The Concept of Revenge for Honour in English Fiction and Drama

between 1580 and 1640.

A thesis submitted for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

in the University of London

by

Elizabeth Mary Brennan

Abstract

From the production of Kyd's *The Spanish Tragedy* in the late 1580s until the closing of the theatres in 1642 English tragedy was almost exclusively concerned with revenge. By the close of the sixteenth century, however, the influence of the tragedy of blood revenge for murder was almost exhausted. What revitalized revenge tragedy was the replacement of the theme of revenge for murder with that of revenge for honour. The first aim of this study is to consider the development of the concept of revenge for honour in drama and to see whether any corresponding development took place in prose fiction. From an examination of revenge tragedies of the period 1580 - 1605 a basic code of honour for drama is formulated. Thereafter it is demonstrated how important this code and its developments were in the work of the major Jacobean and Caroline dramatists: Tourneur, Webster, Chapman, Marston, Middleton, Beaumont, Fletcher, Massinger and Ford. An examination of the prose fiction published between 1580 and 1640, and in particular the work of Lyly, Sidney, Greene, Lodge, Nashe, Deloney, Riche, Emmanuel Forde and Richard Johnson, reveals that revenge for honour had by no means as great a significance for the prose writer as it had for the dramatist. Some reasons for this are suggested. The contrast between drama and fiction in this respect gives an indication of the difference between the creative imaginations of prose writers and dramatists in the period. In three appendices are tabulated: the applications of the word 'honour' in English drama, 1591-1640; the causes of dishonour in
drama and fiction, 1560 - 1640; and the husband's revenge for adultery in English drama, 1603 - 1640.

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Acknowledgements

This thesis was prepared during the author's tenure of a Tutorial Research Studentship in English at Royal Holloway College, University of London, 1955-1958. She wishes to thank the Council of Royal Holloway College for this award which made her work possible.

The author also wishes to express her gratitude to her supervisor, Dr. J.M.S. Tompkins, for her unfailing guidance and encouragement.

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Chapter I

Introduction

From the year 1580 until the end of the sixteenth century there were two main types of serious drama in England: chronicle history and tragedy. The medieval conceptions of tragedy embodied in the fall of princes or the operation of the wheel of fortune were, to some extent, contained in the later Elizabethan dramatic chronicles. Of this type of tragedy Shakespeare's Richard II, Richard III and Macbeth with Marlowe's Edward II, Tamburlaine and The Tragical History of Doctor Faustus are examples which combine the elements of history and tragedy in different ways. The last named play and also Marlowe's Famous Tragedy of the Rich Jew of Malta comprehend both the fall of a powerful man and the most important Elizabethan development in tragedy: the creation of a protagonist into whose mind the audience is allowed to look.

The greatest single impetus towards this development was probably the production, late in 1588, of The Spanish Tragedy by Thomas Kyd. The play was an immediate and enduring success: a fact attested to by twenty-nine recorded performances between 1592 and 1597 and eleven printed editions between 1592 and 1633.¹ The appeal of the play was twofold. On the one hand, it provided Elizabethan audiences with the blood, the spectacles of murder and a ghost and

with the pomp and ceremony of courts in which they delighted, together with an interest, hitherto unknown on the stage, in a person of high rank who reacted to mental suffering in the same way as an ordinary man; and on the other hand it gave Elizabethan dramatists a ready-made formula for a popularly successful play.

As a result, revenge became the dominant theme in Elizabethan tragedy. Yet in the very elements which constituted its success lay the seeds of its artistic failure. Following Kyd's model, writers of early revenge tragedy considered the problems connected with the obligation to avenge a murdered kinsman. The situations in which such problems could be presented became increasingly spectacular and gory, while the plot was tramelled with stage conventions. By the end of the sixteenth century an ungifted dramatist could produce no fresh situation in a tragedy of revenge for murder.

A more serious limitation was imposed by the characterization and motivation of the avenger of blood. The exaction of private revenge contravened the laws of God and man. The avenger was, therefore, bound to be censured by the moral code, even if the audience enjoyed watching the action which drove him to seek private revenge. By presenting his hero as a magistrate forced to transgress the law and as a man driven to madness through grief and so prevented from making an appeal for justice to the King, Kyd successfully surmounted this obstacle and ensured his
audience's compassion for the plight of Hieronimo. Nevertheless, the voice of justice, personified in the King of Spain, calls Hieronimo at the end of the play a traitor, a damned bloody murderer.

Unless all revengers were to be presented as madmen, dramatists who followed Kyd had to find an alternative kind of characterization. The most obvious alternative, and that which was generally adopted, was to make the revenger a villain from the start; one who gloried in the lawlessness and cruelty of revenge. The only possible development of the protagonist's character on these lines - the lines of Chettle's Hoffman, of Eleazar in Lust's Dominion and of Alexander in Alphonsus Emperor of Germany - was to have each villain exceed the limits of cruelty set by his predecessor. The more cruel the revenger, the farther was he removed from the audience's sympathy and from Kyd's advance in characterization. Moreover, no matter how much the audience enjoyed the spectacle, it was bound to agree with the condemnation of the avenger as a murderer, and in this condemnation even the dramatist joined by showing how no revenger lived to enjoy the fruits of his lawless act.

Nevertheless, despite the Church's reiteration of the text "Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord" Elizabethans frequently took the law of vengeance into their own hands. For while the Church taught that the Magistrate would act as God's deputy on earth to avenge injuries, Elizabethans well knew that their legal system was inefficient and open to abuse. Murderers
could avoid capital punishment or escape altogether because they claimed benefit of clergy or because the jury or magistrate had been corrupted. If a jury, influenced by bribery or favouritism, returned a false verdict the judge was powerless to reverse their decision. In the case of five out of seven revenge murders committed between 1593 and 1605 which I have examined² the murderer went unpunished. Complaints of the clergy and accounts of crimes given in pamphlets, letters and documents³ confirm the impression that private revenge of various kinds, from slander and litigation to rioting and killing, abounded in Elizabethan England. One of the chief - if not the chief - motive for the exaction of private revenge between 1580 and 1605 was not the death of a kinsman, but injury to honour. What was condoned in everyday life could, therefore, be sympathetically represented on the stage.

Whether or not the change in Elizabethan revenge tragedy from revenge for murder to revenge for honour was due to the inspiration of Shakespeare we cannot say. He excelled all previous writers of revenge tragedy in the characterization of a sympathetic revenger in Hamlet. Yet even in Hamlet, as indeed in almost every revenge play including The Spanish Tragedy, a motive of revenge for honour was implicit. It is certain, however, that Othello, acted in 1604, marked the beginning of an era in English stage history extending

² This examination was made in a thesis presented to the Queen's University of Belfast for the degree of Master of Arts (1955): The Theme of Revenge in Elizabethan Life and Drama 1580 - 1605, pp. 181-213. Future references to this thesis will be denoted "M.A. thesis" and page numbers given.
till 1640 during which revenge for honour was the most prominent theme in tragedy and the concept of revenge for honour commanded the interest, even if only briefly of every major English dramatist.

Unlike the concept of revenge for murder, which may be traced back to the Anglo-Saxon blood feud, that of revenge for honour was of continental, especially Italian and French, origin. Although travellers, and in particular the Englishman Italianate, might bring home to England a knowledge of the code of honour derived from experience, it was at first a code very much derived from books. As one Elizabethan divine complained:

But what age is this? Or what people doe wee line amongst? Bluntly to kill, and simelie to murther, is but for plaine fellows: our gallants that studie to bee made with reason, have an art of killing, rules, traditions, and precepts to teach them murther by the booke: in which they growe more expert then captain Loab, which could take the fifth ribbe in his stabbes, where he was sure to speed. 5

Books of courtesy and honour, whether translated from Italian and French or written in English, disseminated in late sixteenth century England a knowledge of the art of rapier and dagger and of the wounds to honour for which these weapons provided the cure.6 Ostensibly, these works decried the use of arms upon trivial causes,7 but at the same time they declared that, among gentlemen, honour should be preferred before life. Sir William Segar, author of one of the most

4 As in the case of Ben Jonson.
6 Examined in detail in M.A. thesis, Chapter V, pp. 64-93.
7 See, for example, the Epistle to the Reader in Sir William Segar's Booke of Honor and Armes (1590).
important books of honour written in England, The Book of Honour and Arms, urged his readers not to undertake private revenge if a civil trial were obtainable. Nevertheless, he allowed that an injury offered treacherously might be treacherously repaid. Vincentio Saviolo, an Italian fencing master in the service of the Earl of Essex and another authority on causes of quarrel, asserted that "... if the injurie be such, that either murder be committed by trecherie, or rape, or such like villanies, then is it necessarie to proceede in reuenging it, ..." He later declared that in all such cases the sin, rather than the sinner, should be punished and that private revenge should not motivate the challenger.

But both Segar's and Saviolo's opinions were grounded on the fallacy that, if a man undertook to avenge an injury with the sword, God would decree that the right should prevail. The loser was not doomed by poor swordsmanship but by God's wrath. This conception had the effect of seeming to lend God's blessing to private revenge, especially revenge for honour. Moreover, though the Church could show examples of God's revenge for murder, wrought either by miracle or through His appointed deputy, the Magistrate, it could not show any similar revenge against the man who dishonoured his neighbour. Murder was a criminal offence, punishable by death at the hands of

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8 Titles in the text are modernized and, in some cases, abbreviated. Their original spelling is preserved in footnotes, and the full and original form given in the bibliography.
10 Vincentio Saviolo his practise. In two bookes (1595, 94), Sig.P1V.
the law. Honour was itself an abstract concept, and it was a matter of private opinion - even though that opinion were widely held - how it could be gained or lost. The destroyer of honour could not, therefore, be brought under the jurisdiction of the Magistrate.

This was true even of the man who inflicted the greatest dishonour on his neighbour: the seduction of his wife. For adultery could only be tried in an ecclesiastical court whose jurisdiction in this respect was corrective, not criminal. The dishonoured husband could neither punish his injurer nor free himself completely from his wife. He might obtain a divorce a mensa et thoro, but he could not be divorced a vinculo matrimonii. Except with the aid of the legislature, a valid marriage was indissoluble. 11

The Church, acting through the Magistrate, allowed that blood should be repaid with blood, though it forbade the private man to be the instrument of God's revenge for murder. Dishonour could not be repaid with dishonour, however. Even the greatest dishonour, which transgressed the seventh commandment, was a sin to be corrected, rather than punished, in the sinner. In this respect the Church had more regard for the spiritual welfare of the sinner than of the man sinned against whom the world considered a man dishonoured. A sincere Christian would rest content with the Church's offices of correction. A man concerned with his worldly fame would see that

the only redress that he could obtain for dishonour would have to be found by himself.

Although the books of courtesy and honour were primarily concerned with physical injuries or the dishonour of having one's veracity questioned, either of which could be avenged by a duel on the spot, the concept of dishonour, once established in England, soon widened to include almost any injury from a chance insult to the violation of a kinswoman's chastity. In replacing revenge for murder with revenge for honour in tragedy the Elizabethan and Jacobean dramatists were, therefore, replacing a scarcely justifiable cause of revenge with a virtually unlimited number of causes justified and accepted in the eyes of the worldly, if not the eyes of the godly.

At the same time, as almost any malicious action could be disguised or excused as revenge for honour, the possibilities for characterization and motivation in the tragedy of honour were greater than in the tragedy of blood revenge. Moreover, the avenger of honour did not have to be in an exalted or special position in order to claim the audience's attention. He could be simply a wronged husband. He did not have to be a villain. He could be depicted as a good, even a sincerely Christian man, compelled to vengeance by the pressure of convention or passion. Where the avenger of blood was motivated mainly by hatred of the murderer, the avenger of honour was often driven by ambition, pride or jealousy as well.
Even more important for the development of characterization in English drama was the fact that the tragedy of honour offered the dramatist, for the first time, full scope for the examination of female character. Women might be depicted as innocents wronged, innocents corrupted, or as base betrayers of the men who loved them. Shakespeare showed the nobility of which women were capable under suffering, but later writers of tragedies such as Ford and Middleton showed women suffering the degradation of dishonour, their souls tainted by its influence.

The scope of situation which the tragedy of honour afforded was as great as the number of causes for which men considered themselves dishonoured. As these causes were often a matter of personal opinion, frequent discussion of them took place on the stage as, doubtless, also in life. It was almost generally accepted that a man incurred dishonour through the unchastity of wife or kinswoman, but other forms of dishonour had to be explained by one character to another or, more important, by the dramatist to the audience. For the full understanding of the ideas behind the major Jacobean and Caroline drama it is often necessary to appreciate not only the concepts of honour and dishonour motivating the characters, but those actually held by the dramatists themselves. Some writers, like Beaumont and Fletcher, accepted a conventional code of honour without criticism. Others, like Massinger or Ford, were bent upon instilling into their audiences their own ideas of what constituted true honour. It is towards the better appreciation of these differing ideas that this study is chiefly directed.
Honour was so frequently discussed in the drama from 1580 onwards that the meanings which the word itself implied may be arranged and classified. This has been admirably done in a recent study by Dr. C.L. Barber, *The Idea of Honour in the English Drama, 1591-1700* (Gothenburg, 1957).\(^{12}\) The most important distinction which Dr. Barber finds in the meanings of honour is that between the demands of honour which were consistent with the demands of Christian virtue and those which were dictated by a conventional code of behaviour which was often in conflict with the former.\(^{13}\) In considering a play involving revenge for honour it is important to realize by which aspect of honour - virtuous or conventional - the dramatist and his characters are influenced. It may be said in general, however, that only the didactic dramatists, of whom Massinger is the best example, were primarily interested in the virtuous aspect of honour.\(^{14}\)

Both the conventional and virtuous meanings of honour were of two kinds: inherent and acquired. The conventional code, that found most frequently in the drama, laid much more stress on the latter

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12 A summary of the definitions of honour which Dr. Barber gives for the drama of the period 1591-1640 is given in Appendix I.
14 C.L. Barber, *op. cit.*, p. 20 states: "In general, then, there is less idealization of honour at the beginning of the century, and a more critical attitude to it; but this passes very quickly, and after about 1615 a critical attitude is exceptional; there are a few interesting exceptions round about 1630, but I have found no certain ones later." Being more concerned with the work of dramatists as a whole than with the chronology of their plays, I attribute these exceptions to the fact that between 1680 and 1640 the two most didactic dramatists, Ford and Massinger, were producing their most mature work.
because it could easily be lost and a man thereby dishonoured. Nevertheless, the conventional code was also concerned with inherent honour, though its interpretation of it differed from that of the virtuous code. To the worldly and conventional, one of the most obvious examples of inherent honour was that of noble birth. The concomitance of high rank and honour is stressed by the appearance of the latter as a distinguishing mark of the former. Thus the behaviour and bearing of Guiderius and Arviragus in *Cymbeline*, described by Belarius as "Honor vntaught",\(^{15}\) indicates that their birth is nobler than their education. The same kind of honour is found in other plays as also in prose romances in which children of noble birth are raised in obscurity. This kind of honour could not be damaged or lost, except by proof of illegitimacy.\(^{15}\) In drama the most important kind of inherent honour was that of a woman's chastity. Despite its inherent character, however, a woman was considered dishonoured, not only if she were unchaste, but if she were suspected of being so.

This fact indicates the importance of reputation as a determinant of honour. For acquired honour could comprehend the reputation for, as distinct from the possession of, any aspect of honourable behaviour.

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\(^{15}\) Mr. William Shakespeares Comedies, Histories, & Tragedies (1623), 'The Tragedie of Cymbeline', IV, ii, p. 388b. Unless otherwise stated, Shakespearean quotations are taken from the First Folio reproduced in a facsimile edition by Helge Rørkeitz and Charles Tyler Prouty (1955). The letters 'a' and 'b' indicate the first and second columns respectively on the pages of the Folio.
such as telling the truth or keeping a vow, or a more obviously acquired quality such as military glory. The difference between inherent and acquired honour may, therefore, be described as the difference between what a man was and what people believed him to be.

This is illustrated, though not always consistently, in a husband's reaction to the report of his wife's unchastity. If the report became public knowledge, convention demanded that he should exact vengeance. If only the wife and her lover besides himself knew of the husband's dishonour he might still preserve his reputation as an honourable husband and so avoid revenge, as Amintor sought to do in *The Maid's Tragedy*. Nevertheless, there were husbands on the stage, like Leontes in *The Winter's Tale*, who chose themselves to make public a supposed injury of this sort.

Woman's honour played a very important part in the conventional code of honour. By virtue of their sex women could not acquire the kind of honour associated with the exclusively male occupations of fighting, duelling or quarrelling. Nor was it considered an important mark of honour in a woman, as in a man, to be generous, truthful, sensitive to injury or quick to avenge it. The only honour which a woman might acquire in the same way as a man was that conferred by dignity, rank or title. This is made clear in *All's Well That Ends Well* where Bertram complains of Helena's low birth and the King

16 The revenge for adultery executed by husbands in the plays examined in this study is tabulated in Appendix III.
replies that she not only possesses such breeders of honour as youth, wisdom and beauty, but to these he can add the honour of rank and wealth.  

Chastity, however, remained the chief source of woman's honour. Moreover, though honour as an ideal in men was confined to those of the rank of gentleman and above, as they alone were allowed to bear the arms with which wounds to honour could be repaired, the honour of chastity was inherent in all women, both maids and wives, of every social degree. This could be considered as either a physical state or as an attitude of mind, though most emphasis was placed on the former. For this reason innocent women whose chastity was violated, like Lucina in Valentinian or the lord Antonio's wife in The Revenger's Tragedy, were driven to suicide. The case of Lucina also illustrates the fact that, as has already been indicated, a woman's honour was, if anything, more important to her menfolk than to herself. Lucina's husband, Maximus, himself proclaimed that she would have to die. Similarly, Titus Andronicus killed his violated daughter Lavinia. It was also incumbent upon a gentleman injured through the dishonour or suspected dishonour of a wife or kinswoman to demand satisfaction from her seducer. The honour of an unmarried woman could be cured by marriage to the man in question. For a wife no such cure was possible, and her husband's right to exact blood vengeance on his injurer was unquestioned in the drama, though it was not always executed. A guilty wife might be murdered, divorced,

17 Act II, Ï′iiiÌ′, p. 238a.
tortured or, though opinions differed on this point, reconciled to her husband.

Such a difference of opinion indicates that the code of honour allowed ample freedom for dramatists' individual interpretations of its meaning and implications. Some of the best plays concerned with honour were, in fact, those which presented deviations from an accepted code of honour, such as Frankford's forgiveness of his wife.

Liberty in interpretation of the meaning of honour led to its being used also as a cloak for other feelings besides a desire for revenge. Of this the dramatists were well aware. If honour could consist in success in love, it was considered a dishonour for a lover's suit to be rejected. Accordingly he may well have considered himself entitled to exact a revenge for honour which was, in fact, an act of spite committed to propitiate wounded pride. It was partly to indicate the folly of such a concept of dishonour that Massinger wrote *A Very Woman* or *The Prince of Tarent*. Yet the same concept had been, to some extent, part of the motivation of Balthazar's murder of Horatio in *The Spanish Tragedy*.

Although, as this study hopes to demonstrate, revenge for honour was a dominant theme in Jacobean and Caroline tragedy, this does not mean that it constituted the sole interest of the dramatists writing

18 See Appendix I, 'K' 34, 40 and 52; Appendix II, Drama II, 4-7.
such tragedy. The very fact that a dramatist was more interested in some other philosophical, ethical or social problem often led to the placing of the concept of revenge for honour in a new and illuminating light. Thus the Jacobean interest in kingship allied to the concept of revenge for honour produced Beaumont and Fletcher's finest serious work, The Maid's Tragedy, while the idea of educating his audience in the true meaning of honour was only one of Massinger's many dramatic aims.

Nevertheless, the interest of these dramatists in honour and revenge for honour was such that every major dramatist between 1605 and 1640 considered it necessary to address his audience on one or the other subject. Their utterances varied in length and seriousness from Falstaff's short catechism in The First Part of Henry the Fourth to Orgilus's detailed definition in The Broken Heart. For this reason it will be an aim of this study to consider not only what concepts of honour and revenge for honour were held by the major dramatists of the years 1580 to 1640, but what place these concepts were given in their work as a whole. To the main causes of dishonour in the drama, already briefly outlined, a study of the plays of this period adds aspects which are only implicit in some plays and

19 Act V, i, p. 70a.
20 The Broken Heart (1633), III, \[i\] , Sigs. E_2^V - E_3^F.

Unless otherwise stated, quotations are taken from the earliest extant editions of works used in this study. Page numbers are given whenever possible. When these are wanting or inaccurate signatures are used. These are treated as numbered, whether they are or not in the original text. Act or scene divisions of plays which have been supplied from modern editions are enclosed in square brackets.
which therefore need to be understood for a full appreciation of their motivation. Explicit statements concerning the nature of dishonour made in some plays may therefore serve to illuminate the concept of revenge for honour in other plays of the same period. A list of the meanings of dishonour derived from such statements is, therefore, given in Appendix II. Chapters on individual dramatists will examine the interpretations of the concept of revenge for honour given in their works.

The most important difference between tragedies of revenge for murder and those of revenge for honour was the difference between an exceptional and a common theme. The occasions when members of an audience found themselves faced with the duty of avenging a murdered kinsman were, presumably, rare; but the code of honour was so widely and differently interpreted that the occasions when they felt bound to avenge wounded honour - not necessarily by bloodshed - were probably many and frequent. A situation demanding revenge for honour could, therefore, be visualised as happening in the life of a member of the audience where a situation demanding revenge for murder could not. This was, moreover, true of the entire audience. Though the actual code of honour was the prerogative of gentlemen, citizens were no less sensible of injury in such important instances as the seduction of their womenfolk. The difference between the concept of revenge for honour held by the gentry and that of the lower classes was one of expression, both physical and verbal. Where
a gentleman sought revenge by the sword the citizen used his cudgel or his fists, or repaid his injurer with like injury; when a gentleman spoke of a loss of honour, the citizen spoke of a loss of fame or reputation. The citizen interpreted injuries in simple language; the gentry translated them into the refined terminology of the code of honour. The injuries themselves were, in many cases, the same for both classes.

This difference of expression between the gentry and the lower classes is indicative of a desire of the former to be distinguished from the latter. Thus acceptance of the code of honour, in its conventional and widely accepted sense, became the criterion of gentlemanly conduct, and there arose a conflict in the minds of those men who realized that the standards of the conventional code of honour were opposed to the dictates of their hearts and consciences. Their dilemma was eloquently expressed by the Elizabethan courtier Sir William Cornwallis. For the dramatist it provided an opportunity for such fine characterization as that of Frankford in A Woman Killed with Kindness, Duke Pietro in The Malcontent or Amintor in The Maid's Tragedy. Moreover, the suffering of dishonour was such a very personal concern that plays dealing with revenge for honour, especially tragedies, were bound to examine human relations and motives in greater detail than hitherto in English drama.

21 Vide C.L. Barber, op. cit., pp. 32-33.
22 Essays. By Sir William Corne-waley, the younger, Knight (1600), Essay 3 - 'Of Patience', Sigs. C6V - C6V.
23 Shakespeare's Hamlet is an obvious exception to this statement.
It was in their power of characterization and motivation that the strength of such dramatists as Webster and Middleton lay.

Conversely, in the handling of revenge for honour by minor dramatists, or by those who were more concerned with plot and stagecraft than with character and motive - such as Beaumont and Fletcher - the weaknesses of these dramatists became apparent. Revenge for honour appeared in so many plays that only the finest artists could succeed in presenting it in a light both interesting and stimulating. Revenge for honour was, in many respects, a touchstone of the greatness of an author's creative imagination.

This is true of prose fiction as well as drama, and it is for this reason that the prose fiction of the period 1580 to 1640 is also considered in this study. The basic requirements of successful drama and fiction are the same: a good plot with interesting situations and good characterization. The concept of revenge for honour provided material for both these requirements, and when dramatists and prose writers both used it the strengths and weaknesses of their creative powers may be compared. As a result it will be seen that the strength of the major dramatists up to 1640 - the ability to create character and present it intimately and in conflict with the natures and ideals of other characters - constituted the weakness of the writers of prose fiction. This may, perhaps, help to explain why the best creative literature of the Elizabethan and Jacobean ages was that written for the stage.
Revenge for honour was a fascinating concept on the stage and in life. Its fascination lay chiefly in two things: the number and variety of meanings attached to honour, and the mental conflicts aroused by the idea of vengeance. How great or how slight an injury constituted dishonour; could it be morally wrong to do that which was socially acceptable and right; or, in the words of Shylock, "if you wrong vs, shall we not revenge"? On the answers to these questions depended much of the strength of the intellectual passion in English drama between 1580 and 1640. It is hoped that in examining the answers to these questions provided in the works of the major dramatists this study may contribute something to a fuller appreciation of that passion.
Chapter II

The Development of the Concept of Revenge for Honour in Elizabethan Tragedy after 1580.

The greatest demonstration of the success of Kyd's The Spanish Tragedy was given by the number of succeeding revenge tragedies that were written and performed until 1642. Yet, although this suggests that audiences enjoyed watching the bloody and cruel exploits of Hieronimo's successors, only two plays\(^1\) exonerated the private avenger of blood. Hieronimo himself was an avenger whose action might be excused by the compassion aroused by his position as a magistrate driven to transgress the law and by the madness which prevented him from seeking redress from the King. Shakespeare's Hamlet was the justified revenger, for, as rightful heir to Denmark he acts as Sovereign Magistrate in executing justice on the murderer and usurper, Claudius. These two, with Titus Andronicus, were the only blood avengers to be presented sympathetically on the English stage between 1580 and 1642. All other revengers in tragedies of blood written after The Spanish Tragedy were shown as thorough villains from the start, though the lesser counter-revengers who outwitted them were invariably represented as the powers of justice acting against wickedness. Moreover, no matter how great

\(^1\) Marston's Antonio's Revenge and Shakespeare's Titus Andronicus in which Lucius, the avenger of his father's death on Saturninus, becomes Emperor of Rome.
the revenger’s claim to the audience’s sympathy it was seen that none of them—not even Hieronimo, Hamlet or Titus Andronicus—survived the accomplishment of their vengeance.

This was not true of the revenger of honour. Far from being condemned either explicitly or implicitly by the dramatist, his action was shown to be part of the accepted conduct of a gentleman, a "man of honour". Thus the revenger of honour was represented to the audience as a sympathetic character when the revenger of blood was not. In the development of revenge tragedy between 1580 and 1605 the revenger of honour increases in importance as the avenger of blood decreases. For, though not all revenge tragedies of this period contained revenge for blood, only two apart from the domestic tragedies illustrating God’s revenge for murder, did not contain some element of revenge for honour.

Apart from Shakespearean tragedy, the Elizabethan tragedies written after 1580 were more concerned with action than reflection. Revenge for honour therefore appears in them as a concept moving men to action without hesitation. This concept was not explained to an audience presumed to be familiar with it. It was left to Shakespeare and the Jacobean dramatists to explain, examine, condone or denounce it; and to interpret it in their own terms in not just one or two of their plays but, more often, in several.

3 Chettle’s Hoffman and Peele’s Battle of Alcazar.
4 Arden of Feversham, A Warning for Fair Women and Two Lamentable Tragedies.
This does not mean, however, that Elizabethan drama does not provide any material from which an understanding of its concept of revenge for honour may be derived. It is immediately obvious to the reader of Elizabethan tragedy that honour largely consisted in the chastity of a man's womenfolk. This kind of honour, which may be termed "family honour", could be lost as well when a woman was suspected of being unchaste as when she was so indeed. The punishment of her lover or seducer was invariably death, but the punishment inflicted on her could be mitigated according to her degree of guilt or the inclination of the man whom she had dishonoured.

This may be seen in The Spanish Tragedy itself in which revenge for honour first appears in the motives of Lorenzo and Don Balthazar in murdering Horatio. Lorenzo's real motives are jealousy of Horatio's part in the capture of the Portuguese Prince, Don Balthazar and his desire to marry the Prince to his sister, Bel-imperia. Yet he excuses the murder of her lover to Bel-imperia by saying that he sought to save her honour and his own, which was jeopardized by her being found "meanly accompanied" by Horatio in an arbour. The concept which justified this claim appears to be that a brother was dishonoured if his sister loved or married beneath her station. Cognate with this was the idea that a brother could preserve his family honour by controlling his sister's choice of suitor. Even though it was the lady, like Bel-imperia, who did the courting, her

5 The Spanish Tragedie (?1592), Act III, Sig. C2r.
6 The importance of this idea appeared later in such plays as The Duchess of Malfi, The Fair Maid of the Inn, The Broken Heart and The Guardian.
lover was doomed. When a sister's chastity was violated a brother considered himself and his family dishonoured and the injurer worthy of death. Thus Absolon, killing his brother Ammon for the incestuous rape of Thamar, in Peele's *David and Bethsabe*, declares:

> Die with thy draught perish and die accurst,  
> Dishonour to the honour of vs all,  
> Die for the villany to Thamar done,  
> Unworthy thou to be Kings (sic) Dauids sonne.  

Peele, in fact, gave his play a contemporary atmosphere by a rearrangement of and addition to the Biblical narrative in order to give prominence to the theme of revenge for honour and to present Absolon's actions as a dishonour to his father David.

Bel-imperia and Thamar are not punished by their brothers. In contrast, when a father undertakes to revenge the dishonour supposedly inflicted on him by his daughter in *Alphonsus Emperor of Germany* he kills her. This example is particularly complicated as it involves both a father and a husband. The narrative, therefore, requires elucidation. Alexander, son of Lorenzo de Cyprus, is anxious to avenge his father's murder. The real murderer, the Emperor Alphonsus, persuades him that the Electors of the Holy Roman Empire are guilty. Alexander pledges himself to kill them all; which is what Alphonsus wants for his own purposes. When Alphonsus offers Alexander the key to the chamber of the Princess Hedewick he embraces the opportunity of dishonouring through Hedewick her

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7 *The Love of King David and Fair Bethsabe* (1599), Sig. D⁴ v-v.
8 Thamar's rape is made to occur before Uriah's death. Peele's additions include a speech in which one of David's concubines denounces Absolon as a dishonour to his father.
father, who is one of the Electors, and her husband, who is nephew to another supposed murderer of Lorenzo de Cyprus, Richard of Cornwall. Alexander comes to the Princess on her wedding night and she takes him for her husband, Edward, Prince of Wales. On the morrow Hedewick mentions that she spent the night with her husband. Prince Edward hotly denies this, and concludes that she must have slept with another man. This implication of Hedewick's dishonesty rouses her father, the Duke of Saxony, to exclaim:

Soldiers lay hands upon the Prince of Wales,  
Convey him speedily unto a prison,  
And load his Legs with grievous bolts of Iron;  
Some bring the Whore my Daughter from my sight; 9

Thus, although the Duke of Saxony punishes Prince Edward for his open defamation of Hedewick, he is forced to believe the accusation. When Hedewick gives birth to a son he asks Prince Edward to acknowledge the child his. Edward refuses, and the Duke of Saxony dashes out the child's brains before killing Hedewick. He intends to kill Edward too, but is prevented from doing so at the end of the play. The Duke of Saxony's actions illustrate the onus laid on a man publicly dishonoured to execute a public vengeance. Edward rejects Hedewick publicly, so dishonouring her and her father. 10 The Duke is bound, therefore, to take a public revenge on Hedewick and on the man who made her dishonour known, her husband. The

9 The Tragedy of Alphonsus Emperour of Germany (1654), Act IV, p. 46.  
distinction between public and private dishonour was later to become important in tragedies of honour involving dishonoured husbands. A dishonour was private if only the husband, wife and lover knew of it. If there were other witnesses, or if the dishonour were known to other people, it was considered public and convention demanded that the husband seek revenge.

Prince Edward's conduct as a dishonoured husband is therefore exceptional. He seeks no revenge. The knowledge that Hedewick has been dishonoured forces him to refuse to acknowledge her child as his. Yet, realising that his bride has suffered rape, he pleads with her father to save her life, declaring,

And were I not a Prince of so high blood,
And Bastards have no scepter-bearing hands,
I would in silence smother up this blot,
And in compassion of thy Daughters wrong,
Be counted Father to an others Child;
For why my soul knows her unguiltiness. 11

When Edward discovers that Alexander is the injurer of Hedewick he is placed in the position of a public judge rather than a private revenger. He therefore sentences Alexander to the ignominious death of hanging by the heels between two mastiffs.

The understanding compassion that compels Edward to plead for his wife's life contrasts strongly with the attitude of Alphonsus. Although the Emperor knows that his wife Isabella is innocent, he traps her in a compromising situation in order to be rid of an enemy.

11 Act IV, p. 55.
and, possibly, of herself. For when he learns that the Empress has
hidden the Palsgrave in her chamber Alphonsus breaks into it to
revenge his pretended dishonour on her by dragging her by the hair
and on the Palsgrave by ordering him to be killed. By making his
supposed dishonour public Alphonsus assumes the right to exact a
public revenge. As the two bishops who are present make no
objections to this, it may be assumed that it was considered the
natural revenge for a dishonoured husband. Indeed, the Bishop of
Mentz later commits Isabella to prison himself.

The scheming villain Eleazar in Lust's Dominion, who resembles
Alphonsus in his lust for power and his lack of scruple in obtaining
it, tries to trap his wife in the same way. He actually tells her
that she is to be the bait in Eleazar's plot to kill King Fernando,
who loves her. Eleazar's wife Maria is to poison the King when he
tries to seduce her. Then, as Eleazar indicates in an aside, he
will be able to kill Maria too. Eleazar's trap is typical of
others in Elizabethan and Jacobean tragedies of honour. He leaves
home in order to give the King an opportunity to seduce Maria, and
then returns unexpectedly to catch them in the middle of the night.
Things do not happen as he had planned, however. To save her honour

12 Lusts Dominion; or, the Lascivious Queen (1657), Act II,
Sigs. D1v - D2v.
13 An example of a husband who set the same kind of trap and for
the same reason, in everyday life, is to be found in Star
Chamber Proceedings of Elizabeth I: St. Ch. 5 L47/6 (fo. 5)
Bill: Luttrell vs. Palmer, Carterett, et al., discussed in
M.A. thesis, pp. 141-7. Using a woman to compromise a man in
order to make him pay his way out of the situation was, of
course, a favourite trick of conny-catchers.
Maria gives the King a sleeping draught, not a poison. The Queen Mother, finding her son asleep, thinks that Maria has killed him and so kills her. Eleazar then returns, seeking countenance for his intended revenge for honour by declaring that he hears his slaves call out that Maria is dallying with the King. When he finds Maria dead Eleazar has only to make a slight change in his plans. He immediately assumes that the King has killed Maria (presumably for not yielding to his lust) and so stabs him, swearing

Were he ten thousand Kings that slew my love,
Thy soul my hand (plum'd with revenges wings)
Requite mine own dishonour, and her death.

The interesting thing about the plots of Alphonsus and Eleazar is that each could rely on men's attitudes to the concept of revenge for honour to provide adequate excuse for the unquestioned murder of his wife's lover.

If a man could consider himself dishonoured by the conduct of his sister, daughter or wife, he could also consider himself dishonoured by his mother. Prince Philip, younger son of the Queen Mother in Lust's Dominion typifies a just attitude to family honour with regard to his mother. When the old King dies Philip's sorrow is less for his father's death than for his mother's unfaithfulness.

14 Act III, iv, Sig. Dg
15 Act III, iv, Sig. Dg
He minces no words in declaring to her that it is Eleazar who

Dishonours you and me, dishonours Spain,
Dishonours all these Lords.  

For speaking thus Philip is banished. He later learns that his mother is planning to marry Eleazar and that she has declared Philip to be a bastard. Thus, meeting Eleazar in single combat Philip is assured of the justice of his cause. It consists in his father's wrongs, his brother's wounds, his mother's infamy and Spain's misery. Although the intervention of Eleazar's Moors prevents Philip's victory here, it is he who deals Eleazar his death blow at the end of the play. As Philip commences his reign he wipes out his mother's dishonour with a free pardon. He therefore typifies the revenger who wishes to abide by the Christian law that forbids unnecessary slaughter and advocates reconciliation and forgiveness. Indeed, although Philip actually seeks revenge for dishonour his methods are such as could be approved by the Church. As rightful heir to the throne of Spain after his brother's death he acts as God's deputy to execute divine vengeance on Eleazar. When the Queen Mother becomes a self-confessed penitent her son has no power to punish her and so pardons her accordingly.

It was not only the female members of his immediate family circle who could dishonour a man. As uncle to the Prince of Wales, Richard of Cornwall is involved in the dishonour caused by the doubt

16 Act I, iii, Sig. B9 V.
17 Act IV, iii, Sig. E9 V.
18 Act V, vi, Sigs. G10 V - G11 r.
of Princess Hedewick's honesty. Accepting the truth of the Bishop of Cologne's suggestion that she has been unknowingly dishonoured, Richard exclaims,

0 that I knew the foul incestuous wretch,
Thus would I tear him with my teeth and nails. 19

Similarly, in the eyes of the Duke of Saxony, Richard is linked in guilt with his nephew. The Duke would revenge his public dishonour on Richard as well as on Edward and calls for Richard's head. His hatred, in fact, extends to all the English nation. 20

In view of this concept that a wound to the honour of a kinswoman demanded vengeance by the sword it is surprising that neither her brother, Richard of Cornwall, nor her nephew, Prince Edward, defends the honour of the Empress Isabella. The Prince does, indeed, lament the Emperor's treatment of his aunt, even though he does not know whether or not she is guilty. He even tries to save her life when Alphonsus threatens her. 21 Nevertheless, he never actually questions the Emperor's right to revenge as he pleases the dishonour of his wife.

This apparently unquestioned right of revenge for honour was extended from husbands to suitors on the Elizabethan stage. The woman to whom a man was betrothed was considered as capable of dishonouring him by her conduct as if they were already married, for it would later be a dishonour to him to marry a woman suspected

19 Alphonsus Emperour of Germany, Act IV, p. 48.
20 Ibid., Act IV, pp. 46-7.
21 Ibid., Act V, p. 61.
of being unchaste, and a public demonstration of interest in any other man than her betrothed lover might lead to that suspicion. Similarly, a betrothed lover was bound to defend his lady's honour with the sword. These ideas are reasonable and acceptable corollaries of the concept of marital honour. But the way in which the code of honour was strained to provide excuse for acts of pride, spite or malice is seen in the extension of this concept to include rejected suitors as well. For although it is obvious that a woman could only choose one husband at a time, the rejected suitor apparently considered himself dishonoured by his successful rival. In *The Spanish Tragedy* when Don Balthazar learns that Horatio is his rival in Bel-imperia's affections he rejoices that he knows on whom to be revenged. He has no hesitation in joining with Lorenzo to murder Horatio, although he knows that in doing so he will forfeit the love of Bel-imperia altogether. His action is, in fact, motivated by jealousy and wounded pride. A comic instance of this concept is found in *Soliman and Perseda*. The foolish Basiliseco professes to love Perseda, who never encourages his suit, and he declares his intention of seeking revenge on Erastus when he sees him with her. Even when he later learns that they are married he vows to follow Erastus to Rhodes to seek revenge. Basiliseco is finally murdered by another unsuccessful suitor of Perseda, Soliman himself. Having arranged the death of Erastus, Soliman thinks of Perseda as his.

22 *The Spanish Tragedie* (?1592), Act II, Sigs. C₃r - C₄r.
23 *The Tragedye of Solyman and Perseda* (?1592), Sigs. B₂r; C₃r.
When Basilio dares to kiss her as she lies dying and Piston laments her death, Soliman stabs them both for presuming to love her.24

Since woman’s chastity was so important to the honour of her husband or kinsman it was to be expected that a wronged woman, sensible of dishonour, might wish to avenge it herself. Already in The Spanish Tragedy Bel-imperia had illustrated the female avenger of blood, and the blood of two lovers, not of members of her family. Yet, apart from Shakespeare’s Lavinia, Perseda is the only active female revenger of honour in Elizabethan tragedy. When she finds Lucina wearing a carcanel that she had given to Erastus she assumes that he has betrayed her faith. Even she, however, deputes her revenge to another, commissioning Basilio to work revenge on her behalf.25 He is too cowardly to carry out what proves to be a needless task, and Perseda later carries out her own revenge for the murder of Erastus by stabbing Lucina and poisoning Soliman.

In David and Bethsabe Thamar complains to her brother Absolon to revenge her rape. In contrast, neither of the wronged women in Alphonsus Emperor of Germany complains at all. Hedewick, faced with the prospect of dying at her father’s hands if her husband refuses to acknowledge her child, thinks only of the vengeance of Heaven. When she has seen her child killed she can only pray to God to receive her soul and hope that her innocence may come to light.26

The Empress Isabella also appeals to heaven to avenge her shame when

24 Ibid., Sigs. H4v - I1r
25 Ibid., Sigs. C4v - D1r
26 Alphonsus Emperor of Germany (1654), Act IV, pp. 55-6.
her husband accuses her of dishonour and tortures her to make her confess her guilt. Yet, despite this misery, Isabella freely forgives Alphonson and when Alexander murders him she is the first to call for vengeance for the deed. In Lust's Dominion a wife dishonoured by her husband's intentions is contrasted with a woman who pretends to have been dishonoured. The former, Maria, endures with patience the evils planned by her husband, Eleazar. She prefers to die rather than yield her honour to King Fernando. Torn between loyalty to a wicked husband and loyalty to a lustful king, she seeks to preserve the King's life, her own and her husband's honour by administering a sleeping draught to the king instead of a poison.

The Queen Mother, on the other hand, openly dishonours herself in order to bastardize her son Philip. Cardinal Mendoza, who is himself infatuated with the Queen, "confesses" that he is Philip's father. The Queen, however, turns upon him to call publicly for justice on vile Mendoza for her ravishment. Eleazar responds by sending them both to prison to await death. Thus the patience of the truly dishonoured wife is contrasted with the vindictiveness of the woman who scruples not to dishonour herself.

From this study of the concept of revenge for honour in Elizabethan tragedy after 1580 it appears that it was linked most closely with the chastity or reputation for chastity of a man's womenfolk. If his sister, mother, kinswoman or - more especially -

27 Ibid., Act III, pp. 40-41; Act V, pp. 64, 66.
28 Lust's Dominion (1657), Act III, i, Sigs. D2r; D5v.
his wife or even his intended wife were either proved to be unchaste or publicly thought to be so, he conceived that he had the right to kill the man who was responsible for this. What happened to the woman herself depended on the depth of the revenger's belief in her guilt. A compassionate man might forgive her; a ruthless man torture or kill her. A hypocrite who knew her to be innocent might set her free or impose on her what punishment he chose.

A dishonoured husband was conceded a free hand in exacting whatever revenge he wished. Thus, no matter how villainous they were considered in other aspects of their behaviour, neither Eleazar nor Alphonseus was prevented from executing his own revenge for the dishonour caused by the supposed unchastity of his wife. For this very reason an unscrupulous man could use revenge for honour as an excuse to trap and kill an enemy and possibly his wife as well.

The nature of the circumstances which constituted the necessary trap to lead to revenge for honour indicates that a woman was dishonoured if she lost her reputation for chastity as much as if she had lost it indeed. None of the women in these plays was taken in an unchaste act. Bel-imperia was embracing Horatio; but even if Maria (though dead) and the Empress Isabella had men in their chambers, they were convicted by appearances only.

The presence of witnesses at the discovery of dishonour was important. If a man's dishonour were proved in public he could execute a public revenge without hindrance from the onlookers. It followed
that there was little subtlety in the execution of such revenge, though there may have been some contrivance of the circumstances to warrant it. As a result, none of these plays contain either an examination of the revenger's motives or of the actual concept of revenge for honour that prompted them. Nor is there any condemnation of the idea that the revenge inflicted on a man for wounding the honour of another through his womenfolk should be death. The only suggestions that a bloody revenge was unnecessary are given by Philip's pardoning of his mother in Lust's Dominion and Prince Edward's compassion for Hedewick in Alphonsus Emperor of Germany.

Of the code of honour as it applied in cases other than those just discussed there is little evidence in Elizabethan tragedy. A soldier could be dishonoured in battle if he were overcome and killed with an unfair advantage, as Don Andrea was by Don Balthazar. Similarly, a private man could be dishonoured in the manner of his death and even in his treatment after death. Thus Hieronimo could speak of Horatius's "bloody corpse dishonoured here." The allegation of bastardy, used against Philip in Lust's Dominion, was an obvious wound to the honour inherent in his good birth and his mother's chastity.

The dishonour done to Philip, however, was not done to a private man only. In as much as he was sovereign of Spain, his court and

29 The Spanish Tragedie (?1592), Act I, Sig. B3v implies this.
30 Ibid., Act II, Sig. D3r.
people were dishonoured too. Similarly, David as sovereign of Israel was dishonoured by the private actions of his sons Absolon and Ammon. The man who dishonoured a king, therefore, tainted the whole nation with dishonour.

In a king there were, in fact, two kinds of honour: his honour as a private man, which was inherent, and his honour as a sovereign, which could be called acquired (the more especially if he were a conqueror or tyrant). This difference between inherent and acquired honour is illustrated by the fact that Richard of Cornwall considered himself dishonoured in not being elected Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire as he had been led to expect. This was not a wound to his own good birth or honourable conduct, but it deprived him of the additional honour concomitant with the position of a sovereign. Richard does not seek revenge for this wound, but he is nevertheless conscious of it. Even when he is dressed as a fool at the feast he laments,

Yet to my roabs I cannot suit my mind,  
Nor with my habit shake dishonour off. 31

He vows to repair his honour or end his life. The former can only be achieved by his successful election as Emperor. Until this happens he will never return to England. Fortunately, he becomes Emperor at the conclusion of the play and thus this dishonour is removed.

Even the deprivation of slightly lesser offices constituted dishonour. When Cardinal Mendoza, Protector of Spain, has his

31 Alphonsus Emperour of Germany (1654), Act II, p. 24
Protector's staff taken from him by the King Fernando he vows revenge, for he interprets this action as a wound to his honour as a gentleman and as a representative of the Church. In revenge he is willing to lay aside his position in the Church and act as a soldier. He tells Fernando:

Fernando I am wrong'd by Peters Chair,
Mendoza vows revenge. I'lle lay aside
My Cardinals hat, and in a wall of steel
The glorious livery of a soldier; fight for my late lost honour 32

Mendoza is here possibly confusing inherent and acquired honour in a way which was later shown to be common in the worldly. Indeed, his speech reveals the extent to which his worldliness overruled his spiritual qualities.

Taken all together, these examples indicate that injury to a man's inherent honour, such as his family or marital honour, required the death of the man responsible for it. There is not enough evidence of the injury to acquired honour in Elizabethan tragedy, however, to indicate whether the sword was equally necessary to avenge it.

This lack of evidence is an indication of one of the most interesting aspects of the development of the concept of revenge for honour in English tragedy before 1603. That is, that it was an extremely limited concept with an equally limited development. The books of courtesy and honour were full of examples of causes of

32 Lusts Dominion (1657), Act II, i, Sig. C2r
honourable quarrels, and yet the only example of this kind of quarrel in the drama is the combat between Philip and Eleazar in *Lust's Dominion*. Elizabethan revenge tragedy gives no indication of the width, depth and variety of the interpretations of the concept of revenge for honour which were to appear in Jacobean and Caroline drama. Though these early revenge plays contain effective characterization of particular types, they have no penetrating individual character studies. It seems, therefore, that the selection of material by Elizabethan dramatists was limited by their capabilities and by certain stage requirements as well as popular demand. A husband's right to avenge his wife's dishonour by the death of her lover was unquestioned because the minor dramatists had not sufficient power of characterization to present moral conflict convincingly. It was easier for them to present a villain revenger than a sympathetic revenger like Hieronimo. The accusation of cowardice as an incentive to revenge for honour did not appear, probably because it would have entailed an examination of the concept of military honour. This, moreover, might have led to the production of a play with a cast of men only, and it would have been impracticable to exclude the boy actors who had been especially trained to take women's parts. Thus revenge for honour chiefly arose in situations involving women. At the same time, however, the fact that these parts were played by boys may explain why Elizabethan dramatists - with the obvious exception of Shakespeare - paid little heed to the feelings of the dishonoured
woman. The women whose characters stand out in these plays, such as Bel-imperia or Perseda, are remarkable for a decidedly unfeminine boldness in seeking revenge.

Apart from Shakespeare the only Elizabethan dramatist who might have foreshadowed the Jacobean use of the concept of revenge for honour was Christopher Marlowe. For Marlowe had a thinking mind, and though he was more concerned with passions than with ideals, his plays demonstrate his intellectual interest in the nature of man and in the effects on that nature of ambition, pride or sin. His concern with the dilemma of Faustus is sufficient to suggest that he might well have presented the dilemma of the avenger of honour with equal conviction. That he did not do so may be explained as much by the lack of development of early revenge tragedy as by the fact of his early death. 33

As it was, the nearest approach to revenge tragedy that Marlowe made in The Jew of Malta was in The Jew of Malta, for Barabas's actions were at first inspired by the desire to be avenged on Malta and on its Governor. But once Barabas's mind became employed on revenge the interest of the play was concentrated on the workings of that mind rather than on the revenge itself. Moreover, it was his ambition rather than his revenge that led to his final fall. Thus Marlowe's contribution to Elizabethan revenge tragedy was not in the production

33 Although Eleazar in Lust's Dominion seems to be closely modelled on Barabas I do not accept the title page's ascription of the play to Marlowe.
of a sympathetic revenger to follow Hieronimo, but in the creation
of a fascinatingly villainous revenger. For though Barabas's revenge
was neither for murder nor for honour, later revengers of both kinds
owed much of their characterization to him.

The concept of revenge for honour might have remained undeveloped
in drama had it not been so closely allied to English life and
thought in the late sixteenth and, more especially, the early
seventeenth century that it was bound to be considered as dramatic
material by those playwrights who drew their inspiration from the
world in which they lived. It was, therefore, destined to be
used by Shakespeare and those early Jacobean dramatists who
sought their material in the lives of men in order to make their
plays live in men's experience. Such playwrights were Marston,
Chapman, Webster and Tourneur. In their hands even the often
used situation of the dishonoured husband was still found fruitful.
With the impetus of their work the scope of the code of honour
and the influence of the concept of revenge for honour extended
to other kinds of drama than revenge tragedy. Thus some aspect of
revenge for honour may be found in the work of every major
dramatist of the first half of the seventeenth century. 34

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34 This examination of revenge for honour is based on a detailed
examination of Elizabethan revenge tragedy in M.A. thesis,
pp. 240 - 358.
Early Jacobean Examination of the Concept of
Revenge for Honour

Elizabethan concepts of duelling honour were, to some extent, derived from books of courtesy and honour rather than from native tradition. These concepts were imported from Italy and France, and though later taken over by Englishmen themselves, could yet be treated with a certain amount of curiosity, even amusement.\(^1\) Despite the importance accorded to duelling in such books, it did not appear in Elizabethan revenge tragedy and may not, indeed, have played a large part in Elizabethan life until the close of the sixteenth century.

Yet there was one part of the country where arms were taken up upon all causes without reference to any written code. This was the Border land between England and Scotland. There family feuds lasted for generations, and the inhabitants were probably twice as conscious of the demands of vengeance as anyone in the rest of England.\(^2\)

\(^1\) Touchstone’s account of finding a quarrel to be upon the seventh cause (As You Like It, V, iv, p. 206) is a humorous account of what was discussed seriously by Segar and Saviole.

\(^2\) Vide The Calendar of State Papers relating to the affairs of the Borders of England and Scotland preserved in Her Majesty's Public Record Office, Edited by H. Bain (Edinburgh, 1894, '96): vol. i 1560-1594; vol. ii 1595-1603; Calendar of State Papers, Domestic Series, Edited by R. Lemon: 1547-1580 (1856); 1581-1590 (1865); 1591-1594 (1867); 1595-1597 (1869); 1598-1601 (1869); 1601-1603 (1870); Addenda, 1580-1615 (1870). For the period 1580-1603 there is at least twice as much material concerned with revenge in the two former volumes as there is in the seven latter.
Each side plundered the other indiscriminately; and every assault, ambush, theft or murder called for vengeance from the injured. It was not strange that a letter written from Berwick in December, 1604 should report that some unruly persons had lain in wait and wounded divers Englishmen upon a feud of eighteen years' standing. 3

With the arrival of James I and his Scottish nobles in London the honourable quarrel became a matter of daily occurrence in the streets. English courtiers were jealous of the favour shown to the King's Scottish followers, while old enmities between Protestant and Papist, between one family and another broke out amid the general unrest. An anonymous contemporary commentator reported:

   In out (ward) appearance Papists were favoured, masses almost publickely administered, Protestants discountenanced, dishonest men honored, those that were little lesse then Sorcerers and witches preferred, private quarrels nourished, but especially betwene the Scottishhe and the Englishhe, duells in every streete maintained: ... 4

The situation grew so serious that, to prevent further bloodshed, King James issued Proclamations against duelling in 1613 and 1614; against the carrying of pistols and daggers in 1616; and finally it was decreed in 1631 by Charles I that quarrels were to be settled by the Marshal. 5 That the code of honour was largely responsible for the prevalence of duelling in seventeenth century England is a recognised fact. 6

3 Captain William Bowyer to Viscount Cranborne, 4th December, 1604: Calendar of Salisbury Papers, Pt. XVI, (1933), p. 376.
4 Harley MS, 4888 The Secret History of ye Reign of E. James ye 1st, fo. 214r.
6 Ibid., v, (second edition, 1937), p. 199
It was inevitable that an increase in the practice of revenging injuries to honour should be followed by an increased interest in the concept of revenge for honour, and that this should be reflected in revenge tragedy. The work of the Jacobean dramatists is, in fact, distinguished by the way in which it examines and analyses this concept. Each of the major tragic writers has his own interpretation of it to offer through his work. Thus, particularly in later Jacobean drama, the concept of revenge for honour becomes a touchstone of a dramatist’s skill in characterization and motivation and of his ability to make of an accepted code a living force to inspire his play.

