.49-53); his megalomaniac bombast is not so much different from Lincoln's proclamation (Addition II D: 6.123-25) and Cade's vociferation (4.2.57-62). When they fail in their rebellion, Falconbridge, Spicing, and Chubs produce a preposterous scene with fighting each other to present the others' necks to King Edward to get the prize money, even though they rebelled to substitute Lancastrian line for the Yorkist King (10.56-173). In Plutarch, Caesar's triumph over Pompey's sons occurs in October, but *Julius Caesar*, which might have premiered on Midsummer Day as an opening-play of the Globe (Daniell 15-16), makes Caesar's triumphant return coincide with the Roman feast of Lupercalia in February, allowing Caesar and his followers to appropriate the festive mood for their political agenda, and the play makes the assassination fall on the Ides of March, interlocking the subsequent commotion of the Roman mob with carnivalesque agitation. Like the xenophobic killing in *Jack Straw*, the Roman mobsters produce a black comedy particularly when they threaten Cinna, repeating the mocking pattern: "directly and briefly, wisely and truly" (3.3.15).

From the viewpoint of the commoners' political consciousness, *Julius Caesar* would be also the worst distortion in all the 1590s insurgency plays. It is a paragon of stigmatizing discourses such as manipulation, brutalization and carnivalization. With this play, Shakespeare seems to blame the downfall of Roman republicanism on the self-complacent but muddle-headed plebeians who are helplessly manipulated by the ambitious political elites. This accusation might be attributed to Plutarch by arguing that Shakespeare just followed his source faithfully. Yet, in spite of using the same source, his attitude to the populace is much improved in *Coriolanus*. *Coriolanus* was produced around the same year of the Midlands Rising of 1608. Shakespeare might have been an eye-witness of it while he attended his daughter Susanna's wedding in 1608, because the uprising involved his home-county,

Warwickshire. His experience might have influenced him to admit the fact that common people were a political entity which ruling elites could no longer deal with as gullible odds and sods and that the popular voice had grievances which the commercial theatres could not represent as a mere laughing-stock for black comedy. Therefore, arguably, about a decade after *Julius Caesar*, the Shakespearean populace began to be unmistakably identified with their political power, expressed in part through tribunal representation, but also a much more concrete concept, through the franchise: i.e. their voices are votes in *Coriolanus*.

Then, what is the best way to appreciate this change in Shakespeare's attitude to the populace? Is it the tangible testimony of his limited understanding of their voices in his earlier theatrical career, or the inevitable strategy to accommodate his external condition of the censorial state apparatus, or the unconscious product of his internalization of oppressive ideology? My question is not only about the Shakespearean attitude but also about current literary critics' attitudes. Ever since E. K. Chambers assumed the ritual elements of disorder in Elizabethan drama to be derived from "the traditional rowdiness of the prentices on Shrove Tuesday" (265), it has been critical convention to relate Elizabethan dramatic representation of crowd action to the patterns of holiday festivities. In *Shakespeare's Festive Comedy*, C. L. Barber formulates it as "the saturnalian pattern" of Carnival release and Lenten punishment (4), and argues that the comic experience can be defined as a process of release leading to clarification and social harmony (6-15). One of its obvious instances, suggests Barber, is the spurning of Falstaff as a Lord of Misrule by Hal in *Henry IV* (192-221). However, can Lincoln's protest in the original text be categorized as Falstaffian misrule, and was the popular disturbance in the crisis age of the 1590s merely a safety valve for their repressed biological desire?

Out of various theories on the interaction between popular disturbance and traditional festivities, the most influential theoretical adaptation may be the 'carnivalization theory' by



Mikhail Bakhtin. According to him, the festive forms of popular laughter subvert official decorum, and level social difference in an orgiastic explosion of the lower body of belly, genitals and buttocks. As the joyous irreverence of Mardi Gras embodies the irrepressible “material needs of the organized human collectivity”, topsy-turvydom prevails in low plebeian mockery, abuse and parody (300-01). Carnival inserts into these structures an indeterminacy, a semantic openness, deduces Bakhtin, which is the uproarious heteroglossia of market-place language. With this so-called ‘liberationist’ interpretation of festive misrule, Bakhtin argues, “Laughter liberates not only from exterior censorship but first of all from the great interior censor; it liberates from the fear that developed in man during thousands of years” (94). “It would therefore be a mistake”, Bakhtin concludes, to presume that festive and carnival forms express “a critical and clearly defined opposition” (95). With this biological essentialist viewpoint, however, can we retrieve the genuine popular voice from early modern drama? Is it not to allow the popular grievances over specific subsistence crisis to get lost in carnivalesque laughter, or impulsive disorder?

Capitalizing on Bakhtin’s subversive theory in order to counter Barber’s conservative interpretation of festivities, Michael Bristol argues, “In considering a particular historical instance of festivity, however, it is necessary to ask who is conserving what and at whose expense. . . . In early modern Europe such appropriation is by no means exclusively confined to the dominant culture” (39). Yet, can Bristol’s subversive retrieval of un-appropriated popular festivities be assured of not being exploited by authoritarian regime and utilized into justifying oppressive ideology? “Seeing the rising in *Jack Straw* as carnivalesque”, Longstaffe argues, “does not in itself either legitimate or de-legitimate it, for the carnivalesque could be seen from either the chroniclers’ or the commons’ point of view” (123). If it is not to de-legitimate the popular voice, then, why did the playwrights of *More* insert carnivalesque elements in their revisions? Was it not to pass Tilney’s censorship? Interpreting festive

misrule in terms of Victor Turner's liminality theory, Annabel Patterson maintains, "In the liminal situations, the lower social strata become privileged, and bodily parts and biological referents, conceived as the source of regenerative energy, are revalued" (61). Yet, again, can this valorization of the repressed libidinal energy as a value-system be an alternative norm of the real society, or is it merely a Freudian fantasy? "For those who write on Shakespeare", argues Richard Wilson, "the question of carnival has become, therefore, a litmus test not only of the value of the kind of popular culture . . . but of radical politics" (9).

Bakhtin's theory has its own value in that it was developed under the totalitarian regime of Stalin's Russia in order to valorize the voice of the oppressed. It might be one of the few liberationist theories possible in Bakhtin's Russia, but it has serious limitations with which both Barber's containment theory of festivities and Bristol's subversive adaptation of levelling rituals have in common, specifically if considered from the poststructuralist argument for non-essentialist perspectives. First of all, it is a sort of archetypal criticism which has as its underpinning the essentialist attitudes, disregarding historicity of the popular voice. For Barber, "holiday magic" of the old customs in popular festivals clarifies "basic human attitudes . . . at a level of esthetic abstraction which makes it inappropriate to identify them with specific social groups in the mingled actualities of history" (15; 256-57). This generic essentialist view chimes with Bristol's account of popular rituals in the context of a tug-of-war between "festive celebrations" of inversion and antagonistic "state power" (35). There is a strong tendency in such criticism both to trans-historicize and to mystify the socio-economic specificities of popular protests with the implication that such popular misrule thereby stands outside time and society whether the theory focuses on reconciliatory mode or on liberating energy. This aestheticism is even shared by the Marxist critic, Robert Weimann, who argues folk games were subsumed into "Shakespeare's universal vision" (*Shakespeare and the Popular Tradition* 251).

What is worse, this essentialist view of popular misrule, whether in literary or in historiographical fields, leads to the political ramification which is frequently appropriated by the ruling class for ideological propaganda. As far as this essentialist view on popular festivities is involved, all theorizations of popular protests come to be extremely vulnerable to being kidnapped by the ruling elites as a pretext to prevaricate on behalf of their defective government. They can easily attribute popular riots to the anarchic dispositions of the populace, and thus legitimize their authoritarian restraints on the common sort's propensity which is reputed to be innately disorderly. They can also use it as an excuse to mystify the problems of hunger and unemployment as the natural condition of human existence by erasing the historical knots of systemic deficiency. Thus, judicial documents and homiletic passages in the early modern age are inundated with the denouncements of all popular riots as signal demonstrations of the anarchic inclination of the rude multitude. It is undisputable that riots frequently took place in the festive mood of ritual occasions, but it should not be understood as an indicator of the rude multitude's inborn propensity to anarchic disorder but as the protesters' attempt to employ ritual and symbol to legitimize their action. At all events, furthermore, the ritualized protests did coexist with serious questioning of the social, political and religious establishment. "Protest was expressed in ritualized forms", concludes the historian, Peter Burke, "but the ritual was not sufficient to contain the protest" (203). The real force to make "the wine barrel" blow "its top", leading to "switching of codes from the language of ritual to the language of rebellion" was almost always the accumulated problems of unemployment and hunger of the period (Burke 203).

## **V. Corrupted Representation in the Original Text and in the Historical Sources**

Historical hindsight gives an opportunity to shed a renewed light on the xenophobic sentiment in Lincoln's protest. Not only in the interpretation of Tilney's censorship but also in

the designation of the date of the play, it seems to me that the previous studies put too much emphasis on the anti-alien aspects. The attribution of the date of the original text to 1592-93 is largely based on the libelous pamphlet posted on the wall of the Dutch cemetery against aliens, found in 5 May 1593, purportedly from *Tamburlaine*, which led to the arrest of Kyd and Marlowe (Gabrieli and Melchiori 18-19). But London's xenophobic climate continued in the crisis age of the 1590s, and it resurfaced as the incident of 1595, in which the aldermen confiscated a pamphlet promoted by members of the weaver's company expressing hostility to the strangers (Consitt 312-18). Considering that the anti-alien sentiments persisted markedly in high tide throughout the crisis age, it can hardly be exempted from the critique of circumstantial conjecture to connect the date of the text with a specifically surfaced incident of xenophobia.