It was both significant and typical of the Jacobean age that one of its earliest plays, George Chapman’s Bussy d’Ambois, should be the first revenge tragedy to deal with a single theme - revenge for honour - and the first play to present an analysis of its meaning and implications. Yet Chapman’s statements are purely didactic. There is no obvious development of thought within the play; no indication that the dramatist is reasoning his way towards a conclusion. The conclusion is presented as incontrovertible and,

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7 Dr. C.L. Barber, writing of the increase in frequency of the meanings of honour associated with reputation and honourableness of character in both comedy and tragedy after 1610, states: “Since this is the group of head-meanings especially concerned with the regulation of conduct, the increase in numbers presumably reflects an increased interest in honour as a determinant of conduct.” Op. cit., p. 94.
significantly, the concept of revenge for honour does not enter
into any other of Chapman's serious plays. 8

In Bussy d'Ambois Chapman examines the concept of revenge for
honour with regard to duelling and adultery, showing how it could
be interpreted as a creed the tenets of which had to be accepted
by the individual regardless of his fellows, his Church or his
country. To understand this presentation a brief account of the
situations involving both kinds of revenge for honour is necessary.

In his treatment of duelling honour Chapman shows how it could
be used to rationalize the lawless actions of his hero. Bussy is
described as

A man of spirit beyond the reach of feare. 10

He is introduced to the French court as the protégé of Monsieur, the
King's brother. There his self-confidence gains him the hatred of
Monsieur's confidential servant, Maffe, while his audacity in paying
court to the Duchess of Guise provokes the dislike of her husband.
Left alone with three young courtiers, Bussy finds this conduct and
his dress the subjects of their ridicule. Two of his friends arrive
to support Bussy against the courtiers' insults. Angry words are
exchanged till the assertion that Bussy is a better man than the
best of them has to be maintained with the sword. When the six men
come to fight, Barrisor, the chief of Bussy's opponents, offers him

8 The arguments for Chapman's authorship of Alphonsus Emperor of
Germany are not conclusive.
10 Bussy D'Ambois (1607), Act I, p.2.
remission and contrition or, alternatively, a single combat. Bussy prefers the latter proposition, but Barrisnor's friends are unwilling to expose him alone to what they all deserve. Then, as the Nuntius reports

... (for the other offer of remission)
D'Ambois (that like a Lewrell put in fire,
Sparkl'd and spit) did much much more than scorne,
That his wrong should incense him so like chaffe,
To goe so soone out; and like lighted paper,
Approoue his spirit at once both fire and ashes:

This refusal is not in accordance with the written code of honour as expounded by such masters as Saviole or Segar. In insisting upon the combat Bussy does not, therefore, act as a man of honour. Moreover, when all but he are killed, he is rightly considered by the law, personified in King Henry, as a murderer whose life is forfeit. Pleading to his brother for Bussy, Monsieur alleges that

Manly slaughter
Should never beare th'account of wilfull murther;
It being a spice of justice, where with life
Offending past law, equal life is laid
In equalall ballance, to scourge that offence
By law of reputation, which to men
Exceedes all positive law, and what that leaves
To true mens valours (not prefixing rights
Of satisfaction, suited to their wrongs)
A free mans eminence may supplie and take.

To this the King replies,

This would make everie man that thinks him wrongd,
Or is offended, or in wrong or right,
Ley on this violence, and all vaunt themselves,
Law-menders and supplieors though mere Butchers;
Should this fact (though of justice) be forgiuen?

11 Ibid., Act II, p. 15.
12 Ibid., Act II, p. 18.
13 Ibid., loc. cit.
Monsieur's reply asserts that, on the contrary, it would make cowards fear to touch the reputations of full men, and justice would soon distinguish murderous minds from just revengers. He considers that reputation or fame is more precious than life. The true murderer is one who kills both a man and fame. Bussy killed in defence of his own fame and is, therefore, worthy to survive those who only kill men. The King grants Bussy his life, but with a warning:

... D'Ambois, let your life
(Refin'd by passing through this merited death)
Be purg'd from more such foule pollution;
Nor on your scape, nor valour, more presuming,
To be againe so violent. 14

In accepting his life from the King's hands Bussy expresses his own concept of the law's relationship to the individual:

... since I am free,
(Offending no just law) let no law make
By any wrong it does, my life her slauer;
When I am wrong'd and that law failes to right me,
Let me be King my selfe (as man was made)
And doe a justice that exceedes the law:
If my wrong passe the power of single valour
To right and expiate; then be you my King,
And doe a Right, exceeding Law and Nature:
Who to himselfe is law, no law doth neede.
Offends no King, and is a King indeede. 15

What Bussy does, therefore, is to use an individual and highly strained interpretation of the concept of revenge for honour to rationalize acts inspired by his own pride. For, as a nineteenth century biographer of Bussy records, he was fond of repeating that

14 Ibid., Act II, pp. 18-19.
15 Ibid., p. 19.
though a simple gentleman, he had the heart of an emperor. In other respects, however, Chapman's Bussy is nobler than his original, who was so fond of duelling that he would fight upon a cause as trivial as a dispute about the resemblance of embroidered designs to letters of the alphabet. Of the historical Bussy it could be said that:

\[\text{Avid de querelles, de bruit et de scandale, débauché, dépourvu de sens moral, cupide, dénué de scrupules, il gaspilla rapidement son génie, son courage et son honneur, dans de misérables aventures, indignes d'un capitaine soucieux de sa renommée.} \]

In contrast, Chapman's protagonist is a Tamburlaine-like figure of heroic proportions. Nevertheless, though this character may have appealed to him, Chapman did not hesitate to indicate the rocks upon which Bussy foundered. At the beginning of the play Bussy sees virtue as a poor, staid fisherman and declares that

\[\text{Wee must to vertue for her guide resort,} \]
\[\text{Or wee shall shipwracke in our safest Port.} \]

Yet Bussy will not accept a guide outside himself. He follows neither virtue nor the advice of the King any more than he does the accepted code of duelling honour. He is a law unto himself and, considering himself above the law, is shipwrecked in the port of his own self-sufficiency. It comes as a shock to Bussy, as it did to Tamburlaine, to discover that his body is no more than penetrable flesh.

\[\text{16 André Joubert, Un Mignon de la Cour de Henri III Louis de Clermont Sieur de Bussy d'Amboise Gouverneur d'Anjou (Angers et Paris, 1885), p. 10} \]
\[\text{17 Ibid., p. 25.} \]
\[\text{18 Ibid., p. 11.} \]
\[\text{19 Bussy D'Ambois (1607), Act I, p. 2.} \]
\[\text{20 Ibid., Act V, p. 66.} \]
Nevertheless, he dies conceiving that the "Ocean of all humane life" is made bitter only with his blood, and Chapman's image here not only expresses the height of Bussy's pride at the moment of death, but recalls the imagery of his opening speech. Not only has Bussy wandered through the waves of glassy glory without seeking the aid of the poor staid fisherman, but the waves have overwhelmed him. It may here be noted that the dominant images in the play are inspired by the opposing elements of fire and water. Bussy sees man as a torch borne in the wind, and at the end of his life he realizes that his own life is a warning fire to others. For Montsurry, at the end of the play, the flame symbolizes his love for his wife which will in future only burn brightly if he is separated from her as the concept of revenge for marital honour demands.

Thus even the imagery of the play stresses that Bussy and Montsurry hold different interpretations of the same symbol: a fact also illustrated by their interpretations of the code of honour. Bussy strains the code of honour to rationalize his own actions, alleging that it gives him authority to exceed all positive law, as his protector Monsieur expresses it. In this interpretation he may, indeed, have had many supporters in the France of his day as doubtless also in Elizabethan or Jacobean England. Montsurry, on the other

21 Ibid., Act V, p. 68.
hand, illustrates the strain imposed by a strict adherence to the code of honour on the sensibilities of a loving but dishonoured husband. In his consideration of marital honour Chapman differs from the Elizabethan dramatists in showing the pull between demands of honour and those of personal relationships. The subject of marital honour is first introduced when Tanyra, Countess of Montsurry, resists the advances of Monsieur. She declares that her honour is in her own hands and therefore Monsieur has no power to pull her down. To this he replies, cynically,

Honour, what's that? your second maidenhead:  
And what is that? a word: the word is gone 
The thing remains: the rose is pluckt, the stalk 
Abides: an easie losse where no lack's found: 23

This concept of woman's honour is consistent with Monsieur's assertion of the importance of man's reputation. It proves to be a concept acceptable to Tamyra herself. For, although she refuses the love of Monsieur, she makes an assignation with Bussy in her husband's absence. She yields to him knowing that she is committing, not only her honour, but her life, to his care. This is the first indication that Chapman gives that the loss of honour will bring death.

When Bussy assures Tamyra that he will never betray her fame, her fears are quietened. It is Monsieur who betrays them both when he publicly makes horns at Montsurry. This sign kills Tamyra's reputation and its concomitant honour. Montsurry, therefore, refusing to pawn his honour to read what proof of the accusation is contained

23 Bussy D'Ambois (1607), Act II, p. 21.
in a paper offered to him by Monsieur, turns in anger on Tamyra herself. She is able to convince him that he is dishonoured only by Monsieur's advances. She even encourages her husband to look at the paper. He does so, and is convinced of Tamyra's guilt. It only remains for him to trap Bussy in order to bring him, as Monsieur urges, within the thirsty reach of his revenge.

To effect this, however, Montsurry has to know the intermediary between Tamyra and her lover, and he tortures her to make her reveal this. It is, in fact, Friar Comolet who is the pandar. The Friar himself pleads with Montsurry to stop his torture, but the Earl replies:

Good father leave vs: interrupt no more
The course I must run for mine honour sake.
Relie on my loue to her, which her fault
Cannot extinguish; ...

I will not passe the verge that boundes a Christian,
Nor breake the limits of a man nor husband. 24

Yet the torture continues. In vain Tamyra pleads with her husband not to make her love's corruption generate murder. It is only when the sight of her torments is too much for the Friar and he drops dead that Tamyra consents to write to Bussy. She tries to warn him of his danger by using her blood for ink, but he takes this as a sacred witness of her love. So Bussy falls into Montsurry's trap. He faces death bravely, however, beating off his assassins and calling for Montsurry himself:

Where is that angrie Earle my Lorde? Come forth
And shew your owne face in your owne affaire;

24 Ibid., Act V, p. 55.
Take not into your noble veins the blood
Of these base villains, nor the light reports
Of blister'd tongues, for cleere and weightie truth:
But me against the world, in pure defence
Of your rare Ladie, to whose spotlesse name
I stand heere as a bulwarke, and proiect
A life to her renowne, that ever yet
Hath beene vntainted even in enuius eie,
And where it would protect a sanctuarie.
Braue Earle come forth, and keepe your scandall in:
Tis not our fault if you enforce the spot,
Nor the wreake yours if you performe it not. 25

Bussy overcomes Montsurry in combat and spares his life, only to be
treacherously killed by Guise and Monsieur. All that remains is for
Montsurry to forgive Tamyra. In doing so he expresses the pathos of
the man compelled by honour to divorce himself from love.

I do forgive thee, and upon my knees
With hands (held vp to heauen) wish that mine honor
Would suffer reconcilement to my loue:
But since it will not, honor, never serue
My Loue with flourishing object till it sterue:
And as this Taper, though it vpwards looke,
Downwards must needs consume, so let our loue;
As having lost his hony, the sweet taste
Runs into sauer, and will needs retaine
A spice of his first parents, till (like life)
It sees and dies; so let out loue: and lastly,
As when the flame is sufferd to looke vp
It keeps his luster: but, being thus turnd downe
(His naturall course of vsefull light inverted)
His owne stuffe puts it out: so let our loue,
Now turne from me, as I heere turne from thee,
And may both points of heauens strait axeltree
Conioine in one, before thy selfe and me. 26

One of the most interesting aspects of Montsurry's revenge is
that it is executed unhesitatingly. He does not theorize over
revenge and yet his actions show how much he was influenced by
convention. Montsurry does not find his wife in a compromising

26 Ibid., Act V, pp. 69-70.
situation, though Bussy's willingness to come to her confirms her
guilt. Bussy, therefore, has the right to defend Tamyra's honour with
the sword. According to the books of courtesy and honour, his
victory should have been interpreted as an indication of his right.
But as Montsurry has already ignored the pleadings of the Church in
his dealings with Tamyra, it is not surprising that his personal
code of honour is more ruthless than the written code. The wounding
of the maid Pero²⁷ who reveals Montsurry's dishonour to Monsieur,
and Bussy's call to the Earl to keep his scandal in, give an indication
of the difference between public and private dishonour. Finally,
Montsurry's last speech is one of the earliest dramatic presentations
of the effect of the concept of revenge for honour on the mind of a
loving husband.²⁸

These last two aspects of the concept of revenge for honour are
expressed with even greater dramatic effectiveness in John Marston's
The Malcontent.²⁹ Duke Pietro, told of his dishonour, goes with his
courtiers to trap his wife and her lover, Ferneze. To the Duke,
dishonour is like a disease suffered by the one body of his wife and
himself. He tells his companions:

My Lords: The heavy action we intend,
Is death and shame, two of the ugliest shapes
That can confound a soule, thinke, thinke of it;
I strike but yet like him that gainst stone walles

²⁷ This is implicit in Act IV, pp. 52-3.
²⁸ It does not, I think, detract from the seriousness of Chapman's
intention here that in the sequel Tamyra is, as Professor Harbage
flippantly puts it: "still on the premises ... and talking like
the injured party." Shakespeare and the Rival Traditions (New
Directs his shafts, rebounds in his owne face,
My Ladies shame is mine, O God tis mine.
Therefore I doe conjure all secrecie,
Let it be as very little as may be; pray yee, as may be?
Make frightlesse entrance, salute her with soft eyes,
Staine nought with blood -- onely Ferneze dies,
But not before her browes: O Gentlemen
God knowes I love her, nothing els, but this,
I am not well; ... 30

Pietro's attitude is that of the surgeon curing a diseased limb. His action is "Sharpe surgery where nought but death amends." 31 It is Mendoza, not the Duke, who is to kill Ferneze. Pietro neither stains his own sword with blood nor says more to his Duchess than: "I am sorry for our shame." 32

Ferneze recovers from his wounds, but Pietro considers the wounds to his honour mortal. He thus describes his condition:

I am not unlike to some sickman,
That long desired hurtfull drinke; at last
Swilles in and drinkes his last, ending at once
Both life and thirst: O would I nere had knowne
My owne dishonour: good God, that men should
Desire to search out that, which being found kills all
Their joyes of life: ... 33

Marston's play is not, however, a tragedy. To both Pietro and the Duchess Aurelia suffering brings humility and conversion to a holier way of life in which it is possible for them to be reconciled. Yet Pietro did not set out to avenge sin rather than dishonour. It

31 Ibid., II, iii, p. 167.
32 Ibid., II, v, p. 170.
33 Ibid., III, i, p. 174.
is Malevole who refers at the end of the play to

... lust so confirm'd
That the black act of sinne it selfe not sham'd
To be term'd Courtship. 34

In contrast, the husband in Heywood's A Woman Killed with Kindness 35 is determined to save his wife's soul by refusing to exact the violent revenge for honour that she expects. Heywood's preoccupation with sin and redemption is felt throughout the play. Both Anne Frankford and her lover, Wendoll are aware of the sinfulness of their actions 36 and thus Frankford is able to leave them to the torment of their consciences.

Although the play is, in some ways, a Christian answer to revenge for honour, Heywood is realistic in his presentation of Frankford's return to his home to trap Anne and Wendoll. He does not come to exact a bloody revenge, but prays that his soul may not be transfixed by what he sees in his wife's chamber; that his hand may be kept from "any violent outrage, or red murder." 37 The sight is, however, too much for him and a bloodthirsty pursuit of Wendoll is only prevented by the intervention of a maid. Given this moment to think, Frankford recovers his strength of purpose and dismisses Wendoll to a life in which it will be revenge enough for him to have the weight of wrongs done to Frankford upon his soul. The excellence of Heywood's characterization is most marked in Frankford's treatment of Anne.

Like Montsurry and Duke Pietro, he is still very much in love with his

34 Ibid., I, iii, p. 214.
36 A Woman Kilde with Kindnesse (1607), Sigs. C3^r; C4^v - D1^r.
37 Ibid., Sig. F3^v.
wife. His love is more obvious than theirs, however, in that it is expressed, not in formal language, but in the simple, quiet words with which he asks Anne why she has acted thus. He still calls her by his pet name of Nan. Loving his wife much, but her soul more, Frankford dismisses her to their manor seven miles away. There,stricken by grief and overwhelmed with a sense of sin so great that she cannot endure to live, Anne Frankford starves herself to death. Before she dies Frankford recognises that

Though thou art wounded in thy honored name,
And with that griefe vpon thy death-bed liest
Honest in hart, vpon my soule thou diest. 38

Anne's dying words are the final triumphal vindication of her husband's bloodless revenge for honour:

Pardon on earth, soule, thou in heauen art frees,
Once more thy wife, dyest thus imbracing thee. 39

In The Malcontent Marston showed how the honour of husband and wife was one as they were one in matrimony. Aurelia's shame was Pietro's own. In A Woman Killed with Kindness Heywood extends the husband's sense of dishonour to include his children. Frankford's appeal to Anne is most pathetic when he brings their children before her, saying

... oh Nan, oh Nan,
If either feare of shame, regard of honor,
The blemish of my house, nor my deere loue,
Could haue withheld (sic) thee from so lewd a fact:
Yet for these infants, these young harmles soules,
On whose white browes thy shame is charactered,
And growes in greatnes as they wax in yeares,
Looke but on them, and melt away in teares.

38 Ibid., Sig. MvF.
39 Ibid., loc. cit.
Away with them least as her spotted body
Hath stain'd their names with stripe of bastardy,
So her adulterous breath may blast their spirits,
With her infectious thoughts:

The same extension of a parent's dishonour to the children is seen in
two plays which are based on Walter Calverley's murder of his two
children and attempted murder of his wife on 23rd April, 1605. As
these plays, *A Yorkshire Tragedy* and George Wilkins's *The Miseries of
Enforced Marriage* are related to truth, a brief account of the
original story as recorded in a contemporary pamphlet is necessary
for an appreciation of the dramatists' interpretation of it.

Walter Calverley, a rich young heir of Calverley Hall in
Yorkshire, was betrothed to a Yorkshire gentleman's daughter before
he went to visit his guardian in London. A few days after his arrival
he married a gentlewoman related to his guardian. The jilted girl
brought herself to a fatal consumption by her continual sorrow.
After his marriage Calverley's way of life changed to one of riot
and expense. He illtreated his wife and spent all the money that she
could provide for him. When she was absent in quest of more funds
he took to proclaiming in company that she was a strumpet and his
children were bastards. On one occasion a gentleman sought to
chastise him for this behaviour. Calverley replied that the

40 Ibid., Sig. F 4v.
41 Two most unnatural and bloody Murthers: The one by Maister
Cauerley, a Yorkshire Gentleman, practised vpon his wife, and
committed vpon his two Children. the three and twentie of
April 1605. ...
gentleman might be his wife's friend for ought that he knew. This insult led the gentleman to challenge and fight Calverley. He had the better of Calverley, but spared his life, requesting him to be kind to his virtuous wife. Calverley, however, left the field saying to himself, "... strumpet, thou art the cause that I bleede now, but I will be the cause that thou shalt bleed hereafter." When Calverley later learnt that his wife had obtained no money and that his younger brother was in prison for debt on his account, he was overcome with the thought of his own folly and wickedness and the present state of his ill life. While he was meditating on these things his eldest son came to him, and Calverley murdered him out of hand. He then went to a nearby chamber where he succeeded in murdering a second child and severely wounding his wife. He was on his way to kill the third child, out at nurse, when he was apprehended.

Although the anonymous author of the pamphlet emphasized the theme of God's vengeance for Calverley's sins in leaving his betrothed and murdering his children, he did not stress Calverley's desire for revenge on his wife. He made the point that Calverley wished to revenge the hurt received on account of his wife's honour, but did not return to it. At the end of the pamphlet it is suggested that Calverley was motivated, not by a desire of revenge, but by despair and his "preposterous fate."  

Nevertheless, it is the concept of revenge for honour that is used to interpret these events in dramatic terms. In A Yorkshire

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43 Two most unnatual and bloodie Murthers: ... p. 9
44 Ibid., p. 16.
Tragedy the Husband openly tells his Wife that their children are "Bastards, bastards, bastards, begot in tricks, begot in tricks." She is called a harlot, and her husband repeats the words "strumpet and bastards." It is when he is upbraided for thus staining her honour that, as in the pamphlet account, the Husband engages in a duel. Though his life is spared, he meditates on his adversary:

... oh my hart
Would faine leape after him, revenge I saye,
Ime mad to be revenge'd, my strumpet wife:
It is thy quarrel that rips thus my flesh,
And makes my brest spit blood, but thou shalt bleed.

Thus the Husband of the play is motivated by a desire to revenge the dishonour of being overcome in a duel. This interpretation is no more than a rationalization of lawless behaviour. Yet this slender motivation seems to have satisfied the public, and the play was, indeed, ascribed to Shakespeare upon first publication.

In Wilkins's play, the husband, called William Scarborrow, is obsessed with a desire to revenge his own adulterous marriage; for he considers it adultery to have married after being betrothed to another. By changing the names of the characters and making the marriage appear forced, Wilkins's plot is as follows:— When it is suggested that Scarborrow marry his guardian's niece, Katherine, he tells his guardian and a lord who is with him of his betrothal to Clare, the daughter of Sir John Harcop, declaring

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46 A Yorkshire Tragedy Not so New as Lamentable and true (1608), A\textsuperscript{4}V.
47 Ibid., Sig. B\textsuperscript{1r}.
48 Ibid., Sigs. B\textsuperscript{2v} - B\textsuperscript{3r}.
I haue done so much, that if I wed not her, 
My marriage makes me an Adulterer, 
In which blacks sheets, I wallow all my life, 
My babes being Bastards, and a whore my wife. 50

Clare too is oppressed with the same thought. So great is her horror of the possibility of having to marry and, therefore, live in sin, that she commits suicide. Shortly after her death Scarborrow calls at her father's house. The sight of Clare moves him to grief and rage against his wife and friends whom he considers guilty of her death. This view is shared by Sir John Harcop, who exclaims,

Thy wife is but a strumpet, thy children Bastards, 
Thy selfe a murderer, thy wife, accessory, 
Thy bed a stewes, thy house a Brothell. 51

Scarborough's own sense of dishonour is later blended with his desire to avenge Clare's death. Yet even this revenge is abandoned at the end of the play when he is reconciled with his wife and family. Just as he is about to execute a bloody revenge on them he is converted to the belief that the punishment for his sinful marriage is due to his guardian, now dead. Despite the unsatisfactory nature of its forced happy ending, *The Miseries of Enforced Marriage* is valuable in establishing a concept of dishonour that appears important in later plays: 52 that it was a dishonour equal to that of adultery if a man or woman married in despite of a previous contract.

All three versions of the Calverley story show that the young man felt that his dishonour bastardized his children. This interaction of

50 *The Miseries of Inforst Mariage* (1607), Sig. B3v.
51 Ibid., Sigs. D2v–D3r.
52 For example, Ford's *The Broken Heart*.
dishonour between parents and children appears in a different form in The Revenger's Tragedy. In this play the Duke considers himself dishonoured when his stepson violates the chastity of Antonio's wife. At the same time his own bastard son, Spurio, is anxious to revenge the dishonour of his bastardy on his father. Lussurioso, the Duke's eldest legitimate son, rushes to execute vengeance on Spurio for dishonouring his father by his incestuous adultery with the Duchess. He is, however, prompted as much by ambition as desire to avenge his father's honour.

The conception of a brother as guardian of his sister's honour is made more explicit in early Jacobean drama than it was in the revenge tragedies of the late sixteenth century. The only virtuous aspect in the character of Vindici, protagonist of The Revenger's Tragedy, is his determination to save the honour of his sister Castiza.\(^53\) This concern contrasts with the attitude of their mother, Gratiana. Commissioned by Lussurioso to win his sister to his lust Vindici, in disguise, makes trial of her chastity. When Castiza boxes his ears he rejoices,

> In this thou hast right honorable showne; many are call'd by their honour that have none; thou art approu'd for euer in my thoughts.\(^54\)

Gratiana, however, does not so stand the test. For the promise of gold she is willing to act as the Duke's bawd to her own daughter. It is only when Vindici and his brother Hippolito threaten her with

\(^{53}\) The Revengers' Tragedie (1607), II, i, Sig. C3\(^r\).

\(^{54}\) Ibid., loc. cit.
their daggers that she is brought to repentance.\textsuperscript{55} Susan Mountford\textsuperscript{56} in \textit{A Woman Killed with Kindness} is tried even more severely than was Castiza. Her brother, Sir Charles Mountford, is released from prison by his enemy's paying for him a debt of £500. The enemy, Sir Francis Acton does this because he loves Susan. Not knowing that Sir Francis's intentions towards her are no longer dishonourable, Sir Charles asks Susan to give him the love which he has bought with such a large sum of money. Susan is horrified at the suggestion of selling her honour, but realizes that as her brother tenders it as dearly as she does, only extreme necessity would force him to call for such a sacrifice from them both. She therefore consents, but adds

\begin{quote}

But heres a knife,
to save mine honor, shall slice out my life.\textsuperscript{57}
\end{quote}

She will risk her honour, but if she loses it she will have to lose her life also. In offering Susan to Sir Francis her brother makes this resolution of hers plain. Sir Francis is so impressed with his former enemy's concern for family honour that he gladly accepts Susan as his bride and Sir Charles as his brother. These two examples of the importance of a sister's honour to her brother, added to Elizabethan expressions of the same idea, prepare the way for an understanding of the ideas underlying one of the finest Jacobean tragedies, \textit{The Duchess of Malfi}.

\textit{The Duchess of Malfi} cannot, however, be considered in isolation from Webster's other plays. Like other major Jacobean dramatists,

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{55} \textit{Ibid.}, Act IV, Sig. C3r.
\textsuperscript{56} She is sometimes called Jane in the first quarto (1607).
\textsuperscript{57} \textit{A Woman Kiled with Kindness} (1607), Sig. G3r.
\end{flushleft}
Webster examined the concept of revenge for honour in more than one play. While early Jacobean drama as a whole developed and analysed this concept with regard to the duel; the dishonoured husband; the dishonour of child, parent or sister, individual dramatists made their own examinations of it, interpreting it in their own terms.

The earliest of these dramatists was John Marston. A satirist, he viewed all conventions, in literature as well as in life, with a critical eye. His first plays, the two parts of Antonio and Mellida, were performed and published at the end of Elizabeth's reign. As they foreshadow the Jacobean treatment of revenge for honour Marston may be considered as slightly in advance of his contemporaries in drama. The two aspects of revenge for honour in which he was most interested were the revenge of the rejected suitor and that of the dishonoured husband.

As was seen in similar examples in Elizabethan tragedy, it was an obvious straining of the code of honour to consider the acts inspired by a rejected suitor's wounded pride or malice as justifiable revenge. In Marston's What You Will Jacomo is as amusing in his threats to thwart Laverdure's match with Celia as was Basilisco in his desire to be revenged on Erastus. Jacomo's suit is, in fact, no more welcome to Celia than Basilisco's was to Perseda. In Antonio's Revenge, however, Duke Piero intends the defamation of his daughter, the murders of Duke Andrugio and the courtier Feliche and the planned murder of Antonio as revenge for his lack of success when he and Andrugio were rival suitors for the hand of Princess Maria of Ferrara. Considered
in the satiric spirit of the play as a whole the horrible and bloodthirsty method of this revenge may well be intended as a strong criticism of the interpretation of such an action in terms of the code of honour as well as an implicit condemnation of the practice of avenging injuries with indiscriminate killing. Similarly, Antonio's murder of Piero's child, Julio implies a bitter comment on the execution of blood vengeance on an innocent victim.

The enormity of the fact of a rejected suitor considering himself entitled to exact revenge for honour appears also in The Tragedy of Sophonisba where Marston first presents the pathetic situation of a rejected suitor who considers himself forced to action by convention; then alienates the audience's sympathy from him by showing the cruelty of his revenge and, finally exposes his revenge for honour as a mere act of spite. The rejected suitor, Syphax is, like his rival Massinissa, a King in Lybia. When Sophonisba, daughter of Asdrubal of Carthage, marries Massinissa and refuses him, Syphax undertakes a war of vengeance against her father and husband.

58 M.A. thesis, pp. 365-384 proposes the theory that both parts of Antonio and Mellida were satiric parodies, one of the conventions of romantic comedy and the other of revenge tragedy. The case was overstated. Nevertheless, there are signs of Marston's satiric intent - not necessarily comic - in some parts of both plays. Vide Travis Bogard, The Tragic Satire of John Webster (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1955), p. 87: "His early tragedies, Antonio and Mellida and Antonio's Revenge are noteworthy experiments in adapting the techniques of his satire to the tragic stage." This is perhaps supported by the fact that both plays were written for the private theatre. Vide A. Harbage, op. cit., pp.56-7;71;77;87;257.

59 Professor Harbage, op. cit., p. 256 interprets this scene as Marston's attempt to achieve pathos by duplicating the effect of the Hubert scenes in King John. Yet if one accepts his own theories that the coterie theatre reversed the values of the public theatres and that one way to cater for a popular taste was to satirize it, it seems likely that Marston has achieved a successful criticism rather than an unsuccessful copy.
He does this because he is a king and cannot, therefore, bear such dishonour as a private man might, without revenge. Syphax expresses his feelings on this point with a pathetic eloquence reminiscent of Gassio's similar complaint:

Reputation:
Wert not for thee Syphax could beare this skorne
Not spouting vp his gall among his bloud
In blacke vexations: Massinissa might
Injoy the sweets of his preferred graces
Without my dangerous Enuy or Reuenge
Wert not for thy affliction all might sleepe
In sweete obliuion: But (O greatnes skourge!) 
We cannot without Emie keepe high name
Nor yet disgrac'd can haue a quiet shame. 60

The tone here is more serious than in the other two plays, but all sympathy must be alienated from Syphax when he does indeed descend to the level of a common man in exacting a bloody private revenge on Sophonisba. His treatment of her is the same as Alphonsus's treatment of his Empress Isabella in accusing her of adultery:

Syphax his dagger twon about her haire drags in Sophonisba
in hir nightgowne petticoate ... 61

By the end of the play Syphax reveals his real motives, when he exclaims

... as liberty so deere
Prove my revenge: what I cannot possesse
Another shall not: that's some hapines. 62

This blurring of Syphax's motives provides Marston with an opportunity for subtle characterization besides criticism of a strained concept of revenge for honour used to cloak other desires.

60 The Wonder of Women or The Tragedie of Sophonisba (1606), I, i, A4v.
61 Ibid., III, i, Sig. Dv.
62 Ibid., V, ii, Sig. F4v.
Revenge for honour carried to excess is repeated with similar critical intention in Marston's comedies. In *The Dutch Courtezan* the courtezan, Francischena, complains that Frewill has brought her honour to nought when he leaves her in order to pay honourable addresses to Beatrice, the daughter of Sir Hubert Subboys. This perverse attitude in a dishonoured and dishonourable woman is found again, with better effect, in Webster's *Vittoria Corombona*. Here, Francischena, who is certainly without the honour inherent in female chastity, is not prepared to execute revenge murder herself. Yet she rejoices in contriving the deaths of Frewill and his friend Malheureux as well. Her desire of vengeance is even extended to the innocent Beatrice:

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Now Ick sail revenge, hay, begar me sal tartar de whole
generation, mine braine worke it,
Frevile, is dead, Malhareux sall hang,
And mine ruiall Beatrice, Ick sall make run madde. 63
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This overdoing of revenge is indicative of the mordant satire of Marston's comedies in which the moral values of his more serious plays, such as *The Malcontent*, are reversed. Thus in *The Dutch Courtezan* Mistress Mulligrub, who has previously threatened to cuckold her husband because he has made her appear foolish, makes indecently speedy arrangements for him to be succeeded by Cockledemoy when she is waiting for Mullygrub's execution. In *What You Will* the comedy is actually based on Albano's fear that he will be cuckolded if his wife does not recognise him.

63 *The Dutch Courtezan* (1605), Act IV, Sig. F3v.
64 Ibid., Act III, Sig. F1r.
65 Ibid., Act V, Sig. H3v.
This reversal of moral values in his comedy affects the treatment of Marston's other theme, the revenge of the dishonoured husband. The unhappiness of dishonour, so well expressed in Duke Pietro, is echoed only once, in The Insatiate Countess. Here again Marston is concerned with a personal problem. Although Roberto is determined not to pursue his unfaithful wife and her lover, he is miserably aware of the demands of convention:

> Since I cannot
> Enjoy the noble title of a man,
> But after-ages, as our virtues are
> Buryed whilst we are living, will sound out
> My infamie, and her degenerate shame;
> Yet in my life I'll smother 't if I may,
> And, like a dead man, to the world bequeath
> These houses of vanitie, Mills, and Lands. 67

Roberto, like Pietro, is converted to a holier way of life. His wife Isabella, like Aurelia, sues on her knees for her husband's pardon.

Yet the same play also illustrates the folly of the man who thinks nothing of cuckolding his neighbour, but would rather die than live thus dishonoured himself. When Claridiana and Rogero believe that they have cuckolded each other, they both "confess" to a crime of which they are both innocent because they want to be executed, though neither seeks revenge on the other. The ridiculous behaviour of the husband who believes himself dishonoured is also the object of Marston's comic

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66 This attitude is not completely explained by the fact that these plays were written for the private theatre, for The Malcontent in which moral values are established, was also written for the private theatre.

67 The Plays of John Marston, Edited by H. Harvey Wood, iii (1939), 'The Insatiate Countess', Act II, p. 35. This edition is preferable to the first quarto of 1613 in which the characters' names both in speech headings and in the text are hopelessly confused.
satire in the characterization of Don Zuccone in *Parasitaster*. Don Zuccone is so foolishly jealous of his chaste wife that he employs someone to tempt her and is almost eager to believe the false tale of her adultery which has been invented to trap him. He swears that he will be "tyrannous and a most deepe revenger." His revenge consists in divorce, but at the end of the play it is he who is punished as a slanderer of honour and has to beg his lady’s forgiveness.

The importance of a woman’s reputation, whether she is actually chaste or not, is evident in *The Insatiate Countess*. The promiscuous Isabella considers herself dishonoured by Count Massino’s description of her in a ballad as "Isabella the insatiate." She therefore commissions Cniaca to revenge this dishonour on the Count by death. On the other hand, the chaste Lady Lentulus, in the same play, is in danger of losing her reputation and, therefore, her outward honour, if Mendoza is found lying hurt outside her house. He therefore dishonours himself to save her by confessing to a theft that he did not commit. At the same time he also jeopardizes his life in the hands of the law.

This is an extreme exaltation of the amount of respect due to the outward appearance of honour, but it adds the final touch to Marston's concept of the importance of honour. His idea of true honour is summed up in Duke Hercules’ encouraging words to Dulcimel

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68 *Parasitaster, or, The Fawne* (1606), Act IV, Sig. Cγ.  
69 *The Plays of John Marston*, Edited by H. Harvey Wood, iii (1939), 'The Insatiate Countess', Act IV, p. 56 et seq.
in Parasitaster

The acts of constant honor cannot feare.

When this constant honour, exalted as an ideal to be kept untarnished in the characterization of Sophonisba or Lady Lentulus, is blemished or corrupted there is, as Marston realized, a conventional demand for revenge. Some of the most moving passages in his plays show the dishonoured man torn between this demand and the love which he still retains for the woman who has dishonoured him. Nevertheless, Marston did not condone blood revenge for honour. The ideas implicit in his most serious examination of the problem, in The Malcontent, are that the health of the soul is more important than honour and that a penitent wife, though dishonoured and dishonourable, should be forgiven. Thus Marston, aware of the demands of the code of honour, held its excuses for revenge, particularly excessive revenge, up to scorn in his satiric comedies and in his tragedies showed the more excellent way of Christian charity.

The same Christian teaching is found in the work of Cyril Tourneur, the known author of The Atheist's Tragedy and probably the author of The Revenger's Tragedy which appeared four years earlier, in 1607. The plot of The Revenger's Tragedy is based on Vindici's revenge for the murder of his betrothed bride, poisoned by the lecherous Duke for refusing his suit. Vindici's methods are cruel,

70 Parasitaster (1606), Act V, Sig. I₄⁹.`
bloody and villainous. Yet he is not without moral standards. As has been noted earlier, Vindici is anxiously concerned for his sister's honour and his mother's attitude to honour. His last words express satisfaction at having preserved one and set right the other. Moreover, if he quits murder with murder, he also quits dishonour with dishonour. For the Duke who would have dishonoured Vindici's bride is himself tortured with evidence of his own dishonour. But it is the more Christian attitude to dishonour, shown in the nobleman Antonio, that indicates the moral tenor of the play: the private revenger is never justified. Antonio's wife, described as "that Generall honest Lady" is raped by the Duchess's youngest son. The offender is tried by the Duke, but by the Duchess's intervention his sentence is deferred. Antonio himself first appears to tell of his wife's suicide:

Her honor first drunke poyson, and her life,  
Being fellowes in one house did pledge her honour,

In face of the corruption of justice at court the lord Piero encourages Antonio to exact revenge. He welcomes this as some comfort, but does not do anything to forward it. He does not appear again till the closing moments of the play when the young Duke Lussurioso, his brothers, the bastard and his nobles have all been murdered. The crown then falls to Antonio. To conciliate him, Vindici mentions that the rape of his wife has thus been requited with death on death. This fact is, however, interpreted by Antonio

72 The Revengers Tragedie (1607), Act V, Sig. L4V.  
73 Ibid., Act I, Sig. A4V.  
74 Ibid., Act I, Sig. C1V.
as the work of heaven, not of man. Of all that Vindici has brought about Antonio only says

Just is the Lawe above. 75

The same idea, though with regard to revenge for murder, is at the core of The Atheist's Tragedy. Even its subtitle - The honest Man's Revenge - indicates that the standard of behaviour set before Charlemont by the ghost of his murdered father is that to be observed by all truly honourable men:

Attend with patience the success of things;
But leave revenge vnto the King of kings. 76

By waiting with patience Charlemont sees his father’s death avenged by the murderer on himself; a fact which he is quick to attribute to Heaven alone. 77 This contrasts with the attitude of Belforest who suspects his wife, Levidulcia of adultery with Sebastian. Shortly after his doubts have been confirmed by the testimony of an informer Belforest finds his wife with Sebastian at night. Without pausing to debate the matter, he sends the watch to pursue her and attempts to follow her himself. He is prevented by Sebastian, and they fight. Each is mortally wounded. This combat is not specifically stated to be a revenge for honour, but the nature of the situation implies it. In view of the theme of the play that patience is the honest man’s revenge, the deaths of Belforest, Sebastian and Levidulcia indicate both the sinfulness of private revenge and the impossibility of life without honour. For the guilty wife of Belforest,

75 Ibid., Act V, Sig. L4v.
76 The Atheists Tragedie (1611), Act II, Sig. F2v.
77 Ibid., Act V, Sig. L3r.
no less than the innocent victim, Antonio's wife, finds it impossible to outlive her honour. She too commits suicide.

All this demonstrates that Tourneur, like Marston, saw a conflict between the Christian and the worldly man of honour. The really honourable man leaves revenge to heaven. It is, therefore, interesting to note the conceptions of honour held by D'Amville, the Atheist. He believes that a man cannot be honest without wealth, and speaks of war as the first original of all man's honour. The saintly Montferrers, on the other hand, values the honour inherent in the dignity of a noble family and claims that any honour that his son could gain in war would be but a vain addition to it.

On the evidence of one certain and one doubtful work it is impossible further to analyse Tourneur's concepts of honour and revenge for honour. It is sufficient to conclude that while both plays satisfied the requirements of audiences of revenge tragedy in their expense of blood and prevalence of lust and intrigue, their precepts were directed away from private revenge. Moreover, far from condoning even revenge for honour, Tourneur seems to have wished to establish abstinence from revenge as the criterion of honourable conduct.

In this respect Tourneur's concept of revenge for honour is essentially the same as Marston's. They also have something in

78 Ibid., Act I, Sigs. B₁⁺ - B₂⁻.
79 Ibid., Act I, Sig. B₃⁻.
common in their method of presenting it. Both are didactic dramatists, imposing their own moral precepts upon their characters. In their works the teaching is driven home by the utterances of personages who are sometimes unbelievably saintly in their contrast to the villains around them: Marston's Duke Altofront (Malevole), Sophonisba, Lady Lentulus; Tourneur's Antonio and the ghost of Montferrers. Marston uses the additional method of critical satire which, lightly applied, as with Don Zuccone, leaves nevertheless almost the same unpleasant taste in the mouth as the murder of Julio in Antonio's Revenge. Nevertheless, despite his often extreme portraiture of virtue or vice, as in Sophonisba or Franceschina, Marston's characterization is less wooden than Tourneur's. Marston's concept of revenge for honour is most acceptable, dramatically, when he interprets the actions of his characters in terms of contemporary human behaviour, not of his own moral feelings. Thus his compassionate understanding of the personal conflict imposed upon a man by the code of honour brings to life at times even Syphax or Roberto and makes the conversion of Duke Pietro acceptable to reason. It is when Marston shows this understanding of the human heart, the springs of human actions, that his work touches greatness. The occasions on which it does so are unfortunately too rare to raise him to the stature of a major dramatist.

With the drama of John Webster, it is otherwise. Not only is his best work based on a particular insight into human thought and action, but it is held together and inspired by a poetic talent which, in
spite of flaws in plot, places his tragedies second only to Shakespeare's in the early Jacobean period.

Webster's knowledge of human behaviour, though not always his poetic gifts, may be observed in two of his earlier plays, comedies which he wrote in collaboration with Thomas Dekker: \textit{Westward Ho} and \textit{Northward Ho}. Probably his first play, also written with Dekker, was \textit{The Famous History of Sir Thomas Wyatt}. It is a short chronicle history which remains faithful to fact and contains no philosophy other than that parents should not impose their wills upon their children. The two comedies, in contrast, deal with the lives of contemporary London citizens who have strong wills of their own. These plays are remarkable in that they embody a concept of revenge for honour quite different from that of Jacobean tragedy; different even from Webster's own tragedies. Yet it is significant that both of them, like \textit{A Cure for a Cuckold}, written by Webster and William Rowley some twenty years later, are concerned, as were so many tragedies, with the husband who believes himself to be dishonoured by his wife's adultery.

In \textit{Westward Ho} the Italian merchant, Justiniano finding an Earl's bawd with his wife, concludes that he is a cuckold. Refusing to believe her denials, Justiniano tells her that he has sold his goods and is going to Stoad. He intends, however, to return to the city in disguise in order to observe her and at the same time to see if he can bring about the cuckolding of other city merchants. A letter from his
wife partly convinces Justiniano of her honesty despite the Earl's solicitations. Finally she joins with him in a plan to bring the Earl to repentance. The second part of Justiniano's project does not achieve the success that he had desired. But as he discovers that he is not dishonoured, it is fitting that the other merchants should make the same discovery. Their wives spend a night at Brainford, as Justiniano had intended, but they remain chaste.

There is a time of suspense, however, when the three merchants believe that they are cuckolded. During this time Justiniano reveals his concept of what their attitude to honour should be. First he says,

So if you trompet a broad and preach at the market crosse, you (sic) wives shame, tis your owne shame. 80

Later he advises them not to seek revenge for honour, but

... what a glory will it be for you 3. to kisse your wives like forgetfull husbands, to exhort and forgive the young men like pittifull fathers; then to call for oares, then to cry hay for London, then to make a Supper, then to drowne all in Sacke and Suger, then to goe to bed, and then to rise and open shop, where you may ask any man what he lacks with your cap off, and none shall perceiue whether the brims wring you. 81

This advice is spoken ironically. Yet it suggests that, though the citizen was as conscious of dishonour as the gentleman, even if he spoke of fame or reputation instead of honour, he did not necessarily feel the same urgency to exact revenge. The same idea, that the cuckold will have to make the best of his situation, is found in Northward Ho, which is similar to Westward Ho in many ways.

80 West-ward Ho (1607), Act V, Sig. H3v.
81 Ibid., loc.cit. Cf. Eastward Ho (1605), Act V, Sig. L4v where Touchstone tells Security that if he is a cuckold he should endure it patiently.
It also opens with a husband believing apparent proof of his cuckoldom and then trying to prove that someone else is a cuckold too. The husband, Maybery, hears from Greenshield and Fetherstone that they have both slept with his wife. When he is convinced of her chastity he vows revenge for their calumny. Mistress Maybery fears murder, but he reassures her:

No: I will shed no blood,
But I will be reveng'd they that do wrong
Teach others way to right: ... 82

The first part of his revenge consists in making Greenshield and Fetherstone repent and confess their slander of his wife. This is accomplished with her aid. Secondly, he seeks to prove to Greenshield that he is cuckolded by his wife Kate. It is only at the end of the play that the failure of this scheme appears. Kate, like the citizens' wives in Westward Ho, proves chaste despite all expectation of the contrary. The plot is reduplicated when Greenshield believes himself cuckolded by Fetherstone. He cannot attempt a revenge like Maybery's, since Fetherstone is a bachelor. But Bellamont and Maybery, acting on his behalf as well as their own, 83 inflict the nearest other kind of dishonour on Fetherstone by tricking him into marriage with a whore. The tables are turned on the plotters at the end of the play, however, when Fetherstone accepts his wife and simply ignores the implications of his dishonour:

Well, it's but my fate: Gentlemen, this is my opinion, it's better to shoote in a Bow that has been shot in before, and will neuer start, than to draw a faire new one, that for every Arrow will bee warping: Come wench wee are iovnd, and all the Dogs in France shall not part vs: 84

82 North-west Hoe (1607), Act I, Sig. C3v.
83 Ibid., Act V, Sig. H2v.
84 Ibid., Act V, Sig. H4r.
The only mention in either of these plays of anything approaching the kind of revenge for honour conceived by the tragic dramatists is Greenshield's declaration, reported by Maybery, that he will be divorced from his unfaithful wife, making her do penance for her sins. The thought of divorce is also present in Maybery's mind when, in his first anguish and rage, he exclaims to Bellamont:

If a man be deworst, doe you see, deworst forma Iuris, whether may he haue an action or no, against those that make hornes at him? 85

Both plays show how important it is that husbands should not doubt the honour of their chaste wives. Justiniano and Maybery are, in a sense, educated to the appreciation of their wives' virtues. This minor theme of education to the appreciation of honour is not found elsewhere in early Jacobean drama, but occurs later in the work of Philip Massinger.

In A Cure for a Cuckold the difference between the gentleman's and the citizen's code of honour appears most strongly. As in the two earlier comedies, a wife is accused of dishonour and, in the subplot, a cuckold is the object of the comedy. In the complicated main plot only a small part is relative to revenge for honour. Lessingham is jealous of Bonvile because, though just married, he is still beloved of Lessingham's mistress, Clare. Lessingham therefore accuses Bonvile's bride Annabel of dishonour. He first tells her father, Woodruff, that Annabel has wounded her husband's reputation.

85 Ibid., Act I, Sig. A4v.
Woodruff would defend his daughter's honour with the sword, but Lessingham refuses to fight with him. Bonvile is more willing to believe the report, but as all the parties are hastily satisfied in the conclusion of the play there is no further need of revenge.

More interesting is the conduct of the subplot which, though it may have been the work of Rowley, is curiously in tone with Westward Ho and Northward Ho. The idea that a man must endure dishonour, expressed by Fetherstone in Northward Ho, is put forward more strongly in the story of the mariner Compass. Compass returns from a four years' absence at sea to discover that his wife has just borne a son. Compass never thinks of revenge, however. Instead, he rejoices that his wife has had the son for whom he has long waited, and he insists on claiming the child as his. Moreover, he seems to consider that only the foolish would seek revenge in such a situation. He declares:

Let fainting fools lie sick upon their scorns,
I teach a cuckold how to hide his horns.  

So anxious is Compass for possession of the child that he threatens the father, Frankford, that he will go to law to prove his right to him. At first the lawyers support Frankford's claim, but Compass presents his arguments so forcefully that Frankford concedes the child to him. Moreover, Frankford promises that he will not take back the inheritance which he has promised to the child. It is the gallant, Raymond, who then suggests to Compass how he may cure his

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87 A Cure for a Cuckold (1661), Act II, Sig. D1v.
cuckoldom. The cure, which Compass willingly accepts, consists first in divorcing his wife. Then, this divorce having blotted out both their marriage and their dishonour, they are to marry again and start an honourable relationship.

The difference between this attitude to honour and that of Woodruff and the difference between the concept of revenge for honour found in these comedies and that found in tragedy suggest that the citizen, though aware of the implications of the code of honour, did not exact revenge in the same way as the gentleman. This was probably true in life as well as drama, and may be explained by the fact that the code of honour was based on the law of arms and largely consisted in duelling honour. Therefore it was of necessity confined to the gentry, for citizens were without weapons and accordingly unable to execute immediate revenge with the sword or defend their honour when insulted. Moreover, citizens had less chance of escaping justice if they became revenge murderers than the gentry, who might corrupt judge or jury or plead

88 Professor Harbage uses Westward Ho and Northward Ho with Eastward Ho by Chapman, Jonson and Marston as evidence of the way in which the private theatres implied disrespect of legal sanctions and family life by allowing adulterers to escape punishment, or even find approval, in their plays. In support of this are cited examples of cuckolds who are told to forgive their wives. While allowing that this distinction between public and private theatre plays obviously existed, it is possible to assume that the dramatist's attitude in such cases was regulated by his choice of material. If he were writing about citizens (in fact, nearly all the examples quoted by Professor Harbage are of citizens) he would use the citizens' attitude to the code of honour - even if only to make his "select" audience laugh at it. (op. cit. pp. 247-8)
benefit of clergy to evade punishment or, at least, capital punishment. 89

It is in his tragedies, however, that Webster's greatest understanding of the concept of revenge for honour is found. In contrast to the citizen comedies, these take place in the courts of princes and an acceptance of the courtly concept of revenge for honour is necessary for their appreciation.

Webster's earliest independent play, The White Devil, has the dramatic form of a tragedy of revenge for murder. Honour and dishonour have also their places in it. Lust and attendant dishonour pervade the atmosphere of the play. Young Flamineo gains promotion in the service of the Duke of Brachiano by acting as the Duke's pander to his sister, Vittoria Corombona. Flamineo goes so far as to trick his brother-in-law, Camillo, into being safely locked up while Vittoria cuckold him. Flamineo's complete lack of honour is emphasized by his attitude to his mother, Cornelia, who pleads on honour's behalf against his actions. Vittoria herself shows at least

89 Corruption of magistrates or jurors by bribery or force seems, unfortunately, to have been common in late Elizabethan England. It was the kind of offence which was triable in the Court of Star Chamber. From the proceedings of that court for the year 44 Elizabeth and from some pamphlet accounts of murders it appears that of seven murderers who executed blood revenge between 1593 and 1605 no less than five escaped justice. Of these five murderers, three were motivated by the desire to avenge their wounded honour. (M.A. thesis, pp. 181-213)
some regret at her mother's words, but Flamineo is unmoved.

Brachiano dismisses Cornelia as mad when she vows to Vittoria:

If thou dishonour thus thy husbands bed,
Bee thy life short as are the funerall teares
In great mens. (sic) 90

Yet Brachiano can become conscious of honour, though he ignores murder, when he suspects Vittoria of being unfaithful to him after her husband and his wife have been murdered. On finding a letter to Vittoria from Francisco to Medicis, he exclaims:

Vds death, Ile cut her into Atomies
And let th'irregular North-winde sweep her vp
And blow her int' his nostrils. Where's this whore ? 91

Thus berated, Vittoria also prates of honour, saying to her lover,

What haue I gain'd by thee but infamie ?
Thou hast stain'd the spotlesse honour of my house,
And frighted thence noble societie : 92

Similarly Flamineo, blunt and coarse as he is in his references to Brachiano's dealings with his sister, professes to consider honour when it suits his purpose. He tries to win Brachiano to Vittoria's favour after this quarrel by saying of Brachiano's offer of marriage:

... you are blemisht in your fame, My
Lord cures it. 93

Flamineo's lack of scruple for his sister's honour is equalled by Romelio in the satiric tragicomedy, The Devil's Law Case. Romelio's sister Jolenta discovers his attitude when she tells him that she is

90 The White Divine (1612), /Act I/, Sig. C²r.
91 Ibid., /Act IV/, Sig. G²v.
92 Ibid., loc. cit., Sig. G³h.
93 Ibid., loc. cit., Sig. H²r.
with child. He does not respond as a man of honour should. So Jolenta exclaims,

If you had lou’d or tendred my deare honour,
You would have lockt your ponyard in my heart,
When I nam’d I was with child; ...

Jolenta is not really pregnant, but Romelio persuades her to pretend that she is in order to inherit the lands of her supposedly dead lover, while the birth of Romelio's child by the nun Angiolella may thereby also be concealed. At the same time Romelio's mother, Leonora tries publicly to dishonour him and herself by proclaiming Romelio a bastard. But neither Romelio nor his mother, any more than Flamino, Vittoria or Brachiano, is really concerned with honour or dishonour. Brachiano is moved by jealousy at the thought of his mistress (whom he has made dishonest) preferring another to him. Vittoria, herself the destroyer of her family's honour, is motivated by rage and spite. Flamino only uses an argument of honour to win his sister to the marriage that will bring him advancement. Romelio does not think twice of staining his sister's honour so that he may gain the kind of honour that he most values: land, wealth and noble connections. Leonora seeks to bastardize her son in order to cheat him of his inheritance because she believes that he has murdered Contarino whom she loves. Romelio realizes that her penitence for

94 The Deuils Law-Case. (1623), Act III, Sig. F3r.
95 This is implicit in Cantilupo's reference to "those false beames of his supposed honour" (ActIV, Sig. H2v) and Romelio's plans for the marriage of his child by Angiolella (Act IV, Sig. H1v).
alleged adultery in her youth is only feigned, and

Has a most bloody and unnaturall revenge
Hid vnder it: ... 96

Early in the play Ercole engages Contarino in an honourable combat because they are rivals for Jolenta's hand. Later he declares that he has fought for one in whom he had no right, and prays that his rival may live to enjoy Jolenta.97 At the end of the play, however, Contarino cheerfully transfers his affections to Jolenta's mother. The original quarrel was, indeed, grounded on a sense of honour divorced from love or reason.

It appears, therefore, that Webster was not so much interested in revenge for honour or in honour itself as in their use as a disguise for other passions. This is best illustrated in his finest study of the conflict between the unexpected and the conventional in human behaviour: The Duchess of Malfi. The story of Giovanna, Duchess of Amalfi was a true tragedy of honour, though Webster found it, not in history, but in the accounts of Bandello and William Painter. There is no reason to doubt that Bandello, who once met the Duchess's husband Antonio, recorded the reasons for her death accurately in his novella.98 Though he narrated the story without moral comment, Bandello exclaimed against murders motivated by revenge for honour in his introduction to it.99 William Painter's version,

96 The Deuils Law-case. (1623), Act IV, Sig. I1V.
97 Ibid., Act II, Sig. E2r.
99 La Prima Parte de le Novelle del Bandello (Lucca, 1554), fol. 180.
which appeared in The second Tome of the Palace of Pleasure, is not derived directly from Bandello, but from Belleforest, and it endorses the French writer's moral fervour in stressing repeatedly the dishonour of the Duchess in marrying beneath her and thus staining the noble blood of Aragon. To English readers this would also imply that the Duchess had sinned against degree. The wish of her brothers to revenge this dishonour is also important in Painter's version.

Lope de Vega, using the same material for his tragedy El Mayordomo de la Duquesa de Amalfi also made the brothers' motives explicitly

100 The amount of moral commentary added by Painter (and Belleforest) to Bandello's narrative may be seen in both descriptions of the effects on the Aragonian brothers of the news that their sister has had a child. Bandello says, simply, "E mormorandosi di questa cosa variamente, il fatto peruenne à l'occhje de i due fratelli, cio è del Cardinale di Ragona, e d'vn 'altro, i quali hauendo inteso la sorella hauer partorito, ma non sapendo chi fosse il padre, deliberarono non portar questa vergogna su gli occhi, e con gra dligenza cominciarono con molti mezzi à spiar ogn'atto & ogni movimento che la Duchessa faceua; ..."

La Prima Parte de le Novelle del Bandello, fol. 183.

Painter amplifies this to: "Think what joy and pleasure the Aragon brothers had, by hearing the report of their sisters facte. I dare presume to say, that albeit they were extremely wroth with this happened slander, t with y dishonest fame whych y Duchesse had gotten throughout Italie, yet farre greater was their sorrow t grief, for that they did not know what hee was, that so courteously was allied to their house, and in their loue had increased their ligneage. And therfore swelling wyth delight, t rapt with furie to see themselves so defamed by one of their bloud, they purposed by all meane whatsoever it cost them, to know the lucky louer that had so wel tilled the Duchesse their sisters field. Thus desirous to remove that shame from before their eyes, and to be reuemged of a wrong so notable, they sent espial round about, and scoutes to Naples, to view and spy the behauior t talk of the Duchesse, to settle some certaine judgement of him, whych stealingly was become their brother in law."

The second Tome of the Palace of Pleasure (1567), fol.181r.
revenge for honour. For Webster, however, revenge for honour was only a cloak to cover a passion which was, in Ferdinand at least, even more horrible and unnatural. It has been suggested that the reason for the difference between Lope's play and Webster's lies in the difference between the Spanish and English codes of honour. Lope de Vega could expect his audience to accept the brothers' motives without question; Webster could not, and therefore had to interpret them in terms of a deep seated psychological derangement. While it must be admitted that the Spanish code of honour was governed by stricter rules than the English, it has been seen already that the idea of a brother as guardian of his sister's honour or even as selector of her husband was not unknown in English drama from The Spanish Tragedy onwards. It seems more likely, therefore, that Webster could and did expect his audience to understand the brothers' behaviour in terms of the code of honour, and for that reason chose to examine it in order to show how it could conceal deeper motives.

Already in The White Devil Webster had demonstrated some of his finest dramatic gifts: a realistic and penetrating approach to the study of human nature and the endowment of his scenes with an intimacy that brings his characters into close contact with the audience. Vittoria is seen most clearly through the utterances of Flamineo whose very coarseness reveals her own actions as they really are.

101 J.E. Housman, Parallel Plots in English and Spanish Drama of the early Seventeenth Century, unpublished Ph.D. thesis of the University of London (1951), pp. 87, 89.
The intimacy of her scenes with Brachiano is particularly striking as when he gives her a jewel, or woos her from weeping rage. In *The Duchess of Malfi* the same qualities are even more evident.

Webster not only gives a detailed picture of the Duchess through her own words and actions, but shows how well her brothers know her and how little they know themselves. Early in the play Ferdinand and the Cardinal reveal their understanding of her inclinations and declare their own:

**Ferdinand** You are a Widowe:

You know already what man is: and therefore

Let not youth: high promotion, eloquence,

**Cardinal** No, nor any thing without the addition, Honor,

Sway your high blood. 104

Ferdinand would not have his sister remarry at all. He speaks of the luxuriousness of those who wed twice and warns the Duchess against the deadly honey dew, found in the rank pasture of the court, which will poison her fame. The Cardinal's reference to the possibility of a secret marriage without her brothers' approval brings a fuller revelation of Ferdinand's attitude. He speaks of the "lustfull pleasures" of such a marriage and finally leaves his sister with an obscene reference to women's preferences which she cannot mistake, though he tries to excuse it. If Ferdinand knows his sister intimately enough to speak obscenely in her presence, as Flamineo did in Vittoria's, then the Duchess must know her brothers well enough to realize the impossibility of reconciling them to her

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103 *The White Devil* (1612), [Act I], Sigs. B₄ᵛ - C₁ʳ; [Act IV], Sigs. G₄ʲ - H₁ᵛ.

104 *The Tragedy of the Dvetchesse of Malfy* (1623), I, ii, Sig. C₁ᵛ.
remarriage. She must also be aware of the danger she will incur in
crossing their determined wills.

Marrying Antonio Bologna in secret, the Duchess commits into the
hands of her husband and her waiting woman the honour that consists in
her good name.\textsuperscript{105} The truth of Ferdinand's warning about the danger
to it in court proves only too evident. When the villain Bosola first
discovers that the Duchess is pregnant and, later, that she has borne
a son, it never occurs to him that she might be secretly married.
Therefore the letter which he sends to her brothers gives her the
blemished reputation of a whore. Yet not even this justifies the
excessive rage to which the letter drives Ferdinand, as the Cardinal
recognizes. The Cardinal himself, thinking primarily of family honour
as it consists in their noble blood, exclaims,

\textbf{Shall our blood?}
(The royall blood of Arragon and Castile)
Be thus attained?\textsuperscript{106}

But Ferdinand is the one who, as Professor Leech has said of Flamineo,
cannot get the act of sex from his mind.\textsuperscript{107} More than this, he is
obsessed with the picture of his sister's body.\textsuperscript{108} Nevertheless, he
shows a remarkable amount of restraint when he meets her face to face.
He quietens her mind when she boldly tackles him on the subject of the
rumours current concerning her reputation. When he surprises the
Duchess in her chamber, however, Ferdinand's mind is once more filled

\textsuperscript{105} \textit{Ibid.}, I, ii, Sigs. C\textsuperscript{a}V, C\textsuperscript{a}F.
\textsuperscript{106} \textit{Ibid.}, II, v, Sig. E\textsuperscript{a}V.
\textsuperscript{107} Clifford Leech, John Webster (1951), p. 49.
\textsuperscript{108} He will hew her to pieces (II, v, Sig. E\textsuperscript{a}V); he can think of her
suckling her child, and he would have her and her lover's bodies
burnt (II, v, Sig. F\textsuperscript{a}F).
with images of lust. Before he speaks he presents her with a poniard, probably the same that pointed his obscene jest earlier in the play. Though the Duchess protests that she is married, Ferdinand refers to her husband as her lecher and warns her never to let him know his identity. Nothing that she can say will make Ferdinand explain why she should not have remarried. He hides whatever his real feelings are behind a fable of Reputation, Love and Death, concluding:

And so, for you:
You haue shocked (sic) hands with Reputation,
And made him invisible: So fare you well.
I will never see you more. 109

When her husband's identity is known it is the Cardinal, not Ferdinand who banishes the Duchess and her family at the Shrine of Our Lady of Loreto. He tears her wedding ring from her finger and publicly declares that he will sacrifice it to his revenge.110 Despite what Ferdinand has said, he is unable to keep away from his sister. In order not to break his vow of not seeing her, he speaks to her in darkness. This gives him the opportunity of frightening her with a dead hand to kiss, and then with the images of Antonio and her children. Even Bosola would have Ferdinand's torture of her stop when she is brought to despair. Unfortunately, Bosola suggests sending her

... a penententiall garment, to put on,
Next to her delicate skinne, ... 111

To Ferdinand's sex ridden mind this immediately recalls "that body of hers" and spurs him on to devise fresh cruelties. He determines to

109 The Tragedy of the Dvchesse of Malfy (1623), III, ii, Sig. C1r.
110 Ibid., III, iv, Sig. H2r-v.
111 Ibid., IV, i, Sig. I3r.
torture the Duchess and kill Antonio. So, within her brother's hearing, the Duchess of Malfi is afflicted with the noise of madmen. This cannot, however, completely shake her confidence in herself. She is Duchess of Malfi still and, most touchingly, the mother of a little boy with a cold, a little girl who likes to pray. Yet as the Duchess lies strangled, she is to her brother the woman whose beauty dazzles him; his dearest friend. Ferdinand has to confess at last that the meanness of her match meant nothing to him. He says, perhaps to deceive Bosola, but not himself, that he had hoped to gain treasure by her death if she had remained a widow: a hope that does not seem possible if she were survived by her son, the young Duke of Amalfi. Ferdinand's true reason seems to lie in the words which he himself may not comprehend:

... her Marriage,
That drew a stream of gall, quite through my heart;  113

It has been questioned whether Ferdinand, or Webster himself, understood his obviously incestuous passion for the Duchess. 114 Yet when one considers The White Devil and The Devil's Law Case it appears that Webster was especially interested in the relationship between brother and sister, particularly with regard to honour. It is therefore unlikely that he should not have realized all the possible variations of feeling within this relationship. If Flamineo were his

112 Vide Clifford Leech, op. cit., p. 68.
113 The Tragedy of the Duchess of Malfy (1623), IV, ii, Sig. K3v.
114 Clifford Leech, op. cit., pp. 101-104.
sister's bawd and could instruct her lover how to fondle her,
speaking of her sexual appetite with a coarse understanding possibly
based on his own imagination of her in the position of a responsive
mistress, there is no reason to assume that Ferdinand, with an
imagination at least as coarse, could not imagine his sister's
similar responses - but to himself.

Moreover, it is important for the understanding of each of these
three plays that the audience accept a certain pattern of behaviour of
brothers with regard to their sisters' honour. For in each play the
audience is to be surprised by Webster's treatment of that pattern.
Flamineo's degeneracy is most evident in his disregard of family
honour, as his mother's comments stress. Romelio would exchange his
sister's honour for a false honour proceeding from wealth. His
failure to avenge her supposed injury to family honour by death
surprises Jolenta herself. Throughout The Duchess of Malfi it is
clear that the Aragonian brothers are desirous to preserve their
sister's honour: the honour that consists in a good reputation and
untainted blood. Even an ordinary pilgrim at Loretto is seen to
appreciate that the Duchess committed a social crime in marrying
beneath her station. Nevertheless, the same pilgrim thinks that her
brother Cardinal bears himself too cruelly towards her. There can
be no doubt that Ferdinand, no less than the Cardinal, is intent to
revenge family honour; but with Ferdinand it is the wrong kind of
family honour. His torture and killing of the Duchess, the murder of

115 The Tragedy of the Dutchesse of Malfy (1623), III, iv, Sig. H2r.
her children and her maid and the final pursuit of Antonio do not constitute the revenge of a brother for his sister's honour. They are, rather, the revenge of a husband for his wife's adultery.

It must be stressed, however, that this morbid examination of the concept of revenge for honour is not Webster's sole interest in The Duchess of Malfi. In such an examination Ferdinand emerges as the most interesting character in the play, but it is the Duchess herself who commands our interest in the play as a whole. It is because we see her young, alive, half shy, a duchess, a mother and, in the most intimate scene in the play, a young wife joking with her husband as she prepares for bed, that we are concerned for her fate. She is vital and moving in the same way as Desdemona is, and we are compelled to examine the cause of her death as we are to examine that of Desdemona's. Both women married in defiance of an accepted code and the wishes of their nearest relations. Both were killed on a suspicion of dishonour. Despite the brother's authority over his sister's choice of husband, he could cure even the dishonour of rape by her marriage. As the Duchess was Antonio's wife, Ferdinand had no cause of quarrel with Antonio, and none with the Duchess other than that her secret wedding had laid her reputation open to common scandal.

The fifth act of The Duchess of Malfi suffers from anticlimax by her absence; Webster's not entirely successful portrayal of the

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*116 I cannot agree with Professor Travis Bogard that Webster's characters possess no inner reality: (The Tragic Satire of John Webster (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1955), p.55)*
effects of sin on the Cardinal and, more especially, on Ferdinand; and the contrivance in Bosola's accidental killing of Antonio. Yet the play as a whole remains Webster's finest dramatic achievement, both in characterization and in the intellectual stimulation derived from the ideas set forth in his poetic imagery: ideas as varied as the stagnation of great courts; the welfare of a duchy; the corruption of religion; the soul's struggle to be free from the body; the wilfulness of women. Webster's minor and possibly later tragedy, Appius and Virginia, is far below The Duchess of Malfi in theme and characterization. Its theme is, indeed, the preference of death to dishonour, but it is merely stated without examination. The characters show no lively interest in its implications and they themselves lack cohesion. 117

In his three major plays, The Devil's Lawcase, The White Devil and The Duchess of Malfi, Webster reached the height of dramatic attainment among the early Jacobean dramatists who examined the concept of revenge for honour. His achievement in illustrating the effects of this concept on the mind of the individual may well have inspired those of his contemporaries who made it one of their chief studies and thereby contributed much to the greatness of later Jacobean and Caroline drama: Middleton, Massinger and Ford.

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117 Clifford Leech, op. cit., pp. 93-94.
Chapter IV

Honour and Revenge for Honour in the Plays of Shakespeare.

Shakespeare's dramatic work embraces in time and in ideas the development of English drama from the period of Kyd's Spanish Tragedy to the establishment of the tragicomedy of Beaumont and Fletcher. Even without a precise knowledge of its chronology one may see reflected in it the change from Elizabethan to Jacobean as ideals which are accepted in the early plays are reconsidered in the later. At the same time it is obvious that Shakespeare's imaginative genius was ahead of the developments of his fellows. Attitudes to life which are characteristic of Jacobean drama - a probing of meaning, questioning of values and a certain amount of cynicism - were present in Shakespeare's work from the end of the sixteenth century. Above all, his mastery of characterization was unequalled in the Elizabethan age. It was only in the work of the Jacobean dramatists that tragic characters were drawn with anything approaching the intensity of Shakespeare's. For these reasons his treatment of revenge for honour and characterization of revengers of honour is important in so far as it foreshadows the work of later dramatists. That honour itself was important in his plays is demonstrated by the fact that in only one of them there is no reference made to honour or to some part of honourable behaviour; and in the majority of his serious dramas honour has a significant part to play in theme or action.

1 A Midsummer Night's Dream.
The earliest group of plays written by Shakespeare comprises the English histories (with the exception of Henry VIII), which belong to the last decade of the sixteenth century. As a group they reflect an interest in the problems of the nature and function of kingship and in the relationship between the ruler and the state which is more searching in its observations than that of any other Elizabethan chronicle histories. Though individual plays are also rich in other minor ideas, the very nature of the swift moving and compressed action of which these histories are composed precluded any detailed presentation of other philosophical, social or moral problems. It is for this reason that revenge for honour occurs in them incidentally, its significance being limited by the exigencies of plot. In Richard II the tension between Bolingbroke and Mowbray is restrained and controlled by the formality of their quarrel. This treatment at once accords with the medieval practice of courtiers' requesting the sovereign's permission to decide a dispute by combat and with the establishment of Richard in the position, important in the Elizabethan view of order and degree, of sovereign magistrate, God's deputy. On the other hand, in the three parts of Henry VI the King is represented much more as a person than a symbol. It is his personal sanctity rather than his position as God's anointed that removes him from close contact with the warring personalities who strive to attack or defend his crown. His human weaknesses may, therefore, be stressed and the audience is allowed to see Henry as a man careless of his honour. Among the objections to his marriage with Margaret is his former betrothal to an Earl's daughter. Of this the Duke of Gloster says:
How shall we then dispense with that contract,
And not deface your Honor with reproach?

In replying that a contract with an Earl's daughter may easily be
broken in favour of marriage with the daughter of a king, Henry
ignores the claims of honour completely. The same kind of
dishonourable action, though it is a proposed contract with a king's
sister that is abandoned in favour of marriage with a gentlewoman, has
much more serious consequences for Henry's enemy and successor,
Edward IV, because it involves not only himself but his envoy in
dishonour. It is when Warwick is pleading on his sovereign's behalf
for the hand of the Lady Bona that word reaches him of Edward's
marriage with Lady Elizabeth Grey. This annulment of his suit
constitutes a personal dishonour to Warwick. He promptly vows:

... to repair my Honor lost for him,
I here renounce him, and return to Henry.

Moreover, the rivalry between the Duchess of Gloster and Queen
Margaret is epitomized in the scene in which the Queen casts aside
the dignity and honour of her rank to box the Duchess on the ears,
and the Duchess replies with a vow of vengeance. In this instance
revenge for honour is implicit rather than explicit, as it is in
many situations in the history plays. For among kings, courtiers

2 The first Part of Henry the Sixth, V, v, p. 118b.
3 The third Part of King Henry the Sixth, III, p. 162a.
4 The second Part of Henry the Sixth, I, p. 124a.
5 Only four out of sixteen references given in an analysis of revenge
for honour in Sister Mary Bonaventure Mroz's Divine Vengeance: A
Study of the Philosophical Backgrounds of the Revenge Motif as It
Appears in Shakespeare's Chronicle History Plays (Washington, D.C.,
1941), p. 164 are explicitly concerned with revenge for honour.
knights and gentlemen the code of honour regulates many of their actions. When Pistol swears revenge on Fluellen for making him eat the leek he is probably thinking of the action as derogatory to his honour as a soldier, who was dishonoured in submission. It is no more surprising to find the coward Falstaff considering honour and finding it a mere scutcheon than it is to hear Hotspur exclaim earlier in the same play:

> By heauen, me thinkes it were an easie leap,  
> To plucke bright Honor from the pale-fac'd Moone,  
> Or diue into the bottome of the deepe,  
> Where Padoome-line could neuer touch the ground,  
> And plucke vp drowned Honor by the Lockes:  
> So he that doth redeeme her thence, might weare  
> Without Co-riuall, all her Dignities:  

In each case the character of the speaker is epitomized by his attitude to the soldier's dearest attribute, honour. Similarly, in *Julius Cesar*, honour is used as a criterion of character, the epithet "honourable" being applied by Antony to Brutus with telling sarcasm.

Only one other play of Shakespeare's gives an examination of the soldier's honour comparable to that in *The first Part of Henry IV*. This is *Troilus and Cressida* in which, once again, two different people express their attitude to honour. But whereas Falstaff's speech serves as a comically satiric comment on Hotspur's enthusiasm, in *Troilus and Cressida* satiric comment is given precedence. Achilles, deprived of the attention in which he has formerly gloried, complains:

> What am I poore of late?  
> 'Tis certaine, greatness once falne out with fortune,  
> Must fall out with men too: what the declin'd is,

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6 *The Life of Henry the Fift, V, i7, p. 92a.*  
7 *The First Part of Henry the Fourth, V, i, p. 70a.*  
8 *Ibid., I, iii, p. 52a.*
He shall as soone reade in the eyes of others,
As feeles in his owne fall: for men like butter-flies,
Shew not their mealie wings, but to the Summer:
And not a man for being simply man;
Hath any honour; but honour'd for those honours
That are without him; as place, riches, and fauour,
Prizes of accident, as oft as merit:
Which when they fall, as being slippery standers;
The love that leand on them as slippery too,
Both one plucke downe another, and together
Dye in the fall. 9

In answer to this cynical attitude to honour Ulysses asserts,

... perseverance, deere my Lord,
Keepes honor bright, to haue done, is to hang
Quite out of fashion, like a rustie male,
In monumentall mockrie: take the instant way,
For honour travels in a straight so narrow,
Where one but goes a breast, keepe then the path:
For emulation hath a thousand Sonnes,
That one by one pursue; if you give way,
Or hedge aside from the direct forth right;
Like to an entred Tyde, they all rush by,
And leave you hindmost: 10

The speech is too long to quote in full. Of the remainder, which
leads towards an appeal to Achilles to leave his idleness, one
passage, however, stands out:

... O let not vertue seeke
Remuneration for the thing it was: for beautie, wit,
High birth, vigor of bone, desert in service,
Loue, friendship, charity, are subjects all
To envious and calumniating time
One touch of nature makes the whole world kin: 11

The basis of Ulysses' argument is his implication of the relationship
between honour and virtue. The same relationship is one of the
many involved in one of Shakespeare's later detailed examinations of
honour, that of Measure for Measure.

9 The Tragedie of Troylus and Cressida, [III, iii], Sig. 9
10 Ibid., [III, iii], Sig. 9
11 Ibid., loc. cit.
It is difficult to arrange a consideration of Shakespeare's concepts of honour and revenge for honour into any pattern of development. It is more difficult, and even dangerous, to pronounce that any one play contains the sum of his ideas about either concept. It has recently been said of his attitude to revenge that it is possible that, so far from writing one play to attack it and another to support it, "he allowed the individual situation in each individual story to elucidate the appropriate comment."12 That this is also true of his attitude to honour and revenge for honour is seen in Troilus and Cressida. For the honour with which Shakespeare is most concerned in this play is the honour of the soldier. The situation of Menelaus as a dishonoured husband is not given prominence beyond the fact of its being responsible for the war. Moreover, the sole reference to the honour of the faithless Cressida is Ulysses' question to Troilus:

... of what Honour was
This Cressida in Troy, ...? 13

Significantly, the question remains unanswered.

Shakespeare's most important contribution to the concept of honour in the abstract is the idea that there is a responsibility concomitant, not with inherent honour, but with acquired honour. This is illustrated in two plays which return to the medieval conception of tragedy in the fall of great men: Coriolanus and Henry VIII. The judgment passed on Coriolanus by his murderer, Aufidius, is that

12 Bertram Joseph, Conscience and the King (1953), p. 43.
13 The Tragedie of Troylus and Cressida, IV, 7, Sig. Ff4 v.
... he could not

Carry his Honors eeuenn. (sic) 14

In Henry VIII Shakespeare reiterates the word "honour" as frequently as he does "honest" and "honesty" in Othello. The honour most under consideration is not that of the rejected Queen Katherine, but of Henry himself and, more important, of Cardinal Wolsey. Wolsey falls as Coriolanus fell, but, unlike Coriolanus, he is able to express the reason for this himself. He recognizes that Henry has with justice taken from his shoulders

A loade, would sinke a Nauy, (too much Honor.)

• • • a burden

Too heavy for a man, that hopes for Heauen. 15

The most striking aspects of this attitude to honour are its originality and seriousness. The same qualities are characteristic of Shakespeare's treatment of the concept of revenge for honour in the non-historical plays. It is obvious that revenge for honour can have no place in the lightest of the early romantic comedies such as Love's Labour's Lost, As You Like It, or Twelfth Night. In The Merchant of Venice the insults to which Shylock was subjected would constitute dishonour to a gentleman, but it is doubtful if Shylock is to be considered as such, as his trade would preclude him from gentlemanly status. This assumption as borne out by the fact that he is not concerned with the dishonour of Jessica's elopement. In The Merchant of Venice Shakespeare was primarily concerned with justice and injustice, revenge and mercy. Examination of the relationship

14 The Tragedy of Corioliarnus, IV [vii], p. 25a.
between revenge for honour and justice was reserved for his later plays Measure for Measure and All's Well That Ends Well.

The citizen Ford in The Merry Wives of Windsor is another who does not speak of his honour, but in his concern for reputation, its equivalent among the citizen classes, shows himself familiar with the gentleman's attitude to honour and revenge. The audience's knowledge that Mistress Ford and Mistress Page are themselves determined to avenge their honours on Sir John Falstaff detracts from the seriousness of Ford's attempts to exact revenge on an innocent wife. For Ford is very serious about his revenge. His seriousness indicates its basic nature: pretentiousness. The Merry Wives' revenge is in keeping with their station. It is a good-natured, if indignant, answer to Sir John's conceited presumption. In contrast, Ford affects not only the ideas but the language of the gentry in his revenge:

...Well, I will take him, then torture my wife, plucke the borrowed vaile of modestie from the so-seeming Mist. Page, divulge Page himselfe for a secure and wilfull Acteon, and to these violent proceedings all my neighbors shall cry aime. 16

Ford, in fact, is the counterpart of Sir John himself. For the idea of a respectable and probably middle-aged citizen suspecting the chastity of his wife and seeing himself as a tragic revenger of honour is no less ridiculous than the idea of Sir John envisaging himself as a lover capable of seducing not only one, but two sensible women from the respectable security of their happy marriages. It is

16 The Merry Wives of Windsor, III, ii, p. 49a.
when Ford joins his wife in a comic revenge on the fat knight that
revenge for honour is seen in its proper perspective, the perspective
of Mistress Page and Mistress Ford who know that

Wives may be merry, and yet honest too: 17

In the end, the most solemn words of the play are reserved for
Fenton's condemnation of enforced marriage.

Much more disturbing is the presence of revenge for honour in
**Much Ado About Nothing**. Although, as in **The Merry Wives of Windsor**,
the audience knows that the lady is chaste, there is no certainty
that this knowledge will ever reach Claudio. Indeed, the tension is
heightened rather than lessened by the difficulties to be overcome
in eliciting the right information from Dogberry and the Watch. The
most significant aspect of Shakespeare's treatment of revenge for
honour in the play is the form that it takes. In none of the versions
of the story available to Shakespeare - Ariosto's **Orlando Furioso**,
Book IV, Bandello's novella of Timbreo and Fenicia or Peter Beverley's
**Ariodanto and Ienevra** - does the lover seek to exact revenge on his
supposedly false beloved. 18 Moreover, Shakespeare's alteration of
his source material in this respect leads to the consideration of the
effect of Hero's supposed dishonour on those around her. The first
effect is that foreseen by Borachio when he devised the scheme for
Don John to prevent the marriage of Claudio and Hero: the Prince is
dishonoured by an attempt to marry his protégé to a dishonest woman. 19

18 Vide Charles T. Prouty, *The Sources of 'Much Ado About Nothing'*,
19 **Much Ado about Nothing**, II (ii), p. 107a; IV, ii, p. 114b.
Hero herself is dishonoured by the accusation of unchastity and the public repudiation of her marriage contract. The violence of the effect of dishonour on the mind is demonstrated, not only by this action, but by the keen sense of injury to family honour that makes Beatrice tell Benedick to "Kill Claudio."

That a bridegroom should consider himself dishonoured by the unchastity of his future wife appears in earlier Elizabethan plays, but in no other play does a lover ignore his rival completely and exact a revenge, and a public revenge, on the girl herself. The only acceptable explanation of Claudio's cruel behaviour is that given by Professor Prouty that Claudio is not a romantic lover. His marriage with Hero is a mariage de convenance and this makes a public denunciation of Hero possible. Hero's part in the bargain is proved fraudulent and so she is rejected in the terms of a merchant refusing to accept internally damaged goods:

There Leonato, take her backe againe,  
Gleue not this rotten Orenge to your friend,  
Shee's but the signe and semblance of her honour: 21

But if, in Much Ado About Nothing, the clouds that threaten romantic love are darker than in the earlier comedies and in The Merry Wives of Windsor, its final triumph is the greater. For it is only when he has refused his bargain and believes Hero dead that Claudio, like Bertram in All's Well That Ends Well, realizes its true worth. Moreover, having seen the effect of his revenge on an innocent girl, Claudio submits to whatever revenge Leonato may choose for him.

\[21\] Much adoe about Nothing, IV, \(\sqrt{i}\), p. 114a.
In humility he agrees to accept a second bargain from Leonato. In so doing he unexpectedly recovers the lady and the romantic love which he has just learnt to appreciate. Thus Claudio, no less than Benedick, is prepared for the full happiness of a previously despised marriage. In this way Shakespeare used a brutal and unconventional revenge for honour to question the value of an arranged marriage with greater seriousness than in *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, though with less poignancy than in *Romeo and Juliet*.

Shakespeare's treatment of revenge for honour in tragedy is no less provocative of thought than it is in these two comedies. Whereas in *The Merry Wives of Windsor* and *Much Ado About Nothing* revenge for honour plays a serious part where it is least expected, and thereby indicates Shakespeare's development in comedy towards the Jacobean tragicomedy some years before that form was established, in *Titus Andronicus* and *Hamlet*, as in *Troilus and Cressida*, its emphasis is surprisingly placed.22

In *Titus Andronicus* this is the result of Shakespeare's refraining from mentioning revenge for honour after he has established in the first act the importance of honour in the minds of his main characters. In the first act the word honour is repeated as noun and verb time and time again23. It is used to stress, in particular, the extent

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22 What follows is a revaluation rather than a summary of the analysis of the themes of revenge in *Titus Andronicus* and *Hamlet* given in M.A. thesis, pp. 385-421.

23 In Act I 'honour' is mentioned more frequently than revenge is in the entire play. Yet *The Spanish Tragedy* is the only other revenge play in which the word revenge occurs more frequently than it does in *Titus Andronicus*. 
to which the Andronici glory in honour, both inherent and acquired. Saturninus, no less than Titus, is sensible of the claims of honour. Like Titus, he is destined to be dishonoured through a female relative. Titus's family honour is, however, wounded through no fault of Lavinia; but the Emperor is dishonoured by his wife's adultery with Aaron. His dishonour is the greater because he himself is apparently ignorant of it, though it is known not only to the Andronici and their friends, but to Saturninus's enemies, the Goths. Despite the fact that Titus has cause to avenge his daughter's rape and mutilation, he never states explicitly that his revenge is for honour. The importance of honour in his life has been so emphasized in the first act that it is unnecessary to specify the kind of revenge that he seeks. References to the stories of Lucrece and Progne are sufficient indication of his feelings.

The rape and mutilation of Lavinia are only part of the many injuries suffered by the Andronici. In their final vengeance more than one motive or type of revenge is involved. Revenge for honour has no part in Lucius's leading of the Goths against Rome, and when he kills Saturninus it is in revenge for the Emperor's murder of his father Titus. Moreover, unlike any other revenger on the Elizabethan or Jacobean stage, except Marston's Antonio, Lucius survives his vengeance to live, not only justified by the Romans, but as their ruler.

This apparent reversal of moral values is made possible by Shakespeare's setting of the play in a time and place where Christian
standards are not applicable. Titus Andronicus is, in fact, the only Elizabethan revenge tragedy which is completely devoid of links with the religious background of Elizabethan England and it is, therefore, the only tragedy in which it was possible for blood vengeance to be executed without anyone questioning the justice of the deed. Conversely, the Christian background of Hamlet is so emphasized that the moral implications of the Prince's revenge have to be considered, and Hamlet has to struggle between the contradictory demands of the code of honour and of conscience.

From what has been seen of the importance of the code of honour in earlier Elizabethan tragedy it is clear that Hamlet is dishonoured by his mother's incestuous marriage with Claudius. It is unlikely that a Prince who recognised the need to avenge such injuries to honour as being called a coward and treated with contempt would ignore the need to avenge the unchastity of a female relative. On

24 Despite settings in Spain or Italy, there is no indication that the contents of any revenge tragedies are particularly foreign. Only two tragedies, David and Bethsabe and Alphonsus Emperor of Germany take place before the sixteenth century. The former is a biblical play illustrating God's revenge for sin and the latter contains religious dignitaries among the characters. The Battle of Alcazar contains no specifically Christian doctrine, but suggests that there are higher powers to whom vengeance belongs.

25 This is noticeable in the concern of Marsellus that the shipwrights cannot observe Sunday; in the gravediggers' discussion on whether or not a suicide should have Christian burial; and in the fact that the sinning Claudius no less than Hamlet and Ophelia, is accustomed to prayer.

26 This is implicit in the third soliloquy.
the contrary, throughout the first act Hamlet is obviously tortured by the thought of his mother's incest. He refers to it in terms stronger than those of the code of honour as he expresses his longing to be free from the flesh that she has sullied.\textsuperscript{27}

But Hamlet never expresses a desire to avenge his family honour. The thought that it is his mother who has committed incest is greater than his response to the code of honour. Thus in Hamlet, as in Titus, Shakespeare shows the man conscious of the demands of honour who nevertheless reacts to dishonour with feelings stronger and more natural than those dictated by any code. "Wounded honour" would have been too inadequate a description of the sufferings inflicted on Lavinia and, through her, on her father: it would certainly be insufficient to express the feelings of revulsion and horror aroused in Hamlet by his mother's sin. If it was to prevent his son from executing revenge for honour that the Ghost warned him not to attempt anything against his mother, he underestimated the strength of Hamlet's natural feelings. Moreover, by setting aside the austere demands of honour, Hamlet can still hope to redeem his mother's soul.

Hamlet's prime motive for revenge against Claudius is, therefore, the murder of his father: a revenge which must be considered an act of justice when it is remembered that Hamlet, as rightful ruler in

\textsuperscript{27} The case for accepting the reading "sallied" (Second Quarto) and interpreting it as a corruption of "sullied", first stated by Professor Dover Wilson in The Manuscript of Shakespeare's Hamlet (1934), ii, pp. 307-16 has been established on bibliographical grounds by Professor Fredson Bowers in 'Hamlet's "Sullied" or "Solid" Flesh: A Bibliographical Case-History,' Shakespeare Survey 9 (1956), pp. 44-48.
Denmark, is acting as God's deputy in avenging the murder on the usurper. Nevertheless, Hamlet never succeeds in freeing his mind completely from a sense of wounded honour. Claudius is always a bawdy villain and, as he lies dying at Hamlet's hand, he is once more called incestuous.

Though revenge for honour is removed perforce from Hamlet's motives, the code of honour is one of the most important forces in the play. In Titus Andronicus Shakespeare stressed the scrupulous attention to honour paid by the protagonist. In Hamlet he shows how honour is venerated by the family of the young man who in some ways represents Hamlet's ideal of honourable behaviour: Laertes. Both Laertes and his father Polonius talk about honour incessantly. They are seriously concerned to preserve Ophelia's honour, and Polonius is anxious for his son's honour when he is away from home. Moreover, it is Laertes who indicates the struggle which Hamlet has to undergo when he expresses his willingness to forgive Hamlet's accidental murder of his father Polonius:

I am satisfied in Nature,
Whose motiue in this case should stirre me most
To my Reuenge. But in my termes of Honor
I stand aloofe, and will no reconcilement,
Till by some elder Masters of knowne Honor,
I have a voyce and president of peace
To keepe my name vngorg'd. 29

But it is nature, not honour, that leads Laertes to the dishonourable act of poisoning the rapiers: an act which he feels himself to be against his conscience. 30 Yet Laertes knows, as does Hamlet, that

29 The Tragedie of Hamlet, Prince of Denmarke, 2/V, ii, p. 280b.
30 Ibid., 2/V, ii, p. 281a
the man who does not avenge an injury dishonours himself. This is
the greatest demand that the code of honour has to make on Hamlet,
as he himself is aware: 31

Rightly to be great
Is not to stirre without great argument,
But greatly to find quarrell in a straw
When honour's at the stake, how stand I then
That have a father kild, a mother staint,
Excitements of my reason, and my blood,
And let all sleepe, while to my shame I see
The imminent death of twenty thousand men,
That for a fantasie and tricke of fame
Goe to their graves like beds, fight for a plot
Whereon the numbers cannot try the cause,
Which is not toome enough and continent
To hide the slaine, from this time forth,
My thoughts be bloody, or be nothing worth. 32

Even when he is dying Hamlet is aware that his honour is at the
stake. This knowledge wrings from him the appeal to Horatio:

Oh good Horatio, what a wounded name,
(Things standing thus vnknowne) shall line behind me.
If thou did'st ever hold me in thy heart,
Absent thee from felicitie awhile,
And in this harsh world draw thy breath in paine,
To tell thy Storie. 33

The poignant notes of this speech are not sounded by other dramatists
till some years later in descriptions of the struggles of a husband
forced by the demands of honour to torture or disgrace the wife he loves. 34

Shakespeare was farthest ahead of his fellow dramatists in his
imaginative treatment of revenge for honour in Othello. 35 On the
surface, the part played by the concept of revenge for honour in Othello

31 Vide Bertram Joseph, op. cit., passim.
32 Hamlet Second Quarto 1604-5, Shakespeare Quartos in Collotype
Facsimile, Number 4 (1940), IV. iv. 53-66. (not in Folio)
33 The Tragedie of Hamlet (Folio), V, ii., p. 281b.
34 Vide pp. 50-54 supra.
appears to be simple: by circumstantial evidence a husband is convinced of his wife's unchastity and his consequent dishonour; he approves of the plan to murder her supposed lover and murders her himself. Yet so carefully has Shakespeare analysed the emotions behind Othello's actions that it has been usual for critics to describe the play, not as a tragedy of honour, but as a tragedy of jealousy. It should, however, be obvious from what has been seen of the pattern of behaviour of dishonoured husbands in other Jacobean and Elizabethan plays that they too could threaten revenge on their wives on mere suspicion of cuckoldom and those husbands who accepted circumstantial evidence of their wives' guilt in order to exact vengeance by death or torture were not prevented from doing so by any who witnessed them.

36 One exception to this view in the nineteenth century was expressed by W.R. Turnbull who wrote that not jealousy, but love and honour were the ruling emotions of Othello's soul: Othello A Critical Study (Edinburgh and London, 1892), p. 163. Professor Lily B. Campbell, writing in 1930, demonstrated how the play contains four types of jealousy postulated in Tofte's translation of Verdi; she only conceded a place to honour in Othello's motives as a cause of his jealousy: Shakespeare's Tragic Heroes Slaves of Passion (Cambridge, 1930), p. 162. The most recent critics to consider the importance of honour as supreme in the play have been William Empson - The Structure of Complex Words (1951), pp. 216-249 and 'The Pride of Othello', The Kenyon Review (Gambier, Ohio, Winter 1954), pp. 163-166 - and Professor E.M. Wilson - 'Othello, a Tragedy of Honour', The Listener, vol. xliv, No. 1214 (5th June, 1952) and in an unpublished paper, 'A Hispanist Looks at Othello.' A recent American study of the play stresses the concern for reputation found in it without terming it specifically a concern for honour: Brents Stirling, Unity in Shakespearean Tragedy The Interplay of Theme and Character (New York, 1956), pp. 111-138.

37 The accepted date of the play is 1604, as it was performed at Court on 1st November in that year.

38 e.g. Justiniano in Westward Ho; Greenshield in Northward Ho.

39 e.g. Alphonsus in Alphonsus Emperor of Germany and Elseazer in Lust's Dominion.
One difference between Othello and the usual avenging husband is that he acts without setting the conventional trap for his wife and her lover. For him this is unnecessary, however, as he believes that he has heard Cassio confess his guilt.

Another difference between Othello and the conventional avenger of honour, though it is a difference he shares with Heywood's Frankford, lies in his desire to save his wife's soul. Yet, unlike Hamlet's father, he does not wish to spare her body also. Othello's concept of revenge for honour, therefore, combines at once the acceptance of a cruelly conventional revenge and the transmutation of revenge murder into sacrifice. That this concept is impracticable is brought home to Othello by Desdemona's refusal to confess her guilt. When her innocence is finally established he cannot allege his more religious intentions in killing her to the world. He can only call himself

An honourable Murderer, ...
For nought I did in hate, but all in Honour. 40

Emilia, however, expresses the matter differently. She calls the Moor a "murd'rous Coxcombe"41 and in doing so, one feels, she gives the judgment of a normal human being on the man of honour as extreme in his acceptance of the code as Othello.

Othello is doubly a tragedy of honour because the action is controlled by another avenger of honour, Iago. The reasons for Iago's

40 The Tragedie of Othello, the Moore of Venice, V, ii, p. 338a.
41 Ibid., V, ii, p. 337b.
villainy have puzzled commentators since Coleridge spoke of the "motive-hunting of a motiveless malignity." The second latest editor of the play in England sees the inability to discover Iago's motive as "Shakespeare's crowning stroke, his final touch to the portrait of a consummate villain." The latest editor, writing only a few months later, gives full allowance to the importance of Iago's suspicion that Othello has cuckolded him, but considers that this is irrelevant from the point of view of Iago's career. He sees Iago as governed chiefly by a love of power. The main difficulty in accepting revenge for honour as Iago's motive is an unwillingness on the part of critics to accept the truth of any of Iago's statements. Yet not only is this motive given by Iago in his first two soliloquies (and it is surely unreasonable to suspect that Iago is intended to deceive the audience as well as Othello), but he twits Emilia with it when they are alone, and she herself alludes to her husband's unjust suspicions of her behaviour with Othello.

The difference between Iago's revenge for honour and Othello's is that the ancient uses the method of the citizen (though he is none) and the Moor the method of the gentleman. As may be seen in such plays as Eastward Ho, Northward Ho and, more especially, Westward Ho, the citizen who believed himself cuckolded sought revenge by

42 John Dover Wilson, Othello, New Cambridge Shakespeare (1957), p.xxvi
44 The Tragedie of Othello, the Moore of Venice, III, iii, p. 325a.
torturing other husbands with the same belief. This is exactly what
Iago determines to do:

... I do suspect the lustie Moore
Hath leap'd into my Seate. The thought whereof,
Doth (like a poysenous Minerall) gnaw my Inwardes:
And nothing can, or shall content my Soule
Till I am seuen'd with him, wife, for wifet. (sic)
Or fayling so, yet that I put the Moore,
At least into a Ielouzie so strong
That judgement cannot cure.  

His reference to getting even with Othello, wife for wife, may apply
to his previous declaration of love for Desdemona or to his plans to
forward Roderigo's dishonest desires. That Iago does nothing to
achieve the cuckolding of Othello by his own or Roderigo's means is
to be attributed to the fact that his success in inflicting mental
torture on Othello is greater than he had anticipated.

For the murder of Desdemona is no part of Iago's original scheme,
and to assume that he could foresee it is to overestimate the
extent of his malignity at the beginning of the play. His revenge
gets out of hand when Othello threatens him if he does not prove
Desdemona a whore. Iago's efforts to save his own skin lead to
the production of proof which is fatal to Cassio. As he fears
Cassio with his nightcap too, Iago can see him killed without regret.
Yet he tries to direct Othello away from exacting vengeance on
Desdemona. It may well be, though indeed it cannot be certain,  

46 Ibid., II, i, p. 316b.
47 M.R. Ridley, op. loc. cit., pp. lxi-lxiii.
48 The Tragedie of Othello, the Moore of Venice, III, iii, p. 326b.
that in suggesting that Othello should strangle his wife rather than poison her, Iago hoped that the Moor's love would prevent the final execution of vengeance.

In support of this interpretation of the play as a tragedy of honour it may be pointed out that Iago's attempt to dishonour Othello begins when he taunts Brabantio in the opening scene. For this is done in the hope that Brabantio will effect a divorce between Othello and his daughter. That Cassio's preferment as Othello's lieutenant was also a wound to Iago's honour is not explicitly stated, but it would be in accordance with the soldier's code of honour to view it that way. Iago's reaction to it is the same as that to his suspicion of being dishonoured by Othello: he inflicts the same kind of dishonour on Cassio. His success in this is measured by the bitterness of Cassio's subsequent lament on his lost reputation.

Shakespeare's achievement in Othello lies in his presentation of the effect of the concept of revenge for honour on the minds of two men incapable of controlling their passions. Othello is unable to control his jealous love of Desdemona and Iago cannot control his lust for power. It was not until Webster wrote The Duchess of Malfi that the Jacobean stage again saw a similar effect of the code of honour, in this case on the mind of a man inordinately fond of his own sister.

The relationship between the concept of revenge for honour and justice is presented in both Hamlet and Othello in so far as justice

49 Cf. The Tragedie of Coriolanus, III 3 iii 3, p. 19a.
dictates the saving of an erring woman's soul and neither Hamlet nor Othello wishes to commit murder. The demands of justice are set against those of honour in different ways in Shakespeare's four Jacobean comedies: All's Well That Ends Well, Measure for Measure, Cymbeline and The Winter's Tale. These plays are not only Jacobean because they were probably written between 1602 and 1613, but because they reflect a questioning attitude to accepted values not found in Elizabethan comedy. Yet, with the possible exception of Cymbeline which is included among the tragedies in the First Folio, they are not tragicomedies in the Fletcherian pattern, even if they fit Fletcher's own definition of that form. They have been justly called problem comedies, for each poses a question concerning the value of honour.

The simplest statement of it is found in the earliest of the group, All's Well That Ends Well. Bertram has a false sense of honour. He conceives that honour lies chiefly in military glory and noble birth. He therefore despises the lowly born Helena as not sufficiently honourable to be his bride, and though the King explains to him at length that she is rich in the honour bred by

50 "A tragie-comedie is not so called in respect of mirth and killing but in respect it wants deats (sic), which is inough to make it no tragedie, yet brings some neere it, which is inough to make it no comedie; which must be a representation of familiar people, with such kinde of trouble as no life be questiond, so that a God is as lawfull in this as in a tragedie, and meane people as in a comedie." The Faithfull Shepheardesse (no date), Epistle to the Reader, Sig. [4] 2.
youth, wisdom and beauty, Bertram leaves her on their wedding day to seek after military honour in foreign wars.

The King had also told Bertram that

Honours thrive
When rather from our acts we them derive
Then our fore-goers:

Bertram's life in Italy shows that he limits this interpretation of honour to military honour only. For while he gains such honour in the war he seeks to corrupt the chastity (and honour) of Diana. When other attempts fail, he tries to bribe her with an offer of his ring, his house; his honour and even his life. Not only does this cause Bertram to lose honour in the eyes of his fellows, but he himself, denying to the King that there is truth in Diana's petition, protests that he would not sink his honour in her. Thereby he condemns himself when the truth is revealed. It is only when he has been discredited and dishonoured by his own confession before the King and Court that the nature of Bertram's relationship with Diana is made known and Helena comes to him again on the conditions that he himself had imposed. He accepts her with a new-found love and, one presumes, a new-found honour too.

The most obvious link between All's Well That Ends Well and Measure for Measure is the bed trick which is used in both plays to

51 All's Well that Ends Well, II, iii, p. 238a.
52 Ibid., IV, ii, p. 246b.
53 This is seen in the conversation of the French Captains IV, iii, p. 246b and in Lafuei's statement that Bertram's reputation comes too short for his daughter V, iii, p. 252b.
54 All's Well that Ends Well, V, iii, p. 252b.
save a girl's honour. Another link lies in the fact that Diana, no less than Isabella, appeals publicly not for revenge, but for justice for dishonour. Of all the plays in which Shakespeare considered honour Measure for Measure is the one in which its value and meaning are most severely tested. It is a play of contrast and paradox which raises probably more philosophical questions than any other of Shakespeare's works: problems concerned with the relationship between the ruler and the people; between justice and the law, between place or authority and greatness; between being and seeming; and between the soul and the body, mortality and immortality; dishonour and sin. Throughout the play these questions are considered in the conflict of ideas concerning honour and justice which are held by different people. Claudio fell to dishonour by the prompture of the blood, but still had a mind of honour. His sister Isabella is sensible of her brother's concern in the honour inherent in her chastity. If she yields to Angelo her brother will live in perpetual dishonour. When rejecting Angelo's offer to save Claudio, Isabella weighs her body and soul in the balance; in discussing the offer with Claudio she weighs dishonour and sin against each other; and when she appeals to the Duke for justice at the end of the play she excuses her alleged dishonour by saying that her sisterly remorse confuted her honour that she yielded to Angelo. The Duke, who is enabled by his disguise to sift the truth of each person's conception of honour and find a solution to their problems, sees that honour should be preserved with justice. The bed trick which he suggests saves Isabella's honour, is no dishonour to Mariana and procures justice for them both.
The Duke's final meting out of justice includes even the scurrilous Lucio who, vainly jealous of his reputation, is made to make an honest woman out of his whore and is thereby dishonoured in his own opinion.

The person most deeply involved in the testing of justice and honour is Angelo. That he is scrupulous about his honour appears in the rejection of Mariana because he believed her honour to be tainted (though her loss of dowry was also a weighty consideration). It is also seen in Angelo's continuation of the order to have Claudio executed because he fears a possible revenge from him for Isabella's dishonour had he lived. In offering Isabella her brother's life at the price of her chastity Angelo confounds both honour and justice. Even his salt imagination wrongs her honour. When she appeals publicly for justice it is Escalus who exclaims of Angelo to the Duke:

My Lord, I am more amaz'd at his dishonor,
Then at the strangenesse of it.

So Angelo, who had asked Isabella to sacrifice her honour in order that justice to her brother might be tempered with mercy, loses his honour publicly only to find justice with mercy, through the intercession of Isabella, at the hands of the Duke. It is in such paradoxes that Shakespeare tests and weighs the value of honour and justice, leaving the final assessment, not so much to the Duke, as to the audience. For in Measure for Measure the audience's ideas of

55 Measure for Measure, IV, iv, p. 79a.
56 Ibid., V, i, p. 82b.
honour and justice no less than those of the characters in the play are weighed in the balance.

In All's Well That Ends Well and Measure for Measure the wronged women appealed for justice. In contrast to them Imogen, in Cymbeline makes no formal accusation against Posthumus, and waits for no answer. For she is guided by no code of honour but by the force of a love which, like Cordelia's, is strong enough to forgive all injury and is best expressed in silence. The appeal for justice after dishonour which was given prominence in All's Well That Ends Well and Measure for Measure is replaced in Cymbeline and The Winter's Tale by the joy of reconciliation after dishonour. This theme had, in fact, been present in the two earlier plays in the happy triumph of Helena's reunion with Bertram and the touching silence of Isabella's reunion with her brother. Few words are exchanged between Imogen and Posthumus, but this is because their meeting is only one of many aspects of a single theme. For the play concludes also with the reunion of Cymbeline and his three children; his honourable reconciliation with Rome and Posthumus's forgiveness of Iachimo.

This last is one of the most important aspects of the treatment of revenge for honour in the play. Posthumus is the only avenging husband in Elizabethan or Jacobean drama who is able freely to forgive the false informer who has wronged him out of malice. In

57 The Tragedie of Cymbeline, V, iii, p. 397a.
58 The case of Heywood's Frankford is different in that Wendoll was guilty of adultery and Frankford leaves him to God's vengeance working through his conscience.
this and in other ways the play forms a happy postscript to Othello, though the differences between the plays are considerable. The evidence of Imogen's guilt which Iachimo produces and Posthumus believes, is no more authoritative or less circumstantial than that fabricated by Iago of Desdemona. Posthumus's cry for vengeance has the same ring of agony as Othello's and may proceed from the same enslavement of his senses in marriage. But whereas Othello had to kiss his bride, touch her, kill her with his own hands, Posthumus orders Pisanio to kill Imogen for him. In this way character combines with plot to provide the opportunity for Imogen's escape from unjustified revenge for honour to justified mercy at the hands of Pisanio.

In The Winter's Tale the themes and ideas of the three previously considered plays are synthesized into a rich maturity. For the lovers Leontes and Hermione are not a newly married couple when the play opens, and at the conclusion they are within hope of seeing their child's children. In the character of Leontes Shakespeare makes his deepest study of jealousy. There is no villain to prompt his suspicions of adultery between his wife and his friend. Calumny is self-bred in the disease of Leontes' mind and first appears in a

59 Desdemona's sweetness made Othello's senses ache; Posthumus exclaims of Imogen:

... Oh Vengeance, Vengeance!
Me of my lawfull pleasure she restrain'd,
And pray'd me oft forbearance: ... II, 3v 7, p. 389b.
sudden, unpremeditated spasm of jealousy which goes deeper than Othello's in that it includes doubts of his paternity of his dear child, Mamillius. The disease spreads quickly, revealing itself in Leontes' preoccupation with honesty and in his obscene language.