The impression that Tilney's censorship focused on the anti-alien aspects is largely from his first intervention where he instructs the theatre to substitute 'men' for "Englishmen", and 'Lombard' for "strangers" and later enjoins the theatre to remove the whole lines: "It is hard when *Englishmen's* patience must be thus jettied on by *strangers*, and they not dare to revenge their own wrongs" (OT: 1.24-25. *Italics* are mine.). But his intervention in xenophobic reference is not consistent. He leaves intact "stranger" and "Frenchmen" in several places (OT: 1.28, 44; OT: 3.359), and, as discussed above, Hand D uses the pejorative word of "strangers" casually. Tilney's intervention is instead persistent in the lines of the apprentices' grievances and their insurrection. He proscribes Shrewsbury's speech, "In these dangerous times / I do not like this frowning vulgar brow. / My searching eye did never entertain / A more distracted countenance of grief / Than I have late observed / In the displeased commons of the City" (OT: 3.318-23); and the Messenger's lines, "My lord, ill news; and worse, I fear, will follow / If speedily it be not looked unto. / The City is in an uproar, and the Mayor / Is threatened if he come out of his house" (OT: 3.388-91). Tilney's

ensorial process also supports my argument that he is more concerned over the apprentices' insurgency in general. After he crosses out Lincoln's speech (OT: 1.24-25), his concern seems to have increased as he read, causing him at first to make deletion-marks line by line in most of scene 1 and ultimately to return to the starting point of the play to stipulate the sweeping injunction, "Leave out the insurrection wholly". Indeed, neither Tilney nor the playwrights decidedly focus their attention on the anti-alien aspects.

The dramatization of the anti-alien revolt itself, furthermore, seems to have been the result of the negotiation between historical realities of London citizens and the censorial apparatus of the Elizabethan theatre in the 1590s. That is, the playwright would have tried to pass Tilney's censorship by transferring the blame for the apprentice grievances from the misgovernment of the Elizabethan regime onto the "high-crested insolence" of the foreigners (OT: 3.327). It is undisputable that the foreigners were continually targeted during civic disturbances throughout the Tudor period. In particular, French Huguenots were singled out for the expression of xenophobic hostility by native Londoners, because they fostered a distinctive French Protestant identity and asserted themselves a self-confident minority, convinced of the superiority of their language and culture that enabled them to remain aloof from English natives (Ward 353; Archer 131). According to the historians, however, among the apprentice riots in the crisis age of the 1590s, anti-alien disturbances comprised only a small segment. Manning gives a statistical analysis of 35 outbreaks of popular disorder between 1581 and 1602 in metropolitan London. The largest category of 14 incidents consists of the insurrections which protested against various kinds of misadministration of justice, as cited above, the second largest of 8 incidents was for economic distress, and no more than 4 riots were directed against aliens (Manning 202). That is, the popular protest against the governmental regime is much more menacing and at least five times more numerous than the anti-alien riots in the last decades of Elizabethan London. These statistics lead us to infer that

Hand S would have sacrificed French foreigners vicariously to present Londoners' frustration caused by internal matters, and that Tilney would have tried to defuse the diplomatic friction with France presumably caused by the particularized term of 'Frenchmen'. Therefore, he would have intended at first to substitute the Catholic-nuanced generic term of the foreigner, "Lombards", only to find that the play's dramatization of insurgency in itself was too provocative to allow.

The self-censorship which Hand S would have exercised in the original text could be verified, even though the lacunae and the revisions make it difficult to retrieve many parts of his original manuscript. It is extraordinary, as argued above, that his presentation of apprentice demonstrators is free from the contaminating elements of clownish figures which all other insurgency plays of the period have in common, but his original text cannot help being regarded as a distorted portrait of commoners when compared with the chronicle sources. The deformation of the protesters into violent arsonists is exercised, where Lincoln instructs his followers to set fire to the houses of foreigners, "Then fire the houses, that, the Mayor being busy / About the quenching of them, we may scape" (OT: 4.449-50). It is true that the original text does not depict it as a mindless barbarism like Jack Cade's arson in *2 Henry VI* or the Roman mob's incendiarism in *Julius Caesar*, because it is committed as a strategy to earn time to escape from the riot police after the deliberation between the leaders, but it cannot be excused from the accusation of the criminal behavior of mob-lynching. In the chronicle sources, Lincoln's demonstrators did not attack the foreigners' residence before they were attacked by the foreigners. Thomas More met the demonstrators at St Martin's Gate and tried to appease them;

[He] had almost persuaded the people to depart, they within St Martin's threw out stones, bats, and hot water; so that they hurt diverse honest persons that were there with

Sir Thomas More, persuading the rebellious persons to cease, insomuch as at length one Nicholas Downes a sergeant of arms being there with the said Sir Thomas More, and sore hurt amongst others, in a fury, cried: Down with them. And then all the misruled persons ran to the doors and windows of the houses within St Martin's, and spoiled all that they found. (Holinshed 3: 621)

As Holinshed recounts, it was not Lincoln but Sergeant Downes who instigated the demonstrators to attack the foreigners' residence nor the demonstrators but the foreigners who attacked Downes. Not only in this scene does Hand S blame the demonstrators for committing arson but in the later scene he also transfers the blame for attacking Downes from the insolent foreigners to the apprentice protesters, "Ay, Downes, is't thou? I once did save thy life, / When else by cruel riotous assault / Thou hadst been torn in pieces" (OT: 13.1560-62).

Hand S's self-censorship is most obvious in reprocessing the chronicle sources about Dr Beal into drama. Dr Beal was a canon in St Mary of the Hospital in the time of Ill May Day, and played an important role in mobilizing the mass action. Holinshed gives detailed accounts of how the clergyman read Lincoln's "pitiful bill" in his sermon and of what incendiary speeches he delivered to the London citizens to give them the religio-political justice of the revolt: "As birds defend their nests, so ought Englishmen to cherish and maintain themselves, and to hurt and grieve aliens for respect of their commonwealth. And upon this text *Pugna pro patria*, he brought in, how by God's law it was lawful to fight for their country" (Holinshed 3: 619). But Hand S shrinks the priest's role to a minimum. He mentions the priest and repeats the text of Lincoln's bill verbatim from *Holinshed's Chronicles*, "As the hurt and damage grieveth all men, so must all men set to their willing power for remedy, and not suffer the said aliens in their wealth, and the natural-born men of this region to come to confusion" (OT: 1.87-91; Holinshed 3: 619), but he limits his role only in the indirect form of Lincoln's

narration, and avoids dramatizing his role on the stage. Lincoln says to his fellow artisans, “Doctor Beal will do in this matter as much as a priest may do to reform it, and doubts not but happy success will ensue upon our wrongs” (OT: 1.74-76).<sup>99</sup> *Holinshed’s Chronicles* gives even the accounts of how he was arrested and sent to the Tower, but Hand S restricts it into Shrewsbury’s passing remark, “That Doctor Beal may chance beshrew himself / For reading of the bill” (OT: 3.397-98).

In the context of turbulent religio-politics of Tudor England, Hand S would have known how inflammatory a role the priest could play in popular disturbances. History gives witness to the fact that popular protest developed into a large-scale commotion posing a serious threat to the Tudor regime when the priest was involved as an ideological formulator (Longstaffe 75-82). As Karl Marx argues, it was not simply military and economic struggle but also symbolism and language which enabled struggle and gave it the meaning and legitimacy that determined history (*Eighteenth Brumaire* 5-6). In Tudor England, the priest was an important state apparatus to spread government propaganda with the promulgation of official homilies in the congregation. The duty of a priest would be to soften the bitterness of subsistence struggles and class animosity by preaching order and obedience, and with the help of ecclesiastical apparatus, Tudor orthodox ideology practiced itself to convince people that not only the binary oppositions defined by political hierarchy such as “Kings and subjects” but also the gradational categories produced by economic disparity such as “riche and poore” are the result of the “goodly ordre of God” and therefore unalterable (Bond 161). Getting on the side of the distressed people, however, Dr Beal reminds us of Parson Ball in *Jack Straw* who also takes the part of the oppressed commoners. Against the assertion of the official church, which imposes a hierarchical order through which the oppression of the poor is naturalized, John Ball disseminates an Edenic concept of egalitarianism with the legendary couplet,

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<sup>99</sup> The first line of quotations is missing for the damage of the original manuscript. I quote John Jowett’s reconstruction adapted from Holinshed (Arden edition, 1.111-14).



“When Adam delved, and Eve span / Who was then a gentleman?” (1.1.62-63), and this became one of the most frequently quoted catch-phrase of the early modern levellers and served as the manifesto of proto-communism ever since (Longstaffe 83). But Hand S disregards Doctor Beal’s role in Ill May Day as much as he can, needless to say that he does not give him the role of an ideological formulator. Instead of playing down Dr Beal’s role, Hand S creates a new character, Doll Williamson, who does not appear in the chronicle sources, and makes her deliver the feminist version of John Ball’s radical ideology of egalitarianism.

Christopher Hill reminds us that the history of popular protesters is often written by “their enemies” (“From Lollards” 49). When we attempt to retrieve the genuine popular voices in their protest, we should be wary of accusations made against them by their enemies or Crown advocates. “They cannot represent themselves; they must be represented”, Marx argues while discussing the political vulnerability of French peasants (*Eighteenth Brumaire* 64). Like French peasants, the popular protesters in early modern London never could speak of themselves, nor could represent their emotions, presence or history as far as the official documents are concerned. All extant official documents about them came from the state apparatuses. In the representational interaction between subject and object, in other words, they could never be a speaking subject; they were always on the receiving end only. As a result, their representation was predicated not on facts or realities, but on the author’s preconceived stereotypical ideas. Legal documents frequently insist that ““they cared neither for God nor the King’, and that they were ‘wicked and seditious persons, being for most parte of the basest and pooreste condicion, not fearinge God and maliciously envyinge the state and peaceable government of this lande’” (Manning 319).