With a compression of action fully justified by his characterization of Leontes, Shakespeare shows in one act the conception of dishonour and the preparation of revenge. The first mention of revenge for honour comes from Camillo, who indignantly replies to Leontes' suggestions concerning Hermione and Polixenes:

I would not be a stander-by, to hear My Soueraigne Mistresse clouded so, without My present vengeance taken: 60

Without mentioning vengeance or dishonour himself, Leontes seizes on the idea, and orders Camillo to poison Polixenes. But Camillo, like Pisanio, is no rash executor of another's unjust revenge, and so saves Polixenes' life. In Polixenes himself is seen the understanding of a man who, though wronged, can justly assess the feelings of his injurer. It is he who recognizes that Leontes seeks revenge for honour, and says,

... as he do's conceiue,
He is dishonor'd by a man, which euer Profess'd to him: why his Reuenges must In that be made more bitter. 61

Polixenes escapes, but Hermione remains to be dishonoured before her son and slandered in front of lords and ladies. Finally, Leontes mocks justice by ordering her to be imprisoned to await the judgment

60 The Winter's Tale, I, ii, p. 280a.
61 Ibid., I, ii, p. 281b.
of the Oracle while he has already condemned her in his own mind. He holds the trial, but rejects the judgment of the Oracle as he had rejected the same advice of Camillo. Only the news of Mamillius's death can break through Leontes' wilful passions to his true love and bring home the realization of his wife's innocence. He immediately thinks of restitution, and fully intends to make recompense as far as possible for the injuries he has inflicted on his wife, his friend and his faithful servant.

But this is too simple a plan, as suddenly conceived as was his jealousy. As in All's Well That Ends Well, Measure for Measure and Cymbeline the man with the false sense of honour has to face his trial. Leontes, no less than Bertram, Angelo and Posthumus, has to learn the value of honour by suffering without it or without the woman who chiefly brings it to him. Thus Shakespeare altered Greene's story to accord with his concept, not of revenge but justice for dishonour. Leontes is told of Hermione's death and so, like Claudio in Much Ado About Nothing and like Bertram, he is without hope of reconciliation with his love and honour. Leontes' trial, however, is not formally presented on the stage. It is endured unseen through years of saint-like sorrow and repentance which change and ennoble him till he is fit for reconciliation with Hermione. The meeting between

62 Vide pp. 186-188 infra.
63 The characterization of Leontes would be marred if, like Greene's Pandosto, he were to fall in love with his own daughter.
Leontes and Hermione is as silent as that between Isabella and Claudio. In it Shakespeare once again shows the confusion of false justice leading to a triumph of honour.

Thus from disparate episodes in many plays the pattern of Shakespeare's ideas of honour and revenge for honour emerges. From the difference between the concepts of honour held by Hotspur and Falstaff, Achilles and Ulysses, through the false judgments of Master Ford, Claudio, Othello, Bertram, Angelo, Posthumus and Leontes, Shakespeare showed that honour could not be judged by external appearances. The idea that salvation is more precious than honour appears in both Hamlet and Othello. Thereafter Shakespeare was concerned with the realization of the soul's peace on earth as well as in heaven. In dishonouring and murdering his chaste wife Othello lost life and honour. The later dishonourers of themselves and of chaste women - Bertram, Angelo, Posthumus and Leontes - learnt that such dishonour merits, not revenge, but justice and mercy.
Chapter V

Revenge for Honour in Prose Fiction, 1580-1640.

It may be stated immediately that, with the few exceptions which will be considered in detail, there was no code of honour in original English fiction to correspond with that in the drama between 1580 and 1640. Considering that the concept of revenge for honour was important in the drama and, as the evidence for the period 1580-1605 suggests, in everyday life this is no less interesting than surprising. Yet there is no single satisfactory reason to explain its absence from prose fiction though, as will be indicated in section v of this chapter, there were several contributory reasons which appear upon an examination of the period as a whole.

Of the more obvious reasons, probably the chief is one that is incident to the nature of Elizabethan creative art: the fact that the genius of the age found greatest expression in drama. Even in the fiction one may see how an author conceived his work in dramatic terms, appealing to the reader's eye with detailed descriptions of battles, pageants or coronations and to his ear with long rhetorical passages of carefully balanced argument.

The best writers of the age were either dramatists or poets. Many prose writers could turn their hands to almost any of a number of forms of writing. Such men as Anthony Munday and Gervase Markham were

poets, pamphleteers and translators while Thomas Nashe, the author
of a single work of fiction, was equally capable of writing scientific
treatises or pamphlets of low life. Emmanuel Forde and Bernabe Riche
were probably the only important writers of prose fiction who did not
express themselves, as far as we know, in drama or verse as well.
With the notable exceptions of Sir Philip Sidney whose Arcadia is
the most sustained piece of creative prose of the period, Robert
Greene and Emmanuel Forde, the major writers of Elizabethan and
Jacobean fiction were not men whose best work was concentrated in
this form of literature. Prose fiction was not a medium through which
writers vented their philosophies, ideals or inspirations.

This might suggest that Elizabethan and Jacobean writers were
less interested in and, therefore, produced less fiction than drama.
This is not so. An American scholar's analysis of the figures for
editions of drama and fiction between 1475 and 1642 shows that in
this period fiction must have been as popular as drama with the
reading public; that only every fifth play saw two editions while
the average tale had three; that there was a great upsurge in the
publication of fiction in 1576 while drama did not enjoy a similar
sharp rise in popularity till 1591; and that until 1590 the printing
of fiction was as much as three times greater than that of drama.²
Nevertheless, though the quantity of prose fiction may have equalled

² C.C. Mish, 'Comparative Popularity of Early Fiction and Drama',
Notes and Queries, cxcvii, no. 13 (21st June, 1952), pp. 269-70.
or surpassed that of drama until the turn of the century, its quality never did. Most of the fiction written before 1640 is of an inferior kind and cannot stand comparison with the work of the major dramatists.  

The chief mark of this inferiority is an immaturity expressed in the prose writers’ concentration on story-telling to the detriment of characterization and motivation. This immaturity has never been explained, but in itself provides the best single explanation of the absence of revenge for honour from fiction. As an examination of the early drama has shown, revenge for honour only replaced revenge for murder in serious drama when the early playwrights had been succeeded by such skilled examiners of human character and motive as Shakespeare, Marston, Chapman, Webster and Tourneur. It required a mature mind to present on the stage situations involving revenge for honour, because such situations showed men and women very often suffering under the strain of the conflict between the code of honour and

3 In selecting material for this chapter the general rule has been to eliminate works by minor writers who are not known to have produced more than one extent work of fiction. An exception is Brian Melbancke whose Philotimus merits consideration by critics of Elizabethan prose fiction. Though this method of selection reduces the amount of fiction published between 1550 and 1640 by forty per cent I am satisfied that it does not exclude anything which could alter the conclusions of this chapter. A Small part of the selection was also influenced by the unavailability of texts in England. The only texts in England which I did not make an effort to consult were Anthony Munday’s Zealute, Gervase Markham’s English Arcadia, part I and Henry Roberts’s Honours Conquest. From M. Pruvost’s account of the first (in Matteo Bandello and Elizabethan Fiction (Paris, 1937), pp. 265-7; 274-6) it appears that it does not contain any relevant material. There was no trace of revenge for honour in the second part of Markham’s work to warrant the supposition that it might be present in the first; and it seemed unlikely that Honour’s Conquest would differ greatly from the pattern of Roberts’s other romances.
conscience, or the code of honour and love. These men and women could not be brought to life without the exercise of considerable powers of characterization and some psychological insight. Few prose writers before 1640 possessed these powers to the same extent as did the major dramatists. A comparison between the uses of revenge for honour in fiction and drama indicates, therefore, some of the differences in the creative powers and the creative imaginations of dramatists and prose writers.

Such a comparison is, however, virtually limited to the period 1580 to 1605. Lists of English fiction published between 1580 and 1640 reveal an increasing paucity of fiction after 1615. The only notable works to appear after that date were the posthumously published Alcida of Robert Greene (1617), Emmanuel Forde’s Montalvon, Knight of the Oracle (1633) and Richard Johnson’s History of Tom Thumb (1621) and The Pleasant History of Tom a Lincoln (1631). The best fiction of the period had been written before 1605.

As has been shown earlier, revenge for honour was not established as a major theme in drama till shortly before this date, though the concept of revenge for honour had been developing in drama since 1580. This, therefore, is another contributory cause of the lack of revenge.

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for honour in prose fiction before 1640; that there were no writers of fiction to compare with the major dramatists after 1605. If a code of honour had developed in fiction, as in drama, between 1580 and 1605 it would probably have remained undeveloped because there were no prose writers of sufficient literary abilities to let it develop further in their works. Yet, had the concept of revenge for honour been important to prose writers after 1605 there would, doubtless, be some surviving work to prove it, just as the plays of Middleton, Beaumont, Fletcher, Massinger and Ford illustrate the importance of the concept to them.

The history of prose fiction in the later sixteenth century is a history of influences so various and so interwoven that few works can be classified without the help of such composite labels as Polonius gave to plays. Yet, as revenge for honour had greater significance in tragedy than in comedy or history plays, it is necessary to see in which, if any, type of prose fiction it played a part. For this purpose the prose fiction will be considered under five general headings, characterized chiefly by main influences and major writers:

i. The work of the translators and the influence of the novella;
ii. John Lyly and the euphuistic fiction;
iii. Sir Philip Sidney's Arcadia and the romance;
iv. Greene, Lodge and Nash: euphuism, romance and the picaresque;
v. Thomas Deloney and the fiction of common experience.
The work of the translators and the influence of the novella.

English prose fiction in the sixteenth century developed mainly from the work of translators. Scarcely more than a dozen works of Fiction belonging to the period 1500-1580 have survived, yet three of the earliest of them - William Painter's Palace of Pleasure (1566-7), Sir Geoffrey Fenton's Certain Tragical Discourses (1567) and A Petite Palace of Pettie his Pleasure (1576) are collections of stories which had been translated from foreign authors. They are both typical and popular examples of the kind of tales which appealed to the English reader's imagination in the Elizabethan and succeeding ages.

The sources of such collections of translations were the Novelle of Bandello which were taken either from the original Italian or from the French version of Boaistuau and Belleforest, the Heptameron of the Queen of Navarre, and the works of Boccaccio and Cinthio. The ancient Greek and Latin authors, frequently quoted for the short exempla with which even Elizabethan sermons abounded, also yielded material for such works as The Orator: Handling a hundred several Discourses, in form of Declamations: Some of the Arguments being drawn from Titus Livius and other ancient Writers, the rest of the Author's own invention: ... Written in French by Alexander Silvayn, and Englished by L.P.(1596)

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6 Vide The Cambridge Bibliography of English Literature, i, 728-9.
7 Their popularity is attested to by frequent reprints:
   The Palace of Pleasure, 2 vols. 1566-7; 1569; 1575; pt. ii only [?1580]
   Certain Tragical Discourses, 1567; 1579.
   A Petite Palace of Pettie his Pleasure, 1576; [?1578]; [?1580];
   1606; 1618.
8 It is usually assumed that this is Lazarus Piet, i.e. Anthony Munday.
and *The Theatre of God's Judgments: Or, A Collection of Histories out of Sacred, Ecclesiastical, and profane Authors, concerning the admirable judgments of God upon the transgressors of his commandments. Translated out of French, and augmented by more than three hundred Examples, by Th. Beard (1597).*

One of the most interesting aspects of these Elizabethan collections of tales is that some of the most popular and most frequently translated stories were, in fact, concerned with dishonour and revenge. One notable example is the story of the Duchess of Malfi. From Bandello (*Novelle, i, 26*) it was translated into French (*Belleforest, Histoire 19*) and first appeared in English in *The Palace of Pleasure*, (ii, 23). It was used by Thomas Beard to illustrate 'whoredoms committed under colour of Marriage', the twenty-second chapter of his *Theatre of God's Judgments;* and references to it are found in George Whetstone's *Heptameron of Civil Discourses* (1582), Barnabe Riche's *Farewell to Military Profession* and *The Forest of Fancy* by H. C. 9

The history of the adulterous Countess of Celant (Bandello, i, 4) was reproduced by both Fenton and Painter. The cruel revenge for honour by which the Lady of Turin was forced to strangle her lover and then be walled up with his corpse till she died (Bandello, ii, 12) was retold by Painter. He also translated from the Queen of Navarre's *Heptameron* the equally cruel revenge of the husband who made his wife

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use her lover's skull as a goblet: a story which Whetstone recounted in greater detail. The massacre with which the dishonouring of a lieutenant's wife was avenged on the Lords of Nocera (Bandello, i 55) was also included in The Palace of Pleasure and described by Thomas Beard. The story of the Lady of Chabrye (Bandello, ii, 33) was retold in Bernabe Riche's Right Excellent and pleasant Dialogue, between Mercury and an English Soldier (1574), having been previously translated by Fenton. The tragedy of Appius and Virginia appeared in both Painter's and Fettie's collections. The former also contained Boccaccio's tale of the revenge of Tancred of Salerno for his daughter's dishonour; and the latter included the legend of Tereus and Progne. In Geoffrey Fenton's Certain Tragical Discourses there also appeared the account of the murder of her child by a young lady in Milan (Bandello, iii, 52): a story which might be considered as her revenge for the desertion of the child's father. Probably the most famous of the stories printed in Whetstone's Heptameron was Cinthio's Promus and Cassandra which Whetstone himself dramatised before Shakespeare made it the foundation of Measure for Measure.

The most remarkable characteristic of these translations is their moral tone. Boaistuau and Belleforest moralized upon their versions of Bandello and the English translators continued in the same spirit. The pages of Fenton's work, in particular, burn with righteous

10 An Heptameron of Ciuill Discourses (1582), Sigs. K_1\textsuperscript{r} - L_2\textsuperscript{r}.
12 Sigs. I_3\textsuperscript{r} - L_8\textsuperscript{v}.
indignation when, for instance, he describes the young Milanese lady's
delivery and the murder of her child. At the same time he also appears
to be fascinated by the very gruesomeness of the story. The same
dichotomy of moral outlook is found in The Theatre of God's Judgments.
The reader frequently feels that the example are more important than
their moral: a feeling encouraged by the fact that later editions of
the work, appearing in 1612 and 1631, contained an even greater number
of these examples.

In his chapters concerning rape, adultery and similar offences
Beard equates man's revenge for honour with God's vengeance for sin on
the grounds that death was ordained as God's punishment for adultery
under the Jewish law. As will be seen later, it was accepted on the
stage, as probably also in life, that if a man made an honest woman of
the girl he had betrayed, he would not have to suffer vengeance from
her kinsfolk. Beard's judgments are not so tempered with mercy. He
includes among his examples of God's revenge for rape the judgment of
King Otho in the case of a man who had married the woman whom he had so
dishonoured. The woman herself had first begged for justice when Otho's
army was passing through Italy and Otho had promised to revenge her
wrong when he returned, calling upon a nearby church to witness his
vow. Beard's account continues:

Now when hee had made an end of his warfare, in his returne,
as hee beheld the church, hee called to mind the woman and
caused her to be fetcht, who falling down before him desired
now pardon for him whom before she had accused, seeing he had
now taken her to wife, & redeemed his injurie with sufficient
satisfaction: Not so I sweare (quoth Otho) your compacting
shall not infringe, or collude the sacred law, but hee shall
die for his former fault, and so he caused him to be put to death. A notable example for them that after they have committed filthiness with a maid, think it no sin, but competent amends, if they take her in marriage whom they abused before in fornication.\textsuperscript{13}

This is immediately followed by the story of a woman who prostituted her honour to save her husband's life. The unjust captain by whom she was oppressed had her husband executed nevertheless. The woman appealed to Gonzago, Duke of Ferrara who decreed that the Captain should marry her and then suffer death. This kind of punishment, commended by Beard, was threatened on the stage, but never executed.\textsuperscript{14}

Beard devotes no less than four chapters to examples of revenge for adultery. These include the account of Maximus's revenge for honour executed on the Emperor Valentinian and, as mentioned above, the story of the Lords of Nocera. In no instance does he condemn the avenging husband who kills his wife's lover or his wife also. If this attitude was endorsed by a man translating and writing with a religious purpose, it is not surprising that it was condoned on the stage.

In Painter's, Fenton's and Pettie's works alone, over thirty of Bandello's \textit{Novelle} had appeared in English by 1576. The Queen of Navarre's \textit{Heptameron} was translated in its entirety twenty-one years later. Surprisingly, it was 1620 before Boccaccio's \textit{Decameron} appeared in English. Thus, although it had been read and used by English writers since Chaucer, the influence of the \textit{Decameron} on English fiction

\textsuperscript{13} P. 313.
\textsuperscript{14} Cf. \textit{Measure for Measure}.
in the sixteenth century was by no means as important as that of Bandello's Novelle.

Moreover, there was this important difference between Bandello and Boccaccio: the latter was not as useful for the Elizabethan writers' moral purpose as the former and this may have contributed to his comparative neglect by them. Whereas, for example, Bandello's Novelle abounded in examples of revenge for honour which could be interpreted as God's vengeance for sin, the Decameron applauded the cleverness of wives who enjoyed their loves without their husbands' knowledge. The enjoyment of love, an enjoyment which makes the moralist feel uncomfortably prudish, is the keynote of Boccaccio's tales. Lovers, especially young lovers, can do no wrong in his sight. If they suffer, as did Ghismonde and Guiscardo, they die claiming the reader's sympathy, not his disapproval. The kind of revenge for honour of which Boccaccio apparently approved was that of Agiluffo, King of Lombardy (Day 3, novel 2) who, failing to discover which of his servants had cuckolded him

... he concluded, not to win eternall shame, by compassing a poore revenge: but rather (by way of admonition) to let the offender know in a word, that he was both noted and observed. So turning to them all, he says; He that hath done it, let him be silent, and doe so no more, and now depart about your businesse.

Some other turbulent spirited man, no imprisonments, tortures, examinatons, and interrogatories, could have servd his turne; by which course of proceeding, he makes the shame to be publikely knowne, which reason requireth to keepe concealed. But admit that condigne vengeance were taken, it diminisheth not one title of the shame, neither qualifieth the peoples bad affections, who will lash out as
liberally in scandal, and upon the very least babbling rumor. 15

If the Elizabethans wished to read prose accounts of revenge for honour they had only to turn to the pages of Painter, Fenton, Beard or Whetstone in order to do so. Nevertheless, it was left mainly to English dramatists, not to prose writers, to adapt these stories for their own use. Thus Boccaccio, comparatively neglected by the translators and prose writers, provided plots for Shakespeare, Marston, Beaumont and Shirley; Cinthio gave us, through Shakespeare, Measure for Measure and Othello; and Bandello yielded a host of plots for plays as memorable as Romeo and Juliet or The Duchess of Malfi. The dramatists' borrowings were more assimilated than those of the prose writers. The resultant plays were always their own and, more often than not, the atmosphere became English even when the characters' names remained Italian.

When prose writers borrowed or plagiarized there was no comparable transformation or anglicization of their material. One is often uncomfortably aware that the plot is not original, even if one cannot trace the source. Thus the influence of Bandello may be traced in almost the entire range of Elizabethan fiction. 16 At the same time this influence overlaps, in places, those of the Greek and Palmerin romances and the English stimuli provided by Sir Philip Sidney and John Lyly. Nevertheless, one immediate result of the publication of

15 The Decameron Containing An hundred pleasant Nouels (1620), i, fos. 24v - 25r.
collections of stories from 1560 onwards may be distinguished. For some writers of English prose fiction began their careers in this field by publishing small groups of Italian tales (whether or not they acknowledged the sources) which were linked together by narratives of their own.

Barnabe Riche produced four such books between 1574 and 1584. The first of these, A Right Excellent and pleasant Dialogue, between Mercury and an English Soldier (1574) is largely occupied with a discussion of military discipline and the soldier's profession, but at the end Riche recounts his version of the story of the Lady of Chabrye. In Riche his Farewell to Military Profession (1581) he admitted that three of the eight component tales were Italian, but said that the rest were forged only for delight. Of those which Riche claimed as his own, two have parallels in Italian novelle while the first tale, 'Sappho, Duke of Mantona' is composed of borrowings from at least eight stories, six of them from Painter's translations, which were at times copied verbatim. Thus it does not contribute to our knowledge of the Elizabethan code of honour to note that Valerye dishonoured herself by marrying beneath her station, as Riche's conception of her relationship with Silvanus is copied from that between the Duchess of Malfi and Antonio Bologna as described by Painter. Similarly, the revenge

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17 'Riche his Farewell to Militarie Profession', Eight Novels employed by English Dramatic Poets of the Reign of Queen Elizabeth, Edited by J.F. Collier (The Shakespeare Society, 1846), p. 16.
18 Appollonius and Scilla, cf. Bandello ii, 36; Phylotus and Emilia, of Cinthio Hecatomithi, Decade iii, 8, but see Pruvoest, op. cit., pp. 86-91.
planned by the Duke of Ferrara for the secret marriage of his niece Portia in The strange and wonderful adventures of Don Simonides, a gentleman Spaniard (1581) may have been influenced by the same source.

Otherwise this work shows a marked development of Riche's own narrative technique. It is an episodic romance which recounts more frequently the adventures of the people whom the hero meets than his own experiences. The stories vary in length and content. The tale of the hermit Aristo is a straightforward narration of a fall from felicity. The account of Simonides's residence with Titerus and the shepherds is a miniature romance in the Greek pastoral style. The longest episodes, those of the Lady Portia and of Lamia the merchant's wife, both contain elements of revenge for honour. In the former the Duke of Ferrara does not find Portia and her husband till they are dead and revenge is useless. In the latter, Lamia and her bawd Mondule contrive to hoodwink her husband so that he is unable to execute the revenge that he had planned. Though the descriptive detail in this episode is Riche's own, the plot is probably derived from Bandello (IV, 17).

In The second Tome of the Travels and adventures of Don Simonides (1584) Riche was more concerned with philosophical debate than with story telling, and the influence of euphuism is stronger in this work than those of the novella or the romance.

Thus, though Riche's work shows an interest in the concept of revenge for honour, it is the interest of a narrator looking for

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striking situations, not of a philosopher or moralist concerned with a problem of human behaviour. In utilizing such situations Riche adapted them from his models without manifesting any concern for their psychological or moral implications.

Another Elizabethan writer to produce prose fiction in the form of short stories was Robert Greene. Whereas Riche began his career as a writer in this way, Greene had already published two long romances, Arbeste and Gwydonius before the appearance of his first collection, Planetomachia, in 1585. Nevertheless, Greene was at least as much, and probably more influenced by the novelle than was Riche. He may never have borrowed as copiously in a single tale as Riche did in 'Sappho, Duke of Mantona', but his works abound with echoes of other writers and his later works often reproduce ideas and phrases from his earlier. 21

In Morando The Tritameron of Love, published a year before Planetomachia, Morando's guests discuss questions concerned with problems of love, but without illustrating their arguments. In Planetomachia a discussion takes place among the planets of their differing effects and influences. This is illustrated by three tragic examples, one of which is based on revenge for honour. The first, Venus's tragedy, reveals the effects of a Saturnine constitution; in reply, Saturn's tragedy demonstrates the evil influence of Venus;

21 Greene's almost verbatim borrowings from Pierre de la Primaudeye's The French Academie (translated in two parts, 1586 and 1594) are noted by H.C. Hart in Notes and Queries, Series X, vol. v (1906), pp. 203-204; 343-344; 424-425; 442-445; and 463-465.
finally, the operation of Mars is seen in Jupiter's tragedy. Though not specifically described as such, Saturn's is a tragedy of honour.

It is also an interesting illustration of Greene's method of plagiarism. To the fact of history that the Egyptian king Psammetichus became infatuated with Rhodope, a courtesan, and made her his Queen, Greene adds a fictional Prince, Philarkes, who is beloved of his young step-mother. When Psammetichus discovers them in bed together tragedy ensues. The king waits only long enough to summon some nobles to witness the fact.

His raging threats awaken the lovers, and then

The king disdainfully to debate of ye matter with these vilde wretches, pulling forth his arming swordes, at too stroakes dispatched them both: a punishment too good for such a haynous offence, and a death not sharpe enough for suche incestuous traitours.

The conclusion is Greene's own, but the moral point at the end echoes the comments of Painter and Fenton upon their translations. Similarly, the story of Alcestes' war on the Thracian king and his daughter Lidia, told in Greene's Orpharion, provides an interesting example of the revenge of the rejected lover grafted on to an idea probably derived from Ariosto's Orlando Furioso.

Euphues his Censure to Philautus (1587) combines the euphuism suggested in its title with the formal debates of Morando and the tragic example of Planetomachia. To the latter type belongs Ulysses'

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22 This, the correct and complete arrangement of Planetomachia is found in only one of the five extant copies. Vide Chauncey Sanders and William A. Jackson, 'A Note on Robert Greene's Planetomachia (1585)', The Library: Fourth Series, (1935-6), pp. 444-447.
23 Planetomachia (1585), Sig. I3r.
tale, one of the four tragedies in this work, which illustrates divine revenge for adultery. The heroine of the tale is probably a combination by Greene of the Countess of Celant and the Lady of Chabrye, but the plot is his own. It is Greene's only original treatment of this kind of revenge in a short story. Though the fear of a revenge at her husband's hands haunts both Maedina, the wife of King Polumestor and Vortymis, the young courtier whom she seduces, her tragedy is accomplished by divine, not human, vengeance. Polumestor is at first depicted as a very jealous husband, yet his reaction to Maddina's adultery, though influenced by the consideration that she has fled to an enemy's land, is surprisingly mild. He wishes her to return and is willing to let Vortymis remain in banishment, but be rich. Unfortunately, the letter conveying this news reaches Maedina too late. She has already grown tired of Vortymis and poisoned him, which Greene calls

... the end of such Adulterous ingratitude, as preferring the loue of a strumpet before the lawes of the Gods, runne headlong vpon mishap and revenge.

The letter drives Maedina to despair and suicide: a sequel described as "the guerdon of Adultry, and the Iustice of the gods." In Helenus' tragedy the emphasis is on human revenge. The murder of Possianus and his Caspian lords by his bride, Queen Cimbriana, and her ladies is a revenge for defeat in battle and threatened dishonour.

26 Ibid., p. 264.
27 Euphues his Censure to Philautus (1587), Sig. E.  
28 Ibid., 'Sig. E.  

In the remainder of Greene's short stories, comprising Penelope's Web, Perimedes the Blacksmith, Alcida, Orpharion, Greene's Farewell to Folly and Greene's Vision, his attitude to revenge for honour varies with the provenance of the plot. Thus the first and second of Penelope's tales, neither of which is original, are concerned with the exemplary preservation of fidelity by wives sorely tempted. The first tale related by Perimedes describes how the Despot of Decapolis reacts to the news that his daughter is with child by Procidor, a young courtier of unknown origin:

... as a main in raged furie, and revenge, driving reason out of conceipt, he presently caused Procidor to be apprehended, and his daughter Marcella, resolving that according to the law of the countrey, they should die.

Tragedy is averted by the intervention of Marcella's mother, and later turned to happiness when it is learnt that Procidor is nobly born. He is then married to Marcella: and ending which does not, however, indicate that Greene interpreted the code of honour leniently, for the whole story is closely modelled on Boccaccio's tale of Jehannot and Spina (Decameron, Day III, novel 6).

... In the style of the Decameron, if not actually modelled on two novels from it, is the fabliau of Tomkins which is related as Chaucer's

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30 This theme occurs again in the story of Ninus and Semiramis in Greene's Farewell to Folly which is probably a combination of de la Primaudaye, op. cit., chapter 47 and Pettie's version of Synorix and Camma. (Pruvost, loc. cit., pp. 238-9.)

31 Perimedes The Blacke-Smith (1588), Sig. D1².


Tale in Greene's Vision. Yet, in spite of its possible Italian derivation, there is a very English ring in the cuckold's cry, "Naye you whore ... ile be reuengd both on you and your knaue scholler."  

But, true to the spirit of the fabliau, Kate and her scholar succeed in outwitting her husband. In a similar tale which appeared two years earlier in a minor collection called Tarlton's News out of Purgatory the lovers who escaped a husband's revenge on earth are condemned in purgatory to be whipped with nettles. Despite their English setting, Richard Johnson's The pleasant conceits of Old Hobson (1607) include two incidents derived from Foglio's Facetiae, but neither this work nor Tarlton's Jests (1638) contains any elements of revenge for honour.

Thomas Lodge was also guilty of plagiarism in compiling his collection of short tales, The Life and Death of William Long Beard (1593). The account of how William revenged impiety by slaying Arthur Brown who deceived him of his Maudlin is a blunt story of revenge on the interloper followed by reconciliation with the mistress. Among the "manye other most pleasant and prettie histories" the wondrous revenge for honour executed by Megollo Lercato on the Emperor of Trabisond is very similar to one of Bandello's tales (ii, 14). Even if Lodge did

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34 Greanes Vision Written at the Instant of his death 1592, Sig. D4v.
35 Vide M.A. Scott, op. cit., p. 39.
37 R. Pruvost, Matteo Bandello and Elizabethan Fiction, p. 96.
not borrow this story from Bandello or Belleforest, there is a flamboyant cruelty in it which savours more of the Italian than the English. It is unlike anything else in original English fiction outside The Unfortunate Traveller or Lodge’s own Margarite of America and Robert, second Duke of Normandy. Megollo had been playing chess with a young nobleman when they fell out and the latter uttered certain speeches in contempt of the Genowafies. Megollo gave him the lie and, finding his country dishonoured and the court laughing at him, sought remedy at the Emperor’s hands. The Emperor gave Megollo no satisfaction and so he equipped two galleys and fought against the Emperor’s three ships, cutting off the noses and ears of all whom he captured. Finally, the Emperor was forced to send the young man to Megollo. He, however, wept and proved himself such a milksop that Megollo refused to take revenge on him. Nevertheless, the Emperor was constrained to build a palace in Trebisond for the accommodation of Genowafies.

The only other major writers to produce short stories were Richard Johnson, whose Pleasant conceits of Old Hobson has already been discussed, and Nicholas Breton. Breton’s The Will of Wit, Wit’s Will or Will’s Wit is composed of discourse and debate, together with a long episodic story entitled "The Miseries of Mavillia", which is redolent of the tragicomic satire of Nashe’s Unfortunate Traveller. The use of a deliberately extreme revenge for honour for comic effect is seen in the fifth of Mavillia’s miseries. She has just decided to accept one

of her many suitors, a young gentleman, when she encounters a detestable old suitor. Mavillia tries to dismiss him, but he follows her and insists before witnesses that she has just plighted him her troth. In spite of all that she can say to the contrary, he asserts,

Yes ... but you did mean it, and you did it, and you shall performe it, or I will know why to the contrary. ... I will plague you for your lustinessse, and therefore resolve to make me amends with courtesy, or I will requite thee with such crueltie, as thou shalt repent thy pride I warrant thee. 39

On her wedding day the old man, bald, deaf, half-blind, misshapen and rheumy as he is, swears to be revenged on Mavillia and her husband. Accordingly he sets upon them one day with two knaves who bring her husband to his knees to beg mercy, saying

... I haue offended you, if this Gentlewoman haue made you any former promise: if not, let your conscience accuse you, of wrong to vs, and offence to God: ... 40

When Mavillia adds her entreaties the old man declares that she may choose whether she would rather lose her husband or her nose. She pleads for death rather than either of these, and the old man feigns mercy, asking only a parting kiss from her. Of the sequel she relates,

I with teares in mine eyes, leaping in heart for joy of this good promise, ranne to him, and taking him about the necke to kissse him, the cankred old villaine (with the ilfaouured teeth that hee had) bit off my Nose, and so with his two villaines like himself, away he goes. 41

Thus, among the short tales by Elizabethan prose writers, only three provide examples of revenge for honour which are almost certainly

39 The Will of Wit, Wits Will or Wills Wit (1596), edition of 1599, Sig. Ff.4.
40 Ibid., Sig. Gg2r.
41 Ibid., Sig. Gg2v.
original: Greene's Saturn's Tragedy and Ulysses' Tragedy and the fifth of Breton's 'Miseries of Mavillia.' Though the first of these illustrates an unhesitatingly executed revenge for adultery it is not explicitly described as revenge for honour. The theme of the second is God's revenge for sin. Even Mavillia's nasty old suitor does not mention dishonour, despite his frequent threats of vengeance. His revenge, is, in fact an act of spite and malice similar to those in the drama.

Nevertheless, Elizabethan translations and adaptations of the Italian novelle as a whole reveal that revenge for honour was used by prose writers as a means of providing sensation. It also appears that such ideas as a husband's or kinsman's right to execute blood revenge on erring women were accepted without modification. It is evident that both translators and adaptors shared a moral purpose, for the fabliau in which illicit love goes unpunished, was rare. Above all, the fact that major writers such as Greene, Lodge and Riche included revenge for honour in their stories, whether original or not, indicates that they and their readers were interested in revenge for honour, even if their interest did not result in any discussion of its implications: a discussion which was, indeed, precluded by the brevity of these tales.
In deciding which Elizabethan works of fiction were more influenced by Euphues than by the romances one has to accept such a rough criterion as that implied in Professor C.S. Lewis's distinction between declamatory and narrative fiction:

By separating these romances from the previous genre I do not imply that they are always less rhetorical, still less that their rhetoric is not often pure euphuism. The difference is that, beneath all the rhetoric, there is a genuine narrative interest. As the writers of euphuistic fiction were more concerned with style than plot in most of their work, they did not describe the often swift action of revenge for honour, and even motives of revenge for honour are rare in it.

One notable exception to this is Lyly's Euphues itself. Though dishonour is not specifically mentioned, Philautus meditates on his desire for revenge when he is rejected by Lucilla in favour of Euphues, and he sends Euphues a letter which appears at first to be the prelude to a challenge. It threatens,

_Dost thou thinke Euphues that thy crafte in betraying me, shall any whit coole my courage in reuenging thy villany? or that a Gentleman of Naples will put vpp such an inuury at the hands of a Scholler?_ 43

Nevertheless, despising what he deems a base conquest, Philautus adds,

... there can no greater reuenge lyghte vpon thee, then that as thou hast reapèd where an other hath sowen, so an other may thresh y which thou hast reapèd: I will prey that thou mayst be measured vnto with the lyke measure that thou hast meaten vnto others: ... 44

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43 _Euphues_. _The Anatomy of Wyt_ (1578), fo. 36v.
44 Ibid., loc. cit.
Euphues' reply also hints at a combat:

... as for revenge thou arte not so able to lende a blowe as I to wond it; nether more venterous to challenge the combatte, then I valyant to aunswer the quarrel. 45

When the two meet again they are concerned with the disloyalty of Lucille rather than with their own quarrel. Their old friendship is renewed, "both abandoning Lucilla as most abominable." 46

Although Euphues had less plot than any of its successors, including Lyly's sequel, Euphues and His England, the concept of revenge for honour, adumbrated in the former, played a part in only one other euphuistic work, Brian Melbancke's Philotimus (1583). Melbancke's euphuism - if indeed it may be so called - was sui generis. As Professor Hyder Rollins has demonstrated, Melbancke's prose was largely composed of wholesale borrowings from poetry. A more important aspect of his style was its laboriousness. The formal debate, which in Lyly or Greene had been modelled on the books of courtesy, is clumsily handled by Melbancke. He employs the technique of the debate to replace normal conversation - as in the attempt by Telamon to seduce Castibula - or correspondence - as when Philotimus sues to be readmitted to Aurelia's favour.

In each of these instances revenge for honour is at the heart of the discussion. Castibula is the mother of Philotimus; Telamon is a friend of her husband, Cleocritus. What could have been effective as a short

45 Ibid., fo. 32r.
46 Ibid., fo. 38r.
incident among Philotimus's misfortunes becomes tedious and improbable as Telemon assails her honour and Castibula defends it in thirteen pages of verbosity which contains neat aphorisms, but little fresh information about a husband's attitude to his wife's dishonour other than Castibula's expression of the conviction that it is impossible for a wife to deceive her husband. She affirms this twice, the second time in one of Melbancke's better similes:

An husband is to his wife like a spider in the middle of her web. For if any part of the said copweb (sic) be but touched with the point of a needle, forthwith the spider feeleth it: And if the wives honesty bee never so little cracked, she shall juggle closelye but he will perceive it. 48

When narrative is his concern, Melbancke can be concise. He wastes little space in recounting Telamon's murder of Cleocritus, Castibula's marriage to Telamon, her murder of him and suicide by poison. The narrative progresses swiftly as Philotimus goes to join Aurelia, but once she has deserted him for Cornelius there is a lengthy pause for their correspondence.

The dishonour mentioned in their letters is indefinable. Melbancke seems to use the word without understanding its implications. Philotimus speaks of Aurelia's desertion as dishonest and declares that "rage hath sworne to seeske reuenge of wronge."49 As they were not married it is strange that in her reply Aurelia should taunt him with cuckold's horns.

Melbancke duplicates actions as well as statements. On page 162 we read that Philotimus often sent his challenge to Cornelius, but the coward could not be brought to meet him. Loaded with grief, Philotimus

48 Philotimus (1583), p. 111. Her earlier statement is on p. 104.
49 Ibid., p. 131.
50 Ibid., pp.133, 146.
soliloquizes on his condition and decides to issue another challenge to Cornelius (p. 166) but changes his mind. He seeks advice from two of his friends, writes a pamphlet, and then once more (pp. 191-2) challenges Cornelius, sending his gauntlet as a pledge of revenge. Aurelia composes her lover's refusal, and Philotimus is grieved to the heart that he cannot hurt him by wile or weapon. He accepts the situation, however, and is last seen entering the service of a prince.

This work has been considered in detail, not merely to emphasize its tediousness, but to give an indication of the limitations of euphuistic fiction. Few writers found themselves able to exclude as much action from their work as Lyly did. Though many sought popularity by the use of Euphues' name on their title pages, they were usually content to borrow only the style from Lyly and combine it with a romantic plot.

In only one later euphuistic work, apart from those of Greene, are questions of honour discussed. This is Chettle's Piers Plaimes seven years Prentiship in which Rhegius is so given over to loose desires that he neglects the regard of honour and seeks to seduce his own niece, Queen Aeliana of Crete. His arguments, delivered in a markedly euphuistic vein, are chiefly interesting because they echo similar persuasions in Elizabethan and Jacobean drama: 52

_Curst be those lawes that binde men from that which Nature denyeth not to beasts. The lightfoote Roe is conversant with his Dame, the Birde billeth with those of the same_.

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51 *e.g.* Greene's Menaphon, Camilles Alarum to Slumbering Euphues; Dickenson's Arias, Euphues amidst his Slumbers; Lodge's Euphues Shadow, the battle of the Sense and Rosalynde Euphues Golden Legacy. In the last the legacy is for the sons of Philautus and Camilla. Philautus married Frances, not Camilla.

east, the Dolphin wantoneth with fish of the same spawne: but men have imposed burthens on men which neither they themselves, nor their fathers before them could keep. Myrrha loued hir father, Byblis hir brother: this in the worlds eye was preposterous, to Nature not abhorring, to loue agreeing: why shoulde not Loue and Nature then command Lawe, seeing from them Law onely holdes hir cheefe positions.

Aeliana is able to restrain the fury of her uncle's passion on this occasion, but it is later aggravated by the favour which she shows to Prince Aemilius of Thrace. Despite Rhegius's further plotting all ends happily when he meets Aemilius's sister Rhodope whose "first view sodainly changed Rhegius lawles affections."

It was probably not so much the limitation of action in euphuistic fiction that prevented the inclusion of revenge for honour as its limitation of subject matter and treatment. When euphuistic fiction had a framework of plot it did indeed, as in Euphues and His England, Morendo, The Tritameron of Love of Ciceronis Amor Tullies Love, concern the progress of a love affair between a gentleman and lady who meet and become acquainted through formal discussion of the exchange of letters. Love is usually the subject of their debates, but lack of success is attributed to woman's inconstancy, as in Euphues, rather than to the intervention of a rival. The possibility of love being seriously entertained between a married lady and a courtier does not arise. Thus its limited subject matter precluded from the euphuistic fiction one of the commonest kinds of revenge in the drama, the revenge of the dishonoured husband.

53 H. Chettle, Piers Plainnes seauen yeres Prentiship (1595), Sig. F₃r.
54 Ibid., Sig. I₂r.
Sir Philip Sidney's Arcadia and the romance.

In the longer prose fiction of the sixteenth century the influence of translations is no less evident than in the shorter. One main difference, however, is that this influence on prose romances combines elements from ancient as well as contemporary sources; on the one hand, the work of the Greek novelists - Longus, Heliodorus and Achilles Tatius; and on the other hand the Palmerin romances of sixteenth century Spain. Of the earlier group the Aethiopice of Heliodorus, the most frequently reprinted and probably the best known, was translated by Thomas Underdowne and first published circa 1569, a corrected edition appearing eight years later. Angell Daye's version of Daphnis and Chloe appeared in 1587, but was not reprinted. A Latin De Clitophontis & Leucippos amoribus libri viii was printed in Cambridge, circa 1589. The first English translation, made by William Burton in 1597 came too late to have a great effect on the major Elizabethan prose writers. Greene and Sidney were, however, familiar with the original. The Palmerin cycle of romances were made popular through Anthony Munday's versions which appeared between 1581 and 1595.

The second main difference between the influence of the novelle and that of the Greek and Spanish romances on Elizabethan prose fiction is that there are few borrowings from the romances which can be traced exactly. It is often difficult to determine which type of romance has had the greatest influence on a work. For the Greek and Spanish

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romances had many elements in common, such as the concealed birth and/or exposure of a child; its subsequent education by foster parents; the use of a recognition token; the hero's unswerving devotion to the heroine, a heroine who was destined to be his by the operation of fate or a divine decree; and the postponement of their marriage by accidents and adventures. If the Spanish romances had such elements in common with the Greek, they also had much in common with Arthurian and other medieval romance and with *Amadis de Gaule*. For all the elements just listed may be found in either the *Amadis* or in medieval romance. The Greek romances, moreover, contained such rhetorical devices as unnatural natural history very like that of euphuism.

Pastoral romance, of the type of *Daphnis and Chloe*, popularized in the work of Lodge and Greene, was a major influence - with aspects of the *AEthiopica*, too - on Sidney's *Arcadia*, which in turn influenced later Elizabethan prose fiction. In discussing the prose romances it is, therefore, easier to distinguish between pastoral and chivalric than between Greek and Spanish influences; to discover the aim of the stories in general rather than the sources of any romance in particular.

The aim of the prose romancer is the most important single determinant of the incidence of revenge for honour in the romances. For this aim, like that of the translators and adaptors, was a moral one. As a result, the most usual kind of revenge for honour found on the stage, revenge for adultery, arising as it does from an immoral

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57 S.L. Wolff, *op. cit.*., pp. 5-6.
situation, is seldom found. Of the morality of the translators

M. Pruvost writes,

In the pages of Whatstone, Grange, Pettie, Lyly, Rich, Melbancke, Warner and Greene no less than in those of Boaistuau, Belleforest, Painter and Fenton, lust usually works greater havoc than it does in the Amadis romances, and greater insistence is laid upon the duties of conjugal faithfulness and chastity. The long moralizing disquisitions that Boaistuau and Belleforest are so very fond of, are not to be found to the same extent in the Spanish romances. They confront us at every turn in the Elizabethan novels. 58

Yet, if the Spanish romances were lacking in lengthy moral disquisitions, they were not, in fact, lacking in morality; though it was a morality that accepted premarital (but not extramarital) intimacy as honourable if marriage were promised or intended to the lady concerned. As an American scholar has demonstrated, the divergence between medieval and Spanish romance lay in the attitude to love:

Of the characteristics of amour courtois - humility, courtesy, adultery, and the religion of love - only the courtesy inherent in aristocratic society survives in the Spanish romances. In them adultery is not glorified; it is deprecated. Marriage is consistently conceived as a romantic ideal, and the compatibility between love and marriage is insisted upon. 59

The writers of short tales and prose romances also shared the same ambivalent attitude to sin. This is not, in the romances, expressed in descriptions of violence or immorality, as it was in the translations; but rather in long temptation scenes in which a virtuous heroine is subjected to the attempts of a seducer or the excessive ardour of her chosen hero. In the latter instance a compromising

58 Matteo Bandello and Elizabethan Fiction, p. 320.
59 Mary Patchell, op. cit., p. 70.
situation, leading to revenge for honour, could easily arise. Even if the revenge were not executed, the description of such incidents, common to pastoral and chivalric romance alike, demonstrates the author's awareness of and possible interest in the demands of the code of honour.

The best example of this kind of situation in romance is found in Sir Philip Sidney's *Arcadia* which surpasses the rest of Elizabethan fiction as the work of Shakespeare does the rest of Elizabethan drama. Sidney's attitude to revenge for honour is also comparable with Shakespeare's because he too was concerned with justice, kingship and the relationship between the ruler and the state. Thus, what might have been a conventional situation - the finding of a young man in a girl's bedchamber - becomes of central importance in the *Arcadia* because the girl is a princess and her dishonour taints the nation.

When Pyrocles is discovered asleep beside Philoclea, her father, King *Basilius*, is believed to be dead. So Pyrocles has to answer, not her father, but the state (represented by Philanax) for this presumed dishonour. Justice replaces private revenge and the supposedly guilty couple have to stand trial for adultery which is punishable by death in Arcadia. Even more serious and more complicated is the position of Pamela who was found beside Musidorus in a situation as compromising as that of her sister and Pyrocles. By the presumed death of Basilius, Pamela becomes regent of Arcadia and her honour is, if anything, more important to the country than that of Philoclea. If
the accusations against Pamela's honour were maintained she would be, in Kalendar's words, crowned "with a Crowne of golde, and a dishonoured title."

In the climax of the plot honour is established by justice operating through Evarchus, the wise ruler. But, unlike the justice for dishonour which Shakespeare represents at the end of Measure for Measure, that of the Arcadia is uncompromising and unmerciful. The judgment of Evarchus rings with the same moral tone heard from Beard's King Otho:

Both remember the force of loue, and as it were the mending vp of the matter by their marriage, if that vnbrided desire which is intituled loue, might purge such a sickenes as this, surely wee shoulde haue, many louing excuses of hatefull mischiefe. Nay rather no mischiefe shoulde be committed, that should not be vailed vnder the name of loue.

The two couples are not to be allowed to marry. Having previously decreed that Philoclea should be kept a prisoner for life among certain women of religion in order to repair the touched honour of her house with well observing a strict profession of chastity, Evarchus declares that Pyrocles shall be thrown out of a high tower and Musidorus be beheaded. So sternly impartial is Evarchus that when he learns that the prisoners are his son and nephew he refuses to set the claims of kin above those of justice. It is only when Basilius awakens that the princes' lives are saved and a happy marriage with the princesses is possible.

60 The Countesse of Pembrokes Arcadia. Written by Sir Philip Sidney Knight. Now Since the first edition augmented and ended (1593), fol. 219r.
61 Ibid., fol. 240r.
62 Ibid., fol. 232.
The trial also settles the confusion of honour and justice in the lives of Basilius and his queen, Gynecia. Pyrocles, disguised as a woman, was simultaneously beloved by Basilius and Gynecia. The latter knows Pyrocles to be a man and in love with her daughter, Philoclea. This situation is only made possible by the dishonourable characters of the King and Queen and it therefore gives rise to much discussion of honour. By a device so familiar in the drama Basilius, planning to embrace Zelmane (Pyrocles) spends the night with his wife, who had likewise hoped to be with Pyrocles. Gynecia discovers the mistake first and is inclined to seek revenge on Pyrocles for deceiving her. She later reflects, however, that if she were to do so "her owne honour might bee as much interested, as Zelmane endaungered:"

Similar guilt makes Basilius beg his wife's pardon when he discovers what has happened. Not knowing all the facts, he sees the episode as an establishment and proof of his wife's honour:

He thanked the destenies, that had wrought her honour out of his shame, and that had made his owne striuings to goe amisse, to be the best meanes euer after to hold him in the right pathe.

For her part Gynecia, conscious of the demands of honour and knowing her unworthiness to be the wife of Basilius, submits to false justice in affirming her guilt of the King's supposed murder. Wakening from his death-like sleep, Basilius sets aside this false justice and, moreover, firmly establishes Gynecia's honour by his declaration before all the people that she has preserved her virtue unspotted all her life.

63 Ibid., fol. 204v.
64 Ibid., fol. 205v.
In this presentation of the relationship between justice and honour, Sidney was not merely original, he was possibly twenty years ahead of the thought of his contemporaries. For he was killed two years before The Spanish Tragedy was acted and yet his treatment of revenge for honour in Arcadia foreshadows the work, not of Kyd's immediate successors in the tragedy of blood, but of the more mature dramatists of the Jacobean stage who considered revenge for honour. His achievement in the Arcadia is one piece of convincing evidence that revenge for honour could have been used by later prose writers if they had had Sidney's maturity and depth of vision. Moreover, it also establishes that revenge for honour was of interest and concern to men of letters long before a code of honour was formulated on the stage.

For even some of the minor episodes of the romance illustrate Sidney's interest in private revenge for honour. In his travels Pyrocles encounters Pamphilus, who is being tormented with bodkins by nine gentlewomen whom he has dishonoured. Pyrocles rescues him from what Dido, one of the women, calls "just revenge upon this naughty creature." Unfortunately, Pamphilus does not mend his ways. He had left the nine revengers to become betrothed to Leucippe; but he later deserts her in favour of Baccha. Leucippe reports to Pyrocles that the latter is "the most impudentlie unchaste woman of all Asia", and Pyrocles concludes,

For my selfe, the remembrance of his crueltie to Dido, joyned to this, stirred me to seake some revenge vpon him, but that I thought, it should be a gayne to him to lose his life, being so matched: ...  

65 The Countesse of Pembroke's Arcadia, written by Sir Philip Sidney (1590), fol. 182v.  
66 Ibid., fol. 195v.  
67 Ibid., fol. 200r.
This action, however, is not inspired by a desire to avenge wounded honour so much as by a wish to succour a distressed maiden. Other indications of a code of honour based on chivalric behaviour are Amphialus's declaration that he is dishonoured when the black knight slays his horse under him and Argalus's inability to refuse Amphialus's challenge.

Among these serious matters Sidney includes a comic revenge. Miso, a character of bucolic humour, attempts to avenge the dishonour inflicted on her by her husband's supposed adultery. Thinking that she has caught him with his mistress, she cudgels their own daughter, Mopsa.

Thus Sidney showed an interest in and appreciation of the possibilities of using the concept of revenge for honour to arouse his reader's interest, sympathy or amusement; or to create a tragic or comic atmosphere. The maturity of his outlook on and presentation of revenge for honour were not only in advance of those of other prose writers, but of the Elizabethan dramatists as well.

Other writers copied the style and incidents of Arcadia, but none had Sidney's seriousness of purpose or power of characterization. In no other Elizabethan or Jacobean romance is there similar evidence of the author working out a code of honour or attempting to apply such a code to human behaviour. For lack of characterization and of serious

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68 Ibid., fol. 272r.
69 Ibid., fols. 290r-291r. Cf. the combat of Philonexus and Amphialus (fol. 47) and the story of Plangus (fols. 166v - 172r).
70 Arcadia (1593), fols. 177v and 203r.
interest in anything other than the narrative are the weaknesses of
the lesser romancers. They use revenge for honour to produce striking
situations, often without considering that there is no code which could
justify or excuse some of their fantastic revenges or cruel revengers.
Such a work as Gervase Markham's *The English Arcadia* is an obvious
attempt to reproduce the pastoral romance in an Arcadian setting. The
narrative is complicated and replete with conventions of the Greek
pastoral romance, but they are not used to embody any significant
ideas. John Dickenson's *Arisbas, Euphues Amidst his Slumbers* is also
set in Arcadia, but it is an Arcadia inhabited by Pan, satyrs and
nymphs where Arisbas, Prince of Cyprus had wandered to lament the loss
of his lady, Timoclea. This romance contains no revenge for honour,
but illustrates a concern for the preservation of honour which is one
of the few serious ideas common to the lesser romances.

Arisbas, having become enamoured of Timoclea after his father has
arranged for him to marry a princess, asks her to elope with him to
Arcadia. She will only consent to this on the understanding that her
honour will be preserved; but Arisbas assures her of his honourable
intentions. 71 In losing her on the journey, Arisbas suffers a dishonour
only to be salved by her recovery. 72 During this separation Timoclea
has to strive to preserve her honour. She disguises herself as a boy
after her chastity has been twice assailed in her adventures at sea.
Yet even in this disguise she inspires unnatural affections in the
heart of the neatherd Dorylus.

71 *Arisbas, Euphues amidst his slumbers: Or Cupids Journey to Hell*
(1594), Sigs. C1v; C3.
72 *Ibid.*, Sig. D1v.
This otherwise unimportant work illustrates not only a combination of Arcadian and pastoral elements, but an important motif of English chivalric romance: the trial of the heroine’s honour through her chastity. Such trials provided the writer with scope for the narration of adventures other than those of the hero and were as essential to the plots of English chivalric romances as the hero’s devotion to his lady. This is one aspect of Elizabethan and Jacobean romance which was obviously derived, not from the Palmeirin cycle, but from medieval romance.

This preservation of the heroine’s chastity is the one theme connected with honour which may be discerned in the lengthy and intricate works of Emmanuel Forde, a writer otherwise strongly influenced by the Palmeirin romances. It is, moreover, the most important narrative motif that they all have in common: a fact which indicates how great an importance Forde attached to it.

It appears in the first of Forde’s romances to be published, The Most Pleasant Historie of Ornatus and Artesia (?1595) when, during the first of the long separations of hero and heroine, Artesia is kidnapped by Lenon, a prince whose offer of marriage she has refused. As his prisoner in the Green Fortress, Artesia lives in constant fear of dishonour from his lust. She is rescued from Lenon by Allinus, but is taken from the latter by pirates. They cast lots for her, and she falls to one whose dishonourable intentions have, fortunately, been

73 Vide M. Patchell, op. cit., p. 35
74 The Most Pleasant Historie of Ornatus and Artesia (?1595); Sigs. K1r; K2r; K2v.
changed by her beauty. Ornatus finds her with the pirates and, without revealing his identity, saves both Artesia's life and honour before she falls into Lenon's power again. She is kindlier treated than she was in the Green Fortress, but is still subjected to Lenon's importunity. Ornatus is made her custodian and is able to test her faith by pleading on Lenon's behalf. He has the satisfaction of hearing her reply:

... I cannot fancie him, for that I alreadie have plighted my faith to another more worthie than himselfe, ... and therefore I should dishonour my name, breake my faith, and reape perpetuall infamy, if I should shew my selfe so inconstant.  

Ornatus reveals himself and they plan to escape, Artesia encouraging him to revenge himself on Lenon whose love is an injury to him. Before Ornatus can do this he is discovered coming from Artesia's chamber by two of Lenon's servants whom he kills. Returning to Artesia he finds her asleep and uncovered as Pyrocles found Philoclea. Artesia is not so strong minded as the Arcadian princess, for she yields herself to Ornatus: an action which must be assumed to be honourable because their love is constant and pure. All is made right when, after many other adventures, the romance ends with the pomp and ceremony of their wedding and Ornatus's coronation as the successor, chosen by the people, of Theon and his son Lenon.

75 Ibid., Sig. N.\r.
76 Ibid., Sig. N.\r of Sig. N.\v.
77 In the manuscript version of Arcadia, however, Philoclea does yield herself to Pyrocles and the consummation of the union between Musidorus and Pamela is only prevented by the arrival of a band of robbers. By altering these incidents Sidney was able to give greater prominence to Justice at the end of the book. Vide The Complete Works of Sir Philip Sidney, Edited by A. Feuillerat iv (1926), pp. 226-7; 286.
Though the importance of Artesia's keeping herself chaste for Ornatus is emphasized throughout the romance, there is no explicit statement in it of any code of honour. Revenge is frequently exacted, without any explanation of it being given. To understand the constant threats of revenge between Ornatus and Lenon one must assume that each considered himself dishonoured by the attempts of the other to secure the lady he loved.

The motif of the heroine's imprisonment and subjection to dishonourable intentions is repeated and amplified in Parismus, the Renowned Prince of Bohemia (1598) and its sequel Parismenos (1599). Unlike the heroine and hero of Forde's earlier work, Laurana and Parismus are of royal blood. The reason for the concealment of their love is that Laurana's father has accepted on her behalf the suit of Sicanus, Prince of Persia. Laurana's trial comes much later in the story than did Artesia's. Having survived separations and adventures of many kinds Parismus and Laurana are married with great pomp and to the contentment of their parents. They are on their way to Bohemia when Laurana becomes a prisoner to the tyrant Andramart in the Castle of the Rocks. But whereas Artesia was subject only to Lenon's verbal assaults, Laurana is actually tortured because she refuses to yield to her captor's lust. Moreover, when she gives birth to Parismenos, Andramart threatens to kill him if Laurana remains obstinate. She does not flinch, for considering that if shee should condiscend to loue Andramart, she should both disrobe her self of chastitie, and do a most monstrous inuurie to the noble Parismus,
she resolved rather to see the destruction of her sonne, and endure death. 78

Laurana is rescued in time to prevent these disasters, but Parismenos has been conveyed away for safety by his nurse and his whereabouts are unknown at the otherwise happy conclusion of the romance.

One strange aspect of Forde's attitude to honour is revealed by the fact that Parismus is unfaithful to Laurana and yet the lady whom he seduces is considered no more dishonoured than he is. The incident occurs before Parismus's marriage. Forde makes it quite clear that Parismus, discovering how beautiful Violette is, takes pains to prevent her discovering that he is not the lover whom she expected. Parismus enjoys seducing her yet, as in the Palmerin romances, it is absolute fidelity of heart rather than physical chastity that is the criterion of the hero's conduct with regard to his lady.

What is surprising is that his friend Pollipus, apparently knowing of Violette's relationship with Parismus 79 nevertheless accepts Parismus's aid in his suit to her. The course of this love is complicated by the fact that Violette, still enamoured of Parismus, disguises herself as a page in order to follow him. As a result, all three of them suffer imprisonment and such other adventures together as make the concealment of Violette's sex highly improbable. When she finally realizes the extent of Pollipus's devotion and reveals her

78 Parismus, the Renowned Prince of Bohemia (1598), Sig. Z2v.
79 "Pollipus hauing vnderstoode the cause why Parismus sent for her father, (Parismus louing him so dearly, that he would not conceale any thing from him) revealed vnto Parismus the louse he bare to Violette." The use of the pronoun makes the meaning of the parenthesis ambiguous. Ibid., Sig. R1.
identity, Violette lays great stress on the fact that she preserved her honour while disguised. She even insists that Pollipus restrain his ardour till they shall be married. In Parismenos it is Violette who is separated from her husband in the first chapter and immediately subjected to the lustful assaults of Archas. Unlike Artesia or Laurana, she has actually to resist attempted rape before her escape.

Most of Parismenos, however, is concerned with the hero of the title and his search to find his unknown parents. He has also to find the fair Angelica who is destined by a vision to be his wife. His adventures are therefore in the nature of a quest rather than a test. Nevertheless, Angelica has to undergo the same trials of chastity as other heroines in Forde's romances. Just before her wedding she is captured by the King of Tunis and taken by force from him by Irus who subjects her to such treatment that only his murder saves her honour.

Forde's last published work, The Famous History of Montelyon, Knight of the Oracle (1633), though actually shorter than Parismenos, contains a greater variety of incident and more improbable adventures than the latter. Montelyon, like Parismenos, is ignorant of his parentage, but his search is made even more difficult by the fact that his father, Persicles, does not know of his existence. Although the plot of Montelyon is the most involved of any of Forde's romances, it is the one which contains the most direct statement of the concept of revenge for honour. Montelyon's honour is blemished by a false accusation of

80 Ibid., Sigs. G_{1}^{v}; Ff_{4}^{r}.
rape by Praxentia which causes her father, the King of Macedonia, to
war with Persia and Assyria in order to revenge it. The most intricate
situation in this romance is based on a curious conception of revenge
for honour. The kings of Armenia and Macedonia both seek the love of
Philotheta, who is beloved by Montelyon. Montelyon arranges to save
her honour and deceive the kings. As a result the King of Arménia
vows revenge, first because he thinks that the King of Macedonia has
Philotheta with him, and then because he discovers that it was not
Philotheta, but his own wife, who slept with the King of Macedonia.
At the same time the Queen of Macedonia is discovered in the bed of
Delfurno, Emperor of Almaigne. At first the three monarchs decide that
they had better be friends, and dishonour is temporarily forgotten.
Very soon, however, the King of Armenia declares that he will be
revenge to the full. The King of Macedonia replies that the former
is a tyrant, laying unjust claim to the crown of Assyria. He himself
would not have aided the King of Armenia, "were it not to revenge my
Daughters dishonor to Sons death." These two motives of revenge for
honour combine to produce the final glorious battle in which Montelyon
kills the King of Armenia and helps his father King Persicles to
vanquish his foes. Then, cleared of the false accusation of having
dishonoured Praxentia, Montelyon is free to marry Philotheta.

Even this brief account of Montelyon suffices to indicate that,
whereas in the other romances Forde had used the preservation of honour
as an important motif in his plot, in this romance even revenge for

81 The Famous Historie of Montelyon, Knight of the Oracle, and Sonne
to the Renowned Persicles King of Assyria (1633), Sig. Bb2.
adultery is reduced to the status of another piece of machinery in
Forde's box of tricks and surprises. The plot of Ornatus and Artesia
was improbable, but possible in a world of chivalric adventure. In
Perismus Forde first introduced the elements of magic and enchantment.
Thereafter his plots grew more and more fantastic and involved. In
the world of Montelyon, a world of oracles, spells, magic castles and
enchanters, human situations, such as those involving revenge for
honour, are reduced to insignificance.

Forde's development as a romancer led him away from reality. The
pleasing frankness of his early works - when Ornatus first sees Artesia
lying down "to breathe her selfe, and drie vp her swet"; when Artesia
leaps into bed to piece together and read the letter from Ornatus which
she has just torn up; or when Perismus, losing his knightly courtesy
and temper, flings a stone at a discourteous knight "with such violence
in the backe, that it made the blood start out at his nose" - is
lacking in the later. With Richard Johnson, the other important writer
of chivalric romance before 1640, the development is towards reality,
though it is not the reality of everyday experience. He never was as
strongly influenced by the Palmerin cycle as Forde. His works reflect
rather a backward glance to the medieval romance. Johnson's most
remarkable contribution to the English romance is an attempt to relate
it to an English background and, more important, an English hero.

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82 The most pleasant History of Ornatus and Artesia, Sig. B₁Ⅴ.
83 Ibid., Sig. C₂Ⅴ.
84 Perismus, the Renovmed Prince of Bohemia, Sig. I₂Ⅶ.
In his first published romance, *The most famous history of the Seven Champions of Christendom*, the patron saints of England, France, Spain, Italy, Scotland, Ireland and Wales are seen as wandering knights whose adventures smack as much of the Italian *novella* as of *Palmerin* or medieval romance. In the Italian style are three incidents based on the concept of revenge for honour, albeit the first illustrates a confused idea of it. Ormondine, a "Nigromancer" tells St. George how his elder daughter Castria was dishonoured by Floridan, son to the king of Armenia. Leaving her pregnant, Floridan married her sister Marcilla. Castria vowed revenge and on Marcilla's wedding night stabbed her with a silver bodkin before committing suicide. Why she should avenge her honour on her innocent sister is not clear, but as Floridan himself commits suicide on the sisters' bodies, a poetic justice is achieved.

Both the other incidents concern the trial of a lady's chastity. After St. George had overcome the Barbarians and had departed their country, they sought revenge on all Christians whom they could find. Among these latter was a merchant of Tripoly whose servants were massacred and he and his children tied up while the "bloody minded Negars" offered to dishonour his wife before his face. She would kill herself rather than yield, and even the lives of her children are less valuable to her husband than her honour. He exclaims,

if I had a hundred children, twice the number of King Priam, yet would I loose them all, before I will indure to see my wimmes dishonor; children may be gotten againe, but her honour neuer recovered. 85

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85 *The Most Famous History of the seven Champions of Christendom* (1596), Edition of 1608, Sig. S₄".
At this the children are killed, baked in pies and offered to their parents to eat. The merchant and his wife die of grief. Revenge is left to God, Who preserved their bodies from birds of prey so that they might be consumed like morning dew, "and by the wonderfull workmanship of heauen, in the same place sprung a bower of Roses, to signifie the unspotted honour of the Merchant and his vertuous wife." Much less fanciful is the narration of the attempted rape of St. George's wife Sabra by the Earl of Coventry. When words will not mollify the Earl's violence, she pretends to yield to his wishes. Twining her fingers in his hair, she lulls him asleep with a song before sheathing her poniard in his heart.

The incidents involving revenge for honour in The second Part of the famous History of the seven Champions of Christendom are more contrivedly tragic than those of the first part. The story of the two sisters is repeated, to some extent, as a gruesome variation of the Tereus and Progne theme. Leoger, the Knight of the Black Castle, tries to seduce his sister-in-law in a wood. He first whips her most cruelly and then, when she continues to refuse to yield, he strangles her. In revenge for her sister's death, the Knight's wife kills their baby son before his eyes and then, failing to murder him, commits suicide. Leoger is preserved in order that he may face death for the dishonouring of the Queen of Armenia. She, left pregnant by Leoger, lived only long enough to educate their daughter Rosana to seek out her father and revenge her mother's cause. When Rosana finds him, she delivers

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86 Ibid., Sig. S⁴v.
a letter written by the Queen of Armenia before her death. Having read it, Leoger commits suicide. Rosana buries him with her mother before committing suicide herself.

The most perverse of all Johnson's revengers of honour is the King of Babylon who pursues his daughter Angelica because she eloped with a magician. Angelica pleads with him that he has been in no way dishonoured by her flight, for she lives honourably with her husband, but in vain

with his cruel hand he thrust the poynt of his sword in at her breast, so that it appeared fforth at her backe, whereby her soule was forced to leave her terrestial habitation, and flye into Paradice to those blessed soules, which dyed for true loues sake. 87

In Johnson's last extant romance, The Most Pleasant History of Tom a Lincoln ... the Red-Rose Knight he turned not only to an English setting for most of his narrative, but also to the Arthurian legend, if a strange form of it, for part of his inspiration. Moreover, in the second part of the romance revenge for honour is the theme which unites its otherwise desperate elements. In the first part Tom of Lincoln is introduced as the illegitimate son of King Arthur and the fair Angelica. The King sent his paramour off to a nunmery in Lincoln and exposed the child at a shepherd's gate. This strange attempt to give the story an English atmosphere is not successful for long, for Tom soon wanders abroad, is wrecked on a fairy island and begets a son upon the Queen

87 The second Part of the famous History of the seuen Champions of Christendomae. (1597), Sig. R lv.
88 The earliest extant edition, of 1631, is called the sixth. The first part of the work was entered in the Stationers' Register in 1599 and the second in 1607.
thereof. Nevertheless, the first part of the romance ends happily with Tom's marriage to Anglitora, daughter of Prester John. The tone of the second part is quite different. In the first chapter King Arthur dies, repenting his incontinence, and Johnson changes his attitude to Angelica "who from a pure virgin made her self a desolate strumpet."

The two following paragraphs indicate what is to follow:

Likewise King Arthur's widowed Queen, like to the faithful Hecuba, or the jealous June, kept her Chamber for many dayes, pondering in her minde what revenge she might take upon Angelica her husbands late favourite.

On the other side Anglitora, Lady and Wife to the Red-rose Knight, with her Son the Black Knight, made provision for their departure towards the Land of Prester John, where she was born: so upon a night when neither moon nor star-light appeared, they secretly departed the Court, ... The Black Knight her son ... without taking leave of his father (being then absent in the company of his lewd Grand-mother) with a noble spirit conducted his mother to the Sea side, ...

The revenge of the widowed Queen consists in making Angelica choose which of seven deaths she will die. She chooses the most lingering: a sign of her repentance. The journey of Anglitora takes her, not to the land of Prester John, but to the home of the Knight of the Castle with whom she lives in adultery. Learning from her dwarf that his wife has dishonoured his bed, Tom a Lincoln contemplates revenge, but then decides "with his meek persuasions seek to win her from her wickednesse, and to forget, forgive, and cast out of remembrance all these her un-woman-like demeanours,..." He travels to the Castle, but before he can make known his merciful intentions Anglitora and the

89 The Second Part of the Famous History of Tom of Lincolne ... the Red-Rose (sic) Knight, edition of 1655, Sig. G3.
90 Ibid., Sig. I2.
Knight thrust a scarf of jewels down his throat and bury him in a dunghill. Then, obviously imitating Hamlet, Johnson relates how Tom's ghost urges the Black Knight to revenge his death on his adulterous mother. Calling on "thou revengeful God Nemesis" for assistance, the Black Knight kills the Knight of the Castle in his mother's arms and then kills her also. Finally, having buried both parents together, he spends the rest of his life with his half-brother, the Faerie Knight, in religious devotion and Christian charity.

Viewed as a work of art, The Famous History of Tom a Lincoln is the most carefully constructed of Johnson's romances. It is obvious that he used the theme of revenge for honour to impose order on the otherwise unconsequential episodes of chivalric romance. Yet even in this work, no less than in the others, he shows no understanding of any code of honour. He merely uses stock situations and speeches. One suspects that the influence of stage trappings on his mind extended beyond the ghost of Hamlet or, as the incident of the Merchant of Tripoly suggests, the revenge of Titus Andronicus. His descriptions of action and much of his dialogue show a strong streak of theatricality. He uses revenge for honour as a dramatist might, but without a dramatist's imaginative force or power of characterization. His imagination fails most patently when England ceases to inspire it. One can appreciate the struggle of Sabra in the garden with the Earl of Coventry and, with a considerable suspension of disbelief, one can accept the England of Angelica and the outraged widow of King Arthur. Once outside England, however, Johnson writes of "things impossible
And cast beyond the moon." The result is the improbability of Marcilla's murder of her sister and the King of Babylon's murder of his daughter; neither of which accords with any expressed concept of revenge for honour.

Johnson's chief deficiency lies in characterization. This is illustrated in his imposition of a theme on the second part of Tom a Lincoln. For, in order to give the widowed Queen an opportunity of avenging her honour on the Nun of Lincoln, Johnson's attitude to the latter changes. No longer "the fair Angelica" she is called "a desolate strumpet." Even less convincing is the degeneration of the character of Anglitora. Not only was it a contravention of the accepted pattern of behaviours in chivalric romances that the wife of the hero should prove unfaithful, but Johnson makes no attempt to explain Anglitora's sudden moral downfall. The only realistic touch in the whole episode is the description of how, having committed adultery, Anglitora and the Knight of the Castle sat waiting for her son's arrival, looking as if they had not even spoken to each other in his absence.

That a complete change of character could be successfully accomplished in a prose romance is demonstrated by Barnabe Riche's The Adventures of Brusanus, Prince of Hungary (1592). It is because Riche has command of his characterization that the most far-fetched of Brusanus's exploits are no less credible than his change from a vicious to a nobly repentant life in the opening chapters of the romance. Even that part
of the romance which involves revenge for honour is credible, though the description of it is on a very grandiose scale. At the Court of Ileria, Brusanus, his friend Dorestus and the Princess Moderna become involved in the kind of triangular relationship common in euphuistic fiction: Dorestus loves Moderna, but she loves Brusanus. In time Brusanus returns her affection and, as her father has already promised her hand to Dorestus, they flee the country. The reactions of the King and Dorestus to this news are thus described:

... but unhappy Moderna, / laments the King / sith y traytor
that hath thus inueygled thee, hath not spared to dishonour thy father, I do heere vowe by all the powers of heauen, I will make Hungaria to smoke for his facte, his parents shal curse the time of his nativity, and lament yeuer they brought so wretched a (sic) impe into the world: The king freted not so fast in his melancholy, but Dorestus chafed no lesse in his choler, blaspheming bitterly both against Brusanus and Moderne, but especially against Brusanus and understanding the intent of the king was to make warres with Hungaria, he proffered to strengthen his armie, with tene thousand Epirotes, to be ragedeng of the injury proffered him by Brusanus, ...

Moreover, the King sends his son Antipholus to follow Brusanus and exact a personal revenge. Although Antipholus and Brusanus are reconciled through Brusanus's saving the honour of Antipholus's beloved and the life of her mother, the war between the King of Ileria and the King of Hungaria takes place, despite the latter's protests that he has no part in his son's quarrel. It is only when Dorestus falls in love with Brusanus's sister that there is a reconciliation on all sides.

The dishonour involved in this romance is both that of the family and that of the lover deprived of his promised bride. The joint

revenge of King Mileto and Prince Dorestus is credible because they
are princes. It is both fitting and in keeping with the grand scale
of the romance that they should employ armies to exact a royal revenge.
More understandable, however, is the way in which Antipholus undertakes
his father's quarrel. It is no less natural than his reasons for
abandoning it when he learns how Brusanus's nobility has been proved
in the service of the princess whom he loves.

Probably the best example of strength in characterization among the
minor romancers is to be found in A Defiance to Fortune by Henry Roberts.
Roberts wrote two other romances besides pamphlets in praise of his
native Devonshire. He was, one assumes from his writings on Devon,
 dowright man as well as a patriot. It is his forthright bluntness,
similar to that of the early writings of Forde, that enriches the
characterization and action of his otherwise fantastic fictions.

A Defiance to Fortune, published in 1590, is an adventure story,
yet it is neither a chivalric nor a pastoral romance. Roberts's use
of the concept of revenge for honour in it is, like Johnson's, reminiscent
of the theatre. Roberts had the advantage of Johnson, however, in
possessing the ability to handle situations well. This is particularly
obvious in those situations which lead to revenge for honour, of which
there are two. The first occurs when the hero, Andrugio, Duke of
Saxony, is found in a compromising situation with his protector's sister
and the second when the Saxons rebel against the dishonour he has

92 Vide L.E. Wright, 'Henry Roberts: Patriotic Propagandist and
(vol. XXIX). One of the other romances, Honour's Conquest, I have
not seen.
inflicted on himself, and them, by his marriage to a miller's daughter. The events which lead to this second revenge occur early in the narrative and thus revenge for honour is, in fact, an unifying theme in the romance. For Andrugio is a young man on his way to study at the university of Sienna when misfortune brings him to the miller's home, and when the miller's daughter has nurssed him back to health he continues his journey. When he tries to see her again he is again unfortunate. The ship in which he is travelling is captured by pirates at whose hands and, later, at the hands of others, he endures whipping and other torments. Eventually he is released through the good offices of a noble lord called Jeronimie whose service Andrugio enters. Jeronimie's sister falls in love with him, though Andrugio is not conscious of this. In order to get to know him the girl, Melissina, becomes the friend of Elena, a lady of Saxony whom Andrugio often visits. Being lonely, Andrugio welcomes Melissina's friendship and often visits her too. Unfortunately, this is noted by a secret admirer of Melissina's who, thinking that Andrugio is his rival, becomes jealous and, one night, being drunk

he began to accuse Andrugio of villany, saying, that there was no night escaped, wherein Andrugio used not in moste vile and dishonest manner, the body of madam Melissina. 93

In the morning he and another lord who is jealous of Andrugio's happiness come before Jeronimie and tell him that Andrugio seeks the dishonour of him and his house by accompanying himself with the lady Melissina. It is even affirmed that Andrugio and Melissina have been

93 A Defiance to Fortune (1590), Sig. I1r.
seen "in most vnlawfull sort together on her bed, her mayden beeing sent of purpose away." Jeronimie is, naturally enough, grieved at this news, and determines to test its veracity. He disguises himself and waits outside his sister's lodging where he sees Andrugio and Elena arriving. As ill luck will have it, Melissina and Andrugio become so engrossed in their game of chess that they are unwilling to leave it until one has won. Elena, not wishing to wait longer, sets off for home, taking Melissina's maid for company. Seeing this, Jeronimie can forbear no longer. He makes a dramatic entry:

(checke) quoth Andrugio to the Ladie, which Jeronimie hearing, answered, I villaine, and that checke shall cost thy life, miscreant and vngratefull villaine as thou art, tell mee for which good fauour I have done thee, hast thou sought the confusion of me and mine: ... As for thee lewde Dame, that hast yeelded thy body as a companion to this rascal, I wil take such order as thy hot desies (sic) shall bee made coole enough. Thus furiously hailing Andrugio out of the chamber, he departed, committing him to the custody of the Goaler, ... 

Despite the conventional nature of Jeronimie's entry, Roberts is remarkably original in his treatment of revenge for honour. Not only are the supposed lovers innocent, but the circumstances of their being alone together are so much the result of every-day occurrences that the situation is refreshingly life-like. Unfortunately, Roberts blurs this effect by the sequel. For Melissina dies of grief on the spot. Realizing that she has been innocently slandered, Jeronimie murders the two false accusers, but does nothing to exculpate Andrugio. Eventually he removes him from prison, but only to send him to a nobleman in

94 Ibid., Sig. I_r^V.
95 Ibid., Sig. I_r^r.
Friesland with a request to inflict some grievous torment upon him. Thus Andrugio becomes a draught horse for the conveyance of sledges over the ice.

Although the amount of ill treatment which Andrugio suffers is excessive, the reason for it can be partially understood. Andrugio presumably bears the punishment which would have been better given to Jeronimie himself. Jeronimie transfers his own guilt for Melissina's death to Andrugio and thus revenge for honour degenerates into malice.

The same thing happens when the revengers are the discontented nobles of Saxony. Unlike the heroines of pastoral romance, Susania the miller's daughter is no princess in disguise. When Andrugio, having escaped from Friesland, makes her his bride and Duchess, he is very consciously marrying beneath his blood and station. Their happiness lasts only for two years. At the end of this time two nobles, Gonsalo and Flodericus, raise a rebellion. Their pretext is that Andrugio has dishonoured himself and his posterity by his base marriage. Although Susania has endeared herself to most of the subjects, the rebels prevail. When Andrugio flees from the battlefield, Susania and her two children are left undefended in the city. The rebels want to revenge themselves on her with the sword, but the common people intercede on her behalf and she is sentenced to banishment.

This incident demonstrates the way in which popular feeling may be moved by an appeal to a commonly held belief, even if it is a fallacy.

96 Ibid., Sig. L_{3}r.
that a prince dishonours himself by a base marriage. Yet Robarts was careful to point out that Gonsalo was really incited by envy because Andrugio had refused to marry his daughter. Gonsalo's revenge for honour was only an excuse for him to attempt to gain control of the dukedom. Thus, in a small way *A Defiance to Fortune* shows the author considering the concept of revenge for honour; using it to give unity to the hero's adventures; employing it, not spectacularly, but to demonstrate how men could find in it an excuse for the expression of far less excusable motives for action. His treatment of revenge for honour is, therefore, akin to that of Marston in drama.

In *Pheander, the Mayden Knight*, published five years after *A Defiance to Fortune* the influence of literary convention, especially the convention of chivalric romance, is more marked. It lacks much of the vigour of the earlier work. Its scope is broader; the descriptions are on a grander scale. The action moves ponderously, involving monarchs and armies who move from one country to another over a seemingly large area of the globe. The men who rose against Andrugio were the tenants, kinsmen and followers of two nobles in a small Dukedom. In *Pheander* when Phedera, sister of King Theophilus of Thessaly, refuses the hand of the King of Egypt, he embarks upon a revenge for honour which requires an army to execute. He defeats the Thessalians and forces Theophilus to flee. A further war is then needed to reinstate Theophilus as King of Thessaly. One is reminded of the armies who revenge private injuries in Forde's romances or in *The Adventures of Brusenus, Prince of Hungary*. 
Yet there is evidence of Roberts's lively, even homely imagination in the description of how Prince Dionicus avenged a conceived dishonour by attacking Cariolus with a chess board. The prince had fallen in love with Princess Mutania of Thrace merely on the report of her beauty. So great was his passion that he was moved to violent jealousy only by hearing two Thracian gentlemen, Cariolus and Octavius, speak of her. As a result, he "sought no means, but revenge of him that never committed the least thought of euill against him." Despite a consciousness of his own folly, the prince could not control his feelings. It only required a slight provocation, such as his defeat by Cariolus at chess, to make him vicious. He not only attacked Cariolus, but called him a villain, and accused him of robbing him of his lady. To accept his action as revenge involves a considerable straining of the concept of revenge for honour. But this may have been Roberts's intention. For this action illustrates, much more clearly than the impassioned speeches of lovers in the euphuistic fiction, the madness and folly of youth in love. When Dionicus comes to himself, he laments that by this action he has dishonoured himself for ever, and before Cariolus leaves his court they are reconciled. This sane recognition of folly, not the folly itself, puts the concept of revenge for honour in a true perspective.

Of all the writers of chivalric romance, Roberts was the only one to do this. Forde and Johnson were so influenced by the conventions and

97 Pheander, the Mayden Knight (1595), Sig. C4v.
trappings of romance that in their works revenge for honour had to be extravagantly conceived and executed in order to fit in with their fantastic plots. The only clear idea of honour to be derived from Forde's work, for instance, is that a wife (whether officially married or not) was honourable only as long as she remained chaste. Her husband was considered honourable if he were faithful in intention, if not in act. Otherwise, revenge for honour was to Forde and Johnson no more than another strand to be woven into a plot of constant surprises. Human situations, when forced to compete for the reader's interest with those concerning enchanters and magic castles, lose their reality.

Nevertheless, Johnson showed that revenge for honour could be used in prose fiction, as in drama, as an unifying theme. To a certain extent Henry Robarts also used it in this way in *A Defiance to Fortune*. Johnson could also show originality in characterization. Among his seven champions of Christendom, St. George emerges as the most important; the others are lay figures. Tom of Lincoln is less clearly drawn, for inconsistency was Johnson's main defect. He showed signs of originality in single works which are not found in his work as a whole. Barnabe Riche, on the other hand, was conventional in his handling of plot, as witnessed by his treatment of revenge for honour, but consistent in characterization. In that respect he had a greater ability than either Johnson or Forde. The adventures of Brusanus seem less fantastic than they are, because Brusanus himself comes to life
at the beginning of the story, as his conversion from a life of vice is described with skill and understanding. Moreover, the writer of an adventure story had an advantage over the writer of chivalric romance: for the hero of the former meets so many different kinds of people that the deficiencies in his own character are not necessarily obvious; whereas the hero of chivalric romance is the same, beneath his armour, as his friends, though he may be easily distinguished from his enemies.

Among these lesser writers of romance only Henry Roberts approached the standards of Sir Philip Sidney. For Roberts combined good characterization with originality to produce work that, like Sidney's Arcadia, shows evidence of the author's concern for human action outside the world of the romance. Roberts was thus able to understand that the concept of revenge for honour was very often used as an excuse, if a plausible excuse, for the venting of other passions. It is to be regretted that Roberts, no less than Johnson and Forde, fell a victim to the literary habits and fashions of his day. For in imitation of his predecessors and fellows in Chivalric romance he too, like them, weakened his own undoubted native abilities.

*     *     *
Although there were as many conventions of plot and character in the fiction modelled on the Greek pastoral romance as in that which related deeds of chivalry, it was the former type that was preferred by major writers such as Greene and Lodge no less than by Sir Philip Sidney. Yet, when one comes to consider the work of these two writers, one does not find so surprising the failure of minor writers to show originality or individuality. It has already been seen how Robert Greene, the more prolific of the two, borrowed from Italian sources when writing short tales. The rest of his work is no less derivative. He could copy the style of Euphues or the plot of pastoral romance with equal facility. Although Greene was little over thirty when he died in 1592, he had produced twenty works of fiction, half a dozen pamphlets which are part fiction, part religious exhortation, and a series of conny-catching pamphlets, besides being a dramatist and poet. It is therefore obvious that the speed at which he must have written his works of fiction did not allow him any time to study the various forms which he copied. He did not make any one form or style his own. Nevertheless, despite its imitations and plagiarisms, his work demonstrates a remarkable and commendable versatility. It is virtually an illustration of the history of Elizabethan prose fiction in itself. Moreover, Greene succeeded in producing the most popular of all Elizabethan romances, and one which appealed to the imagination of Shakespeare himself: Pandosto.
As the prose fiction considered so far has been examined according to its type, so now the contributions made to these types by Greene and Lodge are to be examined; and with them, the satiric comment upon literary conventions made by Thomas Nashe in *The Unfortunate Traveller*. Greene's earliest work, *Mamillia*, was entered in the Stationers' Register in 1580, and, as one might expect of a work of that date, its style is markedly euphuistic. The action is subordinated to carefully constructed speeches and letters. In this, as in its sequel *Mamillia*, the second part of the triumph of Pallas, and in the most euphuistic of all Greene's works, *Ciceronis Amor* Tullies Love, revenge for honour has no place. These are the only examples of Greene's imitation of Lyly's framework. He employed the euphuistic style almost continuously till the end of his career, but he constantly adapted it to suit a variety of purposes in framework and plot. In both parts of *Greene's Never too Late*, and in the first in particular, euphuism and romance are almost equally balanced.

One of Greene's most remarkable adaptations of euphuism for narrative purposes, however, was to make it enliven two well known Biblical stories: Susanna and the Elders and the Prodigal Son. In each case Greene transformed the story, giving it an atmosphere that was decidedly Elizabethan, if not specifically English, by his reference to honour. Thus for Greene's Susanna the first thought, on receiving the Elders' ultimatum, is of her honour and the honour of her father, her husband, and her children:
By this meanes what dishonour shal I bring to my parents, what discredite to my husbands, and what infamie to my selfe and my seelie children. The hoerie haires of my father Helchias shall be brought with sorowe vnto the grave. Joachim shall be ashamed to shewe his face in the streete of the citie and my poore babes shall be counted as the seede of an harlot, ...

With this Susanna the consideration of the sin of adultery is an afterthought. Similarly, honour and revenge, though unconnected, lend an Elizabethan atmosphere to the advice which Rabbi Billessi, a Polonius-like father, gives to his prodigal son:

Be courteous to all, offensive to none, and brooke any injury with patience, for reuenge is preijudicall to a Traueller.  
... Be not too prodigall, ... nor too cuetous, for sparing oftentimes is dishonour. 99

These two examples show Greene's awareness of the importance of honour in contemporary life, though by what conception of the code of honour sparing might be considered dishonour is not clear. On the other hand, the strained concept of revenge for honour which involves the rejected lover is not accepted by Greene. In Francesco's Fortunes Mirmida advises his friend Eurymachus:

... feare not man, if thou hast lookt his, followe thy thoughts, and trie loues favours, for deniall is no dishonour. 100

Thus Greene could adopt or ignore the code of honour when it suited the exigencies of his plot or style.

It is in his full length romances, however, that Greene's best work is found, for in them one sees most evidence of his own imaginative

98 The Myrroure of Modestie (1584), Sig. E5.
99 Greenes Mourning Garment (1590), Edition of 1616, Sig. C1v.
100 Francescos Fortunes: or The second part of Greenes Neuer too late, (1590), Sig. G1'.
powers. The style is invariably euphuistic. His plots abound in
embles from the Greek romances and other sources. M. Pruvost's comments
on Arbasto are true of Greene's romances in general:

Il a suffi à Greene, pour tâter l'intrigue de son roman,
de compliquer cette trame relativement simple en donnant
à Doralicia une soeur dont l'histoire s'apparente à celle
de Médée ou d'Ariane, d'y introduire, avec un incident
qui provient peut-être de Huon de Bordeaux, quelques
lointains souvenirs de l'Euphues de Lyly, et d'envelopper
le tout de considérations sur la Fortune inspirées de
Clitophon et Leucippe. C'est bien toujours la même
procédure d'amalgame, la même fusion d'éléments empruntés
à des sources diverses, dont Gwydonius et Mamillia nous
avaient déjà donné des exemples. 101

Nevertheless, the finished product has an air of originality lacking
in the work of the minor writers. Moreover, of his major romances -
Gwydonius, Arbasto, Pendosto, Menaphon and Philomela - only the first,
which is the most euphuistic and also probably the earliest, contains
no reference to revenge for honour.

Menaphon. Camilla's Alarum to Slumbering Euphues is more concerned
with the pastoral, Arcadian idyll and the fulfilment of an oracle than
with action arising from the interplay of character. In the complicated
and improbable plot revenge for honour is used, as in the lesser
romances, as a piece of machinery to build up the climax. Sephestia,
who calls herself Samela, and her infant son are shipwrecked on the
cost of Arcadia and given shelter by the shepherd Menaphon. During
the course of her life as a shepherdess, Samela falls in love with the
shepherd Melicertus, who resembles her dead husband. Her son Pleusidippus

is kidnapped by pirates and eventually arrives at the court of Thrace. There, grown to the age of sixteen, he hears of the fame of Samela's beauty and seeks her out. At the same time Democles, King of Arcadia and Samela's father, who has been disguised as a shepherd since her supposed death at sea, also falls in love with her. Encouraged by the King, Pleusidippus kidnaps Samela and takes her to Democles' castle. There she repulses both her father and her son, declaring that Melicertus is already entitled to the interest in her beauty. In revenge for this refusal Democles rouses the shepherds who set off under Melicertus to exact revenge on Pleusidippus for the capture of their beloved Samela. Arrived at the castle, Melicertus challenges Pleusidippus to single combat, the quarrel being grounded on his love of Samela. When they come to fight, however, each discovers that the other bears his arms. This is a fresh dishonour to Melicertus, who declares to his adversary:

\[\ldots\] thou contrarie to the Lawe of Armes bearest my Create without difference, in which quarrell, seeing it concernes mine honour, I will revenge it as farre as my louse; \ldots\]

In the ensuing combat neither prevails and Democles, watching his opportunity, captures Samela, Pleusidippus and Melicertus. Even when they are all condemned to death neither Samela nor Melicertus, who is indeed her husband, will reveal their identity. They are only saved by the intervention of an old hag who reveals to Democles that the oracle has been fulfilled and that Samela is his daughter, Melicertus her husband and Pleusidippus their child.

102 Menaphon Camillus Alerum to Slumbering Euphues, in his melancholie Cell, at Silexedra (1589), Sig. K₂v.
Thus the concept of revenge for honour is used by Greene to further the action by bringing father and son, unknown to each other, to single combat. The fact that neither prevails is a symbol of their close relationship. It does not reveal a clash of personality. One reason for this is that Greene was interested, not so much in what human beings did to each other as in what Fortune did to them.

This is also demonstrated in Arbasto, subtitled The Anatomy of Fortune. In this work Fortune directs the characters' disposition in love. Their deeds are their own, however, and human relationships produce the action of the story. Moreover, this work reveals more clearly than Gwydonius or Menaphon that Greene could contrive ingenious plots which embraced most of the themes and styles popular in Elizabethan fiction. Nevertheless, revenge for honour is used in this work, as in Menaphon, as a piece of plot machinery. The story opens with a war waged in revenge for murder. During a period of truce Prince Arbasto falls in love with the younger daughter of his father's enemy while her sister Myrania loves him. In a truly euphuistic work this triangular situation does not produce action. The only two possible solutions are founded on the inconstancy of one of the three, the man or one of the women. Greene is original in basing the development of his plot on the continued interest in each other of all three persons. It is this development that distinguishes Arbasto from the conventional euphuistic tale. When Arbasto goes to ask for the hand of Doralicia her father imprisons him. To win his love the elder daughter, Myrania, frees him and Arbasto is under an obligation to marry
her when they have escaped to his country, Denmark. But the marriage is delayed. Arbasto, still in love with Doralicia, renews his suit to her by letter. When she rejects him, his love turns to hate and he discovers that he now loves Myrania. In the meantime, however, she has found a copy of his letter to her sister and she gives way to despair. Not knowing the cause of her grief, Arbasto comes to comfort her. She meets him with open accusations of dishonour, cursing and complaining that she sees "it is a practice in men to have as little care of their own oaths, as of their Ladies honors." 103 Too weak to execute revenge herself, Myrania commits her cause to Egerio, a lord of Denmark. There is no development of the idea of avenging Myrania's honour, however, for Greene had to preserve Arbasto in order to complete the relationship with Doralicia. No sooner is Myrania dead than Doralicia falls in love with Arbasto, and offers herself to him; he rejects her, and she dies of frenzy. Egerio does raise a rebellion and force Arbasto to flee the country, but his reason for this is not specified.

Greene's apparent lack of interest in revenge for honour as anything more than a means towards the clever contrivance of plot, as seen in Arbasto and, more particularly, in Menaphon is all the more striking when one considers its importance as a theme in what were probably his two finest romances, Pandosto and Philomela. Although, in the former, revenge for honour is used to set the story going and then abandoned,

103 Arbasto, the Anatomie of Fortune (1584), p. 47.
the action which it involves occupies a third of the romance and gives Greene the opportunity of examining the theme in detail.

The importance of revenge for honour in Pandosto is seen immediately in the opening paragraph. This is a declamation of the evil effects of jealousy which contains the important passage:

Yea, it is such a heavy enemy to that holy estate of matrimony, sowing betweene the married couples such deadly seeds of secret hatred, as Love being once rased out by spightful distrust, there oft ensueth bloody revenge, as this ensuing Hystorie manifestly proue by: wherin Pandosto (furiously incensed by causelesse Jealousie) procured the death of his most louing and loyall wife, and his owne endlessse sorrow and misery. 104

This bloody revenge is revenge for honour. The emphasis that Greene places on jealousy as the inspiration of it demonstrates that, in this romance, he is not so much considering the outward effect of revenge for honour in producing a good plot, as looking to its inward springs in order to create a convincing study of human behaviour.

The story is too well known to require detailed analysis. Queen Bellaria is suspected of infidelity because she entertains Egistus, King of Sycilia as warmly as Pandosto had requested her and, as a result, becomes fond of his company. The more closely Pandosto watches them, the more frequently do they seem to betray a guilty love. Thus conceived, jealousy leads Pandosto to seek revenge:

... he did no longer doubt, but was assured (as he thought) that his Friend Egistus had entered a wrong points in his tables, and so had played him false play: wherupon desirous to revenge so great an injury, he thought best to dissemble the grudge with a faire and friendly countenance: and so

104 Pandosto The Triumph of Time (1588), Sig. AgT. The entire paragraph is also found in Euphues his Censure to Philautus (1587), Sigs. D1f - D2f.
under the shape of a friend, to show him the tricks of a foe. 105

Pandosto's plan to poison Egistus is frustrated by the cup bearer Franion with whom Egistus departs the country. To Pandosto this is a further sign of Bellaria's infidelity. He sends her to prison and proclaims that she and Egistus, with Franion's help, had not only committed incestuous adultery, but had conspired his own death. Though Pandosto would have liked to avenge himself on Egistus by war, he realises that Egistus and his allies would be too strong for him:

so that hee was content rather to put vp a manifest injurie with peace, then hunt after revenge, dishonour, and losse, determining since Egistus had escaped scot-free, that Bellaria should pay for all at an unreasonable price. 106

When Bellaria gives birth to a daughter in prison, Pandosto, believing the child to be illegitimate, determines that they shall both die by fire. In the event, the child is put to sea in a boat and Bellaria brought to public trial. The pronouncement of the Delphic Oracle clears Bellaria of guilt. Her excessive joy is immediately followed by the news of her son's death and she falls dead.

The rest of the romance is concerned with the fortunes of the child who is brought up as the shepherdess Fawnia. Yet one is reminded that Greene was also a dramatist by the fact that revenge for honour also occurs in what, in a play, would be a comic sub-plot. The wife of the shepherd Dorus finds Fawnia in her husband's arms and

105 Ibid., Sig. A4r.
106 Ibid., edition of 1616, Sig. B3r. (The unique copy of 1588 lacks signature D.)
began to bee somewhat iselousse, ... thinking it was some bastard: beganne to crow against her goodman, and taking vp a cudgel (for the most maister went breechles) sware solemnly that shee would make clubs trumps, if hee brought any bastard brat within her dores. 107

This couple's quick apprehension of dishonour where none exists leads them later to suspect that Fawnia will not long remain honest under the assaults of Prince Dorastus's love. Fawnia is, of course, honourable in all her relationships, placing honour before inclination when Dorastus offers her his love.

Finally, Greene completes the circle of his story with a return to Pandosto who, we learn with surprise, has not become any more honourable through his unhappy experiences. The ship carrying Dorastus and Fawnia is driven by a storm to Bohemia and they are brought to Pandosto's court. Fired by her beauty, Pandosto seeks the dishonour of Fawnia; which attempt she stoutly resists. It is only when he is informed that she is really a shepherdess that Pandosto's love turns to hate and, accusing her of enticing Dorastus from his country in order to fulfil her inordinate lusts, Pandosto has her imprisoned. Only the revelation by Dorus of his discovery of Fawnia procures her recognition by Pandosto. There is reconciliation on all sides, though grief later drives Pandosto to suicide.

Pandosto is Greene's best known work. It was, with the exception only of Sidney's Arcadia, probably the most popular Elizabethan romance. It was frequently reprinted until 1735 and was obviously

107 Ibid., edition of 1588, Sig. C4v.
popular for its own merit as well as for its connection with The Winter's Tale.\textsuperscript{108} Considering that the pastoral passages are no more nor no less distinguished than those in any other of Greene's romances - though Menaphon seems to be an attempt to repeat the success of Pandosto in its pastoral descriptions and twofold theme of incestuous love - it may be assumed that the chief interest of the work lay in Greene's study of jealousy and its relationship to revenge for honour.

This is perhaps borne out by the fact that the same theme is found in Philemona. Greene plagiarized so frequently from his own and other works that it is difficult to establish whether or not he had any particular interests which he wished to express in his prose fiction. The "Romeo and Juliet" theme of a young man in love with the daughter of an enemy, for instance, occurs in Venus's Tragedy of Planatomachia, in Gwydonius, Arbeao and in Pandosto. This is a narrative motif which is employed without an indication that Greene was especially interested in the problems of such love. On the other hand, the fact that the picture of the convert or repentant prodigal is present in eight of his works\textsuperscript{109} no less than what we know of his own life, shows that the idea of repentance was very much on his mind. Yet it did not produce any deep study of its effects in his work. Greene could exhort his readers to repentance in terms which expressed his own sincerity; but which leave the readers unmoved. He could describe the effects of repentance

\textsuperscript{108} Vide R. Pruvost, Robert Greene et ses Romans, p. 286.
\textsuperscript{109} i.e. Gwydonius, Greene's Mourning Garment, parts I and II, A Disputation between a He Conncatcher and a She Connycatcher; The Black Book's Messenger, Greene's Groatworth of Wit; Greene's Repentance and Greene's Vision.
on the life of one of his characters; but in such a way that one feels his conversion to be unnatural and wrought to serve the demands of plot. This is not to doubt Greene's sincerity; but his ability to convey it to the reader. His treatment of the jealous and revengeful husband, on the other hand, is different. For Greene enlivens his picture with hints of psychological insight. Examples of this in *Pandosto* are the description of the reaction of jealousy to advice from a friend: "it foorthwith suspecteth that he gaueth this advice to couer his owne guiltinesse." [110] and the representation of Pandosto at the end of the story as a man who was himself easily enticed to dishonour.

*Philomela*, Greene's last romance, is the one in which the style is sufficiently subdued to allow all his abilities to be concentrated on the story. The narrative motifs, of the "curious impertinent" and the patient, suffering wife, were not original. Greene makes them his own, however, by his mastery of characterization and causation. Count Philippo is not altogether a repetition of Pandosto, however. The latter's jealousy was inspired by the consideration of his wife's friendly attitude to one particular friend: *Philippo* is led from excessive love of his young wife to a jealousy which has to seek for an object, and decides that she favours not one, but many of the frequenters of *their* house. Where Pandosto acted upon supposition, Philippo desires indisputable proof of his wife's adultery. So he

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110 *This*, *Pandosto* (1588), Sig. A₃r.
employs his friend Luterio to make trial of her honesty. Philomela rejects Luterio's feigned offer of love outright, and in doing so reveals her conception of dishonour in a wife with its results:

A woman's honesty is her honour, and her honour the chiefest essence of her life: then in seeking to besmeare her virtues with lust, thou seemest at no lesse disgrace than her death. ... 111

Of the dishonoured husband she says that he will

leave no confection untempered, no poesy unsearched, no myrrh untried, no Aconitum unbruised, no hearse, tree, root, stone, simple or secret unsoaked, till revenge hath satisfied the burning thirst of his hate: so shalt thou fear with whom to drink, with whom to converse, when to walk, how to perform thy affaires, only for doubt of her revenging husband, and thy protested enemie. 112

Philippo remains unconvinced of his wife's absolute chastity despite Luterio's account of her reactions and glowing praise of her virtue. Not unexpectedly, in attempting a further trial of Philomela's chastity, Luterio decides to try in earnest to win her from her unjustly suspicious husband. His offers of love, like his sonnets, are rejected. Philomela ironically vows that "hir Lord should be revenged upon him for this intended villanie, or else he should refuse hir for his wife, ..." 113

Thereafter, there is a similarity between Pandosto and Philippo in that the suspicions of each are confirmed when his wife is found with child; each brings her to a public trial; and each has a reason for not exacting personal blood revenge on his suspected enemy. In Philippo's case this reason is, in fact, his regard of honour. 114

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111 Philomela. The Lady Fitzwaters Nightingale (1592), Sig. C2r.
112 Ibid., Sig. C2V.
113 Ibid., Sig. D3V.
114 Ibid., Sig. F3r.
and the need for revenge are stressed continually throughout Philippo's speeches to the judges of Venice. The tenor of his plea is that "my dishonors may end in their revenge, ..." Yet when Luteric and Philomela are sentenced to death, Philippo's pleadings make the judges commute this to divorce for Philomela and banishment for Luteric. By this touch Greene recalls the fact that Philippo was originally moved to action by overmuch love.

At this point Greene introduces a consideration of honour that was quite new to prose fiction: the attitude of the dishonoured wife. For Philomela has been publicly dishonoured by her husband's accusation and the court's decision. She knows that her credit is cracked and her honour blemished. She too has the right to seek revenge for honour, and she at first contemplates asking her father to execute this for her. As Greene's intention was to stress both her patience under suffering and her continuing love for her husband, she changes her mind for "she had rather beare guiltlesse shame then bring her husband to perpetuall infamie." So she departs to a strange country.

Greene's study of revenge for honour in Philomela is not confined to the two principal parties involved. Luteric is as much dishonoured as Philomela by what has happened. He too harbours revenge in his mind, and thinks of seeking the help of Philomela's father. His thought is transformed into action. Once aroused, the Duke of Milan vows revenge on Philippo for the injury done to his house by the public dishonouring

115 Ibid., Sig. G1r
116 Ibid., Sig. G2v
of his daughter Philomela. When her innocence is proved by the confession of the false witnesses, the Duke's eyes sparkle with revenge. He raises an army and sets off for Venice, his prime objective being the proof of his daughter's innocence before the Senate. This is achieved. Moreover, because the wrong is his daughter's, the Duke of Milan is requested to pronounce sentence against Philippo. He decrees his banishment.

This is as far as Greene's consideration of revenge for honour extends in Philomela. Learning of what has happened, Philomela reflects on how God has avenged her wrongs on her jealous husband; reaffirming that wives should "preferre their husbands honor before their owne life, and choose rather to die, then see him wronged." After Philippo's sudden death she lives a chaste widow.

Greene's romances do not examine revenge for honour as a human problem in the way that Elizabethan and Jacobean drama does. Nevertheless, they reflect greater interest in it than the work of any other Elizabethan writer of prose fiction. Philomela in particular shows that Greene was aware of the demands of the code of honour and could have used them in a more dramatic way had he so chosen. Yet the fact that the revenging husbands, Pandosto and Philippo, do not seek private revenge is not necessarily the result of a Christian interpretation of the concept. For in each case Greene subordinates the concept of revenge for honour to the exigencies of plot. In Pandosto the public trial leads to the pronouncement of the oracle which is to be fulfilled

117 Ibid., Sig. I₃v.
in the story of Favmiae. In Philomela the exile of the heroine and her husband's subsequent quest for her give an opportunity for the introduction of the ingenious conclusion in which both Philomela and Philippo confess to a murder which was not, in fact, committed.

If Greene's romances show an awareness of the demands of honour similar to that found in Elizabethan tragedy, two of the pamphlets, Greene's Groatsworth of Wit and A Disputation between a He Conny-catcher and a She Conny-catcher have a code of honour which corresponds to that of the citizen comedy. In the former, which later develops into an autobiographical confession, Roberto encourages his brother Lucanio to marry the courtesan Lamilia. When Lucanio refuses to have anything more to do with his brother it is not because he wishes to avenge this dishonour, but because Lamilia has revealed that she and Roberto had planned to share his patrimony. A striking example of a discrepancy between theory and practice of revenge for honour is found in A Disputation between a He Conny-catcher and a She Conny-catcher. In the last part of this pamphlet there is a story of the novella type within the framework of a discussion in which a gentleman has stated that, if any friend of his enjoyed his love, be she wife or mistress, "he would not use any other revenge, but at the next greeting stabbe him with his Poyndaco, though hee were condemned to death for the action." In the exemplum which follows this does not happen. The husband in question believes that the greater dishonour lies in the public knowledge of his

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cuckoldom. Therefore the revenge which he meditates is not the usual and her Loue to one "to have brought his wife to shame; confusion, but he busied his brains how he might reserve his honour inviolate, reclaim his wife, and keepe his friend, ..." 119 His method is to give his wife a counterfeit coin every time he uses her body. When asked to explain this, he tells her:

even as to a whoore, so I giue thee hyer, which is for euerie time a slip, a counterfeit coyne, which is good enough for such a sliperie wanton, that will wrong her husband that loused her so tenderly, and thus wil I use thee for the safetie of mine owne honour, till I haue assured proffe that thou becommest honest, ...

As this tale contains more borrowing from Gascoigne's The pleasant Tale of Ferdinando Ieronimei and Leonora de Valesco than Greene's own work, however, it cannot be said to illustrate more than Greene's method of using an original revenge to form an interesting plot.

Revenge for honour was also used in the same way by Thomas Lodge. His literary output was considerably smaller than Greene's but, like him, Lodge tried his hand at more than one type of prose fiction. His first attempt at romance, and one that is one of the earliest English pastoral novels is the story of Forbonius and Prisceria which comes at the end of his Alarm against Usurers (1584). Here the only shadow on the horizon of pastoral love is the threat of a father's revenge on Forbonius, the son of his enemy, who has gained admittance to his daughter Prisceria after their match has been forbidden. Finding them together, the outraged father threatens that his displeasure "wil not

119 Ibid., p. 64.
120 Ibid., p. 66.
121 Vide Robert Greene et ses Romans, p. 467.
122 Matteo Bandello and Elizabethan Fiction, p. 214.
be finished but "\( \dagger \) bloud."\(^{123}\) But in reality it extends no further than the imprisonment and taunting of Forbonius, for he is eventually persuaded by the young man to consent to his marriage with Prisceria. Though, in this short work, the kind of revenge is not specified, it accords with the conception of revenge for the dishonour suffered by a father finding his daughter in a compromising situation. Its use as a threat of unhappiness in an otherwise idyllic story is similar to that found later in the tragicomedies of Beaumont and Fletcher.