In view of political vulnerability, foreign artisans, particularly the French in London, underwent a worse trajectory than the apprentice protesters. Not only as a social underclass

but also as ethnic marginals, they were easily victimized as scapegoats which served to displace and redirect social tension and constraint. At times of English conflict with Continental power or in economic crisis, they were particularly vulnerable to the expression of native workers' malicious grudges. Around 1517, the precarious diplomatic relations between England and France might have aggravated the native Londoners' anti-Franco sentiment. In 1515, Queen Mary of France, sister of Henry VIII, returned to England after her husband Louis XII died. After Francis I's enthronement subsequently, the rivalry between England and France was intensified at first surrounding the bishopric of Tournai, which led at last to the break of the peace treaty and to the war in Milan 1516. The war was between the French army who occupied Milan and the German army led by Emperor Maximilian, but it was a war *de facto* between Francis I and Henry VIII who tried to restrain Francis I's expansionist policy by the proxy of Maximilian. Henry VIII's diplomatic maneuverings to circumvent Francis I, which were largely ushered by Wolsey, are detailed in *Holinshed's Chronicles* just before the account of the 1517 Ill May Day. The alliance of Henry VIII and Maximilian is reported by Shrewsbury, "The entertainment of the Emperor / 'Gainst the perfidious French into our pay" (OT: 10.1186-87), and the Franco-German war in Italy with Henry VIII's financial support to Maximilian is mentioned, "His love unto our sovereign brings him down / From his imperial seat, to march in pay / Under our English flag" (OT: 10.1207-09). In terms of the London economy, the mid 1510s were not in so critical a situation as the mid 1590s. However, during the period of Ill May Day, Polydore Vergil records, "The sweating sickness . . . once more assailed men, and carried many off", from which we can easily conjecture that the native Londoners were in acute distress at that season (247). Historians do not accept as trustworthy record *Holinshed's Chronicles's* account of Francis de Barde's insolent "boast" and "injurious abuse" which scene 1 in the original text vividly dramatizes (Holinshed 3: 617). Manning regards it as "widely-circulated rumours"

(196). Thus, it would be reasonable to consider the alleged Frenchmen's outrageous abuse not so much as factual truth but as fictional construction due to both anti-alien sentiment and subsistence grievance of Londoners.

Lincoln's demonstration undergoes systematic stigmatization in the representational transmission from chronicle sources through the original text to the revision. But it should not be interpreted that the chronicle sources are truthful accounts of popular revolt. As part of the ideological state apparatuses, chronicle history is also shot through with stigmatization of the popular voice which serves as a foil to the glamorization of royal power. Indeed, the chronicle's detailed accounts of Lincoln's insurgency turns out to be merely a preparatory introduction to lead to the conclusion of Henry VIII's grace of mercy. In the execution scene of the Ill May Day rioters, the chronicle gives a more dramatic account of royal pardon than Hand S' dramatization. Hand S depicts Henry VIII's pardon as being delivered indirectly through Surrey to the execution scene, but the chronicle shows the King presenting himself to the prisoners to aggrandize his image of benevolence to maximum effect through the theatrical manipulation of the prisoners' absolution. In Westminster Hall, Henry did not proclaim his pardon immediately when the prisoners were taken there. He kept them in fearful anxiety by dangling his pronouncement of pardon in midair. Taking his seat with great ceremony on a lofty platform, he "commanded that all the prisoners should be brought forth, so that in came the poor younglings and old false knaves, bound in ropes all along, one after another in their shirts, and everyone a halter about his neck, to the number of four hundred men and eleven women" (Holinshed 3: 624-25). When the prisoners all presented themselves to the King, Cardinal Wolsey implored Henry to pardon them. The King refused and the Cardinal explained to the people that they had deserved death for their offence. When the prisoners heard the death penalty, they all "together cried; mercy, gracious lord, mercy. Herewith the lords altogether besought his grace of mercy, at whose suit the King pardoned

them all” (Holinshed 3: 625). At the exhortation of the Cardinal, “all the prisoners shouted at once, and altogether cast up their halters into the hall roof” (Holinshed 3: 625).

In spite of its royalist account, however, the chronicle induces us to call in question the political mechanism of Tudor monarchy by allowing our historical hindsight to see through how the Tudor regime enhanced royal authority and enforced people’s obedience. What we confirm here is that both the aristocracy and the clergy collaborated in the carefully stage-managed show of royal pardon. The ruling elite deliberately drove people to the climax of anxiety before the dramatic reversal of punishment. Stephen Greenblatt reminds us that Renaissance England was “intentionally committed to the arousal of anxiety” (*Shakespearean Negotiations* 137). Arousing and manipulating anxiety was the key to the mechanism of their power-play which was employed both by the church and the government. They intentionally evoked a feeling of anxiety to shape “proper loyalties” (Greenblatt, *Shakespearean Negotiations* 136). In early modern London, this mode of manipulation showed itself very frequently in evangelist preachers’ lurid exhortation of impending damnation in their open-air sermons (Kaufman 280), and very floridly in the Crown magistrate’s spectacular execution rituals. The dynamics of royal power in Tudor England, during which the ruler had no standing army, no national police force, no efficient system of communication, and no highly developed bureaucracy, was largely dependent upon the theatricalized celebration of royal glory and the theatricalized state-violence meted out to the enemies of that glory (Greenblatt, *Shakespearean Negotiations* 64). Paradoxically, however, the theatricalized power-play is self-deflationary. The true radicalism of theatre is that, regardless of its intention, it provides a pretext for audience reaction. It is able to produce theatre but unable to dictate audience reception. Its effect is not dependent on its natural right but on the audience’s consent and their willing suspension of disbelief. The chronicle’s account of Henry’s theatre of pardon suggests that by putting his pardon on stage, monarchy itself submitted to people’s judgment.

That is, the inherent implication of theatricalized power is that the so-called ‘divine nature’ of royal power and the consequently naturalized obedience of people, which the ruling elite was so earnest to construct in Tudor England, was to be disconcerted by its very theatricality because it revealed the unnaturalness of royal power.

## **VI. Conclusion**

I have tried to retrieve the genuine popular voice in Ill May Day. The pursuit of it has led me to move backward to the origin of its historical moment. I presumed that the function of the origin should not only orient, balance, and regulate the representation, but it also should above all, as the organizing principle of historical transmission, limit what we might call the arbitrariness of the representation. The origin should be the point at which the substitution of contents, elements, or terms is no longer possible: i.e. the fundamental immobility or the reassuring certitude which is itself beyond the reach of arbitrary representation. With this certitude anxiety can be mastered, for anxiety is invariably the result of a certain mode of being implicated in arbitrariness. Instead of attaining the immovable fact, however, I have been obliged to reach the dead end where everything turns into a myth. There is no absolute source of Ill May Day. I have been unable to determine the absolute origin. There are only infinite substitutions, which take their places in the absence of the privileged reference.

Indeed, the historical account on Ill May Day is a chain of repetitions, substitutions, transformations, and permutations. This chain of substitutions is exactly the same as what Derrida calls “freeplay” (“Structure, Sign, and Play” 878). It is not just because the infinity of a historical field cannot be covered by a finite glance or finite senses, but also because there is something missing from it: a centre which arrests and grounds the freeplay of substitutions. The movement of historical account simply adds something, which incurs the recognition that there is always more, and furthermore this addition is a floating one because it comes to

perform a vicarious function, to supplement a lack on the part of the factual evidence. From then on it is necessary to begin to think that there is no centre, that the centre cannot be thought in the form of immovable truth, and that it is not a fixed locus but a function, a sort of non-locus in which an infinite number of sign-substitutions come into play. This moment is that in which language invades the universal problematic; i.e. in the absence of centre or origin, everything seems to turn out to be discourse, inducing us to Derridean pitfall of textuality, which I cited in the introduction, “There is nothing outside text” (*Of Grammatology* 158).

In the chain of supplementarity to Ill May Day, I have referred to, roughly, three groups of texts and authors. First, there are the early modern contemporaries who recorded their views of the turmoil, whom I consider a kind of control-group closest to the ‘truth’ of the historical moment. Second, there are the late sixteenth-century chroniclers retelling this turbulent tale to Elizabethan readers. And third, there are the commercial playwrights dramatizing the old story in the context of the 1590s London crisis. The textual scholars posit *Holinshed’s Chronicles* as belonging to the second group as the ‘reference source’ to *More*, but it does not merit this name and this treatment. Its account of Ill May Day is specious and the use of it as the reference improper. It deserves no referential privilege any more than the fictional representation of *More*. Igor Djordjevic argues that *Holinshed’s Chronicles* is “a notoriously unreliable historical text” because of “the presence of obviously fictional element in the text”, and that its narrative should be analyzed for “the poetic truth” rather than for “the historical truth” (3).

*Holinshed’s Chronicles*, planned “apparently with Lord Burghley’s support” and “printed under royal privilege”, was the product of more than a dozen men’s efforts to circulate a commonwealth discourse such as vociferous nationalism and Protestant zeal (Clegg 138). Its 1577 edition, published in two lavishly illustrated folio volumes after the

death of the original designer and Queen's printer Reyner Wolfe in 1573, deletes Francis de Bard's episode which serves as the source material for the first scene of the play, and its enlarged and supplemented 1587 edition, published after the death of Wolfe's research assistant Holinshed in 1580, devotes many pages to a detailed account of the Ill May Day turbulence including Francis de Bard's episode, but it is merely a verbatim copy of Edward Hall's chronicle.

Edward Hall (1497-1547) was a 20-year-old student at King's College, Cambridge, when Lincoln's revolt happened. Hall's narrative might be taken to be an eyewitness account about Ill May Day, but there are two problems with this assumption. The first is the uncertainty surrounding the role of Richard Grafton (c. 1511-72) who was to complete and publish Hall's chronicle in 1548 after Hall's death. Grafton argues, he has "in suchwise completed them, as may after the said years, appear in this work but utterly without any addition of mine" ("To the Reader"); and he reiterates the same assertion in the revised note of the 1550 edition, "I thought it my duty to suffer his work to be his own, and therefore have altered nothing therein" ("To the Reader"). But the statements are afterwards contradicted. In his 1570 edition of *Abridgement of the Chronicles of England*, he claims that "the greatest parte of the same was myne awne Chronicle and written with myne owne hand" (4<sup>v</sup>). In the account of Ill May Day, Grafton abridges Hall's lengthy description in three pages of folio into a single paragraph in his chronicle by making a complete deletion of the foreigners' insolent abuses of the native Londoners including Francis de Bard's episode. Grafton's single paragraph focuses on the dramatic pardon of Henry VIII at Westminster Hall, but Grafton argues it was granted "by the mediation of the most virtuous and gracious Queen Katherine", contradicting Hall's attribution of it to Cardinal Wolsey's mediation (130<sup>v</sup>). Of course, we cannot attest to whether Grafton's deletion of the foreigners' insolency was due to the lack of factual evidence or for his own convenience of abridgement, and in spite of the contradictory

account of his mediatory role, we also cannot verify which chronicle is more reliable.

More fundamental is the second problem of how much Hall based his narrative on his own research. For the period preceding his own lifetime, it is needless to say that, like all Tudor historians, he followed existing sources, both printed and in manuscript, sometimes word for word. His principal debts were to Polydore Vergil and the London chronicles. What is more disappointing, however, is that even for the conspicuous incidents of his own period he sometimes transcribed other sources word for word. About his plagiaristic account, Janette Dillon argues, “Though it may come as no surprise to find him following BL MS Harley 6079, ff.21<sup>v</sup>-23<sup>v</sup> more or less verbatim for the coronation of Henry VIII in 1509”, when he was a child; “it comes a more of a shock to a modern reader to realize that he is also following BL Harleian MS 41 equally slavishly for the coronation of Anne Boleyn in 1533”, which might have been one of the most remarkable events in his own adult lifetime (4). When we read in the Preface of his chronicle, “I have complied and gathered (and not made) out of diverse writers” (Aii<sup>v</sup>), therefore, we would rather accept it as a literal confession of his plagiarism than as a rhetorical strategy to declare his faithfulness to historical facts.

Hall’s unreliability must be understood, then, within the Tudor customs of historical narrative. The so-called chronicle history was the dominant genre of historiography in early modern England, as witnessed by the publication of Caxton’s chronicles, Richard Arnold’s *Chronicle* (1502), Robert Fabyan’s *Chronicle* (1516), Hall’s chronicle, Richard Grafton’s *Chronicle* (1570), *Holinshed’s Chronicles*, William Camden’s *Britannia* (1586) and John Stow’s numerous chronicles and annals. As a loosely organized compilation of previously written histories, primary sources, and original documents, the chronicle history relies on time as its organizing principle. Events are reported as they occur without regard to their factual evidence or historical significance. Inclusiveness is the aim of the chronicler, and agglomeration is his means. Political events, natural disasters, domestic crimes, local



anecdotes, supernatural phenomena, popular rumours, and anything else that are available to the compiler's disposition are uncritically incorporated into it. Its narrative technique is like what Lévi-Strauss calls "*bricolage*" (16). The *bricoleur* is someone who uses 'whatever is at hand', that is, the instruments he finds at his disposal around him, those which are already there, which have not been specifically conceived with an eye to the operation for which they are to be used and to which one tries by trial and error to adapt them, not hesitating to change them whenever it appears necessary, or to try several of them at once, even if their form and their origin are heterogeneous (Lévi-Strauss 16-18). As a result, it is a sort of free-play with the previous representation of historical facts.

With the decline of medieval monastic annals, another trend emerged as a new approach to history, competing with the dominant genre of chronicles. The so-called humanist history is characterized by its emphasis on dynastic commonwealth, with its organization of history around the personality of the monarch and with its methodology of selecting historical materials according to their perceived veracity and their importance to the topic at hand. The result is a unified and focused narrative with an emphasis on royal character and motivation, as exemplified by Thomas More's *History of Richard III* (1557)<sup>100</sup> and Polydore Vergil's *Anglica Historia* (1534). Vergil (c. 1470-1555) was one of the most trusted agents of the English Crown in Rome until his disgrace around the time of the 1517 Ill May Day. In his dedication to Henry VIII, he avows his historical integrity and veracity. But his work is tendentious in its attempt to justify the rise of the Tudor dynasty, and his truthfulness is most severely tested in his account on the middle years of Henry VIII's reign to which he could give an eyewitness record. There were two contradictory views of Vergil in Elizabethan England: almost without exception Tudor scholars professed to distrust and dislike *Anglica*

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<sup>100</sup> More's unfinished work, *The History of Richard III*, was presumably written in 1513; he was executed in 1535; and it was posthumously published by his son-in-law, Rastell, in 1557.

*Historia*; at the same time they made exhaustive use of it. For this curious situation there is a simple explanation. Vergil rejected the legends of Brutus and Arthur and he wrote primarily as Catholic European and not as Protestant Englishman.

Vergil's accounts of Ill May Day belong to the twenty-seventh book of the third edition (1555) dealing with the reign of Henry VIII down to the birth of Edward VI. His work is still frequently cited by the historians concerning the court affairs of Henry VIII as he was one of the few who had a degree of access to the King, but it leaves as much room for doubt as Hall's account concerning the other matters except those of the high profile figures. He mentions neither the foreigners' insolent sauciness against the English nor the Crown Court's favour to them, which comprises more than a third of Hall's account of the disturbances. He emphasizes the beneficial effects of foreign trades and justifies the reciprocal transaction with foreigners by citing Cicero's treatise on commonwealth humanitarianism which recalls More's appeasement speech in Hand D's Addition II, whereas Hall quotes Dr Beale's sermon on the natives' natural right to defend themselves against the aliens' encroachment which serves as the ideological underpinning of Lincoln's uprising. Vergil describes the apprentices as the "rabble of abandoned men" who wield indiscriminate violence in St Martin's (245), whereas Hall portrays them as disciplined demonstrators who are obliged to resort to violence after being attacked by foreigners in St Martin's. Vergil depicts Lincoln as a coward who conceals himself in the country for fear of being arrested while his fellow apprentices wage the protests, but Hall presents him as a heroic figure who faces his execution with dignity, which is consistent with his image in Hand S's original manuscript. Vergil recounts the royal pardon not as the result of Wolsey's mediation but as a due process of criminal law decided according to the investigation of the disturbances, which reflects his well-known animosity against Wolsey. In spite of these numerous contrasts, however, interestingly enough, Vergil and Hall give a similar account of Henry VIII's dramatic declaration of mercy staged at Westminster

Hall.

In the two historians' accounts of Ill May Day, their partisan narratives are apparent. Vergil's pro-alien account must have derived from his status as an Italian stranger, and Hall's pro-apprentice report must have had a crucial nexus with his material standing. He was born of a London merchant and remained a Londoner all his life. Furthermore, the partisanship is not limited to the historians but extends to the playwrights. Regardless of whether Shakespeare would have conferred to Vergil or not, the similarity between his hand in More's speech and Vergil's narrative on foreigners would not have been a fortuitous coincidence. From the viewpoint of native Londoners, Shakespeare was also a 'foreigner' in early modern parlance, which might have caused Robert Greene to deliver a vehement detraction against him. It may also be easily conjectured that Munday would have found a sympathetic viewpoint in Hall's account of Lincoln's protest. For both of them, London was at once a "birthplace and a breeder" (Tracy Hill 22). Both of them as members of a livery company would have had a personal experience of stringent competition with foreigners or aliens. Vergil's court-centred perspective and Hall's city-centered viewpoint would have an eerie potential to be split off too far apart to be reconciled, eventually leading to Civil War about a century afterwards, but in the early Tudor regime both of them might agree to the point that the commonwealth should be united under the monarchist hegemony. Therefore, they give an almost identical account of Henry VIII's royal clemency to the apprentice rioters.

In retrospect, Derridean freeplay of signification which results from the lack of factual evidence or original centre is in fact not a random freeplay but a tendentious power-play. Discourse which, argues Derrida, arises from the *différance* between signifier and signified, is not simply 'arbitrary dissemination', but it also disguises itself into Foucauldian concept of 'truth' which is produced by virtue of multiple forms of constraint. Foucault argues, "Truth isn't the reward of free spirits, the child of protracted solitude, nor the privilege of those who

have succeeded in liberating themselves” (*Power/Knowledge* 131). In other words, whether he is a historian or a playwright, every discourses is constrained consciously or unconsciously by a three-fold specificity: that of his class position, i.e. his standing in political and economic demands to which he submits or against which he resists; that of his conditions of life and work such as his field of research or his place in the theatre; lastly the specificity of the politics of his society such as a monarchist regime or a republic state. This Foucauldian formula gives a clear explanation of how Vergil’s and Hall’s social standings constrained their historiographies; i.e. why they were bound to be diverged into court-centric and civic-centric respectively but converged into monarchist discourse correspondingly, and how and why their historical discourses were reproduced into theatrical discourses by the playwrights in question. Foucault continues to maintain, “Each society has its regime of truth, its ‘general politics’ of truth: that is the types of discourse which it accepts and makes functions as true; the mechanisms and instances which enable one to distinguish true and false statements” (*Power/Knowledge* 131). This Foucauldian intervention of power in the production of ‘truth’ is also exemplified by how it was possible for the city chronicle to rise with its local patriotism and its intense curiosity about civic government and personalities in the ever-growing bourgeois London; for humanist historiography to replace the medieval monastic annals with its emphasis on royalist human agency and transnational moral ethos in the period of Renaissance humanism; and for their theatrical reproduction to be properly contained within the dominant ideology of monarchism.