In Lodge's most famous romance, Rosalynde, the wrath of the usurping Duke does not extend into the happy confines of Arden where there is no place for serious matters, such as revenge for honour. There is a place for it, however, in Euphues Shadow, the Battle of the Senses which was published in the same year, 1592. In this work, revenge for honour is found both in the euripistic framework and in a story within a story within it. In the former instance two young men and a lady become involved in the usual **triangle**: Philamour loves Harpaste who loves Philamis. Philamour, suspecting this, accosts Philamis with:

\[
\text{Traytour as thou art, and rivell in my loue, ... did I not measure my dishonour more than I make account of thy life,} \\
\text{I would draw thy perjured heart from thy penting brest, who} \\
\text{since thou hast rob'd me of my Loue, canst no way satisfie} \\
\text{my revenge but by thy death.}^{124}
\]

Philautus' desire for vengeance on Euphues was as keen, but he expressed it by letter and despised the base conquest of a duel. In contrast, Philamour's words are followed by a challenge, and before Philamis has time to shape his defence he has been wounded and left

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\(^{123}\) An Alarum against Vsurers (1584), Sig. K_3V^Y.

\(^{124}\) Euphues Shadow, the Battle of the Senses (1592), Sig. H_4V^Y.
for dead. Fortunately, Philamis recovers and years later meets and forgives Philamour. The latter confesses that he injuriously wronged his friend. Thereupon Philamis persuades Harpaste to accept Philamour's love.

The second instance of revenge for honour occurs in the tragical narration with which Claetia interrupts the feast given by Harpaste's father. Claetia's story concerns the accomplishment by her lover Rabinus of the well-nigh impossible tasks which she had set him. In the course of his travels Rabinus met a knight who related how he and his two brothers intended to exact a strange revenge for honour. They were the kinsmen of the lady Servatia who had been dishonoured and had committed suicide. Her ravisher escaped to the mountains. Then, as one of the brethren related to Rabinus:

> when the rumor of this outrage, sounded in the eares of vs three brethren, his allies, finding no fit occasion of revenge, yet willing to auow her right, we inclosed her body in this Marble grave, vowing one of vs each day to attend here, till a tweluemoneth were expired, resolving to trie against all commers, that Servatia was onely faire, onely constant, the paragon of chastite; the patterne of constancie. If any gainsays our reasons, and adventure an others right, if he bee subdued he loseth his right hand. 125

This is indeed a curious form of revenge for honour. Fitting in with no known code, its perverse cruelty makes it akin to the unorthodox revenges of the romances.

There seems indeed to have been some part of Lodge's genius which delighted in descriptions of cruelty. In The famous, true and historical
life of Robert second Duke of Normandy, surnamed ... Robin the Devil
he concentrated, much more than Greene or any other prose writer did,
on the horrific and the blasphemous. The tendency to play with the
fire of lust and murder has already been noticed in the translations
of such moralists as Geoffrey Fenton. Forde's successive romances
contain more and more detailed descriptions of attempted rape. Richard
Johnson and Henry Roberts indulged in descriptions of whipping. That
the battlefields of the romances were strewn with blood, mangled limbs,
even brains, goes without saying. But Lodge was the first writer to
present a consistently vicious character and, in doing so, to give full
vent to his ability to arouse horror. Yet the account of Duke Robert's
horrible crimes comes to an end with his conversion to a godly way of
life. Thereafter the tone of the work is as moral as that of any of
the translators.

With A Margarite of America, published in 1596, it is different.
The villainous protagonist, Arsadachus, lives a life of unmitigated
cruelty and depravity till "embrewed in the blood of innocents", he
kills himself. Being a villain, Arsadachus was naturally dishonourable.
Indeed, "it was to be feared, that he should sooner want matter to
execute his dishonest mind upon, than a dishonest mind to execute any
lewd matter: ..."\(^1\)

His deeds are so spectacularly cruel that, as in
the later romances of Forde, revenge for honour appears insignificant
in comparison with them. This is particularly true of the attempted
revenge for honour of Minecius, the husband of Philenia. Having won

\(^1\) A Margarite of America (1596), Sig. M₂\(^v\).
\(^2\) Ibid., Sig. C₂\(^r\).
the love of the princess Margarita, Arsadachus had attempted to seduce her friend Philenia. She repulses him, threatening to revenge his "lewd and lecherous salutes" by reporting him to Margarita's father, the Emperor of Mosco. In revenge for this repulse Arsadachus ambushes Philenia and her bridegroom. When he assaults Philenia, Minecius undertakes an immediate defence of her honour, deeming it "greater honor to die in defence of his mistress, than beholde the impeach of her credit, ..." After Minecius has been repulsed, Arsadachus tries to bargain his life for Philenia's love. She refuses, and both of them are murdered.

Despite the pleadings of Philenia's father, the Emperor of Mosco refuses to believe in Arsadachus's guilt and he is allowed to return to Cusco where he contracts a secret marriage with Diana, the daughter of Argias. Though it is not stated explicitly, this marriage dishonours the Emperor of Cusco who had arranged the match with Margarita. Being no less violent than his son Arsadachus, the Emperor orders Argias to be torn to pieces at the tails of four wild horses and his remains to be sent to Diana.

Compared with the bloody deeds of the latter part of the story, in which revenge for murder predominates, the revenge attempted by Minecius for Arsadachus's assaults on his bride's honour is not only unsuccessful; it is commonplace. Both Robert, second Duke of Normandy and A Margarita of America are varieties of another type of Elizabethan

128 Ibid., Sig. D₂⁵.
129 Ibid., Sig. D₄⁵.
fiction: the picaresque tale. Most Elizabethan accounts of rogues and vagabonds were confined to short pamphlets such as those of Greene's conny-catching series; such works of Nashe as Piers Penniless His Supplication to the Devil; and of Dekker as The Seven Deadly Sins of London or Lanthorn and Candlelight. Though Greene could relate a short scurrilous anecdote, he did not attempt any expansion of it. Lodge's rogues belong to a level of society above that usually associated with the picaro. The same may be said of John Hind's Eliocto Libidinose, a work whose characters are all morally depraved. For while King Amasias is enjoying the love of Florinda, his wife Cleodora discovers that she loves her stepson, Eliocto. Finding his wife and son together, Amasias sends them to prison, reveals the cause of his action to the peers, and has them executed. Apart from the public revenge for honour at the end, this story closely resembles Greene's Saturn's tragedy, while the account of Amasias's dishonourable pursuit of a farmer's wife is the same as one of the tales in Penelope's Web.

The only prose writer to present an English rogue as the hero of a tale of any length was Thomas Nashe. He did this in The Unfortunat Traveller, or, The life of Jack Wilton. Yet this work is more than a picaresque fiction: it is a satire on the literary conventions of Nashe's day. As such, it brings full circle the course of Elizabethan fiction by including in a picaresque framework criticisms of euphuism and romance. The one narractive theme which Nashe singles out for satire is revenge for murder. This he presents as an

extravagantly diabolical human revenge which is nevertheless intended to represent God's vengeance for the rape and death of Heraclide. Cutwolf's murder of Esdras of Granado, the murderer of Cutwolf's brother and the ravisher of Heraclide, ensures both death to his body and damnation to his soul.

Though it is perhaps unwise to pronounce upon which parts of this work are intentionally satirical and which are not, it would appear that Nash did not satirize revenge for honour as he did revenge for murder. The story of Castaldo's groundless suspicion of his wife Diamante is briefly told in Nash's raucy style:

Her husband's name was Castaldo, she hight Diamante, the cause of her committing was an ungrounded jealous suspicion which her doating husband had conceived of her chastity. One Isaac Medicus a bergomast was the man hee chose to make him a monster, who being a courtier and repairing to his house very often, neither for love of him nor his wife, but only with a drift to borrow monie of a pawn of waxe and parchment, when he saw his expectation deluded, and that Castaldo was too chearle for him to close with, he priuily with purpose of revenge, gaue out amongst his copesmates, that he resorted to Castaldos house for no other end but to cuckoldle him, t doubtfully he talkt that he had and he had not obtained his suite. Rings which he borrowed of a light curtizan that he used to, hee woulde faine to bee taken from her fingers, and in summe, so handled the matter, that Castaldo exclaimd, Out where, strumpet, sixe penny hackster, away with her to prison. 131

Nash did not leave his story at this. Diamante had been injured by her husband, and it was therefore necessary, in Jack Wilton's

131 The Unfortvunate Traveller, or, The life of Jacke Wilton (1594), Sig. G3'.
opinion, that she should be revenged. So, according to Jack's conception, dishonour is repaid with dishonour:

No other apte meanes had this poore shee captiued Cicely, to worke her hoddy peake husbende a proportionable plague to his ielouisie, but to give his head his ful loding of infamie. She thought she would make him complaine for some thing, that now was so hard bound with an hereticall opinion. Howe I dealt with her, gesse gentle reader, ... 132

This is a revenge for honour that is not found in either the euphuistic fiction or in the romances. It is not derived from any courtly, literary or imported code of honour. It arises simply from a natural human desire to spite an unjust accuser by making his accusation true: one might as well be hung for a sheep as a lamb. Moreover, it is an impulse that is not true only in the behaviour of fictitious characters: it is part of the experience of life.

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132 Ibid., Sig. G^v.
On the whole, English fiction before 1640 was not based on everyday experience of life. Its inspirations were mainly literary: the Italian novella, the style of Lyly's Euphues or Sidney's Arcadia, the Greek and Palmarin romances. These influences were not always salutary. The native originality shown in the early works of Emmanuel Forde and Richard Johnson was later stifled by slavish imitation of current literary fashions. Greene's work was vitiated by plagiarism. At the root of all the weaknesses of Elizabethan fiction lies the fact that the creative energies of prose writers were largely expended on experiments in style and form. For the most part, these experiments did not lead to development. Euphuism was not developed, but debased, in the hands of minor imitators. Chivalric romance did not become more precise in its description, but more fantastic in its incidents. There were, particularly in romance, certain elements which could be arranged to form an inexhaustible number of stories of the same kind. A major writer like Robert Greene had the taste, on occasions, to use a few of these elements to form his best work. A writer like Emmanuel Forde would overload his later romances with them, making the plots confused and exaggerated.

The Elizabethan preoccupation with form and style led to the neglect of the one element needed to make fiction come alive: characterization. The delineation of character did not lie within the
intention of early prose writers. Their main aim was to tell a story, and in this they succeeded, whether their material was original or not. The interest of early fiction lay in the variety of incidents; not in the variety of character or clash of personality. Elizabethan prose fiction was not concerned with personal relationships. This is illustrated both by the extravagant and unnatural language of letters and speeches of love in the euphuistic fiction and in the often absurd use of disguise in the romances. The characters in Elizabethan and Jacobean fiction never really get to know one another.

It is obvious that, in a kind of literature in which personal relationships are conventionalized or non-existent, revenge for honour could play only a limited part. It could be used to give variety and interest of plot; but not to throw light on character. It was not used, as on the stage, to bring a work to a tragic climax, though it was occasionally used to produce a spectacular tragi-comic one. The majority of prose works before 1640 had the conventionally acceptable happy ending. Those that ended in tragedy did so because of the adverse influence of Fate or Fortune, not because of human agency.

Moreover, the presentation of revenge for honour would not have accorded with the moral aim of the early prose writers. Human revenge for adultery was equated with God's vengeance for sin. Thus a personal situation, common in the drama, was impersonalized in prose fiction. On the whole, the morality of Elizabethan and Jacobean fiction was
straightforward: the bad bled, and the good achieved earthly happiness or at least the satisfaction of spiritual triumph over adverse fortune. There was, as seen in the works of Greene and Lodge, the possibility of the bad being converted to goodness. But if the reverse happened, as in Johnson's *Tom of Lincoln*, the motivation was not made sufficiently clear. This simple, clear cut morality did not allow any scope for the moral problems of revenge for honour: those of the good wife seduced to dishonour against her will; of the good husband driven to commit murder by the demands of an unrelenting convention or his own great love. Prose fiction presented no individual morality; its code of behaviour was impersonal.

There was, however, great emphasis placed on the importance of honour itself, especially the honour of a chaste woman. If the prose writers seldom presented the act of dishonour in anything other than a conventional light, they did at least portray with a convincing realism the chaste woman's fight against dishonour. If she lost the struggle, vengeance was the Lord's.

Yet, as this chapter has shown, there were exceptions to these generalizations in Elizabethan and Jacobean fiction. All the exceptions had something in common: they occurred when an author did not copy a literary source, but an observation of life. This is true of the short but telling descriptions of revenge for honour such as Roberts's account of the entry of Jeronimie upon Andrugio and Melissina and prince Dionicus's attack upon Andrugio with a chessboard,
Greene's studies of the relationship between jealousy and revenge for honour in *Pendosto* and *Philomela* and, above all, in Sidney's study of the relationship between honour and justice in *Arcadia*.

Next to Sidney's *Arcadia*, the greatest exception to any generalizations upon English prose fiction before 1640 is the work of Thomas Deloney. Of the major Elizabethan prose writers, he was the least literary. For the greater part of his life Deloney was a silk weaver in Norwich. He also tramped the roads as a pedlar. He first wrote ballads before, late in life, he turned to prose fiction in *Jack of Newbury*, *The Gentle Craft* and *Thomas of Reading*. Almost uninfluenced by current literary fashions (the episode of Duke Robert's wooing of Margaret of the white hand in *Thomas of Reading* is the only notable exception to this), Deloney's chief sources of inspiration were the sayings and deeds of men as he knew them. Though he may have derived his historical facts from the chronicles, his characterization was based on his observation of his contemporaries. As a result, the people in his works are heard to speak, not with the common voice of rhetorical fiction, but with the differing accents of countrymen and courtiers, Englishmen and foreigners; their deeds are those of common experience; their characters are differentiated and well developed.  

133 Deloney's superiority in characterization above that of the early prose writers is demonstrated in M.P. Wallis's *The development of character presentation in Elizabethan prose fiction*, with some particular reference to the works of Thomas Deloney, Unpublished M.A. thesis of the University of London (1954).
There is little revenge for honour in Deloney's work, but what there is illustrates the reactions to dishonour of honest men who, though perhaps not entitled to bear arms, were capable of defending their honour in their own blunt fashion. Thus in *Jack of Newbury* the Italian merchant who seeks to dishonour one of Jack's maids is cheated of his hope, not by the substitution of one woman for another, as in the "bed trick" of Elizabethan drama, but by the exchange of a sow for the maid. John the Frenchman and Hans the Dutchman in *The Gentle Craft* use similarly simple, good natured means of deceiving each other. These lead, not to tragedy, but to such comedy as John's frightening Hans out of the garden where he is with Florence, stealing his venison and replacing his water with wine.

The only actual revenge for honour in one of Deloney's works occurs in *Thomas of Reading*. The trap set by the suspicious husband, old Bosom, is conventional. His revenge, however, is both original and effective. For when Bosom finds Cuthbert of Kendal and his wife locked up in a barn, he has no proof of their adultery; they excuse themselves by saying that Cuthbert had gone to seek a cheese. Bosom retorts that he will teach him to look for cheeses:

And with that he caused his men to take him presently, and to bind him hand and foote. Which being done, they drew him vp in a basket into the smokie lower of the hall, and there they did let him bang all that night, euon till the next day dinner time, when he should have been at the banquet with the princes: for neither Hodgekins nor Martin could intreat their inflamed hoast to let him downe. 134

The King's son sues for Cuthbert's release and the effectiveness of

134 *Thomas of Reading* (1612), Sig. *D*<sup>iv</sup>
this revenge is demonstrated by Cuthbert's vow never to come within that house more.

Although Deloney's works are the most notable examples of fiction based on life, there were others. Among these may be counted the autobiographical pamphlets of Greene, Anthony Munday's *The English Roman Life* and Thomas Dekker's *The Wonderfull Year, 1603*, a description of London after the death of Queen Elizabeth and during the plague. Among the anecdotes which Dekker recounts is that of a wife who, believing herself to be dying, confesses the names of her lovers. Unfortunately, she recovers. The lovers' wives want to scratch out her eyes and worry her with scolding, "but in the end, all anger on every side was powred into a pottle pot, & there burnt to death." 135 In John Dickenson's *Greene in Conceiption* a short picaresque anecdote is made into a cautionary tale. Thus, though Giraldo knows himself cuckolded by his wife Valeria he seeks no revenge, but dies of grief after her shame has been made public, as does also her father. In the husband end, Valeria and her second/have miserable deaths; and her sons come to like grief as the result of their corrupt education by her.

Though it might appear from this fiction of common experience that revenge for honour was not executed in everyday life, it must be remembered that the life portrayed in this fiction was not the same as that found in serious Elizabethan drama. The code of honour which demanded that a gentleman avenge a wound to his honour by the sword

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135 *The Wonderfull yeare 1603* ∫?1603∫, Sig. E₄Ⅲ.
applied only to gentlemen. Among the lower ranks of society revenge for honour was no less important; but the means of its execution were, perforce, different.

It may also be assumed that the prose writers intended to reach a wider audience than the dramatists. The latter wrote chiefly for the London stage, and some of them even for private theatres. For either audience there was no need to present a moral, though many dramatists did so. The work of the prose writers, more than that of the dramatists, could be disseminated at fairs and bookshops throughout the country. The prose writer had, therefore, to consider the moral standards of the middle class population who may well have frowned on the vices of the city and the city stage.

The greatest difference between drama and fiction between 1580 and 1640, which may explain why only the former was concerned with revenge for honour as a human problem, lay in the fact that there were no themes in fiction to relate it to life, while in drama there were. In drama, and particularly in tragedy, the playwright was concerned not only with the relationship between character and plot; but also with certain social, philosophical or psychological problems. Of these the concept of revenge for honour was only one; but there were others, as differing as the idea of kingship and the theory of humors. Moreover, the prose writer was limited to only one means of expression: his narrative. Though he could recount the histories of more than one character or set of characters at a time, it was not always possible
for him to relate these characters to each other successfully. There was no adequate prose equivalent to the plot and subplot of drama. *Piers Plowman* Seven Years' Frenship is an illustration of the disruptive effect on narrative of constant changes of scene and character. Above all, there was no prose equivalent of dramatic imagery. Imagery in prose was used to amplify surface meaning only. In drama, the author could express his narrative through the plot and his theme, not necessarily closely related to it, through his imagery.

Drama was, therefore, the chief medium for the expression of moral, philosophical or social concepts before 1640. It was, moreover, the only form of literature in which character was studied or presented in any detail. For these reasons the concept of revenge for honour was not as important in fiction as on the stage. Nevertheless, the fact that it was used in fiction at all is indicative of its importance among writers and thinkers. Prose writers did use revenge for honour to provide surprise or spectacle in their plots and, occasionally, to unify disparate elements or incidents in them. That it was not used more often in either of these ways is due to the manner in which Elizabethan prose fiction developed, and to the unfortunate fact that the few major writers who might have done this were not concerned to apply their creative powers to the establishment of a lasting, valuable prose fiction in England. The early death of Marlowe was not as great a loss to English drama as it might have been, because Shakespeare
survived him. But there was no major prose writer to survive Sir Philip Sidney. Without a leader, minor writers such as Roberts, Forde and Johnson became subject to the general atrophy of originality among prose writers at the close of the sixteenth century and after, from which only Thomas Deloney escaped unscathed.
Honour and Revenge for Honour in the Plays of Thomas Middleton.

In atmosphere and intention the plays of Thomas Middleton are close to those of John Marston whose contemporary he was. Middleton’s comedies, like Marston’s, are satiric and full of moral aphorisms, some of them expressed in couplets. In some ways Middleton’s tragicomedies and tragedies are such as Marston might have written, had he not abandoned playwriting for the Church. For the theme which is found in many of Middleton’s plays, though it emerges most strongly in his tragedies, is one which was also seen in Marston’s: the equation of dishonour and sin. It is a theme which might well be summarized in the words of Cervantes: “La verdadera deshuma está en el pecado, y la verdadera hora en la virtud.”¹

Middleton’s work as a whole examines various aspects of sensuality in men and women, and his more serious work is concerned with problems of honour. But whereas the relationship between dishonour and sin is examined in even his early comedies, it is only in his later work that revenge for honour has an important part. Nevertheless, problems involving a consideration of honour are found in the city comedies, because the chief object of Middleton’s satire is the way in which men will sacrifice love and virtue, no less than honour, for the acquisition of wealth.

This is clearly seen in The Phoenix which, in its obvious resemblances

¹ 'La Novela de la fuerza de la sangre', Novelas Exemplares de Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra (Madrid, 1613), fol. 130v.
to *The Malcontent* comes nearest to the satire of Marston. The Phoenix is the son of a duke and, like Marston’s Altofront, he lives in disguise in order to discover the enormities of the dukedom. Acting in his capacity as vice-regent, he rights or helps to right two cases of wronged honour. His actions therefore represent legal revenge for dishonour. The first wrong is suffered by Castiza, the mother of Phoenix’s servant Fidelio, and the other is attempted against the girl whom Fidelio loves.

Castiza, a widow, marries a sea captain whose honour Fidelio justly suspects. When Proditor becomes enamoured of her, the captain agrees to divorce her for the sum of five hundred crowns. One is reminded of the situation of Flavia in Ford’s *The Fancies, Chaste and Noble.* Middleton, like Ford, shows a woman divorced against her will by a man anxious for gain. Middleton’s treatment of the situation is less subtle than Ford’s, however. Castiza loathes Proditor as much as she loathes the dishonour of her husband’s action. She calls Proditor

> Oh my poyson!  
> Him, whome mine honour and mine eye abhors.

It is obviously impossible for her to make the best of a bad bargain, as Flavia did. Moreover, she considers her personal honour stained by her husband’s action where Flavia did not. But this situation is not developed. Fidelio and Phoenix are present in disguise at the drawing up of the contract that gives Castiza to Proditor. As soon as it is signed, they reveal their identities and give Castiza the money. Phoenix

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2 Vide pp. 377 - 378 infra.
3 *The Phoenix* (1607), II, i. ii. 7, Sig. D₂r. Act of scene divisions not in the original text are taken from Bullen’s edition of Middleton.
then banishes the captain and thus executes his first act of justice for dishonour.

The purpose behind the attempted dishonour of Falso's niece, beloved by Fidelio, is also financial gain. Falso is left to care for her and dispose of her dowry of five thousand crowns. He intends to steal her money by incestuously robbing her of her honour. News of his intentions reaches the ears of Phoenix and Fidelio, and they intervene to take her into their protection. She appears at the end of the play to affirm the accusations against her uncle. When Phoenix assumes full ducal powers he deprives Falso of his office of justice and makes him return the dowry to his niece.

Phoenix's concern for honour is the idea upon which the play hinges. He reveals to the court how honour is abused by the Jeweller's wife and by Falso, her father. Moreover, by rescuing Castiza and the Niece from danger to their honour, he removes all possibility of private revenge. At the end of the play he is able to assume full sovereignty to cleanse the state of the diseases which have afflicted its justice and its honour. This done, he says at the conclusion:

Thus when all hearts are tunde to Honors strings, There is no musicke to the Quire of Kings. 4

This action of cleansing the state, re-establishing honour and giving justice for dishonour is exactly that of Marston's Duke Altofront and Shakespeare's Duke of Vienna.

4 Ibid., ∫V, i∫, Sig. K2V.
In his satire Middleton is less humane than Marston. His characters are more vicious. The plays vary in tone from the ironic social commentary of *The Phoenix* to the broad farce (sometimes reminiscent of Jonson) of *A Trick to Catch the Old One*. Each comedy contains either an unfaithful wife or a courtesan; a libertine gallant or a cuckold. In *Your Five Gallants*, courtesans and rogues cheat and are cheated, suffer and inflict dishonour without any thought of revenge. For whether or not any of Middleton's characters is conscious of dishonour varies from play to play. Yet, on the whole, honour is seen to be prostituted for gain, as it was in *The Phoenix*. This theme is lightly treated in *A Mad World, my Masters* where Follywit's marriage to the courtesan Frank Gullman comes at the end of the play, and the force of her surname appears in the conclusion of *Sir Bounteous Progress*:

Who liues by cunning marke it, his fates cast,
When he has guld all, then is himselfe the last. 5

Follywit accepts his dishonest wife as Fetherstone accepted his, but the former has the consolation of a thousand marks from Sir Bounteous.

The marriage of Andrew Lethe and the Country Wench whom he has dishonoured, in *Michaelmas Term*, is treated much more seriously. The couple are, indeed, well matched. Andrew Lethe (né Gruel) so disguises himself in rich apparel that his own mother does not recognise him. So he determines to employ her

as a private drudge,
To passe my letters and secure my lust,
And nere be noted mine, to shame my blood,
And drop my stayning birth vpon my raiment, ...

5 *A Mad World, my Masters* (1608), V, 7, Sig. I 2 7.
6 *Michaelmas Terme* (1607), 7, Sig. B 3 .
Dishonour means nothing to him as long as he is well dressed. The Country Wench's attitude is exactly the same. She comes to London in order to be maintained by some gentleman, and be dressed as a lady. She is not seduced; she embraces dishonour as a means of advancement.

Michaelmas Term also contains an example of one of Middleton's most vicious characters: the father who will marry his daughter for wealth and against her inclination. Yet, when Quomodo realises how dishonourable Andrew Lethe is, he cheerfully orders him to marry his Quean and be quiet. There is therefore no cloud to overshadow the happiness of Quomodo's daughter Susan and her lover Rearage. In A Chaste Maid in Cheapside, however, even the knowledge that Sir Walter Whorehound keeps a mistress and has had three children by her will not prevent Yellowhammer from marrying his daughter to him. So distorted is the Yellowhammers' sense of honour that it is when Moll attempts to marry Touchwood Junior that her father openly calls her strumpet. On a second occasion, when Moll tries to escape, she is intercepted on the Thames and dragged through the streets by the hair by her mother. This treatment ruins Moll's health and, fearing for her life, her parents are repentant. But their hypocrisy is revealed when, hearing that Touchwood Junior is dead, they think only of curing Moll that they may hasten her marriage with Sir Walter as arranged. Yet Moll and her lover survive to outwit her parents and become happily married.

7 Ibid., V, [iii], Sig. I. 
8 A Chaste Maid in Cheapside (1630), III, [i], Sigs. E3 - E4; IV, [iii], Sig. H4.
at the end of the play. Then it appears that the Yellowhammers really have learnt a lesson from their experiences.

The didactic note in this conclusion is not, however, as strong as in the other plot, which concerns the relationship between the Allwits and Sir Walter Whorehound. Allwit is so completely debased that he rejoices in the fact that his wife is Sir Walter's mistress and bears his children. Of his wife's third pregnancy he says,

... I'll swear it's none of mine, let him that got it keep it, thus do I rid myself of fear,
Lye soft, sleepe hard, drink Wine, and eat good cheere. 9

In Michaelmas Term the Country Wench's father had been as conscious of her wickedness as of her dishonour, but he did nothing to prevent it.

In A Chaste Maid in Cheapside Sir Walter Whorehound is himself conscious, not so much of the dishonour, but of the sin of his menage à trois. Early in the play he comments

When Man turns base, out goes his Soules pure flame,
The fat of ease o'rethrowes the eyes of shame. 10

Nevertheless, it takes the prospect of death to make his consciousness of sin turn to repentance and the rupture of his relationship with the Allwits. 11

A prostitution of honour similar to that of Allwit's is frustrated in Anything for a Quiet Life when Sib's own virtue triumphs over the

9 Ibid., I, [ii], Sig. C2v.
10 Ibid., I [ii], Sig. D2v. (Act II in original)
11 Ibid., IV, [iii], Sigs. I1 - I3r. (Act V in original)
attempt of her husband Knavesby to make her Lord Beaufort's mistress. Moreover, Sib's is an active virtue that is expressed in a resolution to punish her husband and make Lord Beaufort conscious of sin. To effect her purpose she determines that she may as well supply herself with jewels and fine clothes at Lord Beaufort's expense. But Sib herself is not covetous. Once at Lord Beaufort's house she arouses his anger and jealousy by demanding his page in exchange for the satisfaction of his lust. When Beaufort exclaims against this, Sib turns on him, forcing him to judge his own sin. He goes off swearing to punish her husband, while she rejoices that this trick has kept her honesty secure. She then tries to rouse her husband by taunting him with cuckoldom, but he still exults at the thought of what he will gain from this. It is only when Lord Beaufort refuses to give Knavesby the promised money and, instead, assures him that he has been horned by the page, that Knavesby has any thought of revenge. He declares,

... I will go home and cut my Wifes Nose off. I will turn over a new Leaf, and hang up the Page; lastly I will put on a large pair of Wet-leather Boots and drown my self, I will sink at Queen-hive, and rise a.gain at Charing-cross contrary to the Statute in Edwardo primo.

The last part of this speech is reminiscent of the words of Master Ford, or even Justiniano's ironical advice to the merchants. It indicates that Middleton has, in fact, abandoned all thought of serious revenge. Thereafter the play is allowed to romp away to a conclusion in which Knavesby, Sib and Lord Beaufort are forgiven by and reconciled to each other.

12 Any Thing for a Quiet Life (1662), III, Sig. Dv.
13 Ibid., V, Sig. C3r.
There were, in fact, two levels of seriousness in Middleton's treatment of dishonour. When considering the relationship between dishonour and sin he was working upon an important didactic theme which occupied him throughout his career. For such dishonour there was no revenge, but justice, together with a realization of error and the promise of amendment of life. In this way his satiric comedies at times approached tragicomedy. On the other hand, in his lighter comedies an awareness of dishonour is used to lead to a comic revenge. Both levels of seriousness are illustrated by No Help Like a Woman's.

When a poor distressed gentlewoman, Mistress Low-water, takes into her own hands the revenge for her attempted seduction by Sir Gilbert Lambstone, she has the serious purpose of Sib in Anything for a Quiet Life. Disguised as a young gallant, Mistress Low-water disgraces Sir Gilbert in front of Lady Goldenfleece, a rich widow whom he had hoped to marry. She shows Lady Goldenfleece the letter in which she is promised an income as Sir Gilbert's mistress from the money that he would gain on his marriage to Lady Goldenfleece. When the widow dismisses Sir Gilbert and openly declares her love for this "gallant", Sir Gilbert and her other suitors combine to avenge this dishonour. They plan to slander the widow, and so dishonour her and her husband. It is they, however, who are disgraced. At the marriage feast of Lady Goldenfleece and her "gallant" they perform a masque, the words of which reveal to the lady their true natures. Lady Goldenfleece's revenge for their attempted dishonouring of her is to dismiss them, with pity, to appropriate places of banishment.
On the other hand, the stock situation of the husband bursting into his wife's bedroom to execute revenge for adultery is used in the same play for comic effect. Mistress Low-water, still acting as the husband of Lady Goldenfleece, rushes into her chamber on their "wedding" night to find her with Beveril. Her revenge is not to kill the widow, but to "divorce" her. At the same time she receives from Lady Goldenfleece all the money of which she had been deprived. When Mistress Low-water reveals her identity Lady Goldenfleece rests content with this justice and gladly takes Beveril as her husband.

In Blurt, Master Constable Middleton uses revenge for honour with satirically comic effect to indicate, as Marston did in Sophonisba, the injustice of the strained concept of the rejected suitor's right to exact revenge on his rival. But whereas Marston's Syphax was provoked by spite and wounded pride, Camillo, rejected by Violette in favour of the Frenchman Fontinell, is inspired by jealousy of a former enemy and prisoner and by a dislike of foreigners. Camillo's suit had been favoured by Violette's brother Hippolito and so, considering himself dishonoured by the Frenchman's presumption, Camillo appeals to Hippolito to execute vengeance on Fontinell, saying

> Wilt thou not stab the peasant,
> That thus dishonours both thy selfe and me? 14

So Hippolito has Fontinell committed to prison. Camillo later tries to persuade Fontinell to abandon Violette in favour of a courtesan, but he remains faithful to Violette and escapes from prison to marry her.

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14 Blurt Master-Constable, or The Spaniards Night-Walke (1602), II, i, Sig. C₁r.
That Middleton is satirising the disguising of other motives under the cloak of revenge for honour is made clear by the fifth act which opens with Camillo's call to his friends to avenge Violetta's honour on Fontinell. Fontinell first dishonoured Camillo by marrying Violetta and now, as Camillo declares

... hee dotes (my honor'd friends) on a painted Curtizan, and in scorng of our Italian Lawes, our familie, our reuenge, loathes Violettaes bed, for a harlots bosome; I conjure you therefore, by all the bonds of Gentilitie, that as you have solemnly sworne a most sharpe; so let the reuenge be most sodaine. 15

At the same time, Hippolito seeks vengeance on his sister for dishonouring their family by her marriage. Together, brother and suitor resolve to go the courtesan's house, accompanied by their friends:

Camillo There to finde Fontinell; found, to kill him.
Virgilio And kill'd, to hang out his reeking bodie, at his Harlots window.
Camillo And by his body, the strumpets.
Hippolito And betweene both, my Sisters.
Virgilio The Tragedie is iust: on then, begin.

The ridiculousness of this appears in the fact that, if they both achieve their revenges, three people will be murdered and the reasons for their deaths will be at cross-purposes. Violetta is to die for marrying Fontinell; Fontinell is then to die for dishonouring their marriage; and, finally, the courtesan Imperia is to die for dishonouring the marriage also. The promised picture of three reeking corpses hanging from Imperia's window is purposely overdone.

What is serious here, however, is the fact that Fontinell does contemplate being unfaithful to his wife, and it is only by using the

15 Ibid., ^2V, i ^, Sig. G_2^F.
16 Ibid., ^2V, i ^, Sig. G_2^V.
"bed trick" that Violetta prevents this. As the audience knows of her deception, the scene in which Camillo, Hippolito and their friends arrive at Imperia's house loses much of its seriousness. Nevertheless, in appealing to the Duke to execute vengeance on their behalf and in threatening to take it into their own hands if he does not, the characters themselves are acting with the utmost gravity. Camillo pleads with, almost commands the Duke:

My Lord, we charge you by the rauisht honour
Of an Italian Lady; by our wrongs,
By that eternall blot (which if this slave
Passe free without reuenge) like Leprosie,
Will run ouer all the bodie of our fames;
Gieue open way to our iust wrath, least ber'd —

Duke Gentlemen —

Camillo Breaking the bonds of honour and of dutie;
We cut a passage through you with our swords.

The Duke answers that in this revenge they kill their honours more than in Fontinell's murder. He swears that if Fontinell has stained Violetta's honour she shall receive the full legal punishment: death.

When Fontinell and Violetta appear, Camillo once more declares his intention of seeing that they both suffer vengeance for their crimes. But Violetta explains her trick and the play ends hastily with renewals of love and friendship all round. Yet amid the amusement of the fifth act the character of the Duke remains firm and serious. No levity can be derived from his solemn adjurations. Even if all else that the audience remembers of the play is amusing, it must yet carry away with it the thoughts that vengeance belongs to the higher powers,

Ibid., √V, iii 7, Sig. H r.
and that those who execute it privately, even with apparently just cause, only dishonour themselves. In this way, in a comedy whose conclusion is reminiscent of those of *All's Well That Ends Well* and *Measure for Measure*, Middleton includes the moral of many an Elizabethan revenge tragedy.

Thus, in Middleton's early comedies, side by side with the use of revenge for honour for comic effect there is the equation of dishonour and sin which points to an underlying seriousness in even the lightest of them. It seems inevitable that a dramatist with such a serious interest in dishonour should eventually turn to tragedy. Yet it was not until the end of his career that Middleton did so. Among his early work, however, the unpublished tragicomedy *The Witch* is the one which shows the clearest promise of his later development as a tragic dramatist. The play is entirely composed of situations found in revenge tragedy, and they are treated with the varying degrees of seriousness found in the city comedies; which indicates Middleton's awareness of the dramatic effectiveness of such situations. More important than this is the fact that this also demonstrates that he was aware of their suitability for motivation and, through that, for characterization.

There are four main revenge themes in the play, three of which concern revenge for honour. The fourth involves an attempted revenge by the Duchess on her husband for making her pledge his health in the skull of her dead father. In the last scene of the play she is

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18 The source of this is Paulus Diaconus, *Pauli Historia Langobardorum*, Lib. ii, cap. xxvii. It was also to be found in Belleforest, Histoire lxxiii, and was used by D'Avenant in *The Tragedy of Alboine* (1629) and Swinburne in *Rosamund, Queen of the Goths* (1899).
accused of base lust and murder. She frees herself of the first charge and discovers that the Duke is still alive. Moreover, he is willing, not merely to receive her back as his loving wife, but to bury the offending skull as well. So the play drawn to a hurried joyful conclusion.

The first of the three themes involving revenge for honour is similarly concluded, though it is introduced in all seriousness in the opening lines of the play. Sebastian tells how, during his absence at war, his plighted wife, Isabella, has been married to Antonio. She was married quickly and is not thought to be over fond of her husband. Yet, as Sebastian's friend Fernando says to him

... being Married
perhaps (for her owne Creadit) now She intends
performance of an honest duteous wife. 19

Sebastian's first desire is to have Isabella and Antonio parted. The witches whom he has asked to help him are unable to do this, but they promise him that they can cause barrenness and

raise larrs,
Iealouzies, Striffes, and hart-burning-disagreements,
like a thick Skurff ore life, ... 20

At the beginning of the second act there is a hint that the first part of Sebastian's revenge is working, but he himself has to fulfil the second. Disguised and employed as Isabella's servant, he tells her that Antonio keeps a strumpet. At first she refuses to believe this, but soon admits that she would be only too happy to learn that it is

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20 Ibid., II, i, 370-372.
true. She commissions Sebastian to prove the accusation. To do this
Sebastian arranges for her to call at Florida's lodgings where Antonio
is considered Florida's husband. There Isabella learns that Florida
is indeed her husband's mistress, but at the same time she thinks
that her servant Coelio (Sebastian) has enticed her from her home in
order to ruin her good name. She accuses Florida and Coelio openly
before the Governor who is her uncle. At this point, however, the
structure of this part of the play collapses as news is brought of
Antonio's sudden death. Then Sebastian, revealing his identity, is
reunited with Isabella.

The two other themes of revenge for honour in the play are closely
linked. Francisca, Antonio's sister, dishonours herself with
Abberzanes. Isabella discovers the fact but promises to keep the news
from Antonio. Francisca does not trust her, and decides to cover her
own shame by accusing Isabella of adultery. Both these situations
involve Antonio in revenge for honour, first as a brother and then as
a husband. In both capacities he is convincing and, in the latter
case, is an almost pathetic revenger. He emerges as the best drawn
character in the play. The action in which he is involved clearly
indicates Middleton's capabilities as a tragic dramatist.

The strength of the characterization of Antonio lies in the fact
that he is a revenger of honour who is himself dishonourable. In this
respect he foreshadows Hippolito of Women Beware Women. Antonio
married Isabella for the sake of worldly reputation, yet he dishonours
her and himself by continuing to keep Florida. To Francisca, on the other hand, he appears punctiliously honourable. Speaking of the coming birth of her illegitimate child Francisca says

My Brother sure would kill me if he knew't; and powder-up my Friend, and all his kindred for an East-Indian Voyage. 21

But Antonio does not learn of Francisca's dishonour until after he believes that he has murdered Isabella and her lover. He goes sword in hand to execute vengeance on Abberzanes, but discovers that the gallant is too much of a coward to undertake a single combat. Antonio exclaims at this baseness:

This Slave had so much daring Courage in him to Act a syn, would shame whole Generations, but hath not so much honest strength about him to draw a Sword, in way of Satisfaction, 22

... The only fit way of punishing him and Francisca is for Antonio to insist on their immediate marriage. So Francisca, the seed of shame and murder, is contracted to Abberzanes, who is all baseness and cowardice.

As a revenger of his wife's supposed dishonour Antonio is content with no such mild redress. Without demanding any kind of proof, or even the name of her lover, Antonio accepts Francisca's report and immediately sets the usual trap. He returns to his sleeping house late at night. At once the play springs to life as one is reminded of the return of Frankford in A Woman Killed with Kindness. Swearing to Francisca that he will make base lust a terrible example, he rushes

21 Ibid., II, i, 513-515.
22 Ibid., V, i, 1790-1793.
in to kill Isabella and her lover. Returning to his sister without knowing that he has, in fact, wounded Amoretta and Gaspar, he speaks with mingled anger and compassion of what he has done and of the shame he still feels for his dishonour:

... oh perjurous woman

sh'ad tooke the Innocence of sleepe upon her at my approach, and would not see me come, as if sh'ad layne there, like a harmless soule and never dream'd of Mischeif. What's all this now? I feele no ease; the Burthens not yet off so long as th'Abuse sticks in my knowledge, oh, 'tis a paine of hell, to know ones shame, had it byn hid, & don, it'had ben don happy, for he that's Ignorant lives long, and merry. 23

His vengeance will not be complete till the informer, Francisca, is dead. In vain she pleads with him to consider her care and truth in revealing Isabella's adultery, for Antonio replies,

a Cursse vpon' em both: and Thee for Companie, 'tis that too dilligent thenceles Care of thine makes me a Murderer, and that Ruynes Truth that lightes me to the knowledge of my Shame. hadst thou byn secreat, then had I byn happy and had a hope (like Man) of Ioyes to Come Now here I stand, a Stayne to my Creation: and, which is heavier: than all Torments to me the understandeing of this base Adultery; and that, thou toldst me first, which thou deseru' st Death worthely for. 24

These two speeches are the finest in the play. They echo the sentiments of Othello and Marston's Duke Pietro. They reveal Middleton's ability to use dramatic verse in tragedy and look forward to such passages as the betrayed Bianca's bitter censure of Guardiano and Isabella's final lament in *Women Beware Women*.

23 *Ibid.*., IV, iii, 1687-1696.
24 *Ibid.*., IV, iii, 1711-1721.
But this is a tragicomedy, not a tragedy. Middleton rapidly descends from this height of emotion. Francisca, terrified of death, confesses that Isabella never dishonoured Antonio, while she herself did. How he disposes of her has already been described. After that he still laments that he has killed two innocent people, till he is told that Isabella has committed adultery with Coelio. His response to this news is made in language as moving as his earlier speeches:

why heere's but Lust translated from one Basenes into en other; heere I thought to haue caught 'em, but lighted wrong, by false Intelligence and made me hurt the Innocent: But now I'll make my Revenge dreadfuller then a Tempest, an Army should not stop me; or a Sea devide'em from my Revenge. 25

By this time the audience knows that Isabella has not spent the night with Coelio and Middleton has to remove this fine and passionate revenger from the play. This is clumsily done by a report that, on entering Fernando's house Antonio, blinded by wrath and jealousy, fell down some three score fathoms from a false trap door. The news of his death elicits from the Governor the moral comment:

oh you Seede of Lust wrongs, and Revenges wrongfull, with what Terro's yo' doe present yourselves to Wretched man, when his soule least expects you? 26

If there is a moral in the play it is to be drawn from these lines and those of the Duke, spoken in conclusion, in which he extols the triumph of honest love.

25 Ibid., V, i, 1885-1891.
26 Ibid., V, iv, 2067-2070.
It has already been seen how the play alters in tone when Antonio returns to his sleeping house to execute vengeance on his wife. Two other vivid passages in the play also concern the serious treatment of revenge for honour. In the first of these Isabella, whom we know to be married to a man she does not love, reveals herself at the same time a sympathetic sister-in-law and a wife careful for the honour of her husband's family. She says of the letter which she has discovered that reveals Francisca's dishonour:

I could not hold from weeping, when I read it; abuse her Brother's house, and his good confidence; 'twas done not like herself; I blame her much; but if she can but keep it from his knowledge I will not grieve (sic) him first. it shall not come by my means to his heart: ... 27

To Francisca herself Isabella is angry, but mainly for Antonio's sake. She is anxious to help the girl if she will but shake hands with folly. It is only if Francisca persists in sinning that Isabella will be forced to reveal her dishonour.

The theme of revenge for honour brings to life also the passage in the play in which Sebastian discusses his dishonour through the breaking of his marriage contract with Isabella. He plans to deceive Isabella into spending the night with him, and speaks in moving tones to Ferdinand of the bond which unites his soul with hers. Because of its existence he thinks that he may deceive her without abusing faith or friendship. He explains this to Florida as he asks her to help him with his plan:

27 Ibid., III, ii, 1077-1081.
... I will think
this night my wedding-night: and with-e-joy
as reverend, as Religion can make Mans
I will embrace this Blessing: honest Actions
are Lawes vnto themselues, and that good feare
which is on others forcd, grows kindly there. 28

The concept of dishonour in the breaking of a marriage contract is
the concept which, in real life, drove Walter Calverley to murder his
children. But, though equally sensible of dishonour, Sebastian is
not rash. When he comes to carry out his plan he realizes that his
action would not be honest. As he renounces for ever the hope of
fulfilling his love, Middleton once more shows a man more moved by
the prospect of sin than by the burden of dishonour:

I cannot so deceive her 'twere too sinfull,
there's more Religion in my Love, then soe:
It is not treacherous Lust, that gives Content
t'en honest mind: and this could prove no better,
Were it in Me, a part of manly Justice,
that haue sought strange hard meanes to keep her Chast
to her first Vow; and I t'abuse her first.
Better I never knew what Comfort were
in womans love, then wickedly to know it.

No, he that would Soules sacred Comfort wyn,
must burne in pure love, like a Seraphin 29

The chronology of Middleton's plays is not yet sufficiently known
for one to be able confidently to fit his tragedies into a pattern of

28 Ibid., IV, ii, 1554-1559.
29 Ibid., IV, ii, 1597-1613.
We know that as early as 1606 he had written a tragedy called *The Viper and her Brood*. It has been thought that this may be *The Revenger's Tragedy*, but the arguments for this identification are not conclusive. Of the date of *The Witch* the editors of the Malone Society edition write:

... 1609 or 1610 is perhaps as likely a date as any for the composition of *The Witch*. The play, it is true, is tragi-comedy, and not until the year 1616 or thereabouts

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1 revised 1606-7
2 revised 1607

Yet, considering the development of Middleton's handling of questions of honour, it would seem that it might have been after he had discovered his own potentialities in this field that he wrote *A Fair Quarrel* and then went on to write *The Changeling* and *Women Beware Women*. For, despite its happy ending, *A Fair Quarrel* comes close to tragedy in many places. Both main and sub-plots are founded on situations that demand revenge for honour. In some ways the subplot foreshadows the situation of Isabella and the Ward and in others, that of Beatrice and Deflores. Moreover, Middleton's treatment of revenge for honour is on his highest level of seriousness in both plots, and it involves a minute examination of the implications of this concept in both cases.

In this respect the play has affinities with Chapman's *Bussy D'Ambois*, for the two kinds of honour here examined are, as in Chapman's play, duelling honour and a woman's honour. Middleton's treatment of both is, however, quite different from Chapman's. His Captain Ager is no self-sufficient Tamburlaine figure, and his Jane, unlike Tamyra, is an innocent victim of dishonour.

The importance of the main plot lies in the characterization of a young man, Captain Ager, who has to have proof that his injury is real before he will avenge it with the sword. In the midst of a quarrel the Colonel calls him the son of a whore. Ager immediately gives the Colonel

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the lie and they agree to fight. The more Captain Ager thinks about it, however, the more he finds it necessary to be quite sure of his mother’s honesty before fighting to defend it. As he soliloquizes

And is’t not miserable valour then,
That man should hazard all upon things doubtfull
Oh ther’s the cruelty of my foes advantage,
Cond (sic) but my soule resolve my cause were just,
Earth’s mountaine, nor seas surge should hide him from mee,
Ne’ne to hells threshold would I follow him,
And see the slanderer in before I left him, 35

Ager asks his mother point blank if she is honest. At first she upbraids him severely for presuming to call her honour in question, but when she learns that her son will have to defend it with the sword, she sacrifices honour to mother love and tells a false tale of infidelity to her husband. Ager is made miserable by this knowledge, but more because it affects his quarrel than because his father was dishonoured. Since he cannot justly defend his mother’s honour, he feels that he will never be honourable again. So he laments,

Quench my spirit,
And out with honors flaming lights within thee:
Be darke and dead to all respects of manhood,
I neuer shall haue use of valour more:

I should (sic) be dead, for all my lifes works ended,
I dare not fight a stroke now, nor engadge
The noble resolution of my friends,
That were more vilde. Their here, kill me my shame,
I s/m/ not for the fellowship of honour. 36

These lines convey fully the poignancy of Captain Ager’s situation, and we are reminded of the lines in which Othello concludes

Farewell: Othello’s Occupation’s gone. 37

35 A Faire Quarrell (1617), II, Sigs. C3\textsuperscript{v} - C4\textsuperscript{r}.
36 Ibid., II, Sigs. D2\textsuperscript{v} - D3\textsuperscript{r}.
37 The Tragedie of Othello, the Moore of Venice, III, iii, p. 325b.
The same sentiments are expressed again by one of Ager's friends who tells him that if he fails in virtue by not fighting, he must

Bid farewell to the integrity of armes,
And let that honourable name of Souldier
Fall from you like a shivered wreath of Lawrell
By Thunder strucke from a desertlesse forehead,
That weares anothers right by vsurpation. 38

Despite the urgings of his friends, Ager remains firmly determined not to fight the Colonel to whom he offers Christian forgiveness and a lecture on Christian duty:

Why should man
Eor (sic) a poore hasty syllable or two,
(And vented onely in forgetfull fury)
Cheine all the hopes and riches of his soule
To the resuenge of that, dye, lost for euer: 39

Yet these fine Christian sentiments are soon forgotten when the Colonel calls Ager a coward. Or rather, Ager cheerfully exclaims that heaven, pitying his excessive patience, has at last sent him a just cause upon which to fight. Now he will not put off the duel, and within a few minutes the Colonel has been wounded, as all believe, mortally. Shortly afterwards Ager is not even content with this. For when his mother confesses that she purposely belied her honour, the Captain wishes that the Colonel might live only to fight another duel - this time on the original cause, now justified. But the second occasion does not arise. Ager falls in love with the Colonel's sister, and when he later discovers that the Colonel has, indeed, recovered, they are joyfully united as brothers.

38 A Faire Quarrell (1617), III, Sig. E3v.
39 Ibid., III, Sig. E4r.
Although the title of the play is derived from this plot, the second theme is of more compelling interest. It concerns the honour of a young girl, parted by her father from her contracted husband, whose child she is about to bear. This story has greater potentialities for tragedy than that of the Colonel and Captain Ager, and it gives the dramatist greater scope for characterization. In Jane's father, Russell we are reminded of the mercenary fathers of the city comedies, while Jane herself is a forerunner of Beatrice Joanna, Bianca and Isabella. Russell sends Jane's contracted husband, Fitzallen, to prison on a false charge in order that she may be married to Chawgh, a rich, but ignorant, country bumpkin. As Fitzallen is carried off, Russell says to his daughter:

Come, come, be cheard, thinke of thy preferment,
Honour and attendance, these wil bring thee health
And the way to 'um is to clime by wealth. 40

Ironically, Russell does not realize that by separation from Fitzallen, Jane loses honour instead of gaining it.

Jane herself, considering that she is Fitzallen's wife before heaven, thinks rather of the danger to her outward reputation, than the danger to her inherent honour, which the birth of her child will cause. She confides in the Physician and his sister, and they shelter her till the child is born. For this shelter, she thus expresses gratitude:

... you preserve my name,
Which I had forfeyted to shame and scorne:
Cover my vices with a veile of loue,
Defend and keepe me from a fathers rage,
Whose loue yet infinite (not knowing this)
Might (knowing) turne a hate as infinite:

40 Ibid., I, Sig. C₃v.
Sure he would throw me euer from his blessings,
And cast his curses on me: yes, further,
Your secrecy keeps me in the state of woman:
For else what husband would chuse me his wife:
Knowing the honour of a Bride were lost. 41

Neither such protestations of gratitude, nor yet hard cash, are
sufficient recompense for the Physician. He makes the mistake of
assuming that, because Jane has borne an illegitimate child, she is
really dishonourable, and willing to dishonour herself afresh by
becoming his mistress. Jane rejects his suggestions with scorn and
loathing, but she cannot forget that her reputation is at his mercy.

His sister Anne reminds Jane

Your fault dwells in his breast, say, he throw it out,
It will be known, how are you then undone?
Think on't, your good name, and they are not to be solde,
In every market, a good name's dear, 42
And indeed more esteemed than our actions,
By which wee should deserve it. 43

As Jane still refuses the Physician, he threatens her with revenge,
and on the day appointed for her marriage to Chawgh, he tells the
countryman that Jane is without honour. Chawgh, in his turn, complains
of this to Russell. He does so, however, in the meaningless jargon
of his roaring school, and so the Physician explains to Russell:

Sir, with much sorrow for your sorrowes sake,
I must deliver this most certaine truth,
Your daughter is an honor stayned Bride,
Indeed she is the mother to a child,
Before the lawfull wife vnto a husband. 44

But Russell received quite cheerfully the news that he is a grandfather,
and promises to cover Jane's spot with his abundant love. It then
appears that he had prepared Jane that day to marry, not Chawgh, but

41 Ibid., III, ii, 7, Sig. F₂�
42 Cf. Othello, Edited M.R. Ridley (1958), III, iii, 159 (Quarto reading)
43 A Faire Quarell, III, ii, 7, Sig. F₄.
44 Ibid., V, 1, Sig. I₂�.
Fitzallen. Chevwgh tries to warn Fitzallen of Jane's dishonour, but, knowing that the child is his, Fitzallen only pretends to be outraged in order to extract a larger dowry from Russell. The play concludes with reunions between Jane and Fitzallen, the Captain and the Colonel. The Physician is dismissed to no greater punishment than to amend his life, his treatment being similar to that of such dishonourable men as Lord Beaufort and the suitors of Lady Goldenfleece.

The development in construction between the writing of The Witch and A Faire Quarrell is obvious. In the former play, four potentially tragic themes are developed a little and then abandoned in favour of happy endings. In A Fair Quarrel two plots, each illustrating a different aspect of honour, are developed along lines which lead almost to revenge. If their conclusions are somewhat sudden, they are at least more credible than the conclusions of The Witch. It is not unlikely that Ager's love for the Colonel's sister, like Sir Francis Acton's love for Susan Mountford, should overcome his desire of revenge. The announcement that Russell intended the imprisonment of Fitzallen merely as a trial of the lovers' constancy is more difficult to accept, but his treatment is no worse than that imposed on Ferdinand by Prospero.