In these terms, historical truth no longer means the ensemble of facts “which are to be discovered and accepted, but rather the ensemble of rules according to which the true and the false are separated and specific effects of power attached to the true” (Foucault, *Power/Knowledge* 132). The battle in the field of truth is not on behalf of truth but about the status of truth and about the economic and political role it plays. The intellectual’s mission is

not merely to criticize the ideological contents supposedly linked to truth, but that of ascertaining the possibility of constituting a new politics of truth. In the studies of *More*, therefore, the pursuit of a genuine popular voice in Ill May Day should be redirected into the identification of the politics of theatre by which the popular voice is produced, distributed, circulated, and consumed. The battle for the dispossessed people could not be to change their consciousness – or what's in their head – but it could be to ascertain the set of rules by which their voice is contaminated and deflated. From this perspective, we can see the manuscript of *More* as a witness which discloses the censorial intervention and the revisionary process through which the voice of the dispossessed people was deflated. By this disclosure, more importantly, we can correct it with our historical hindsight.

## **CONCLUSION**

### **I. The Modern Subject and Critical Theory**

Why do we read Renaissance drama? What kind of use value can it have for addressing the problems of our current situation? Can the artwork form an autonomous enclave against the encroachment of the surrounding absurdities? To what degree and in what respect can we appreciate it as directing towards the possibility of more desirable ways of organizing life and society, beyond the horizon of the age in which it was written? More fundamentally, does the modern subject still retain the mental faculty to recognize various oppressions? Has it not lost the capability to free itself from dominant ideology? To explicate these questions has been an intractable task for literary scholars, and it would be too bold within the limited space of a concluding chapter to embark upon this huge project which will surely need volumes of work. But in the current circumstances of Renaissance studies in which the originally progressive and critical project of new historicism and cultural materialism tend to lapse into the reactionary mode of fetishized materialism or to be neutralized by the postmodernist suspicion of the narratives of human liberation, I think, it is urgent to pose these fundamental questions again and try to answer them even if such an answer will inevitably be cursory and insufficient.

Some critics such as Richard Halpern, Hugh Grady and Kiernan Ryan still hold on to the idea that our historical hindsight leads us to detect the cultural function of Renaissance drama and to make use of it for the reformation of our contemporary situation, but most of them, particularly in the current poststructuralist milieu, have retreated to the disenchanted view of literature in general, including Renaissance drama, as helpless agent of the dominant culture. This poststructuralist bleak view of literature as subservient agent of the ruling class is mainly derived from the reevaluation of ideological power. Most poststructuralists have

found ideology to be far more formidable in circumscribing our mentality than previously thought. In his essay “Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses”, Althusser reformulates the traditional Marxist conception of ideology as an illusion of reality imposed upon the oppressed by the oppressors to sustain the *status quo*. Far from being an externally dictated illusion, argues Althusser, ideology involves a structural constitution of perception, a subconscious distortion of the imagination, internalized in the individual by the various ideological state apparatuses through which we are socialized (*Lenin and Philosophy* 162-77). That is, from infancy onwards, we learn to live by our own subjection as the condition we desire, and thus through rational argument alone we cannot attain the recognition that ‘what it is to be’ ought to be different from ‘what it is’, which is what makes a real systemic change so difficult to achieve.

In the current poststructuralist era, many post-Althusserians have considered the distinction between the ideological and the non-ideological to be difficult to sustain, and they have proposed a theory which conceptualizes the world as a series of ‘discursive practices’. Particularly since the experience of the defeat of the leftist movement in 1968, Althusser’s concept of ideology has produced a well-nigh universal feeling of powerlessness of the human subject. Foucault points out that hegemonic power operates in every molecule of society, absorbing all dissident desires into a supervising, norm-enforcing, disciplinary power. There is no single privileged place for political activists to go to work, no locus of power whose removal will bring the whole system tumbling down. In a not so different strain of thought, Derrida regards our selfhood as being incarcerated in the prison of textuality which operates on the basis of the binary oppositional system of sign throughout human history. He argues, “We cannot do without the concept of the sign, we cannot give up this metaphysical complicity without also giving up the critique we are directing against this complicity” (“Structure, Sign, and Play” 880). This French poststructuralist account of a helpless subject

appears even more pertinent than ever before in the context of our late capitalism which exercises an accelerating pressure on individuals to fit in the bureaucratic slots of a globalized economy.

The chief underpinning of this poststructuralist logic of an impotent subject can be best summarized by what is called ‘closed-circle thinking’: i.e. a view that all discourses are meaningful only within particular communities. Accordingly, it is possible for two interpretations of the same thing to be incompatible but yet each impeccable. There is no standpoint from which all of these discourses can be assessed and compared. This closed-circle thinking is explicitly propounded by Jean-Francois Lyotard, perhaps a central figure in the last phase of poststructuralism. Lyotard declares the end of grand narratives. Drawing on Nietzsche’s critique that the totalizing claims of reason can have no positive or objective legitimacy, he argues that the criteria regulating the truth-value of knowledge derive from context-dependent language games, not from absolute rules or standards, and that *grand recits* or metanarratives have now lost their legitimacy (37-41). There thus emerges the legitimation of more modest *petit recits* or little narratives which authorize heteromorphous language games and paralogical dissension, keyed to social heterogeneity, the local, provisional, temporary and pragmatic; their speculative and emancipatory goal undecided in advance (Lyotard 60-67). Tracing the genealogy of this poststructuralist closed-circle thinking back to Occam’s nominalism of the medieval age, Peter Munz argues, “Obviously, there is something wrong in the rejection of all and every metadiscourse. If one holds that all knowledge is somebody’s discourse and that this fact makes all knowledge discourse sensitive and that no reference is intended, one may well come to the conclusion that there cannot be metanarratives of which all these discourses are parts” (349). Criticizing this concept of self-referentiality, Munz continues to argue, “But the ineluctable fact is that while one may have doubts about the viability of metatheories, one cannot have doubts about the metasubstance.



We all live in one and the same world; and its separate parts must be consistent with one another and cannot be irreducibly disjointed” (349).

The French poststructuralist concept of a helpless subject was originally derived from the attack on the conventional notion of Enlightenment and its modernizing project. According to Foucault, the development of reason in the Enlightenment period played a key role in boosting capitalism by permitting utility and value to be identified and measured and both natural and human resources to be prescribed, distributed and controlled according to a vertical taxonomy, and this Enlightenment reason constituted as a new mode of knowledge the concepts of production, biology and language which had been hitherto shrouded in the concepts of exchange, life and discourse respectively (*Order of Things* 250-53). However, argues Foucault, the mental faculty of reason in the Enlightenment period constructed itself successfully only by labelling alternative modes of discourse as ‘madness’, banishing them, and silencing what it excluded: “The language of psychiatry, which is a monologue of reason about madness, has been established only on the basis of such a silence” (Preface to *Madness and Civilization* x-xi). Thus, reason can no longer be claimed to be a light switched on in the Enlightenment period. Neither can it be considered to continue to illuminate darkness nor can it be regarded as locating an objective order in amorphous things. The very notion of such an order of things is itself a historical invention, one that requires a systematic and violent oppression, even though “there is nothing that the madness of men invents which is not either nature made manifest or nature restored” (*Madness and Civilization* 283).

When it comes to an attack on the Enlightenment, however, about twenty years before French poststructuralism, German Marxists, especially the Frankfurt School, had already deployed a cogent logic for an anti-Enlightenment conception of modern selfhood. They share with the French poststructuralists the disenchanting view of the subject, but their studies on the subject focused on the faculty of thought or reason rather than on discourse and textuality. In

*Dialectic of Enlightenment*, Horkheimer and Adorno undertake a critical assessment of Western civilization. They claim that the modern West has not fulfilled the utopian promise of the Enlightenment, lapsing instead into a calamitous state of society which reifies human consciousness through instrumental reason, self-alienating functionalism, commodity fetishism and monopoly capitalism (22-25). In *Negative Dialectics*, Adorno inquires into the origin of human reason which causes both the Enlightenment ideal to degenerate into Fascist capitalism and the socialist ideal to deteriorate into Stalinist totalitarianism. He finds out that reason or thought itself has become an instrument of domination which subsumes all objects under the control of the dominant viewpoint, particularly through the notion of identification, i.e. of identifying as real in nature and society only that which harmonizes or fits with dominant concepts, and regarding as unreal or non-existent everything that does not (*Negative Dialectics* 144-46). Adorno's 'negative dialectics' is an attempt to articulate a non-dominating thought that would recognize its limitations and accept the non-identity and reality of that which could not be subsumed under the dominant concepts (*Negative Dialectics* 4-6). Therefore, Adorno seeks to ground the critical axis of his philosophical work in his critique of identity. According to him, the potential of negative dialectics which can be retrieved arises from the gap between concept and object, which can never go into the former without leaving behind a residue. This gap, i.e. the non-identity in identification, is a keystone to his negative dialectics of both material life and conceptual reasoning (*Negative Dialectics* 146-48).

Hugh Grady makes an interesting use of this critical theory of the Frankfurt School to reassess the French poststructuralist view of the modern subject. As summarized above, both the Frankfurt School and the French poststructuralists have in common a negative critique of the positive myth of liberatory Enlightenment, but their views on the modern subject are divergent: i.e. French poststructuralists see it as an impotent agent completely subjugated by ubiquitous power, but the Frankfurt School sees a crevice between reason and Enlightenment

ideology. The Frankfurt School identifies the triumph of rationality in the Enlightenment merely as an intertwinement of the capitalist project with instrumental reason. Thus, Grady argues that the French poststructuralists' pessimistic treatment of the subject as a subjected agent is "a flattening, one sided depiction of the subject", ignoring its potential critical reason which is a different mental faculty from instrumental reason (10). And he maintains that poststructuralist historicism, particularly American new historicism, which has sometimes followed certain strands of French theory, gives a deflating view to the Renaissance subject whose instrumental reason was prefigured by Francis Bacon in scientific discourses, by Descartes in philosophy and by Machiavelli in political expediency (17). As a result, the poststructuralist historicism has postulated a straitjacketed Renaissance man who is one-dimensionally determined by all containing structures of ideology and power (Grady 216).<sup>101</sup>

Grady traces the antithetical process in which the subject interacted with ubiquitous power in terms not only of being interpellated by it but also of distinctive reaction against it. With this process, he retrieves "a much less straitjacketed" subject than the French poststructuralist notion (216). He finds the "residual cultural forms and ideologies" of the early modern period which were engaged in the formation of selfhood (217). In the works of Shakespeare, Montaigne and their contemporaries, for example, Grady identifies the evidence that they passionately denounced the incipient process of commodification and fetishism in their emergent capitalist societies (17). It means that at the specific transitional period in which those works were produced, capitalism, as an anonymous force that was beginning to transform social reality in radical ways, appeared "as something monstrous and alien" (22). That is, the early modern self created a critical, imaginative space for the distantiation from the dominant ideology, even though it is defined as omnivorous by Greenblatt and Dollimore,

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<sup>101</sup> For Greenblatt's view of Renaissance selfhood, see his *Renaissance Self-Fashioning: From More to Shakespeare* (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1980) 161-68; and for Dollimore's notion of Renaissance subject, see his *Radical Tragedy: Religion, Ideology and Power in the Drama of Shakespeare and His Contemporaries* (Brighton: Harvester, 1984) 153-81.

and it reserved critical rationality which led to “utopian, potentially liberatory concepts and works of art” (217).

Grady argues that the critical space of the early modern period forms vantage-points from which to re-evaluate the subject. He looks upon the completion of a humanist ideal in the Enlightenment as a triumphant exaltation of instrumental rationality with its scientism, positivism and techno-mania, suiting itself to capitalist development. The reason that our current postmodern selfhood can discern the critical rationality documented in the works of early modern thinkers is derived from the symmetrical distance between the early modern and the postmodern period from the Enlightenment myth: i.e. our own postmodernist distance from the Enlightenment creates “revealing perspectives on the pre-Enlightenment Renaissance” (7). Grady gives no explanation for what sort of postmodern material condition brings about the distance from the Enlightenment and how it allows our postmodern mentality to recover its critical reason from the totalizing encroachment of instrumental reason, but his argument for the critical agency of the subject with its skeptical, synthetic and intuitive faculties is informative when we take into account the current global capitalism and the commercialized culture industry which wield overarching power to reify the modern way of life into a fetishized mode.

## **II. Marxist Aesthetics and City Dramas**

The Frankfurt School’s critical theory on the gap between the concept and the object extends not only to human selfhood but also to literature. Literary and other artworks have a privileged place in Frankfurt thinking. According to critical theory, art registers the antithetical nature of culture which works not only in a conformist way in its automatic acquiescence to dominant ideology but functions also as critical insofar as it bears in its very form the image of an undamaged material. Again, the keynote of Frankfurt aesthetic theory is

pessimistic like that of French poststructuralists, but it maintains the ‘negative’ power of aesthetic dimension because it thinks that art can be autonomous. Art distances itself from reality. It does not have direct contact with commoditized reality, and this distance gives it the power to be critical of reified human life. Whereas popular art conforms to the social system which shapes it, the autonomous artwork becomes social *paradoxically* by its negating power against the social norms to which it relates (Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory* 321). According to Adorno, art is the embattled enclave squeezed by the deadening forces of capitalism, which resists “the administered world” of the culture industry (*Aesthetic Theory* 355). Art does not simply reflect the social system, but acts within the market-driven society as a determinate negation which produces an indirect but critical truth-content. Art rejects its reconciliation to the alienated condition of human beings. Instead, it lends suffering a voice, and predicates an ‘in-itself’ that has yet to be brought into being. To sum up, for the Frankfurt School, art is a negative immanence of the bourgeois world (*Aesthetic Theory* 369).

For Marxist aesthetics, two questions stand out: one is whether art can survive in the late capitalist world, and the other, whether art can contribute to the transformation of the capitalist system. Concerning these questions, most Frankfurt School thinkers are skeptical. With the prevailing culture industry nowadays, the accelerating force of commercialism poses an unprecedented threat to art. It overwhelms art and frequently reduces it to a means of capitalism: i.e. it transforms art into disposable consumables, or disperses it into advertising commodities. But another German Marxist, Bertolt Brecht, poses a maverick stance. He aligns himself with the Frankfurt School in his endorsement of modernist literature,<sup>102</sup> but he diverges from the Frankfurt School in his practice of Marxist aesthetics. In his epic theatre, he

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<sup>102</sup> The modernist artworks were denounced by a realist Marxist, Georg Lukács, as symptoms of alienated individuals in late capitalism. For Lukács’s criticism about the high-modernist writers, see his *Historical Novel*, trans. Hanah and Stanley Mitchell (London: Merlin, 1962) 30-63; Adorno’s extollment of them, especially Samuel Beckett, see his *Aesthetic Theory*, trans. C. Lenhardt, ed. Gretel Adorno and Rolf Tiedemann (London: Routledge, 1984) 352-54; and Brecht’s critique against Lukács’s formalist aesthetics, see his “Against Georg Lukács,” *New Left Review* 1.84 (1974): 39-53.

takes a stance oppositional to the Aristotelian tradition, which the Frankfurt School reaffirms even though it opposes Lukács's tenets of realism. Indeed, Adorno favours formal unity, dramatic empathy, and poetic catharsis which he transposes, though, into "the experience of tremor" (*Aesthetic Theory* 347). But Brecht defines his epic theatre as anti-Aristotelian, and his foremost means to deploy Marxist aesthetics is the so-called *Verfremdungseffekt*, through which he attempts to prize open social and ideological contradictions, and to provoke the audience into an active engagement in real politics, instead of lulling them into a state of passive acceptance.<sup>103</sup> Opposing formal unity, he urges the dramatists to avoid a naturalist development of action and to render characters subject to criticism and to change. He recommends them to join episodes in such a way that "the knots are easily noticed", and to lay the jagged seams deliberately bare to the audience (*Brecht on Theatre* 201). In order not to promote an empathic audience, he encourages the actors not to lose themselves in their roles. The actors should present their roles to the audience as both recognizable and unfamiliar, so that a process of critical assessment can be set in motion (*Brecht on Theatre* 71).

Brecht's epic theatre was motivated by his dedicated commitment to unmasking the political disguise concealed by a deviously protean capitalist system; nevertheless, Adorno criticizes his political commitment for its crude explicitness. Adorno argues, "whatever is educational in Brecht's plays can be taught more convincingly by theory" than by an art-form (*Aesthetic Theory* 349); and whether the artwork is reactionary or revolutionary should not be decided by its direct message but by its aesthetic distillation. "Any didactic effect of propagandistic art evaporates quickly", because the mechanism that is supposed to trigger

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<sup>103</sup> In spite of Brecht's attack on Aristotelian theatre, Raymond Williams does not evaluate his epic theatre as oppositional to the Aristotelian tradition. He regards it as an opposition to the naturalist convention which preceded the expressionist movement: i.e. what Brecht opposed "was the exclusion, by particular conventions of verisimilitude, of all direct commentary, alternative consciousness, alternative points of view", and in fact, "these had been the conventions of chorus, narrator, soliloquy" in Aristotelian theatre (*Drama* 278). Furthermore, Brecht's restless search for new ways of dramaturgy was directed at shaking audiences out of their complacent passivity, but, Williams argues, naturalist verisimilitude which produces a suspension of disbelief with an illusion of dramatic reality does not necessarily neutralize the audience's critical detachment (*Drama* 278).

political praxis is “interrupted by the intervention of the aesthetic principle” (*Aesthetic Theory* 344). To Adorno, political commitment in art is a higher level of intervention than tendentious art. As Brecht learned, when *The Threepenny Opera* succeeded in the box-office for what he thought to be the wrong reasons, the dramatist cannot control the spectators with any formal ingenuity. Thus, Raymond Williams argues that it is on the action of the drama that the dramatists should concentrate (*Drama* 279). And supporting naturalist dramaturgy, Williams maintains, “The observed reality can shock, by its concentrated power, and has again and again done so, in the naturalist theatre” (*Drama* 278). On the other hand, Adorno concedes that, thanks to Brecht, art gained its self-consciousness as an element of ideological praxis and thus acquired a force opposed to its ideological blindness, but he maintains that the sententious directness with which Brecht translates the political lesson into the art-form accelerates the historical trend towards the decomposition of the artistic autonomy and that the populist style of Brecht’s epic theatre cannot avoid the fate of being assimilated into capitalist commercialism.<sup>104</sup>

The controversy between Adorno’s insistence on artistic autonomy against social heteronomy and Brecht’s adaptation of a populist style for his politics sheds light on the evaluation of city comedies which I have dealt with in the previous chapters. Indeed, Brecht’s epic theatre bears a modern analogy to the Renaissance city comedies. Brian Gibbons argues, “To connect Brecht with Jacobean is not of course wholly arbitrary, for . . . his experiments with Epic Theatre derive in part from his admiration for Elizabethan drama and its popular theatre” (1968: 19). Brecht adapted Marlowe’s *Edward II* and Shakespeare’s *Coriolanus* for his theatre, and his “idea of epic theatre first came into his head” during “a rehearsal for the Munich production of *Edward II*” (Benjamin 115). As I have exemplified in the discussion of

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<sup>104</sup> I think that Adorno’s misgivings about the populist style of Brecht’s theatre have now been proven by the popularity and the commercial success of the West End musicals to which Brecht’s frequent use of musical entertainment in his epic theatre, arguably, gave a generative stimulus.

*The Roaring Girl*'s various invocations of the real Moll, the early modern drama frequently adopted the meta-theatrical technique. Williams thus thinks that Brecht's meta-theatrical sequence of scenes, which contrasts with naturalist theatre's enclosed acts with fixed beginnings and climaxes, "derives, essentially, from the Elizabethan drama" (*Drama* 289). In addition, Brecht's epic narrative which connects several episodes in the style of Eisenstein's montage reminds us tellingly of city comedies which also display loosely linked episodes.