Development in characterization is not so obvious, but this is partly the result of the necessity to produce a happy ending. When a character is touched by the seriousness of the question of honour, as in The Witch, fine poetry and moving speeches result. The poignancy of Jane's situation when trying to resist the Physician's blackmail is no
less obvious than that of Agar as he, like Jane, is faced with the prospect of the loss of honour in the world's eyes.

It is impossible to say more of Middleton's development in A Fair Quarrel because the play was written in collaboration with William Rowley. Although the titlepage ascription of the play has been questioned, they were probably also the authors of The Spanish Gipsy. Like A Fair Quarrel, this play has two plots of which the one not concerned with the title is of more serious interest. Both plots of The Spanish Gipsy are derived from the Exemplary Novels of Cervantes. Le Gitanilla provides the story of the title, which is light and romantic, while the second story is derived from La Fuerza de la Sangre which is much more serious and concerns revenge for the dishonour of rape. In this plot there are variations from Cervantes' original which might well indicate Middleton's concern to replace revenge for honour with justice. But, on the other hand, in view of Middleton's stress on the relationship between sin and dishonour in his other plays, it is surprising that the speech of the injured girl's father on this relationship is omitted in the play.

Nevertheless, the sin of dishonour and the searing effect of dishonour on the soul - a development found in Middleton's tragedies - are both important in The Spanish Gipsy. The story, as dramatized, is as follows: While walking with her parents one evening Clara (Leocadia

45 Vide G.E. Bentley, op. cit., iv, p. 895.
46 Novelas Exemplares (Madrid, 1613), fols. 1-38r; 126-137v.
47 It is from this speech that the quotation on p. 212 supra is taken.
of Cervantes) is seized by a young gallant, Roderigo (Rodolfo), carried to his home, and raped. Thus dishonoured, Clara asks Roderigo to become an honourable villain by either killing or marrying her. This alternative is not in Cervantes' version, nor are the sentiments of Clara's soliloquy:

Revenge I kneele to thee, alas 'gainst whom?
By what name shall I pull Confusion down
From Justice on his head that hath betrayed me?
I know not where I am, up I beseech thee
Thou Lady regent of the air, the Moon,
And lead me by thy light to some brave vengeance,
...

It is Clara's virtue that makes Roderigo conscious of his wickedness and of the guilt which he knows he will always bear in his soul. There is no such consciousness of sin in Cervantes' Rodolfo, who attempts to repeat the rape. Nor does Leocadia's father, as Clara's, promise his daughter a noble vengeance when he has discovered the identity of her ravisher. In both versions neither the man nor the woman whom he has dishonoured knows the other's identity.

Leocadia, in La Fuerza de la Sangre, has a son, Luis, by Rodolfo. It is through the child's being run over by a horse that she comes to know Rodolfo's parents. She recognizes their house, and they know the crucifix that she had taken from the room where she was dishonoured. She reveals her story to them and they arrange for her marriage to Rodolfo. In The Spanish Gipsy, there is more stress placed on honour, for when Roderigo's dishonourable action is revealed to his father, Fernando, by Clara (who has no child), he exclaims:

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48 The Spanish Gipsie (1653), I, [iii], Sig. B_2^V.
Thou too too much wrong'd Maid scorne not my teares,  
For these are teares of Rage, not teares of Love.  
Thou Father of this too too much wrong'd Maids,  
Thou Mother of her counsells and her cares;  
I doe not plead for pitty to a Villaine,  
Oh! let him die as hee hath liv'd dishonorably,  
Basely and cursedly; I plead for pitty,  
To my till now untainted blood and honour.  
Teach mee how I may now be just and cruel;  
For henceforth I am Childlesse.  

Shakespeare's Titus Andronicus is the only other father on the  
Elizabethan or Jacobean stage to be thus conscious of family honour  
wounded by his son's dishonour. Fernando's moving eloquence wins  
Clara to beg at least  

A noble satisfaction, tho' not revenge.  

She responds, also, to Fernando's offer to help her to obtain this.  
Her change of purpose from revenge to justice for dishonour is the  
climax of this plot, marked by the couplet with which Fernando  
closes the act:  

The best revenge is to reforme our crymes,  
Then time crowns sorrowes, sorrowes sweeten times.  

Thereafter the story of Clara and Roderigo moves towardd a conclusion  
in which Don Luis, who had once hoped to marry Clara, resigns his  
interest in her. She is left free to marry Roderigo who, like Claudio  
in Much Ado About Nothing, accepts a bride without knowing who she is  
only to discover that she is the girl whom he once dishonoured and whom  
he now truly loves. Roderigo himself confesses that he has come  

To a new Schools  
Of happy knowledge ...

49 Ibid., III, 3/iii 7, Sig. F 3 r.  
50 Ibid., III, 3/iii 7, Sig. F 3 v.  
51 Ibid., loc. cit.  
52 Ibid., V, 1/7, Sig. H 4 v.
Thus, in the story of Clara and Roderigo *The Spanish Gipsy* combines the moral attitude of Middleton's comedies - but without the satiric sting - with some of the fine characterization and moving verse which are the distinguishing mark of his tragedies.

In *The Changeling* Middleton and Rowley produced their sole tragedy. As critics seem to agree that Rowley's share in the play was confined to the subplot, the development of Middleton's own dramatic craftsmanship may be discerned in the main tragic plot and compared with his work in *Women Beware Woman*. He uses the situation of a woman blackmailed into dishonour, adumbrated in *A Fair Querrel*, to bring about the tragedy, but though the concept of revenge for honour is necessarily implicit in the action, revenge for honour is not exacted. For once more Middleton demonstrates that *sin is greater than dishonour, and justice meeter than revenge*. So a dishonoured wife meets death, not at the hands of her husband, but at the hands of the lover whom she also betrays.

From the very beginning of the play one may see a decided advance in Middleton's use of dramatic verse; and in his command of both structure and characterization. The action begins calmly with the prospect of happy young love. In the quick growth of love between Alsemero and Beatrice, Jasperino and Diaphanta, one is reminded of the pairs of lovers at Belmont. But the seeds of tragedy are sown already in the first scene. A young girl is desired by three men. Her heart inclines, not to her bridegroom, Alonzo de Piracquo, but to the

young soldier, Alsemero, whom she has just met. This sudden love is not, therefore, innocent. If Beatrice chooses Alsemero she will dishonour her betrothed and herself. Her third lover is even more dangerous, because she herself is unaware of his feelings. She does not know that if she should waver in loyalty to her betrothed husband the ever-watchful Deflores will be sure to discover the fact and make use of it to gain her for himself.

Beatrice Joanna is untrained and innocent. Her very girlishness brings her to a disregard, not so much of honour, as of sin. Her first errors are errors of tact and judgment. She allows her dislike of Deflores to lead her to admit her dislike of her bridegroom; and she postpones her wedding. Even to Tomazo, the groom's brother, it is clear that she loves someone else. He gravely warns Alonzo of the consequences of proceeding with the marriage:

... how dangerous
And shamefull her restraint may goe in time to,
It is not to be thought on without sufferings.

Alonzo refuses to listen. Chiding his brother for presumption, he says

... I can endure
much, till I meet an injury to her,
Then I am not my self.

Behind Alonzo's statement lies the certainty that if Beatrice should dishonour him, he would not hesitate to seek revenge. One is reminded of Othello's vision of the chaos of a world without his love for Desdemona.

54 M.C. Bradbrook in Themes and Conventions of Elizabethan Tragedy (Cambridge, 1935), p. 214 describes the play as "a study in the conflict of passion and judgment, and of the transforming power of love."
55 The Changeling (1653), Act II, Sig. D1.
56 Ibid., loc. cit.
57 It may also be noted that Deflores answers to the name "honest Deflores" from the man whom he betrays.
But Middleton surprises us in his development of the plot. Alonzo's qualities are never tested. Before the wedding can take place he is murdered by Deflores at Beatrice's command. Once the murder is committed, Beatrice finds herself in the same position as did Jane after her confinement. Her helper demands a reward other than money, and she cannot grasp what it is. There is this difference between Jane and Beatrice, however: Jane was in danger of losing merely her good name by refusing to comply with the Physician's wishes; Beatrice will lose life, happiness and love as well as the honour of her husband Alsemoro, if she accepts Deflores.

From this point onwards Middleton's mastery of the complicated workings of Beatrice's mind becomes increasingly apparent. She is the most convincing tragic figure that Middleton has yet produced. The strength of her characterization lies in her very inability to express her ideas in adult terms. The murder of Alonzo does not really impinge on her consciousness. When she sees his finger in Deflores' hand she only exclaims,

Bless me! what hast thou done? 58

Ironically, she is far from blessing, and her very use of the phrase is meaningless. It is merely a girlish expression of surprise. 59 She can no more comprehend that Alonzo has actually been murdered than she can appreciate the real wickedness of the murderer. Beatrice is struck with amazement as she says to Deflores:

58 Ibid., III, $iv$, Sig. $E_4^r$.
59 This is clear from the other occasions on which she uses the same exclamation: Act IV, $i$, Sig. $F_2^r$; Act V, $i$, Sig. $H_4^v$. 
Why 'tis impossible thou canst be so wicked,
Or shelter such a cunning cruelty,
To make his death the murderer of my honor. 60

This curious innocence is torn from her shred by shred as Deflores
reminds her that she is a woman "dipt in blood." The image of a
bloody baptism is immediately followed by Beatrice's exclamation:

O misery of sin! 61

Her sudden, terrified realization of the loss of salvation marks a
climax in Beatrice's development. She makes a last plea to Deflores
to take her wealth and let her go poor to her bed with honour. He
refuses, and she has to acknowledge that murder is followed by more
sins. Thereafter, although Beatrice may speak of her honour, and
may think that she is struggling to preserve her husband's honour, the
play is concerned to show the effect of sin on her character. It is
sin, not dishonour, that brings about her downfall.

For, like Mistress Frankford, having once yielded her honour, she
is caught in a labyrinth of sin. The more Beatrice struggles to be
free, the more she becomes entangled. She is forced to submit to
Deflores to buy his silence and her married happiness with Alsemoro.

Yet, ironically, she has no sooner done this than she realizes that
she can never have such happiness. Moreover, her peace of mind is
disturbed by guilt. She lives in terror of being found out by Alsemoro.

In one of her most eloquent speeches Beatrice laments,

there's no venturing
Into his bed, what course soe're I light upon,

60 The Changeling (1653), III, 4iv, Sig. F. 61
61 Ibid., loc. cit.
Without my shame, which may grow up to danger;
He cannot but in justice strangle me
As I lie by him, as a cheater use me; 62

If sin is more important than dishonour in *The Changeling*, so justice
is more important than revenge. Beatrice knows that it is justice, not
revenge, that she has to avoid. In her fright she goes too far in
establishing her innocence. The test of the magic water convinces
Alsemoro of her virginity. He is satisfied, but Beatrice herself is
not. So she makes the mistake of employing a virgin, her maid
Diaphanta, to take her place on her wedding night. This is but a
repetition of her sin of employing Deflores to murder Alonzo. On both
occasions she sought to keep her own hands clean by paying someone
else to sin for her. On both occasions that sin buys her soul from
her. She falls into Deflores' power because he enjoys the sin that
brings him the reward of her obligation to him. She is in danger of
falling into Diaphanta's power because the maid enjoys her task and
overstays her appointed time with Alsemoro. Then, blind to her own
sin and breaking into a frenzy that is as much inspired by fright as
by jealousy or even regard of her honour, Beatrice calls Diaphanta a
whore and strumpet, wishes her death, and readily embraces Deflores'
plan for it.

The parallel between Beatrice and her maid is emphasized by the
fact that Beatrice dies for the same reason that Diaphanta did. For
because
Beatrice's catastrophe is brought about/she continues to associate with

62 Ibid., IV, 17, Sig. F2r.
Deflores. She enjoys her sin as Diaphanta did, and becomes as careless as she. Jasperino overhears Beatrice talking to Deflores and tells Alsemero of this. Alsemero, the young soldier, jealous of his honour, is quick to accuse her of adultery. It is part of the complex characterization of Beatrice that she still thinks she is trying to preserve a love for Alsemero when her deeds deny it; that she thinks she is trying to save his and her honour when she is trying to save her own skin. So she turns to her husband with the dramatic confession that she has done much, even murdered, and all for him.

The last stage of her degeneration is falsehood and treachery. Having first denied her husband's accusations, she then betrays Deflores. Alsemero hesitates to punish her himself, but sends Deflores to her where she is locked in the closet. It is Deflores who murders her and then kills himself. This act is revenge to Deflores, but justice to Alsemero.

In his presentation of the relationship between sin and dishonour in The Changeling Middleton restates a theme of his satiric comedies, but the play is a tragedy because he shows that the wages of sin is death. Moreover, in his depiction of the relationship between Beatrice and Deflores he shows both the horror and the attraction of sin. It is, as has been previously noted, partly her girlishness that leads Beatrice Joanna astray. Just as she responds to the swift courtship of Alsemero in the Temple, so she cannot resist the temptation of exercising her powers of attraction on Deflores. She loathes his looks,
his presence, his very approach. Yet it is not enough for her simply to request him to murder Alonzo. She strokes his ill-favoured face and presses close enough for him to smell the perfume that she wears. Already mad with love for her, Deflores is hardly able to contain himself. He is so near to holding her in his arms that nothing will satisfy him till he does. He himself thinks that Beatrice must know what effect her actions have on him. He tells her that justice invites her blood to understand what reward he desires. Beatrice plays with the fire of lust and it consumes her.

In the progress of Beatrice's soul her attraction to Deflores is synonymous with her attraction to sin. It is a weakness in the characterization of Heywood's Mistress Frankford that she yields suddenly to Wendoll. It is a strength in the portrayal of Beatrice that Middleton shows in passages of realistic ugliness how sin, in the person of Deflores, overcomes her loathing and its prophetic promptings, and wins her to himself.

Moreover, the closer she is drawn to sin and Deflores, the farther is Beatrice removed from righteousness and Alsemero. In their courtship in the Temple, Alsemero and Beatrice were both guilty. But whereas Beatrice becomes oblivious of sin, Alsemero's soul develops in the opposite direction. Shocked by her confession of the murder of Alonzo, Alsemero, who did not want such a crime committed to buy happiness, can view dispassionately the growth of their guilty love and its effects on Beatrice. Of her confession of the murder he says,
Oh the place it self ere since
Has crying been for vengeance, the Temple
Where blood and beauty first unlawfully
 Fir'd their devotion, and quench the right one,
'Twas in my fears at first, 'twill have it now,
Oh thou art all deform'd.  

So Beatrice is not to die without having had to face up to her sin.

Having seen her deeds through Alsemero's eyes, she is at last able to see herself and to understand that sin is more important than dishonour.

Thus she says to Alsemero: her father:

O come not near me sir, I shall defile you,
I am that of your blood was taken from you
For your better health, look no more upon't
But cast it to the ground regardlessly,
Let the common shewer (sic) take it, from distinction,
Beneath the starres, upon yon Meteor
Ever hang my fate, 'mongst things corruptible,
I ne' re could pluck it from him, my loathing
Was Prophet to the rest, but ne' re believ'd
Mine honour fall with him, and now my life.
Alsemero, I am a stranger to your bed,
Your bed was coz'n'd on the nuptiall night,
For which your false-bride died.

Alsemero Diaphanta!

Deflores Yes, and the while I coupled with your mate
At barly-break; now we are left in hell.  

Despite Deflores' claim on Beatrice, she at least dies asking forgiveness and declaring:

'Tis time to die, when 'tis a shame to live.

The equation of sin and dishonour is important in The Changeling because it is sin that changes Beatrice Joanna from an innocent girl to an adulterous murderer In the subplot, which is closely and

63 Ibid., V, iii, Sig. I.  
64 Ibid., V, iii, Sig. I.  
65 Ibid., V, iii, Sig. I.  


skilfully interwoven with the tragedy, it is a dishonourable love that transforms Antonio into a foolish innocent in order to gain access to Isabella. Response to this love causes Isabella to disguise herself as a madwoman. But these are comic changes. Antonio does not recognise her. The act of dishonour and sin is not committed, and there is no threat of revenge. Beatrice is the real changeling; Antonio and Isabella but pretended ones.

Whether or not Women Beware Women was written after The Changeling, it marks Middleton's highest achievement in handling the concept of revenge for honour and the interaction of sin and dishonour. Its strength, like that of all his serious dramas, lies in characterization. As in The Changeling it is the portrayal of the woman who is betrayed, not so much to dishonour, as to sin, that is important. In Women Beware Women two girls, portrayed with equal conviction, are betrayed by the same panderss. Moreover, in the skilful combination of both plots by the inclusion of Livia and Guardiano as important characters in each, one may see Middleton's greatest mastery of construction.

There are two references to women betraying women in Middleton's tragico-comedies, and it is therefore possible that it was because he had had the idea at the back of his mind for some years that he was able to produce a masterpiece when he came to make it the basis of a play.

In The Witch, Florida remarks

What makes the Devill so greedy of a Soule but 'cause be's lost his owne; to all Ioyes lost: So 'tis our Trade to sett Shares for other women 'cause we were once caught our selues. 67

66 Vide M.C. Bradbrook, op. cit., pp. 214-5; 221-4.
In *A Fair Quarrel*, Lady Ager alleges that she was betrayed to dishonour by a kinswoman. These two references throw some light on the character of Livia. From the second it appears that it was not considered improbable that an older woman should betray her kinswoman. From the first one might find a reason to explain the hardness and cruelty of Livia's actions. They would indeed seem to belong to a woman who betrays others because she has lost honour and happiness herself.

The character of Bianca is conceived and executed with Middleton's finest skill. She is shown as a young, innocent, and even foolish bride. Her husband's description of her plans for the future reflects, no doubt, her own girlish assurances to her husband of how happy she will be to sit at home and care for domestic duties. Leantio tells his mother that Bianca intends

To take out other works in a new Sampler,
And frame the fashion of an honest love,
Which knows no wants; ... 69

Yet, though Bianca is innocent and good she is, like Beatrice Joanna, aware of her own physical attractions. Of her husband's admiration she is sure; but she has also more than half a suspicion that the Duke really did look up admiringly when he passed her window. Moreover, when the Duke himself suddenly appears as she is being conducted around Livia's house there is no doubt in her mind about what he wants. She exclaims immediately:

Oh treachery to honor! 70

She knows that accession to the Duke's demands will lead her to death

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68 She is called "Brancha" throughout the first edition (1657).
70 Ibid., II, ii, p. 128.
and deeds of ruin. Yet she has little to say against his strong pleadings, and without a final word of protest she exchanges inherent honour for the wealth and worldly honour that he offers her.

When Bianca returns from the Duke a great change has taken place in her. The shy and quiet girl has gone for ever as, torn between shame for her dishonour and delight in the Duke's love-making, she exclaims against the treachery of Guardiano:

Yet since mine honors Leprous, who (sic) should I
Preserve that fair that caus'd the Leprosie?
Come poysen all at once: Thou in whose baseness
The bane of Vertue broods, I'm bound in Soul
Eternally to curse thy smooth brow'd treachery,

I'm made bold now,
I thank thy treachery; sin and I'm acquainted,
No couple greater; and I'm like that great one,
Who making politick use of a base villain,
He likes the Treason well, but hates the Treytor;
So I hate thee slave. 71

This change in Bianca is, however, carefully prepared for at the beginning of the play. For the Duke triumphs over her honour mainly because he is much more gentle in his treatment of her than her husband was. At the beginning of Women Beware Women Leantio is seen to be intoxicated by his physical passion for Bianca. He laments that he must only see her at week-ends. Yet he speaks grossly of their love: it is a pleasure he has had a smack of; game in a new married couple. In fact, the first act reveals Leantio as a sensual animal rather than a considerate husband. On the other hand the Duke, who embraces and fondles Bianca as soon as he meets her, does so gently; and he promises

71 Ibid., II, ii, p. 132.
her the infinite pleasure that his affections take in gentle, fair entreatings. The contrast between her rough husband and gentle seducer explains why Bianca should like this treason though she hates the traitor.

Bianca can never again enjoy even the simple pleasures that were to compose her married life. She complains of the poorness of her mother-in-law's house and asks to be removed to lodgings near the court. She then refuses to kiss Leantio, complains that he seems to have married her in order to mew her up, and, finally, sets out boldly to the feast at Livia's house to which the Duke has invited her. Leantio follows her to find her openly kissing the Duke. His cuckoldom is confirmed in his own mind when the Duke offers him the captaincy of the fort at Rouen. Leantio then stands sadly by as his young bride boldly jokes with her lover and goes off to lodgings which the Duke has provided for her near the court.

When Bianca and Leantio next meet they are both in the same dishonourable position. Bianca is magnificently installed in Court lodgings; Leantio has been magnificently suited by Livia, who keeps him. At first they bicker at each other's wealth, but Leantio soon breaks down. Even though he is living with Livia, he still loves his wife and cannot forget her shame and his dishonour. When none of his taunts or reproofs move her, he threatens Bianca with revenge:

Why do I talk to thee of Sense or Vertue,  
That art as dark as death? and as much madness
To set light before thee, as to lead blinde folks
to see the Monuments, which they may smell as soon
As they behold; Marry oft-times their heads
For want of light, may feel the hardness of 'em.
So shall thy blinde pride my revenge and anger,
That canst not see it now; and it may fall
At such an hour, when thou least seest of all;
So to an ignorance darker than thy womb,
I leave thy perjur'd soul: A plague will come. 72

From what one knows of Leantio's character - his passion for Bianca
which would over-ride hatred; the weakness of his surrender to Livia -
one does not really expect him to execute this promised revenge. Indeed,
he does not live to do so. Ironically, he suffers a swift and sudden
vengeance from Hippolito for his relationship with Livia. Although
she was the seducer, he was thereby the betrayer of her honour. So
Leantio, first dishonoured by Bianca, dies for dishonouring Livia and
her brother, who are both dishonourable themselves. At the same time,
as Leantio himself realizes, by leaving Bianca a widow, he at least
gives her an opportunity of making an honest woman of herself.

Bianca does, in fact, achieve this outward show of honesty by
marrying the Duke. His brother Cardinal, however, does not hesitate
to state that he considers such honour merely superficial. He asks
the Duke,

"Must marriage, that immaculate robe of honor,

be now made the Garment

Of Leprousie and Foulness? 73"

In vain do the Duke and Bianca strive to explain their repentance
and their honesty. Their union is tainted by lust, dishonour and,

72 Ibid., IV, i, p. 169.
73 Ibid., IV, iii, p. 185.
above all, sin. Therefore the Cardinal predicts:

Lust is bold,
And will have vengeance speak, er'1t be controlled. 74

The final vengeance on Bianca and her Duke is the vengeance of heaven.
The poisoned cup that Bianca has prepared for the Cardinal is presented
to the Duke by mistake. He dies, and Bianca drinks from the same cup.
Before she dies she declares that she can at last feel the breach of
her marriage, and laments,

... Oh the deadly snares
That Women set for Women, without pity
Either to soul or honor! 75

Nevertheless, she rejoices that she and the Duke have tasted the same
death in a cup of love.

The other girl whom Livia betrays is her own niece, Isabella, who is
quite a different person from Bianca. Isabella is willing to dishonour
herself and her chosen husband by adultery. The tragedy of dishonour
is only brought home to her when she discovers that this adultery is
incestuous. Her position is in many ways similar to that of Ford's
Annabella in 'Tis Pity... Isabella is deeply attached to her nearest
male relative - in this case an uncle - and prefers his love to that
of the suitor whom her father favours. Yet she does not immediately
embrace this love, as Annabella did her brother's. In fact when
Hippolito, encouraged to tell her what makes him so sad, reveals his
passion, she sees his declaration as an end of a love which would have
been her only consolation when married to her foolish husband.

74 Ibid., IV, iii, p. 187.
75 Ibid., V, i, p. 197.
Nevertheless, the barrier between the affection of a niece and that of a wife is very slight. Without pausing to consider the supposed dishonesty of her mother, Isabella welcomes Livia's false intelligence that she is not Fabricio's daughter and therefore not Hippolito's niece. So little does she think of honour compared with her own wishes, that she surprises Hippolito himself by the readiness with which she wishes to embrace him and to propose that her marriage with the Ward should take place in order to cover their relationship.

The greatest difference between Bianca and Isabella lies in the fact that the latter is not really conscious of having fallen in becoming her uncle's mistress. So there is no change in her character after she has yielded to him. Yet, if the sin of adultery does not move her, the horror and guilt of the sin of incest do. Livia, lamenting over the dead Leantio reveals the truth of Isabella's relationship with Hippolito:

'Twas I betray'd thy honor subtilly to him
Under a false tale; it lights upon me now;
His arm has paid me home upon thy breast,
My sweet belov'd Leantio! 76

But Isabella, although conscious of a dishonour which demands revenge, is also aware of the injury to her soul:

Was ever Maid so cruelly beguil'd
To the confusion of life, soul, and honor,
All of one womans murd'ring! ... 

If the least means but favor my revenge,
That I may practise the like cruel cunning
Upon her life, as she has on mine honor,
I'll act it without pity. 77

76 Ibid., IV, ii, p. 179.
77 Ibid., IV, ii, p. 181.
At this point Middleton employs the stock device of the revenger feigning forgiveness in order to deceive his victim, but he uses it in a fresh way. Livia first pretends repentance to Hippolito and Isabella for the wrongs that she has done them, while planning vengeance for Leantio's death. Isabella sees through this deceit and herself feigns acceptance of this repentance in order to disguise her desire of revenge for honour.

These revenges are executed in a conventional manner - a masque at court - but again Middleton varies the familiar pattern. For the masque contains not one, but two sets of revengers; each working against the other. Isabella kills herself and Livia with poisonous fumes. Hippolito stoops to kiss his niece-mistress, saying

Nay, then I kiss thy cold lips, and applaud
This thy revenge in death. 78

As he does so he is shot by Livia's disguised pages. This is Livia's revenge for Leantio, which Hippolito himself acknowledges as just.

His dying words describe the action of the end of the play:

... Veng'ance met Vengeance,
Like a set match; as if the plague of sin
Had been agreed to meet here altogether. 79

In this final holocaust (in which, it must be admitted, Middleton overdoes his effects with the use of poison and a trap door) Bianca, the Duke and Guardiano all die. Their deaths represent, as the Cardinal declares, divine vengeance on sin.

78 Ibid., V, i, p. 194.
79 Ibid., V, i, pp. 194-5.
As an avenger of honour Hippolito is no less interesting than Bianca or Isabella. His personality does not develop as theirs do, but is interesting in its complexity. He is, in one respect, similar to Sir Walter Whorehound in that he knows his love is sinful. Yet, like Ford's Giovanni in 'Tis Pity ... he cannot keep from revealing it. When Isabella comes to him to offer her love freely, Hippolito does not know of the false tale that she has been told by Livia. Yet he gladly accepts the joy that is thus offered him. At the same time he accepts without question the necessity of inflicting dishonour on the Ward, Isabella's husband.

Neither Guardiano nor the Ward suspects even the public demonstrations of affection between Hippolito and Isabella. Like Shakespeare's Angelo, Hippolito has a public reputation as a man jealous of his honor, particularly his family honour. For, when the Duke mentions to him that Leantio is living with Livia, Hippolito's desire to avenge this dishonour to his sister is immediate. Without stopping to consider Livia's part in the arrangement, Hippolito rushes sword in hand to execute vengeance for ruined family honour. So he storms at Leantio:

Thou took'st advantage of my name in honor,
Upon my Sister; I nev'r saw the stroke
Come, till I found my reputation bleeding;
And therefore count it I no sin to valor
To serve thy lust so: Now we are of even hand,
Take your best course against me. You must die. 80

80 Ibid., IV, ii, p. 177.
The two different attitudes to dishonour in Hippolito's mind may be reconciled by the assumption that he may have considered that dishonour only demanded vengeance when it was public knowledge. His private dishonouring of his niece was unknown; but it was from the Duke himself that Hippolito learnt of his sister's dishonour. As a man of honour he could not refuse an opportunity of exacting a public vengeance for a publicly known shame. On a human level and quite apart from the code of honour, Hippolito is thereby satirically represented as a man who wishes to remove the mote from Leantio's eye while ignoring the beam of sin in his own.

The other revengers in the play are more conventional and, therefore, less important. Guardiano and his foolish Ward express conventional horror at Isabella's deceit. The former, however, is Livia's accomplice in the betrayal of Bianca. He is as much a hypocrite as Hippolito. The lament of the Ward that he is damned as a cuckold may be taken no more seriously than any of his other foolish complaints.

Before summarizing Middleton's treatment of revenge for honour it must be mentioned that he wrote one tragedy, Hengist, King of Kent which is not a tragedy of honour. Middleton introduces revenge into the play as a device whereby Vortiger may divorce his innocent wife. Castiza is "raped" by her own husband so that she may have to confess openly to a stain on her honour. The important thing to notice in this incident is that Vortiger does not dishonour himself by sleeping with his own wife. Thus he saves his inherent honour, though he later dishonours himself in another sense by divorcing an innocent woman. It
is also noteworthy that Castiza, touched by the stain of dishonour which comes through no fault of her own, emerges as one of Middleton's fine tragic figures, comparable to Beatrice, Bianca and Isabella.

In many ways, Middleton's treatment of revenge for honour combines aspects of its treatment by both the early Jacobean dramatists and those of the late Jacobean and Caroline periods. This was the result, not only of his development from a comic to a tragic dramatist, but of the influences and fashions among his contemporaries. His affinities with Marston - in his conception of the interaction of sin and dishonour - and with Shakespeare - in the representation of justice rather than revenge for dishonour - have already been indicated. On the other hand, as the following chapter will make clear, his treatment and use of revenge for honour in comedy and tragicomedy is similar to that of John Fletcher. Like Fletcher, Middleton could use the conventions of revenge for honour to produce either a comic revenge - as in No Help Like a Woman's - or to provide a potentially tragic situation in a play that will conclude as a tragicomedy - as in The Witch, A Fair Quarrel or The Spanish Gipsy.

Yet, even in his city comedies, Middleton is aware of the sin of dishonour and in them he presents vicious characters whose disregard of honour and sin may be amended. In his tragedies, on the other hand, he shows the degeneration of character through the effect of a dishonour that is, above all, a soul-destroying sin. For the most part, in fact, his comedies rely on comic situation, stock ideas and conventional
reactions for their effect. In his tragicomedies one may see how characterization gradually takes over from situation as a main source of life in the plays. Finally, Middleton's tragedies are seen to be based completely on characterization. Tragedy springs, not from men's or women's actions so much as from the sin within themselves which brings its own wages of death.

This is most remarkable in Middleton's portrayal of women tainted by dishonour. His greatest contribution to revenge tragedy is his examination of the searing effect of dishonour and sin on the soul. It has already been pointed out how the characters of Beatrice Joanna and Bianca alter after their honour has been betrayed. The extent of the change may be indicated further. Beatrice is slow to realize the scope of her sin, but when Deflores has pointed it out to her and added dishonour to murder, her character deteriorates rapidly, even when she is herself aware of this deterioration. Thus she is unable to control her wild, frightened jealousy of Diaphanta and the girl who would once not even think of dishonour and who would as little dream of discussing it as did Desdemona, calls her maid by the foulest terms. At the same time Beatrice, who once thought little of murder and could not comprehend it, becomes a willing murderess as she longs for Diaphanta's death and gladly follows Deflores' plans for accomplishing it. In the final scene she is unable to hide her viciousness as she boasts to Alsemoro of all that she has done for him. His exclamation that she is all deformed gives a true picture of the change
wrought by sin on her once beautiful character. As a result of the same change the once innocent Bianca, having exchanged honourable married love for adulterous lust, is unable to distinguish between them. Thus she dies unrepentant and rejoices that she and the Duke have together tasted death in the same cup of love.

Middleton's other great contribution to the tragedy of honour is his realistic presentation of the part played by physical attraction in dishonour. When, for example, in Ford's Love's Sacrifice Bianca visits Fernando in her night attire, the dramatist gives no indication that the incident arouses any desire in Fernando. Middleton, on the other hand, shows how Beatrice Joanna plays with fire in manifesting the outward signs of affection to Deflores. She has to pay the penalty for encouraging dishonourable thoughts in Deflores' mind and unlawful passion in his blood. In the characterization of Bianca, Middleton handles an even more delicate problem: that of the young bride who is surprised into experiencing a gentle love from her seducer which contrasts with the roughness of her husband.

But the most remarkable thing about Middleton's treatment of revenge for honour is that, when he considers the serious implications of this concept, not only his characterization, but his dramatic verse, is improved. This is first seen in The Witch where the agony of the revenging husband, Antonio, is of the same quality as the agony of Heywood's Frankford or Marston's Duke Pietro. In A Fair Quarrel and
The Spanish Gipsy laments for dishonour produce some of the finest poetry in the play. This is even truer of The Changeling and Women Beware Women where the betrayal of innocence is movingly expressed in speeches which are poetic climaxes in each play. Thus one may see in Middleton's work, not only how he was able to stir fresh experience and emotion in situations which had been commonly represented on the stage many years previously, but how a great theme - the effect of dishonour and sin on human nature - had power to develop and bring out his finest dramatic and poetic abilities.
Chapter VII

The concept of revenge for honour in the work of John Fletcher

Francis Beaumont and Philip Massinger.

Francis Beaumont, John Fletcher and Philip Massinger were, next to Shakespeare and Ben Jonson, the three most important dramatists writing for the English stage between 1606 and 1625. The folio volume published in 1647 as Comedies and Tragedies Written by Francis Beaumont and John Fletcher Gentlemen probably contains twice as many plays by Fletcher and Massinger as by Fletcher and Beaumont.1 Embodying

1 As critics have not always agreed upon what portions of the plays should be assigned to which dramatist, it is most convenient to accept the authority of Professor G.E. Bentley whose The Jacobean and Caroline Stage, iii and iv (1956) presents decisions on authorship and date based on the conclusions of scholars who have most recently considered these problems. The following is a table of the contents of the 1647 Folio with dates and authorship taken from Professor Bentley's volume III, pp. 305-433; -

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
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<td>1616</td>
<td>The Mad Lover</td>
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<td>? 1622</td>
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<td>Fletcher, ?Massinger</td>
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<tr>
<td>1619-23</td>
<td>The Little French Lawyer</td>
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<td>&lt;1619-20; 1638?</td>
<td>The Custom of the Country</td>
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<td>1625/26 ?</td>
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<td>1609-12</td>
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<td>1618 revised ?1633</td>
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<td>&gt;1616; revised ?1616</td>
<td>The Nice Valour</td>
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a great deal of the work of these three dramatists, it forms a
collection of most of the best Jacobean and Caroline drama. No study
of the concept of revenge for honour in the drama of these periods would
be complete without an examination of it.

Although these dramatists must have had many ideas in common, it is
clear that each reacted differently to the concept of revenge for honour.
An understanding of the independent work of Fletcher and Massinger is,
therefore, necessary for a full appreciation of the plays in which
Fletcher collaborated with Beaumont or Massinger. Their plays (including
those not published in the 1647 Folio) will be considered in the following
groups: plays wholly or mainly by Fletcher; plays by Beaumont and
Fletcher; the plays of Fletcher and Massinger (with The Queen of Corinth
and The Knight of Malta, shared with Nathan Field, and The Honest Man's
Fortune, shared with Field and Daborne); and, finally, Massinger's
work independent of Fletcher.

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The Masque of the Gentlemen of Gray's Inn
The work of John Fletcher.

John Fletcher began writing for the stage about 1604-6 and in the next eighteen years he wrote or had a hand in at least fifty plays. His reputation was established during the period of his collaboration with Francis Beaumont, 1606-1613, and continued to flourish with the success of plays which he wrote independently or in collaboration with Philip Massinger.

It is immediately obvious to the reader of Fletcher that he was first and foremost a man of the theatre. Some of his plays may be tedious in the study, with artificially complicated plots like those of The Laws of Candy or Women Pleased, or with pairs of indistinguishable characters such as those of The Woman's Prize, or The Tamer Tamed, but all of them are capable of success on the stage. Fletcher's plays may be immediately appreciated in the theatre, but they do not give his audience anything to consider when they have returned home. For Fletcher was not interested so much in character - except, possibly, comic character - or in the clash of personalities, as in situation. His plots are intricate, abounding in striking or even shocking situations. Nothing turns out as one might expect, for continual surprise is one of the features of Fletcher's art. If it seems (as it does, for example, in the third act of The Chances) that all difficulties have been resolved and the play must soon finish, Fletcher still has tricks left to keep the audience alert and surprised for two more acts. At worst, this technique produced plays which were no more than boxes of mechanical tricks; at best it produced moving tragicomedy in which the biggest surprise is the happy ending.
To keep his audience interested and alert Fletcher had to make his action move swiftly. Indeed, the action of his plays moves at such a pace that there is no time for the audience to consider motives too closely, as the play progresses from one situation to another. Neither is there time for the characters themselves to consider their own or other people's motives.

For this reason it is obvious that the tragedy of honour was unsuited to Fletcher's aims. Moreover, Fletcher himself seems to have been incapable of the depth of feeling necessary for the creation of characters torn by a conflict between duty and religion or love and honour. Tragedy of honour could move an audience by its passion or hold it in suspense till final revenge was accomplished, but, for the most part, the best tragedies of honour relied on characterization rather than situation for their effect. Different men were seen to respond differently to the demands of the code of honour, though the standards which prompted their responses were assumed to be the same. If a dramatist wanted to interest his audience in the personal struggle of a dishonoured man, he had to show the struggle in progress, and present the sufferer soliloquizing on his condition. Thinking one's way towards the solution of a problem is not a quick process, and the characters in Fletcher's plays always found it necessary to find their ways out of the startling situations in which he had placed them as quickly as possible.

Though Fletcher's genius was unsuited to the creation of a tragedy of honour, it was nevertheless able to use the concept of...
revenge for honour in a form to which it was suited: the tragicomedy. Even in pure comedy, no less than in tragicomedy, Fletcher used the concept of revenge for honour to produce the startling or moving situations of which his plays are composed. One of his chief methods of keeping the audience in suspense was to let his characters become involved in a situation which called for honour to be avenged by the sword - and then produce a happily different solution in the last minutes of the fifth act.

At the same time Fletcher, like Middleton, considered revenge for honour on more than one level of gravity. But, unlike Middleton, he had no didactic theme running through his plays, and Fletcher's consideration of the concept of revenge for honour is not always to be taken seriously. For, if his plays are rich in variety of situation, they are also rich in variety of tone. His tone can vary with the situation with modulations comparable with those of a symphonic poem. In most of Fletcher's work the careful modulation of tone is one of his strengths. In some cases, however, it is a weakness, as a result of which, for instance, one can never be sure what his criteria of honourable conduct are. For Fletcher is capable of treating revenge for honour with both seriousness and frivolity in the same play.

One of the earliest examples of Fletcher's variation of action and tone is Love's Pilgrimage, which was probably written in 1616 and revised later by another hand. Two old men, Zanchio and Alphonso

2 Professor Harbage suggests that Jonson was the reviser: Annals of English Drama 975-1700, p. 86.
set out to find their daughters at the house of Leonardo, the father of Mark Antonio. They assume that Mark Antonio has run off with their daughters. Alphonso, the father of Theodosia, intends to seek justice rather than revenge for his family dishonour but, reminded by Zanchio of the obligations of honour, he finally threatens Leonardo with the sword. Later in the play the erring Mark Antonio acknowledges his first betrothal to Theodosia and promises to marry her. The marriage contract drawn up between him and Leocadia, Zanchio's daughter, is therefore void and she is free to marry Philippe, the son of Alphonso.

When Zanchio finds her with Philippe, and disguised as a boy, he assumes that it was Philippe who had dishonoured him all along. His revenging wrath is accordingly transferred from one father to another - Alphonso. The desire to avenge a presumed wound to family honour is presented to the audience in a typically arresting Fletcherian situation: in this instance a comic one. For Zanchio, old and lame as he is, would have his servants fling him - invalid chair and all - at Alphonso. Yet immediately afterwards - again in a manner typical of Fletcher - the scene and the tone become serious, almost tragic, as the wife of the Governor of Barcelona agrees that the two men should duel with pistols.4 Alphonso is bound in a chair so that he may have no advantage over his opponent. The stage is set for the duel; thé pistols are brought in.

The happy ending is achieved at the very last moment as Theodosia and Leocadia place themselves in their fathers' line of fire, and all are united in forgiveness and reconciliation.

3 Vide Henry Swinburne, A Treatise of Spousals or Matrimoniall Contracts (1686), p. 222.
4 The fact that the decree is made by the Governor's wife and not by the Governor himself suggests that the scene is comically intended.
Already in Love's Pilgrimage Fletcher has shown that it was considered no dishonour for a girl to yield to her contracted lover; the dishonour lay rather in his non-fulfilment of the contract. The injury required revenge, but this could be prevented by a timely marriage, as in the case of Theodosia and Mark Antonio. The attempt to achieve variety in situation and tone, could, however, lead Fletcher to treat revenge for honour with unnecessary frivolity. This may be seen in the three other instances when he uses marriage as a happy solution to the problem of the girl who has yielded to her lover. In the Wild Goose Chase the situation is treated lightly throughout, as Oriana seeks not to avenge her honour, but to trap Mirabell into marriage, having first outwitted him. The progress towards a frivolous treatment is seen in The Nice Valour where the situation of the deserted girl is made ridiculous by her being dressed as a Cupid; a disguise obviously unsuited to her pregnant condition, as her brothers well know. Fletcher's treatment of revenge for honour is most frivolous in The Chances in which the girl has actually had a baby. Her plight might, therefore, be pathetic, were it not that Fletcher does not explain the reason for it. When the Duke of Ferrara, the father of Constantia's illegitimate child, is challenged on behalf of her avenging brother, Petruchio, he freely acknowledges paternity of the child and concludes,

5 Leocadia: ... When to save mine honor

Love having full possession of my powers,
I got a Contract from him.

Loves Pilgrimage (1647 Folio), III, ii, p. 13b

As it happened, Mark Antonio did not keep the assignation.

6 The Nice Valour or The Passionate Mad-man (1647 Folio), V, i, p. 161b
She is my wife, contracted before Heaven,
(Witnesse I owe more tye to, then her Brother)
Nor will I flye from that name, which long since
Had had the Churches approbation,
But for his jealous danger. 7

If Fletcher intends Petruchio's jealous authority over his sister to represent something akin to the attitude of the Aragonian brothers to the Duchess of Malfy, he does not make this clear. Instead, he involves his characters in a situation demanding revenge for honour which has no basis in the character of Petruchio as later revealed in the play.

Indeed, in only one of Fletcher's plays, The Island Princess, is dishonour brought about by a weakness of character rather than by Fletcher's own theatrical contrivance. It is through cowardice that Ruy Dias loses his promised bride, Quisara, and suffers the dishonour of seeing her given to Armusia, whom he calls

That flag stuck up to rob me of mine honor; 8

Ruy Dias further dishonours himself by his jealous suspicions of her. 9 Yet, when he has been unable to persuade his nephew to murder Armusia, he decides,

My anger now, and that disgrace I have suffer'd
Shall be more manly vented, and wip'd off,
And my sicke honour cur'd the right and straight way; 10

This is the way of single combat. Armusia prevails, but spares his rival's life. Ruy Dias rises from the place of defeat with the knowledge that honour is something that springs from honourable

7 The Chances (1647 Folio), III, iv, p. 13b.
8 The Island Princess, (1647 Folio), III, p. 105b.
9 Ibid., III, p. 109b.
10 Ibid., IV, p. 111a.
behaviour¹¹ and manifests itself in just, not bloody, practices. Having learnt this, he is able to save Armusia's life and frustrate the revengeful plots of the Governor of Ternata.¹² In the end it is Armusia who thanks Ruy Dias for his life, his wife and his honour.¹³

The Fair Maid of the Inn is probably the best illustration of Fletcher's use of the concept of revenge for honour to produce a really complicated plot. In the opening scene Césario's regard for honour is firmly established by his concern for his sister. Yet shortly afterwards Mentivole is able to accuse him of foul play in winning a horse race. This is an injury under which Mentivole will not sit down. He draws his sword and wounds Césario, only to realize immediately that he has been carried away by "vaine popular wind."¹⁴ Yet Mentivole cannot in honour withdraw his accusation against Césario. Baptista, Mentivole's father, commands him to ask pardon of Césario's father, Albertus. He obeys, but refuses to be sorry for inflicting the wound. Mentivole thus kindles Albertus's wrath and widens the breach between the latter and Baptista.¹⁵ Indeed, Albertus would have Mentivole's right hand cut off,¹⁶ but finally he leaves Césario to take away Mentivole's use of fighting. Césario therefore requests

¹¹ Education in honourable behaviour is the theme of the main plot of Ryle a Wife and have a Wife (Oxford, 1640) in which a wife who intends to be dishonest is taught by her husband to care for her honour as much as he does. Vide III, i, pp. 56-7.
¹² The Governor's revenge is for the dishonour of having his prisoner rescued by Armusia.
¹³ The Island Princess, V, p. 119b.
¹⁴ The Faire Maide of the Inne (1647 Folio), I, p. 33a.
¹⁵ Ibid., II, p. 34b.
¹⁶ Fletcher may have intended to tantalize his audience with recollections of Titus Andronicus.
Mentivole to give him his sword and ring. The surrender of the sword is dishonour enough; but the ring was a love token. So when Mentivole tells his father Baptista of the double dishonour that he has suffered at Cesario's hands, together with Albertus's revengeful intentions, Baptista swears revenge on the whole family of Albertus. To save Cesario from this vendetta his mother, Mariana, "confesses" that he is the child of a falconer, not of herself and Albertus. As Albertus himself is reported drowned, the Duke of Florence decrees that Mariana must marry Cesario. The plot is accordingly complicated by Mariana's attempts to avoid a union which she knows would be incestuous. Yet the family feud appears to be settled when Mentivole is betrothed to Clarissa, the daughter of Albertus and Mariana. Before they can be married, however, Albertus returns safely and demands the combat with Baptista. All is fortunately sorted out in the last scene. Bianca, the fair maid of the play's title who is beloved by Cesario, turns out to be Baptista's long lost daughter, and so Cesario is saved the dishonour of marrying beneath his station.

Fletcher's use of the concept of revenge for honour to produce sheer comic effect leads to much less complication, for he can use it simply to present characters motivated by an exaggerated or false sense of honour. This is seen in the portrayal of Cacafogo, who resembles Basilisco of Soliman and Perseda when he threatens

17 The Faire Maide of the Inne, II, p. 36a.
18 Cf. A Faire Quarrell, III, Sig. G1²; IV, Sig. H₂v.
19 The same solution to the problem of unequal marriage (though it is the young man who is the lost heir) helps to prevent tragic revenge for honour in The Triumph of Love.
Thou hast wrong'd mine honor,
Thou look'st upon my Mistris thrice lasciviously,
I'll make it good.  20

It is also found in Shamont who typifies the title of The Nice Valour.  21
For Shamont cannot endure the flick of a whip given by the Duke of Genoa to attract his attention without thinking that his honour has been wronged. Because he cannot avenge this wound on the Duke, he leaves the Court. This exaggerated sense of honour could, however, be used to achieve the more serious effect necessary for the tragic atmosphere of the tragicomedy The Laws of Candy. In this play Cassilanes' inordinate desire for honour as expressed in military glory leads him, not only to wish to avenge the loss of military honour by the killing of his son, but to threaten the peace and order of the whole country.  22

In none of the plays considered so far has Fletcher shown himself interested in a critical examination of either the concept of revenge for honour or in its effects on people's lives. Fletcher uses the concept in a way that may be termed mechanical, because it is more concerned with the stage machinery than with the characterization of the play. When honour is discussed the speeches are passionless utterances of platitudes or are not intended to be taken seriously.  23

20 Ryle a Wife and have a Wife (Oxford, 1640), I, p. 9.
21 Against this interpretation may be placed the statement of Professor Baldwin Maxwell: "Although the title of the play might indicate the contrary, the absurdity of such nice valor is never suggested in the play." Studies in Beaumont, Fletcher and Massinger (Chapel Hill, 1939), p. 95.
22 Decius says to Cassilanes:

What the sword
Could not enforce, your peevish thirst of honour
(A brave, cold, weak, imaginary fame)
Hath brought on Candy: ...  The Lawes of Candy, V, p. 68b

23 As, for example, in The Nice Valour (1647 Folio), III, p. 155
(Lapet on honour); IV, p. 159a (Shamont on reputation).
There are some plays, however, in which the recurrence of the theme of the man dishonoured by a nobleman or prince suggests that Fletcher was attracted by at least one aspect of revenge for honour. The idea that the head of the state is a divinely appointed ruler against whom no subject should rebel is important in his work;\(^{24}\) as is also the idea that the court itself is a fount of honour.\(^{25}\) This conception of the ruler precludes all possibility of executing revenge against him, and so the man whom he dishonours must perforce struggle between the rival claims of honour and loyalty.

Yet Fletcher could also turn even this dilemma into a comedy, such as *The Nice Valour*. In *Rule a Wife and Have a Wife* it is a matter of amusement that Leon should outwit the Duke of Medina in the pursuit of Leon's wife. Leon's friend, Juan de Castro comments with gusto on his success:

> Has taken a brave way to save his honour,  
> And oosse the Duke, now I shall love him dearly;  
> By the life of credit thou art a noble gentleman.\(^{26}\)

On the other hand, varying his tone from serious to frivolous, Fletcher can present this potentially tragic situation and then avoid the issue completely. In *The Humorous Lieutenant* Demetrius, believing Enanthe to have succumbed to the lust of his father, King Antigonus, calls her a "grave of honor".\(^{27}\) Yet he seems to consider neither his

\(^{24}\) See, for example, Archas' speeches in *The Loyall Subject* (1647 Folio) IV, v, pp. 48-9.

\(^{25}\) This idea is most obvious in *The Noble Gentleman*. See also *A Wife for a Moneth* (1647 Folio), I, p. 47b.

\(^{26}\) *Rule a Wife and have a Wife*, IV, p. 48.

\(^{27}\) *The Humorous Lieutenant* (1647 Folio), IV, viii, p. 143b; *Demetrius and Enanthe*, Edited M. McL. Cook and F.P. Wilson (Malone Society, 1951), V, ii, l. 2874.
dishonour as a deserted lover nor the dishonourable conduct of his father. This also illustrates the way in which Fletcher could rush his action along without allowing either audience or characters to think about the latter's motives.

The issue is again avoided in another tragicomedy, A Wife for a Month. The play as a whole is much more serious than The Humorous Lieutenant and Fletcher's treatment of the theme is more subtle. As Evanthe refuses to yield to the King, her husband Valerio is not actually dishonoured. The King's dishonourable hopes are not realized. Neither are Valerio's honourable hopes as a husband. Yet Evanthe herself is the only person in the play to contemplate revenge for honour, and then it is the Queen's dishonour of which she thinks, not the dishonour intended to herself. The nearest that Valerio comes to rebellion against the lascivious monarch is to suggest that, if he surrenders Evanthe to the King, the latter should let him have the Queen.

'Tis so Sir, thou most glorious impudence,
Have I not wrongs enow to suffer under,
But thou must pick me out to make a monster?
A hated wonder to the world? Do you start
At my intrenching on your private liberty,
And would you force a byeway through mine honour,
And make me pave it too? but that thy Queene
Is of that excellence in honesty,
And guarded with Divinity about her,
No loose thought can come neare, nor flame unhollowed (sic)
I would so right my selfe.

The strongest character in the play is Evanthe. She reveals an inherently honest character in her firm refusal of the King's

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28 The situation of the husband who is prevented from consummating his marriage is also found in The Tragedy of Thierry King of France, and his Brother Theodoret (1621), III, i, Sigs. G2r – F1v and in The Maids Tragedie (1622), II, Sigs. C3r – D2r.

29 A Wife for a Moneth (1647 Folio), I, p. 49a.

30 Ibid., V, p. 50a – b.
solicitations. Her complete lack of sensuality is demonstrated by her continued refusal even after her husband has failed to give her a husband's love. Her conversations with the bawd Cassandra and with the King, in Act IV, ring true. One feels that Fletcher himself has been moved by her situation to make the love of honour a living force in her life. This response of the dramatist to the potentialities of a situation of dishonour is similar to that shown in Middleton's The Witch.

The speeches of Lucina, the chaste heroine of The Tragedy of Valentinian reveal the same response. This play, which was probably written between 1610 and 1614, is the nearest approach that Fletcher made alone to the tragedy of honour. As such it merits a more detailed consideration than his other plays. A detailed examination of it may, moreover, help to explain why he never presented revenge for honour as a theme of tragedy in his later work.

The Tragedy of Valentinian is, in some ways, closer to the spectacular revenge plays of the late 1590s than to the work of Fletcher's contemporaries. The revenger swerves from his purpose and is caught in a web of counter revenge; a tyrant dies in agonies caused by poison while his murderer does the same; the action takes place in a corrupting atmosphere of lust and dishonour. What mark the play as Fletcher's are its continued suspense, emotional tension and surprising situations.
The greatest part of the suspense and many of the climaxes in the play depend on Fletcher's use of different conceptions of honour.\textsuperscript{31} The suspense of the first act is epitomized in the question and answer:

Proculus Is there no way
To take this Phenix?

Lycinius None but in her ashes.\textsuperscript{32}

From this point onwards, interest is concentrated on three questions: what does honour really mean to Lucina; to the Emperor; and to Maximus?