The city comedies do not develop well-made dramas, and they are not set within classical constraints of time and place. Their dramatic materials are plebeian elements or the low-lives of the time, their dramatic motive is to provide a mocking parody or a satiric caricature of material opportunists striving for money and sex, and their mimetic principle is to present a realistic picture of the urban life without sentimental sympathy, romantic elegance, or pastoral lyricism. Of course, their political stance is different from that of Brecht's dramas. Unlike epic theatre, the city comedies show a minimal interest in reformist politics. Thus they take up the position of describing rather than prescribing, i.e. they tend to focus on the overwhelming intensity of social normality at the expense of a critical viewpoint for social transformation. Like epic theatre, however, the city comedies show an unfailing interest in recording in detail the ways in which ordinary men and women strive in a market-driven society.

Is it purely coincidental that the city plays rose up in a context in which early modern London was in crisis, which eventually broke up into Civil War, and that epic theatre rose up when the modern West was in turmoil in between two World Wars? Is it also by chance for the correspondence to take place between Renaissance literary critics' viewpoint of the city plays as the decline of the early modern theatre and Adorno's viewpoint of epic theatre as the decomposition of art? Literary history teaches us that realistic satire wins popularity when economic recession deepens, social crisis intensifies, and conflicting forces eventually break



into war. In modern times, political theatre and satiric cabaret in Berlin after the First World War provided a stimulating context for Brecht's dramatic experiments, in which elements of naturalist convention were combined with expressionism and other kinds of experimental theatre in a series of plays presenting social critique and a Marxist vision. In early modern London, the burgeoning capitalist economy, a swarm of the dislocated and dispossessed poor and the disintegration of traditional morality encouraged the city dramatists to experiment with the use of parody and satire in order to caricature urban lives and to alter the relationship between audience and theatre which had been hitherto dominated by chronicle plays, romantic comedies and Senecan tragedies. In these respects, it cannot be purely by chance that we can find a striking resonance between Moll Cutpurse in *The Roaring Girl* and Mack the Knife in *The Threepenny Opera*, between Hippolito in *The Honest Whore* and Paduk in *Lux in Tenebris*, and between the insurgents in *Sir Thomas More* and those in *The Mother*.

The rise and spread of satiric realism is clearly related to the rise and crisis of capitalism. The ascendancy of city comedy was a response to the growth of the merchant-citizen in Jacobean London. Epic theatre was a Marxist response to the tumbling bourgeois economy in the early twentieth century. Therefore, satiric realism can be regarded as a dramatic genre which is meant, among other things, to provide a critique of bourgeois morality. The city comedy invites its audience to share its conspiratorial glee in the inspired travesty of early modern London as much as the satiric epic theatre does with the twentieth-century urban life. In both theatres, bourgeois pride is subject to sustained irony and derision. The epic theatre sets its episode in a metropolitan city like Victorian London or the 1930s' Chicago, and even if its setting of time and place is distanced in the fable and the history play, its major dramatic conflict consists in a critique of the contemporary urban life. The city comedy also assigns familiar urban activities to its characters and sets action in the streets and shops of commercial London, and its occasional displacement is simply a flimsy veil which

covers London topology. The selection of material and the point of view in both theatres are determined by a critical and satirical mode. Both theatres contrast idealized morality with a stylized, complaint-derived account of the lamentable evils of 'nowadays'. Both theatres designate money and sex as deplorable vices.

Another noticeable similarity between epic theatre and city drama is their low-life materials. In both theatres frequently appear prostitutes, beggars, rogues, crooks, swindlers and gangsters. Consequently, the city play shares a critical assessment of dramatic vulgarity with the epic theatre. Brecht's theatre has sometimes incurred the suspicion of commercialism for his sensational use of circuses or boxing-arenas full of high-spirited spectators and cabarets or jazz bars swarming with ecstatic customers. Adorno admits that when art successfully assimilates the low-life's vulgarity, it gains in an authentic weightiness or gravity which is the opposite of the vulgar, but he argues that Brecht's theatre cannot be free from the accusation of a *kitsch* which deals in marketable cheap emotions (*Aesthetic Theory* 340). Williams' criticism on the epic theatre's vulgarity is less scathing than that of Adorno, but he also thinks that Brecht's low-life materials are frequently used for sensational exposure rather than critical examination, and that they are likely to be enjoyed as disposable commodities rather than serve as a criticism of depraved society. He argues that "a cynical amorality" of whores and highwaymen "could not only expose exploitation but appear to ratify it" (*Drama* 281). According to Adorno, art degenerates into *kitsch* through its condescension to the debased mass-consciousness, particularly when it appeals by means of humor or in a tongue-in-cheek way to a deformed state of populace consciousness and affirms its sway. He maintains that "the forces of domination would like nothing better than to be able to say that what they do to the masses is what the masses deserve" (*Aesthetic Theory* 340). As far as art is concerned, it should respect the masses by opposing this deformed consciousness. It should put before them an image of what they ought to be, rather than adapting to their dehumanized

condition. Therefore, concludes Adorno, “the claim that low art and entertainment are socially legitimate is no more than an ideology testifying to the ubiquity of repression” (*Aesthetic Theory* 340).

In addition to its vulgarity, the city drama has been criticized for its conventional storyline and stereotyped characterization. T. S. Eliot criticizes the city comedy for “the clumsy machinery of the plot” (169), “the mixture of tedious discourse and sudden reality” (162), and the artificial plot which “creaks loudly” (167). Moreover, it is difficult to dispute that the characters of the city drama are frequently re-workings of their New Comedy forbears: the tightfisted merchants symbolize avarice and voracious materialism; the idle gentry gallants stand for sexual energy and sleek cleverness, and they usually stalk merchants’ wives and daughters.

In spite of its obvious shortcomings, however, if we make a selective emphasis, we can alleviate its negative evaluation. Even if its significance as social criticism may not stand out clearly, it deals with contemporary socio-economic conditions. That is, the literary conventions that give rise to the city drama are modulated by a specific society in order to translate the shared typification of relevant realities into literature. The early modern age witnessed a sudden transition from a rural-based organic community to a new urban-based commercialism. The city drama as satirical realism arose in response to the need to assimilate the experience of that sudden change. As a corollary, its characters enter into a specific historical moment. They are society’s heirs as well as drama’s heirs. In particular, the underworld figures such as Moll and Tearcat have much to do with the exponential growth of London and its attraction of the poor. Bellafront’s prostitution cuts a business parallel to the urban commerce, especially the linen drapery. Lincoln’s Ill May Day is dramatized in the historical backdrop of the crisis age of the 1590s.

On the other hand, the city drama as a satire demands another viewpoint from the

audience, which is not required from those who attend romantic comedies or Senecan tragedies. Like Brecht's epic theatre, this early modern satire establishes a distance between the audience and the stage, for it invites us to make a critical examination of the pleasures of glee and disgust, and to exert an intellectual exercise of wit, rather than to make a sympathetic identification with characters or to achieve an emotional sublimation through dramatic catharsis. In particular, it frequently renders the role of each character to be enacted on the stage in a way in which we cast to each other offstage. And it gives us a chance to contrast our typecasting with what others actually are. For example, Candido's and Bellafront's role-playings invert their stereotypes of a rakish male and a slutish whore respectively, and their role-playings operate as a way of thematic exploration into a new form of male gender and a newly discovered morality of the sinful woman. When we can see Bellafront and Candido as the onstage characters cannot see them, we are awakened to the tyranny of stereotyping. That is, through the gap between what is typecast and what is real, the city drama challenges our unrecognized prejudice, and makes us attain an increased sensitivity to the ways we see others and to the ways they react, and thus, more importantly, leads us to the process of a potential liberation from the cultural regime which regulates our perception.

### **III. A Return to Marx**

In the wake of poststructuralism, Marxism has a special usefulness. Whereas French poststructuralism tends to turn everything into language, Marxism reestablishes the interaction between language and world; Derrida mystifies the effect of language by his emphasis on the self-sustaining textuality and the non-referentiality of language, but Marxism clarifies the effect of linguistic inequality by exposing the material destitution of the marginal who has been deprived of speech (Howard and Shershow 5); Foucault makes it difficult to capture the source of invisible power in modern society by limiting his focus to the discursive

aspect of power, but Marxism elucidates the mechanism of power's metamorphosis from the visible to the invisible by re-connecting political power to economic wealth which is accumulated by the hidden hand of the market. Despite its outstanding virtues in a vast range of scholarship, however, Marxism provokes at once a reflexive and blind repulsion not only in popular sectors but also in academic circles, registering an excellent example of what Althusser calls ideological state apparatuses. Consequently, any serious engagement with Marxism is forestalled before it begins.

Marx's works were produced amid the accelerating force of instrumental reason in the middle of the nineteenth century, registering a critical reason which resisted absorption into the capitalist project. His *Capital*, in particular, is the exponential outcome of the critical reason which works in a dialectical way, at once analyzing the premises of the political economy of his contemporaries and producing his own positive vision for a utopian future. He adopts for his analysis of capitalism the same labour theory of value employed by such classical economists as Adam Smith and David Ricardo, but he comes to a conclusion opposite to theirs. His development of logic which starts from the dialectical antithesis of use value versus exchange value reaches its peak at his argument of the extraction of surplus value which lays the capitalist basis for the coercive law of competition, concentration and centralization.<sup>105</sup>

Brown and Hopkins show us the astounding statistics of the past seven centuries in which the real wage of the labourer in the fifteenth century was not recovered as long as 400 years, until the late nineteenth century (29-31), when Marx declared, "A spectre is haunting Europe – the spectre of Communism" (*Communist Manifesto* 4). In our generation, the wage-

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<sup>105</sup> Marx's analysis of capitalism was so precise that it led some political economists to defect from the labour theory of value. Those so-called 'neoclassical' political economists have developed a new theory: i.e. 'the theory of marginal utility' which is on the premise of the consumption-side of capital circulation in order to replace the labour theory of value which is based on the production-side. However, even if the marginal utility theory may be a supplement to the labour theory of value, particularly in the prediction of price fluctuation in the market, but it cannot replace the labour theory of value as an adequate account for economic formation of capitalist society.

gap between average worker and top drawer in the private sector, which was about 50-100 times before Thatcherism and Reaganism of the 1980s, has now astronomically widened roughly to 500-1000 times during the last 30 years of neo-liberalism.<sup>106</sup> How can we explain these statistics without the labour theory of value, the extraction of surplus value, the coercive law of competition and the principle of concentration? There surely happened in human history “some fundamental break or leap or mutation with the emergence of a purely economic and desacralized system” (Jameson, *Late Marxism* 105), and “Marxism is the very science of capitalism” (Jameson, “Actually Existing Marxism” 54). To disregard Marxism means to be deceived by the handsome surfaces of capitalism, to disregard its brutal undersides expressed by the dispossessed people’s voice as in the Ill May Day protest, and as a result, simply to produce “the subjugated knowledge” (Foucault, *Power/Knowledge* 82). Therefore, it seems to me that the Marxist narrative of capitalism requires the utmost defense.<sup>107</sup>

In an obsessive fear of a ‘master narrative’ in our current poststructuralist climate, however, there is an assumption that a Marxist theoretical model is a hopelessly antique mode of analysis. To invoke modes of production is frequently regarded as falling into simplistic ideas of economic determinism, and to cite the base-superstructure model is considered to raise the specter of a totalizing meta-narrative, one that would reduce multiple histories to the *grand recit* of a single history. With my argument for a return to Marx, however, I do not propose the anti-Foucauldian fiction of seeing each period as a monolithic block of time with

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<sup>106</sup> For the specific statistics of UK, see “Final Report of the High Pay Commission,” The High Pay Commission, 22 Nov. 2011 <[www.highpaycommission.co.uk](http://www.highpaycommission.co.uk)>. For the similar statistics of the United States, see “Trends in the Distribution of Household Income Between 1979 and 2007,” Congressional Budget Office, 25 Oct. 2011 <[www.cbo.gov/publication/42729](http://www.cbo.gov/publication/42729)>.

<sup>107</sup> There is a tendency to make a simplistic equation between the collapse of Stalinist states in the East block and the Marxist theoretical deficiency. I cannot deny that Marxism was hijacked by Stalinist states, but I would like to emphasize that Marxism does not have much to do with Stalinist totalitarianism. Marx’s analysis of capitalism is like the scientist’s experiment in a laboratory, and his suggestion of a utopian vision as communism was not for the semi-feudalist states such as Russia or China of the late nineteenth century but for the full-fledged capitalist states such as England, France, or the US nowadays.

a unified, undifferentiated and unitary *episteme*. I also see history as complexly differentiated and filled with contradictions. Nor do I suggest Marxism as the master key to subsume all conflicts into class contradiction. I understand Lyotard's disappointment at the French Communist Party's nonchalance towards the Algerian independence movement and to the students' uprisings in 1968, and I accept his insistence on respect for diversity, for local differences and for the plurality of ways in which we choose to live. But the problem inherent in his skepticism of a grand narrative is that it is liable to lead us to connive at the oppression of the poor, the marginal and the discriminated. If we have no way to judge different ways of life, then whatever exists must be tolerated. Moreover, the absence of standards also seems to leave us unable to imagine a future that we can claim would be better than the *status quo*. In these circumstances, Marxism has particular merits in terms of the alternatives it poses to the fragmentary forms of French poststructuralism. Marxism may not give us a complete picture, but can give us at least a bigger picture: i.e. arguments about "what the local has to do with the national and the national with the transnational" (Howard and Shershow 3).

I would not like to belittle the feminist movement, gay liberation or ethnic integration for which many intellectuals have found more relevance in French poststructuralism than in Marxism, but I would like to point out that capitalists have actually gloated over identity politics during the last 30 years of neo-liberalism, because it contributes to swelling the disposable labourers and enables the capitalist to evade the pressure of wage-hike. Contradiction between sexes, genders and ethnics is not fundamental, because hierarchy and discrimination between them derives ultimately from their economic disparity, and the goal of identity politics is not to be the elimination of the others. However, contradiction between classes is irreconcilable, because the dispossessed people cannot liberate themselves as far as the capitalists remain, and the ultimate goal of class politics is the abolishment of capitalism.

It seems unfortunate to me that during the last 30 years identity politics has dominated

class politics not only in the traditional area of politics; it has also been predominant in cultural studies, and produced undesirable side-effects, as I have argued in the first chapter about Moll's transvestism. Her cross-dressing is more properly analyzed by the viewpoint of the subsistence crisis of the poor than by that of the feminist agenda. Again, as I have suggested in the second chapter, the fundamental cause for the increase of prostitution in the early modern period was economic hardships rather than sexual discrimination. Furthermore, as the third chapter about the representational corruption of the popular voice shows, discursive discrimination is also motivated more by class politics than by identity politics, and its redress hinges ultimately upon the redress of economic deprivation.

Once again, I would like to emphasize the Althusserian concept of relative autonomy and its implications for radical politics: every level of a social formation interacts with every other in a complexly reciprocal way whilst possessing its own characteristic structure and effectivity, but "it is the base which in the last instance determines the whole edifice" (Althusser, *Lenin and Philosophy* 136). This principle obliges us to consider that the identity politics poses the derivative issues. For a better understanding of Marxism, the base-superstructure model can be compared to an arborescent model. In a tree, the subterranean and the super-terranean part have their own autonomy respectively but cannot be completely independent from each other. The roots and the leaves continuously interact with each other for the growth of the tree, but killing a misshapen tree cannot be done by the removal of its leaves alone but by the eradication of its roots. In capitalism, the economic substructure works like the roots. In order to overcome capitalism, thus, we should uproot its economic base.

Nevertheless, what I suggest is not that Marx tells the trans-historical truth. Marxism admits that all theories are historical and open to revision as time changes. Marx himself makes it clear that his knowledge project is provisional by denying the classical political economist's trans-historical belief in the labour theory of value: "Political economy has never



asked the question . . . why labour is expressed in value, and why the measurement of labour by its duration is expressed in the magnitude of the value of the product” (*Capital* 174). Repositing the labour theory as being contingent only upon capitalism, he maintains, “These formulas, which bear the unmistakable stamp of belonging to a social formation in which the process of production has mastery over man, instead of the opposite, appear to the political economists’ bourgeois consciousness to be as much a self-evident and nature-imposed necessity as productive labour itself” (*Capital* 174). In spite of its contingency, however, his theory does not lose its specificity as a situated knowledge project. From the perspective of eternal idealism, Marxism is provisional and a *petit recit*, but from the perspective of a temporal truth-claim, it is a master narrative and a *grand recit*.

Marxism is undogmatic. It is adaptable to various issues. It can produce work not only about the mechanisms of economic disparity and the operation of ideology, but also about commodity fetishism and the reification of human values. Particularly in aesthetics, Marxism has shown its remarkable elasticity to adapt to various art-forms and our ever-changing reality. Since the rise of capitalism in the early modern period, there has been an enormous change in the relationship between art and society. The merger of the aesthetic and the economic has been intensified by the crucial role of advertising and the entertainment industry. Notably in current capitalism, there has been a phenomenal change happening in our experience of time and space which has been brought about by new technologies like television, Hollywood films and the internet. To capture the living force of this changing reality, Marxist aesthetics is willing to make use of every conceivable device, old and new. It presupposes no eternal laws, because no model of art can remain effective indefinitely. As is shown by the controversy over modernist literature, to presuppose a particular art-form as the only true model for reality is certain to lead to a dangerous kind of formalism. Therefore, Brecht argues, “Reality changes: in order to represent it, modes of representation must change” (“Against Georg Lukács” 51).

Marxist aesthetics is dialectic. It is open to revision and displacement by a more relevant and more competent model.

In spite of its provisionality, however, Marxist aesthetics supposes artworks to be conducive to awakening us from hypnotic ideology into an active engagement with a new reality, because without purging the ideology from our mind, we cannot move forward to a better future. To overcome ideology, we cannot solely count on the street politics which gives the masses a chance to vent themselves but usually stops short of changing their everyday lifestyles. Nor can we rely on parliamentary politics in which plutocracy neutralized all the parties including the leftist parties a long time ago. To pry the deadlock open to progress, we ought to emphasize the importance of cultural politics. It is through cultural politics that we can eradicate the ideology which has permeated into every segment of our everyday lives and every capillary of our minds.

Without our vigilance, however, the cultural work will also be easily appropriated for the affirmative enforcement of ideology rather than for its critical exposal. As the revision of *More* illustrates, the drama of resistance loses its genuine voice and gets diverted into the ideological strategy of the time. Unless we pay critical attention to it, moreover, its corrupted revision will pass through even our twenty-first century hindsight without a check. Particularly in the case of *The Roaring Girl* and *The Honest Whore*, their interest in sex and money will be readily exploited for the commercial sensationalism. Only by mobilizing our critical reason can we preserve the critical immanence of art and make it a privileged site which enables us to negate the hegemonic power of capitalism.

In putting Marxism into practice, lastly, we should be cautious not to slip into fantasies of retrospective nostalgia or inevitable progressivism. I cannot agree to the repressive hypothesis by which Marx places the advent of the age of repression in the seventeenth century after hundreds of years of open spaces and idyllic peace, and adjusts it to coincide

with the rise of capitalism in early modern period. Nor do I buy the providential utopianism by which some Marxists predict the natural collapse of capitalism due to its intrinsic contradiction. The past was not an Eden, and without our action, neither will the future be a utopia. To purge Marxism of nostalgia and providence is to see it as a command for transformative praxis. Marxism is less a theory than a praxis aimed both at interpreting the world and at transforming it in its activist dimension. Marxism is produced as critical knowledge in praxis. It is also a demand for historical praxis to identify the point at which the needs of the present intersect with the unrealized potential of the past and to forward the pre-figured energies of the present for the needs of the future.

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