The first question is answered almost immediately. To Lucina, honour consists in her husband's honour, her own good name, her family's reputation and the peace of her conscience.\textsuperscript{33} The solution to the second question is kept a long time in the balance. The Emperor might respond to Lucina's good influence, though she herself does not think so.\textsuperscript{34}

\textsuperscript{31} Lawrence B. Wallis in \textit{Fletcher, Beaumont & Company: Entertainers to the Jacobean Gentry} (New York, 1947), p. 208 writes: "In characteristic fashion Fletcher made revenge, though basic to the plot, only one of the motives in the varied emotional patterning elaborately contrived therefrom. True enough, all the emotional attitudes and fluctuations which could conceivably be derived from Maximus' pursuit of revenge upon Valentinian are fully exploited in a diversity of situations. But the testing of the close friendship of Maximus and Aëcius, Lucina's horror of unchastity, Aëcius' loyalty to the Emperor even to the point of seeking his own death at the latter's command, and Captain Pontius' parallel faithfulness to Aëcius are also developed."

Far from being additional themes to a play of revenge, all these elements may be seen as aspects of a central conception of revenge in its relationship to honour. Pontius, for example, is torn between the soldier's honour (loyalty) and revenge for the dishonour of being dismissed. Similarly, Aëcius, accepting honour as loyalty to his sovereign, dies an honourable death rather than help his friend to avenge Lucina's dishonour.

Professor Wallis's analysis of Fletcher's building up of suspense from scene to scene is not related to questions of honour or revenge for honour (pp. 210-215).

\textsuperscript{32} \textit{The Tragedy of Valentinian} (1647 Folio), I, i, p. 1b.
\textsuperscript{33} \textit{Ibid.}, I, ii, p. 3b.
\textsuperscript{34} \textit{Ibid.}, I, ii, pp. 2-3.
Aëcius, on the other hand, declares

... Say the Prince,
As I may well believe, seems vicious,
Who justly knows tis not to try our honors? 35

This doubt is allowed to grow. Aëcius himself is so bold in his castigation of Valentinian's faults that he expects to be punished with death. Yet the Emperor calls him a friend worthy of his love, and at the end of the first act there is hope that the Emperor may indeed prove honourable.

At the beginning of the second act this hope seems vain as one senses the dramatic irony behind Fletcher's use of the pun on "ring". Valentinian's decision to pay his soldiers promises reform; but this is balanced at the end of his act by his prophecy

If women may be frail, this wench shall fall.36

The tension caused by Lucina's departure for court is relieved without distracting the audience's attention from the theme of honour by the short incident of Captain Pontius's dismissal by Aëcius. This scene illustrates the conflicting conceptions of honour held by Maximus and Aëcius. Moreover, it raises the question of which of the two friends is genuinely honourable, not only in himself, but in his attitude to the other.

The climax of the question of Valentinian's honour comes in the final scene of the second act. He carefully prepares the court for the reception of Lucina. Jewels are set out to entice her eyes; lascivious songs are sung to seduce her mind.37 What Lucina says to these

35 Ibid., I, iii, p. 4a.
36 Ibid., II, i, p. 6a.
temptations tells no more about her attitude to honour. Yet, one can hear the note of terror in her short, biting answers to the bawds and pandars whose false conception of honour provides Fletcher with a fine opportunity for dramatic irony. The honour that they say Lucina brings with her is not, as they imply, the honour of her presence, but the chastity which Valentinian is to destroy. When the fawning courtiers who seem to have entrapped her disappear to leave Lucina face to face with Valentinian, the doubts about his idea of honour are banished in his aside

I dare not do it here, ... 38

With tragic irony, however, Fletcher leaves Lucina herself still in doubt, as Valentinian protests that he will bring her to her husband.

From the third act onwards, Fletcher is wholly concerned with the influence of the concept of revenge for honour on the fates of Lucina, Maximus and Valentinian. That the end is a question of private revenge rather than public justice, is made clear in Valentinian's bitter answer to Lucina's cries:

Justice shall never heare ye, I am justice, 39

This is the most cruel, and the most crucial, line in the play. For Lucina herself, the only cure for her dishonour is death. Valentinian refuses to kill her. If her speeches were of a terror-stricken brevity before, they are now lengthened by the agony of dishonour. Her eloquence is, however, lost on the Emperor, who cannot distinguish between the honour that he has ruined and Lucina's reputation for honour which is

38 The Tragedy of Valentinian, II, iv, p. 10b.
39 Ibid., III, i, p. 11a.
intact as long as her wrong is kept hidden. Lucina’s most heart-felt
expression of grief is, therefore, uttered when Valentinian has left her:

Now which way must I goe? my honest house
Will shake to shelter me, my husband flye me,
My Family, because they are honest, and desire to be so,
Must not endure me, not a neighbour know me:

Her problem is soon shared with Maximus, who realizes that he too is
ruined. Lucina must die. At this point Fletcher uses Æcius to ask
the question which must have crossed the mind of every critic of the
code of honour: why should a virtuous woman die because her chastity
has been spoiled by violence? It is a question to arouse the audience
and make it wait in suspense for the answer. Disappointingly, Maximus’s
reply reveals him as a man tied by convention to the opinion of his
neighbours, his friends and his family. Honour to him means the good
name of himself and his wife. His final argument for Lucina’s death is:

But since it was not youth, but malice did it,
And not her own, nor mine, but both our losses,
Nor staies it there, but that our names must find it,
Even those to come; and when they read, she livd,
Must they not aske how often she was ravish’d,
And make a doubt she lov’d that more than Wedlock?
Therefore she must not live.

Æcius
Therefore she must live,
To teach the world such deaths are superstitious.

Æcius’s reasonable plea is silenced by Lucina herself. She is dismissed
to suicide and the hope of justice from the gods. Her husband is left to
resolve the problem of how to obtain it here on earth. As it is the
embodiment of justice and honour, the Emperor, who has dishonoured
Lucina, the only cure for this dishonour can be his death. This is

40 Ibid., III, i, p. 11b.
41 Ibid., III, i, p. 12b.
revenge, not justice. Moreover, between Maximus and his revenge stands Æcius' loyalty to the Emperor, which is greater than his sympathy for his friend.\textsuperscript{42} Fletcher now keeps his audience in suspense with the question: how far will Maximus' love of honour drive him; will it overrule not only his loyalty to Valentinian, but his loyalty to Æcius? This suspense is heightened as Maximus himself debates the problem:

\textit{... What is honor}

We all so strangely are bewitch'd withall?
Can it relieve me if I want? he has;
Can honor, twixt the incensed Prince, and Envy,
Bear up the lives of worthy men? he has;
Can honor pull the wings of fearfull cowards
And make 'em turne againe like Tigers? he has;
And I have liv'd to see this; and preserved so;
Why should this empty word incite me then
To what is ill, and cruel? \textsuperscript{43}

Yet once more the answer lies in Maximus' conception of honour as good name:

\textit{Shall not mens tongues}

Dispute it afterward, and say I gave
(Affecting due obedience, and tame duty,
And lead away with fondnes of a freindship)
The only vertue of the world to slander? \textsuperscript{44}

If the Emperor lives, Lucina's chastity will be doubted. So he and Æcius must die. The only possible mitigation of the second crime is to make Æcius' death honourable to him.

Once the third of Fletcher's three questions of honour is answered he maintains suspense by the skilful use of dramatic situation and of unexpected agents to achieve expected ends. Thus Maximus brings about the deaths of Æcius and Valentinian without soiling his own hands.

\textsuperscript{42} Ibid., III, iii, p. 16a.
\textsuperscript{43} Ibid., III, iii, p. 15a.
\textsuperscript{44} Ibid., loc. cit.
Æcius is to be killed at Valentinian's command. Yet, even when Maximus has forged a cause for this command and Æcius is face to face with his murderer, Fletcher surprises his audience with Pontius' unexpected loyalty. This points the way to Æcius' suicide, and yet no one knows that Valentinian's command has not been carried out. Thus the death of Valentinian is the revenge of Aretus and Phidias for Æcius' supposed murder. The Emperor himself sees his death as a retribution for his sins. He dies calling on the names of Lucina and Æcius. 45

Although it is impossible to suggest which side of Maximus' arguments Fletcher himself took, the last act of the play can only be considered as a logical development of the first four if Maximus' attitude to honour is condemned. There were other reasons for the play ending as it does. In one of Fletcher's sources, D'Urfé's Astée, Maximus assumes the Empire. 46 Moreover, the Jacobean conception of the divine right of kings and Fletcher's own ideas concerning loyalty to the sovereign would prevent the murderer of a monarch from surviving on the stage. Nevertheless, Maximus' sudden desire to become Emperor may be seen as the result of corruption caused by a false sense of honour. Maximus degenerates after he abandons his original plan of revenge. He says

If I rise,
My wife was ravish'd well; If then I fall,
My great attempt honors my Funerall. 47

46 Vide The Works of Francis Beaumont and John Fletcher, Edited by A.H. Bullen, iv (1912), pp. 210-211.
47 The Tragedy of Valentinian, V, iii, p. 24b.
At his election as Emperor he forces the widowed Empress Eudoxa with him "for more honour". Finally, Maximus destroys the good name that he had striven so long to preserve. He does this by fabricating the horrible story that he arranged Lucina's rape in order to win Eudoxa. This final rejection of honour destroys him. Eudoxa does not believe him, and in revenge for this and for his arrangement of the death of Æcius she poisons him.

The death of Maximus comes unexpectedly quietly, though with a last touch of irony. As Emperor he is praised with a song concerning the attributes of Honour, which concludes,

Thou hast studied still to please her,  
Therefore now she calls thee Cesar:  

This tribute might have been merited when Maximus set out to avenge his honour, but it is true no longer. After another song he is thought to have grown heavy with wine, but he is dead. Maximus dies in his sins, unrepentant and without a last chance to justify himself to the world.

From the point of view of stage production, The Tragedy of Valentinian is most successful. The concept of revenge for honour and the different attitudes to honour of the characters are blended with consummate skill to produce a tragedy of suspense that is at times very moving. The presentation is perfect. The audience is kept interested in questions of honour upon whose answers the action of the play depends. The final surprises are not lessened by the audience's

48 Ibid., V, iv, p. 25a.
49 Ibid., V, viii, p. 26b.
understanding of their causes. What The Tragedy of Valentinian lacks is the dramatist's belief in the answers to the questions which the tragedy raises.

Although the precise dates of both plays are unknown, it seems possible that in this play Fletcher was attempting to repeat the success of the revenge tragedy that he wrote with Beaumont, The Maid's Tragedy. Fletcher's own mechanical use of the concept of revenge for honour was ideal for his comedies and tragicomedies. Unfortunately, his attempt to fuse such usage with the thought of the play was a failure. The reason for this failure explains why he never tried the like again.

The play hinges on Maximus' debates on honour in its relationship to his wife, his friend and his sovereign. In his speeches as well as those of Æcius and Lucina, Fletcher discusses the meaning of honour. Æcius questions the need for Lucina's death and Maximus himself reasons against the murder of his friend. These questions are answered, but the answers are not convincing. Honour is not seen as a living force inspiring men to act in one way only. Honour to Maximus is not only his wife's chastity, or even his own good name. When one examines his arguments, it appears that honour for him consists mainly in what people say and think of him, and this extends to generations yet unborn. The same is true of Lucina. Her suffering moves us because we see her suffer, but not because we understand the reason for her death. Suffering does not, in fact, bring nobility to Lucina's character. She is seen in the almost ludicrous light of a woman afraid of the
neighbours' gossip. Lucina and Maximus are driven to suicide and murder by a code which they cannot really comprehend, because Fletcher himself could not comprehend it.

Nevertheless, The Tragedy of Valentinian reveals that the concept of revenge for honour could be used to provide suspense, emotional tension and striking situations. It was, therefore, highly suitable material for swift-moving comedy, or tragicomedy of rapid changes of situation. This was the best use that Fletcher could make of the concept, but he did make the most of it. His plays are rich in the variety of situation and modulation of tone which this use of the concept of revenge for honour could provide. Yet his inability to make revenge for honour anything more than a mechanical device reveals Fletcher's weakness as well as his strength. He was a master of stagecraft and could make any concept serve his dramatic purposes: but as a dramatist he was not endowed with a passionate interest in or understanding of a great theme which can transform a clever piece of stage machinery into a moving drama.

50 Ibid., III, i, p. 11b:
What woman now dare see me without blushes,
And pointing as I passe, there, there, behold her,
Looke on her little Children, that is she,
That handsome Lady, mark; ...
ii The Plays of Beaumont and Fletcher

As only two of the eleven\(^5\) plays written jointly by Francis Beaumont and John Fletcher - *Philaster* and *The Maid's Tragedy* are seriously concerned with honour, it would seem that the use of the concept of revenge for honour to provide surprise and variety in plot was peculiar to Fletcher alone. The treatment of revenge for honour in the comedies which he wrote in collaboration with Beaumont is more reminiscent of the comedies of Middleton than of his own independent work. Like Middleton, Beaumont and Fletcher used the character who disregards the claims of honour, but the effect which they achieved was purely comic and never satiric in intention.

Such a character is Bessus who, in *A King and No King*, provides comic relief from a situation potentially tragic. Bessus's cowardly disregard of honour is similar to that of Lapet in *The Nice Valour*, and it is also akin to Falstaff's. The similarity to Middleton's use of the disregard of honour is more obvious in *The Coxcomb*, in which Antonio, though neither vicious nor avaricious, bears a comic resemblance to Allwit. It is an exaggerated notion of the claims of friendship that leads Antonio to ignore the claims of honour so far as

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51 The list, taken from G. E. Bentley, *op. loc. cit.*, is as follows:

\[1606\]
\[1607\]
\[1608-10\]
\[1609-12\]
\[1610\]
\[1610\]
\[1611\]
\[1611\]
\[1612\]
\[1604?\ revised\ 1613\]
\[1613- 15/16\]

- The Woman Hater
- The Knight of the Burning Pestle
- The Coxcomb
- The Captain
- *Philaster*
- The Tragedy of Thierry and Theodoret
- *The Maid's Tragedy*
- A King and No King
- Cupid's Revenge
- Wit at Several Weapons
- The Scornful Lady.
to want his wife Maria to become the mistress of his friend Mercury. This desire disgusts Mercury as much as Maria's later acceptance of him when it is thought that she is a widow. As a result Mercury is cured of his dishonest love for her. It may be noted that a typical Fletcherian surprise in *The Coxcomb* is the reversal of the usual "discovery" situation of tragedies of honour. Instead of the husband finding his wife with a lover at midnight, he finds a would-be lover fleeing from the temptation to dishonour him.

In their comic treatment of a woman's honour in *The Captain* Beaumont and Fletcher use a situation of the citizen comedies: that of the man who finds that he has unwittingly married a dishonest woman. But, once again, it is considered more lightly than in the citizen comedies. Despite all appearances to the contrary, Leila is discovered to be truly honest. Her husband, who slandered her before he knew her and married her without realizing her identity, has not been dishonoured in his marriage as he feared.

The disregard of woman's honour appears again in *The Woman Hater*, a play which well might be called a revenge comedy. Gondarino repays Oriana's teasing pursuit of him by assuring the Duke of Milan, who loves her, that she is a whore, as he knows from personal experience.

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52 E.H.C. Oliphant in *The Plays of Beaumont and Fletcher: An Attempt to determine their respective shares and the shares of others* (New Haven, Conn., and London, 1927), p. 270 confirms the belief that this scene is by Fletcher.

53 That revenge is never intended to be a serious threat to the comic atmosphere is perhaps indicated by the echo of *Hamlet* in *Lazarillo* Let me not fall from my selfe; speake I am bound *Count* So art thou to revenge, when thou shalt heare the fish head is gone, and we know not whither. *The Woman Hater* (1607), ii, Sig. D₂rect.
To make good this accusation Gondarino tricks her into staying in a brothel. Although her brother, Count Valore, will not believe the accusation against her, he declares that he would have her whipped publicly if it were true. The Duke then threatens that Gondarino shall suffer worse than she should if he cannot prove Oriana dishonest. When it is sufficiently established that Oriana prefers death before dishonour, she herself asks leave to decree Gondarino's punishment. The revenge for all the dishonour that he has inflicted on her is that he should be held in a chair to be courted and kissed till he is willing to swear as Oriana shall command. His oath is to be never to come into woman's presence or sight or seek the public disgrace of any woman again.

same

From this situation - a false accusation against a lady, supported by false, maliciously inspired evidence - Beaumont and Fletcher built up the tragic interest of their most successful tragicomedy, Philaster. A brief analysis of the plot will show how the concept of revenge for honour is used to provide surprise and suspense. In revenge for the public dishonour of being discovered with Prince Pharamond, Megra, a lady of honour accuses Princess Arathusa of the like offence with her page Bellario. This accusation spreads through the court and is believed by

54 Ibid., IV, Sig. C.  
55 The play exists in two different versions which seem to be the one as censored for stage production (1620 Quarto) and the original text as written for stage production by Beaumont and Fletcher (1622 Quarto). Vide J.E. Savage, 'The Gaping Wounds in the Text of Philaster', Philological Quarterly XXVIII, (Iowa, 1949), pp. 442-457.
even the honourable old courtier, Dion. He repeats it to Philaster, who draws his sword to defend the honour of the Princess whom he loves. Thus pressed, Dion asserts that he himself found Arathusa with the boy. Knowing Dion's honest love, Philaster is led, much against his will, to believe his story. His suspicions seem to be confirmed in Arathusa's own expressions of love for Bellario. Her uncomprehending, innocent answer to Philaster's accusations sounds like an asseveration of guilt:

Nay, then I am betrayed,
I feele the plot cast for my overthrow: 56

Philaster does not swiftly seek revenge for his dishonour as a lover. He is torn between love and honour. His own love for Bellario as well as his love for Arathusa make him change his intentions more than once. He would rather face death himself than hurt Arathusa. Yet when she refuses to kill him he turns on her to execute what he calls a "piece of Justice." 57 A country fellow 58 prevents him from inflicting more injury on Arathusa. Then, wounded himself, Philaster wounds the sleeping Bellario. Bellario, however, loves Philaster too much to avenge himself. Instead, he tries to save Philaster's life by a false confession that he injured Arathusa, alleging revenge for his dismissal from her favour as his motive. The truth is soon discovered, and after some doubts and difficulties Arathusa secretly marries Philaster. Just when it seems that all thoughts of revenge for honour have been forgotten Megra once more makes her accusation against Arathusa. The King, who

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57 Ibid., IV, Sig. H2r p.53r.
58 So called in the 1622 Quarto and the 1679 Folio. The 1620 Quarto calls him "A Countrey Gallant" and the woodcut describes him as "A Cuntrie Gentillman".
has previously been content only to rid Arathusa of the cause of her dishonour, Bellario,\(^59\) has at last to face the task of clearing her name publicly.\(^60\) At the last moment Bellario reveals herself as Euphrasia, the lost daughter of Dion. The only person left to suffer vengeance is Megra, but Philaster pleads with the King:

> Wrong not the freedome of our soules so much,  
> To thinke to take reuenge of that base woman,  
> Her malice cannot hurt vs: ...  

Megra is, therefore, dismissed to banishment and the play ends happily.

Honour and revenge for honour play an even greater part in providing Philaster with two themes which appear in a variety of forms throughout the play: the conflict between real and apparent honour; and the idea that death is preferable to dishonour. The first of these themes is chiefly illustrated in character. Prince Pharamond appears to be an honourable suitor to Arathusa, but she has to withdraw from his dishonourable solicitations.\(^62\) His dishonest nature is made public when he is found with Megra shortly afterwards. Megra herself is a lady of honour by title only, as the King exclaims,

> Now Lady of honour, where's your honour now? \(^63\)

The Princess Arathusa is honest, and indeed looks honest,\(^64\) but the courtiers believe her to be otherwise\(^65\) and her father and lover are forced to the same conclusion. Dion is a lord renowned for his honesty.

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59 Philaster (1622), III, p. 41.  
60 Ibid., V, pp. 73-4.  
61 Ibid., V, Sig. L3V [p. 78].  
62 Ibid., I, p. 17.  
63 Ibid., II, p. 29.  
64 Ibid., IV, p. 46.  
65 Ibid., III, p. 31.
Yet he dishonours the Princess by his repetition of and enlargement on a false accusation against her. It is just because he is considered honourable that his assertions are believed by Philaster.66 Later Dion has to repent having had such unworthy thoughts of Arathusa's dear honour.67

The character who presents the greatest enigma to the others in the play is Bellario. In all his dealings with Arathusa he is completely honourable, yet King, courtiers68 and Philaster do not trust him. However, his tender youth and honest looks prevent Philaster at first from executing vengeance on him.69 At the end of the play the revelation that Bellario is Euphrasia establishes and disestablishes her honour at the same time. Her relationships with Arathusa and Philaster have been honourable, but she has dishonoured herself by her disguise as a boy. Possibly Dion's suspicious mind believes her capable of dishonourable motives in serving Philaster, for the dishonour of her disguise is so keenly felt by him that he tries to commit suicide.

This attempt is an illustration of the second theme, which is presented most vividly in the characterization of Philaster. Three times Philaster tries to die rather than face dishonour. First, he begs Arathusa to kill him so that he may not have to kill her. Shortly

66 Ibid., III, p. 35.
67 Ibid., V, p. 66.
68 In the 1620 Quarto Leon (Dion) declares that he always thought the boy honest, and that he would hang himself for dishonouring him: Philaster (1620), V, pp. 62-3.
69 Philaster (1622), III, Sig. F4r p. 38
afterwards he tries to provoke Bellario into killing him in revenge for wounding Arathusa. Finally, having struggled throughout the play between his love for Bellario and the honour which he believes him to have wounded, Philaster tries to commit suicide rather than make a decision which will dishonour either his bride or his friend. One is left with an impression that Philaster's wavering is a little overdone; the demands of Fletcherian stagecraft threaten to mar the effect of good characterization.

In the careful blending of these two themes and in the skilful use of the concept of revenge for honour to provide a plot at once coherent and full of suspense Philaster merits a high place in the artistic achievement of Beaumont and Fletcher. The familiar Fletcherian surprises are still there: Arathusa actually is wounded; Bellario turns out to be a girl, (though for once not even the audience has any idea of the secret); the happy ending is delayed until the very last minute. Yet such stage tricks are not so obvious as they are in, say, Fletcher's tragicomedies, because Philaster is superior to any of those in characterization. Philaster is, indeed, more credible than Maximus because his inner struggles are not expressed so much in formal debate as in action. This is seen, for example, when he draws his sword to execute revenge on

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70 Ibid., V, Sig. L_q.
71 The only fault in the plot, from the point of view of the code of honour, is the King's early disregard of the need to clear Arathusa's name. Yet even this inaction presents the King in a more sympathetic light. It shows him as a grief-stricken father rather than a courtier automatically moved to seek revenge for honour.
Bellario but is prevented by love from using it. Even Arathusa, no less chaste than Emanthe or Lucina, presents a more convincing picture of honesty by her very inability to defend herself by a quick retort or well reasoned argument from the accusations that beset her honour. Beaumont and Fletcher together have used the concept of revenge for honour in a different way from that of Fletcher alone. It is no mere mechanical device, but a vital force seen at work in people's lives. The result is the production of something more alive than a box of surprising tricks: it is a coherent and artistic whole.

This is even more true of The Maid's Tragedy, the one really successful tragedy of honour in Fletcher's work. The plot is a skilful combination of three themes of revenge for honour: a father's and a daughter's revenge for her desertion by her lover; a husband's revenge for his wife's unchastity; and a brother's revenge for his sister's dishonesty. These themes are combined in a play which is less spectacular than was customary for those in which Fletcher had a hand. Amintor, commanded by the King to leave his beloved A spatia and marry Evadne, discovers on their wedding night that she is the King's mistress. Divinity hedges in the sovereign so that Amintor cannot seek revenge. When the King torments him, however, the burden of dishonour becomes so unbearable that Amintor tells his sorrow to Melantius, Evadne's brother and his own close friend. Melantius, anxious to avenge this dishonour

72 Philaster (1620), III, p. 33 stage direction: He draws his sword.
73 Quotations are from the second quarto (1622), a fuller version than that of 1619. They have been checked against the eclectic text of the Variorum edition (Edited by P.A. Daniel, 1904).
to his family on no matter whom, enlists the aid of his brother, Diphilus, and of Calianax, father of the wronged Aspatia. Melantius then forces Evadne to repentance and the murder of the King. Evadne assumes that she has thereby freed herself and Amintor from dishonour and expects to be received as his wife. He, however, is still dogged with guilt for his desertion of Aspatia who herself comes in boy's disguise to force him to a duel. In the combat Amintor unwillingly and unwittingly wounds Aspatia. Evadne commits suicide to prove her love for Amintor and he then commits suicide on finding that he has killed Aspatia. Melantius vows to starve to death; and the plays concludes with the moral:

... on lustfull Kings
Vnlookt for sudden deaths from God are sent,
But curst is he that is their instrument. 74

This moral could equally well apply to Valentinian, for both plays deal with the same kind of situation. 75 Amintor, like Maximus, has his marital honour destroyed by his sovereign. In Amintor and Melantius the ideals of Maximus and Æcius are reversed. For in The Maid's Tragedy it is the wronged husband who feels that the king has a divinity about him to strike dead his rising passions. 76 His friend is the man who cares for family honour more than for his sovereign. The conception of female character is also different. Unlike Lucina, Evadne is not a chaste wife wronged, but an unchaste wife who has to be brought to repentance. Aspatia, the chaste forsaken maid is, however, like Lucina in her belief that it is better for the man whom she loves if she dies,

74 The Maids Tragedie (Q2 1622), V, Sig. LgY; P.A. Daniel reads "... deaths from Heaven are sent."
75 Professor Bentley dates Valentinian between 1610 and 1614 and gives The Maid's Tragedy a terminal date of 1611.
76 The Maids Tragedie (1622), III, Sig. E3v.
though he himself is the man who has dishonoured her.

These smaller differences indicate the main difference between The Tragedy of Valentinian and The Maid's Tragedy. The latter is based on character rather than action, and especially on character as influenced by the need to avenge wounded honour. Beaumont and Fletcher have also made subtle alterations in conventional situations. The deserted girl disguises herself, not to cure her dishonour in marriage, but in death. The sudden revelation of Evadne's position is managed with great theatrical skill. It comes as a shock, but it is the only really startling revelation of the play. Thereafter the tragedy springs from the characters' different reactions to the concept of revenge for honour.

To some extent the tragedy of the title assumes second place to the tragedy of Amintor and Evadne. Nevertheless, it is important for its influence on the character of Amintor. Aspatia is so conscious of dishonour that her oppressive sadness on Evadne's wedding night provides an atmosphere of foreboding sorrow, but not necessarily of tragedy. She can do nothing but lament her dishonour and wait for death. Yet Aspatia is not without a certain amount of fiery determination which manifests itself in the only lines she speaks in the first act:

My hard fortunes
Deserue not scorne, for I was neuer proud
When they were good. 77

Her courage in speaking of her grief before Evadne indicates her strength. The only cure for Aspatia's dishonour is death, and she is

77 Ibid., I, Sig. 3. 77
the only person who can work the cure. She chooses the honourable method of the duel. Her plans are nearly frustrated when Amintor freely acknowledges his wrong to her and is willing to offer her any satisfaction that he can. To make revenge for honour the suicide that she intends, Aspatia has to goad Amintor into fighting. Aspatia's father, Calianax, is the old courtier who is quarrelsome but ineffectual. He knows that he must avenge the wound to his family honour, and he speaks about it often enough. Fond old age, however, causes him to misdirect his ideas of vengeance. Of Amintor he says,

He have a bout with that boy, ...  

Nevertheless, he turns his attention to Melantius, confusing revenge for his daughter's dishonour with his long-standing quarrel with Melantius. He even tries to betray to the King the plot of Melantius for the King's death. Ironically, this plot offers Calianax the opportunity for revenge on the true source of his dishonour, the King himself. At the end of the play Calianax is left unsure whether he is with or against Melantius, and he has to be prevented from committing suicide, the only cure for his dishonour when Aspatia is dead.

The chief interest of the play is in Amintor, the wronged husband. His sensitivity to the claims of honour is shown in his grief for the dishonour he has been forced to do to Aspatia. His standards of honour are severely tested by Evadne's cruel retort:

A maidenhead Amintor at my yeares? 

78 The brother whom she impersonates is presumably still at war (See Act I, Sig. A 3 , and her father is too old and ineffectual to work revenge on her behalf.

79 Act II, Sig. D 3 .

80 Act V, Sig. K 2 .

81 Act II, Sigs. C 0 - C 3 .

82 Act II, Sig. C 4 .
To one who has just promised to avenge any wrong done to his wife these words immediately convey the sense of wounded honour. A husband in name only, Amintor must nevertheless accept the full responsibility of a husband for his and his wife's honour. There are only two possibilities open to him. He must live scorned or be a murderer. He does not even have to try to discover the name of his injurer, for Evadne is not reticent. She gives the information teasingly, saying, "you guess the man" as if it were some maiden's secret to be imparted to a confidante with feigned reluctance. Thus, only a few moments after realizing that his honour has been wounded, Amintor has to face the fact that he cannot avenge the injury. His situation is that of Maximus, but Amintor comes to his decision quickly, without debate. An appearance of honour may yet be saved as long as the King does not know that Amintor knows the truth. Otherwise Amintor will be forced by honour into action. The fact that his marriage is unconsummated mitigates both the wound and the need for revenge. So Amintor can caution Evadne

Be careful of thy credit, and sin close,  
Tis all I wish, ...  

It is not Amintor's but the King's jealousy that brings Amintor into the situation that he wished to avoid. The King assumes that Amintor is too honourable a man to suffer such an injury unreavenged. Amintor has, therefore, to acknowledge his dishonour in order to prove Evadne's faithfulness to the King. Now that the crisis has come, however, he

83 Act II, Sig. C₂ V.  
84 Act II, Sig. D₂ F.
refuses to draw against his sovereign, and once more he strives to be content with preserving a reputation for honour before the world.

Yet the King's estimation of Amintor's attitude to honour has been to some extent accurate. The burden of dishonour is too great for him to bear alone. He confesses to Melantius with a simplicity indicative of the relief he feels in unburdening himself:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Your sister} & \text{ is much to blame,} \\
\text{And to the King has given her honour vp,} \\
\text{And liues in whoredome with him.} & \text{85}
\end{align*}
\]

This outburst of truth marks the crisis in Amintor's emotions. Thereafter he moves passively towards death. As he refuses to take vengeance on the king this is the only cure for his dishonour. He later recognises that he should have killed Evadne, but seems glad to embrace the opportunity for abandoning this vengeance which is offered by her repentance.86 He forgives her, and repeats, now almost automatically,

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{... haue a care} \\
\text{My honour faileth no further, I am well then.} & \text{87}
\end{align*}
\]

Only once does Amintor forget that it is the King who wrongs him and try to seek revenge, but he is obviously meant to be distracted. For Melantius, who has his own schemes of vengeance, charms Amintor into his usual loyalty by saying,

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{But tis the King, the King, the King, Amintor,} \\
\text{With whom thou fightest.} & \text{88}
\end{align*}
\]

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85 Act III, Sig. F.2r.
86 Act IV, Sig. H.1.
87 Ibid., loc. cit.
88 Act IV, Sig. I.2v.
From the beginning Amintor has never ceased to be conscious of the wrong that he has done Aspatia. Finally, the dishonour that he has suffered as a husband passes out of his mind and he can think only of this. When he discovers that he has unknowingly killed Aspatia, he cannot live. His wife's appearance stained with the King's blood throws an unknown wilderness about him. His horror of Evadne's regicide is as great as his horror of dishonour, if not greater. He can only follow Aspatia in death.

In contrast to Amintor, Melantius is so concerned for the preservation of family honour that he will stop at nothing to cure the wound given it by his sister. He would kill Amintor for saying that she is a whore, and the same impetuosity makes his zeal for revenge greater than Amintor's. As soon as Melantius believes the truth of Amintor's accusation he, not Amintor, becomes the centre of the play's action. He sends Amintor away and immediately sets about his own schemes of vengeance. He enrolls the aid of Diphilus and of Calianax as well. His rashness in expecting the latter to forget their past quarrels is nearly his undoing. However, Melantius does not stop to consider this, but goes on to terrify Evadne into confession and repentance. This is not done to confirm Amintor's story, but to force her to kill the King without letting Amintor know of it. It is inevitable that these two schemes should clash with tragic results. The first marks Melantius as a regicide and the second proves the last straw to drive Amintor to suicide. Finally, Melantius himself can only expect death.

89 Act V, Sig. K^r.
Of Evadne herself as a revenger of honour little may be said.

At the beginning of the play her conception of honour is seen to be falsely grounded in her relationship with the King. She wants to be loyal to him rather than to her husband. At the end Melantius has implanted in her a false sense of the duties of repentance. For even she would stop short of regicide. After Evadne has repented there is no real change in her character. The concentrated venom that she pours on the King in the name of revenge for honour ignores completely her own part in it. Unlike Amintor, who always sees the dishonouring of Aspatia as sin, Evadne is conscious of sin only when threatened with death. She is as falsely proud of being a murderess as she was of being the King's mistress. When she understands at last that Amintor cannot share her feelings there is nothing left for her to do but kill herself. Even in doing this she is not conscious of atoning for her dishonour, but of trying to prove her love for Amintor.

The Maid's Tragedy is the greatest achievement of Beaumont and Fletcher and the best serious play that Fletcher ever attempted. It would be rash to assume that all the credit for its success should go to Beaumont alone. Yet both Philaster and The Maid's Tragedy show the concept of revenge for honour used in a way foreign to the plays of Fletcher. If the other plays of Beaumont and Fletcher show an avoidance of or a superficial treatment of revenge for honour, these two

90 Act IV, Sig. G.  
91 In The Scornful Lady Martha's dishonour in sleeping with Welford is scarcely mentioned. Welford's trick only serves to hasten their marriage. A pretended regard for honour is used by the Elder Loveless, in the same play, to arouse the Lady's jealousy and make her confirm their contract. In Wit at Several Weapons a serious attempt by the Guardianess to wreak vengeance for a slight to her honour by Cunningame is comically frustrated.
demonstrate what could be achieved when Beaumont and Fletcher applied
their combined dramatic gifts to a serious consideration of it.
Moreover, The Maid's Tragedy is much more restrained than any of
Fletcher's plays. Crises in it are not a matter of spectacular action,
but of conflicting ideals reflected in Amintor, as in Philaster, by
an inability to act. The shock of Evadne's disclosure of her dishonour
is all the more effective because it is the only big surprise in the
tragedy. The concentration of tragedy in her single cruel retort is

> Justice shall never heare ye, I am justice.

But its effect is greater because it is allowed to stand alone,
unsurpassed by any later climax of thought or action. Beaumont seems,
therefore, to have provided the disciplinary force necessary to prevent
Fletcher from making his usual sacrifice of character to situation.
Thus together they were able to produce something better and greater
than Fletcher could produce alone or, as will be seen shortly, when
collaborating with another partner, Philip Massinger.

* * * *
Revenge for honour plays a much smaller part in the plays written by Fletcher and Massinger than in any other of Fletcher's work. This may well be because only two of them, The Prophetess and The Lovers' Progress, may be called tragicomedy. The rest are clearly either tragedy or comedy. The plays in the latter class are, on the whole, more serious than Fletcher's romantic comedies and there is some attempt at using the concept of revenge for honour in a way similar to that found in Fletcher's tragicomedy. It is not altogether a successful attempt. In some cases this is the result of faulty construction, for this partnership was less felicitous in plot construction than the partnership with Beaumont, and also less able to handle the concept of revenge for honour. This is revealed by its clumsy use in The Double Marriage, The Spanish Curate and The Queen of Corinth.

In these three plays the concept of revenge for honour appears, as in Fletcher's comedies and tragicomedies, as a piece of stage machinery, but they lack the full power of Fletcher's craftsmanship at its best. In The Double Marriage Virolet's marriage to Martia dishonours Juliana whom he has divorced; yet even when it is made clear that he is Martia's husband in name only and that she has released him from his second vows, Juliana refuses to accept him. She alleges

The 1679 Folio describes the former as a tragical history and the latter as a tragedy. Professor Harbage classes both as tragicomedy (Annals of the English Stage, pp. 92-3). The Prophetess is as close to the usual pattern of Fletcherian tragicomedy as to biographical chronicle history. Despite the death of Cleander, The Lovers' Progress ends happily, if sombrely, and the title suggests that the main interest is rather with the amusing story of Olinda, Lidian and Clarange than with the more serious handling of a similar situation in the story of Calista, Cleander and Lisander.
that it would be against her credit to do so. Her words are spoken with determination, but one is aware of the same lack of conviction in the meaning of honour on the dramatist's part that was apparent in Maximus. Martia's father, the Duke of Sesse speaks of executing revenge for the dishonour brought upon him by his daughter's flight with Virolet and later association with the King. He makes no attempt against the former, however, and when he tries to kill Martia herself he is frustrated by the Boatswain. At the end of the play all the motives of revenge are forced into reasons for rebellion against the tyrant Ferrand. Thus there is no real development of the themes of revenge for honour. The construction of The Spanish Curate is even more faulty. Jacintha, contracted to Don Henrique and the mother of his child is, like Juliana, dishonoured by divorce. She is aware of her dishonour, but hides it secretly for years by living as the supposed wife of Octavio. Don Henrique's wife Violante is dishonoured when Jacintha's child Ascanio is brought home to be recognised as her husband's heir. She vows revenge for this, and accordingly plans to murder both Don Henrique and Ascanio. At the end of the play it appears that she was never married to Don Henrique; so there was no real reason for her to exact revenge. This conclusion leaves Jacintha free to repair her honour by marriage to Don Henrique in the manner of Fletcherian tragicomedy. It leaves unexplained, however, why Don

93 The Double Marriage (1647 Folio), IV, p. 39b.
94 It is interesting to note that E.H.C. Oliphant believes this scene (IV, iii) to be the work of Fletcher alone: op. cit., p. 226.
95 The Spanish Curate (1647 Folio), IV, i, p.40a.
Henrique and Violante should pretend to themselves that they are married; and it ignores a reference to their public marriage ceremony. The Queen of Corinth, by Fletcher, Massinger and Field contains a similar surprise in the denouement. Merione and Beliza seek legal revenge for rape, but it appears that Merione was her assailant's contracted bride, and consequently her honour was not really injured; while Beliza did not suffer at all. In this play the dramatists' force is wholly concentrated on surprise, and the code of honour is not really visible. It is interesting to note, however, that Agenor is willing to marry Merione after her rape and later declares that her honour is not thereby impaired.

The Lovers' Progress blends elements of revenge for honour much more successfully. Indeed, the central situation of a lady falsely accused of dishonour by her guilty maid is the same as that of Philaster. Dorilaus, however, is quicker than the King in Philaster in having his daughter's name publicly vindicated. Though The Lovers' Progress has no disguise to reveal in the last scene, the happy ending is virtually the same as in Philaster, even if the informer Clarinda does not escape punishment as did Megra. Where the question of honour is actually discussed, as in Calista's soliloquy in Act I there is the same lack of understanding of its meaning already noted in Valentinian and in The Double Marriage.

96 Ibid., I, iii, pp.28-9.
97 Ibid., III, iii, p. 37a.
98 The Queen of Corinth (1647 Folio), II, iii, p. 8a; III, ii, p. 13b.
99 The Lovers Progress (1647 Folio), V, p. 93a.
100 It is interesting that this is the only speech in Act I that E.H.C. Oliphant assigns to Fletcher: op. cit, p. 242.
The most felicitous comic presentation of revenge for honour by Fletcher and Massinger is Love's Cure or The Martial Maid. The theme is properly revenge for murder, but at the beginning of the play Vitelli states that he considers his vendetta against Alvarez as revenge for the dishonour of his uncle's death at Alvarez's hands being unrevenged by the law.\textsuperscript{101} This vendetta is conducted in all seriousness, but the comedy springs from the fact that Alvarez's wife, Eugenia tries to protect her son from it by educating him as a girl\textsuperscript{102} while their daughter Clara has accompanied her father in his exile as a boy. The vendetta is frustrated when love teaches these children to respond as befits their sex. Finally, permission is given for the vendetta to be settled by a public combat, but, as in Love's Pilgrimage, the young women intervene at the last moment to prevent the combat and bring about reconciliation on all sides.

In a serious, even didactic use of the concept of revenge for honour Fletcher and Massinger are much more successful. They did not attempt a tragedy of honour, nor did they succeed in producing a tragic-comedy of the standard of Philaster, but there is a serious strain in their comedies that raises them above the level of Fletcher's usual comic style. This may be attributed to the influence of Massinger who, unlike Fletcher, seems to have had strong ideas about the meaning of honour and been anxious to examine them in his plays. A second reason lies in Massinger's interest in the theme of regeneration and

\textsuperscript{101} Loves Cure, or The Martial Maid (1647 Folio), I, i, p. 126a
\textsuperscript{102} This is an amusing variation of the method of Mariana in The Fair Maid of the Inn.
reeducation. Just as the plays of Fletcher and of Beaumont and Fletcher reflect an interest in kingship, and some of their best work shows revenge for honour in relationship to the duties of the subject; so the best work of Fletcher and Massinger is that which shows the idea of revenge for honour in relationship to the themes of regeneration and reeducation.

These two themes are found in five plays of which Fletcher and Massinger were joint collaborators or authors. Only two of the five plays deal with the same aspects of these themes: a fact which may indicate their importance. The earliest of the group, The Honest Man's Fortune, was probably written by Fletcher, Massinger, Field and Daborne. It is concerned with marital honour of which the Duke of Orleans has a false conception. He considers it dishonest of his wife to speak in defence of Montague, a former suitor of hers whom the Duke has defeated in a law suit. Yet, having won land from Montague in this action, the Duke declares that he is willing to surrender his wife to him. Her brother, the Earl of Amiens, draws his sword to defend the Duchess from this dishonour. To save her husband's life the Duchess makes a false "confession" of infidelity. As a result the Duke turns her out of doors, and in her exile she is protected by Montague. This honourable conduct and the momentary fear that the Duchess has died of

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103 The dates of these plays, according to Professor Bentley, are:
- The Honest Man's Fortune 1613
- The Knight of Malta 1616-18
- The Little French Lawyer 1619-23
- The Custom of the Country c. 1619-20 and 1638?
- The Elder Brother 1625.
grief work a reformation in Orleans. He turns to thank Montague for the lesson in honour that he has given him. The situation and lesson are repeated in The Knight of Malta by Fletcher, Massinger and Field. Gomera suspects that his wife Oriana has been unfaithful with Miranda, his former rival for her hand. The fear that this suspicion has killed her lasts for several months after Miranda has, in fact, rescued Oriana from the tomb. Earlier her honour as a subject had to be asserted by a combat between Gomera and Miranda. At the conclusion of the play she therefore emerges freed from two stains on her honour. In both plays husbands have been taught to trust in the honour of their chaste wives and to realise that their distrust only dishonours themselves.

A chaste wife vindicates her honour in The Little French Lawyer also, when Lamira’s honour triumphs over the lust of her former suitor, Dinant.

On a less serious level, the main plot concerns the education in the law of duelling given to La Writt, the lawyer of the title. Once La Writt has taken part successfully in a duel he assumes that he may always ape his betters by resorting to arms in every cause of quarrel. He wishes to fight with Judge Vertaign, only learning his lesson when he is soundly beaten. The point of the teaching is not that duelling is wrong, but that it is a method of defending one’s honour proper to gentlemen, among whom lawyers are not included.

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104 The Honest Mans Fortune (1647 Folio), IV, p. 167b.
105 Ibid., V, p. 171b.
106 The Little French Lawyer (1647 Folio), V, p. 73b. In the scoffs of Dinant and Clermont in act I (p. 53b) there is a hint of the situation of the husband who cannot fulfil his marriage.
107 See the description of him in Act III, p. 61b.
A similar education in the right use of duelling is given to Duarte in The Custom of the Country. He, like La Writt, is too anxious to quarrel. Though he is a gentleman he has been educated in a courtly manner above his situation. Rutillio finds him quarrelling with Alonso over whom he has an unfair advantage. Rutillio tries to come between them and as a result is insulted by Duarte. Rutillio rightly defends himself from this insult by the sword. He wounds his adversary, leaving him for dead. Duarte is cured, however, and vows amendment of life. This is to be manifest first in finding Rutillio:

It shall be my first care to seek him out,
I would with thanks acknowledge that his sword,
In opening my veins, which proud blood poison'd,
Gave the first symptômes of true health.

Nevertheless, Duarte has also to learn to trust in the honour of a chaste woman who is, in this instance, his mother. It is only at the end of the play that he believes her truly honest and she learns that he is still alive.

The reforming power of true honour is seen in two examples in the same play. Zenocia's refusal to be dishonoured by Count Clodio and her strong defence of her honour, even with bow and arrow, contribute to the Count's reformation. Another element is his fear that she may die as a result of the events which followed his persecution of her and her flight. Clodio is reformed to the extent of renouncing for ever his droit de seigneur and thus the cruel custom of the country is abolished. At the same time the honour and constancy of Arnoldo,

108 The Customs of the Countrey (1647 Folio), III, pp. 5-6.
109 Ibid., IV, p. 15a.
110 Ibid., V, p. 22b.
Zenocia's husband, triumph over and reform the dishonest desires of the lady Hippolyta.  

Finally, serious moral and comic situation are combined in the comedy of The Elder Brother to show that honour depends on inward qualities rather than outward show. The studies of Charles, the elder brother, are disturbed by noise in the house. He has been so buried in his books that it is a shock to him to learn that a feast is being prepared to celebrate the wedding of his brother, the foppishly flamboyant Eustace. Charles receives a further shock when he discovers that his father has made Eustace his heir. The bookworm suddenly becomes aware of the schemes and actions of the world around him, and with results both comic and serious. Amazed at the sight of the bride, Angellina, who contradicts all the ideas about women which he has read of in his studies, Charles is quick to perceive that her worth is unappreciated by Eustace. Charles determines to hold on to his patrimony and teach his relations a lesson. Angellina, for her part, cheerfully says that her marriage contract was conditional upon Eustace having the land which Charles now refuses to sign away to him. She agrees to be his. So Charles deprives his brother of his bride and of his sword. Eustace is slow to react to this double dishonour, but when he eventually comes to Charles to demand the return of both, it is to find that Charles rejoices that Eustace has become tender of his honour and has learnt  

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... how farre
And with what curious respect and care
The peace and credit of a man within,
(Which you were thought till now) should be preferr'd
Before a gawdy outside, ... 112

Fletcher's partnership with Massinger began in or about 1617, at a period which might be called the middle of Fletcher's career, and it lasted till Fletcher's death eight years later. On the whole, the plays which they wrote are not as carefully constructed as those by Beaumont and Fletcher, but The Lovers' Progress and Love's Cure are probably equal to the best of Fletcher's romantic comedy. The nearest approach to a tragedy of honour in the group is The Double Marriage, but it degenerates into a rebellion against a tyrant in which the final murders are unmoving. Moreover, none of these plays show that either dramatist had an outstanding gift of characterization.

Nevertheless, if they do not show Fletcher at his best, these plays mark the rise and development of his partner, Philip Massinger. To him may be attributed the unifying force of the themes of regeneration and reeducation which is found in the more serious comedies. Massinger obviously was concerned with and interested in the meaning of honour and the need to avenge wounded honour and, more especially, on the effect of true honour on dishonourable minds. The fuller development of his interest and his statement of the meaning of true honour may be seen in a study of his work as an independent dramatist between 1621 and 1637.

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112 The Elder Brother (1637), V, i, Sig. I₃ᵣ.
In Massinger's work as an independent dramatist and in The Fatal Dowry (written with Nathan Field) and The Virgin Martyr (written with Thomas Dekker) may be seen the results of his apprenticeship with John Fletcher. The most obvious of these is Massinger's continuation of and excellence in tragicomedy. Although he collaborated on only two tragicomedies with Fletcher, six of his own sixteen extant plays are called tragicomedies in their first editions. It seems likely, therefore,

113 The following list of Massinger's extant plays is taken from T.A. Dunn, Philip Massinger (1957), pp. 28-9. The type of play is given from the first edition of each.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Type</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1620</td>
<td>The Unnatural Combat</td>
<td>tragedy</td>
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<tr>
<td>1621</td>
<td>The Duke of Milan</td>
<td>tragedy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mid-1623</td>
<td>The Bandman</td>
<td>ancient story</td>
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<tr>
<td>Early 1624</td>
<td>The Renegado</td>
<td>tragicomedy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mid-1624</td>
<td>The Parliament of Love (MS)</td>
<td>comical history</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Late 1624</td>
<td>The Great Duke of Florence</td>
<td>comedy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Early 1625</td>
<td>The Maid of Honour</td>
<td>tragicomedy</td>
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<tr>
<td>Late 1625</td>
<td>A New Way to Pay Old Debts</td>
<td>comedy</td>
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<tr>
<td>Early 1626</td>
<td>The City Madam</td>
<td>tragedy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mid-1626</td>
<td>The Roman Actor</td>
<td>tragicomedy</td>
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<tr>
<td>Early 1629</td>
<td>The Picture</td>
<td>tragicomedy</td>
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<tr>
<td>Late 1630</td>
<td>Believe as You List</td>
<td>(MS &quot;a new play&quot;)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Early 1631</td>
<td>The Emperor of the East</td>
<td>tragicomedy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mid-1633</td>
<td>The Guardian</td>
<td>comical history</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Early 1634</td>
<td>A Very Woman (a revision)</td>
<td>tragicomedy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Early 1636</td>
<td>The Bashful Lover</td>
<td>tragicomedy</td>
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Though The Bondman is simply called as "Antient Story" and both The Great Duke of Florence and The Guardian are described as "comical history" on their titlepages, Professor Harbage classes the first two as tragicomedy and the last as comedy (Annals of the English Drama, pp. 95, 101, 105). The Bondman contains a considerable amount of action that verges on the tragic, but The Great Duke of Florence does not. (That there is no real danger of Giovanni, Carolo and Sanazarro being condemned to death as traitors is indicated by the Duke's making Lidia and Florinda their judges). Of the three plays, The Guardian comes nearest to Fletcher's definition of tragicomedy (see p. 112 supra) in the expected punishment of Iolante which becomes the real punishment of Calypso. All three might best be called romantic comedies.
that Massinger may have discovered the potentialities of tragicomedy through his association with Fletcher. Yet Massinger's tragicomedies are quite different from Fletcher's. The element of tragedy is not, as in Fletcher's plays, confined to tragic or potentially tragic situation, the main purpose of which is to provide a variety of spectacle or suspense. Tragedy for Massinger is always a human concern. He brings his characters close to it in order that they may learn something. It may not mean nearness to death, though that is the case in *The Renegado*, *A Very Woman* and *The Guardian*, but rather a nearness to the loss of happiness, as in *The Maid of Honour* and *The Picture*. Thus the tragic part of Massinger's tragicomedies has the effect of a refining fire which purges the dross from faulty human nature.

The difference between the tragicomedy of Fletcher and that of Massinger is indicative of the fundamental difference between the two dramatists. Fletcher thought primarily of his audience's entertainment; Massinger of their instruction. Each used his art to serve them as best he could. Fletcher employed his gifts of stagecraft for his audience's amusement: Massinger's strong feelings were poured out for their enlightenment. Massinger was a dramatist of ideas. His intense interest in many subjects may be seen as threads woven through the patterns of all his plays. Even his two most amusing comedies, *The City Madam* and *A New Way to Pay Old Debts* have a didactic purpose. In atmosphere and theme - the right use of wealth - they are strongly reminiscent of Middleton's city comedies. A few of the other main themes
in which Massinger was interested are: the duties of sovereignty (The Roman Actor, The Emperor of the East); the conflict between public and private duty (Believe as You List, The Roman Actor); and the salvation of the soul (The Virgin Martyr, The Renegado).

Among these ideas revenge for honour plays a part which becomes increasingly important in his last plays. As has already been noted in the plays of his collaboration with Fletcher, Massinger was concerned to indicate the dishonour of doubting the chastity of a pure woman. In his independent work one of the most important aspects of his didacticism is an education in the meaning of true honour. One of his great themes is the relationship between justice and revenge for honour. Like Shakespeare, he presents it in the formal debate of a trial scene. Massinger, like Fletcher, also used revenge for honour in the construction of his plots. It appears as a secret motive which provides a surprise in the last act or, as in the case of The Renegado, it is used to provide a basis for didacticism which is not at all concerned with honour.

Massinger's stagecraft was not, on the whole, as great as Fletcher's, though it developed on Fletcherian lines. Such plays as The Renegado and The Picture contain elements of suspense and surprise akin to those of Fletcherian tragicomedy. The building up of tension at the end of

114 A detailed analysis of Massinger's moral, religious, philosophical and social theories is given by B.T. Spencer in 'Philip Massinger', Seventeenth Century Studies by Members of the Graduate School, University of Cincinnati, Edited by R. Shafer (Princeton, 1933), pp. 3-119. Dr. Spencer does not consider revenge for honour as one of Massinger's theories, but he does mention his interest in revenge as one of the contemporary ideas (pp. 49-51).
A Very Woman is equal to the best in Fletcher and, in its actual intention, surpasses Fletcher. For the end is not surprise alone, but instruction; not just a happy ending, but a morally satisfying conclusion. In his use of revenge for honour in his plot construction Massinger indeed betters the instruction of Fletcher. Massinger never lets the concept of revenge for honour - or any other concept - become a piece of stage machinery. His plots and ideas are united in didactic purpose.

Unfortunately, it is not always a completely successful union; for all other elements in Massinger's plays are made to fit the requirements of plot or of Massinger's system of ethics. As a result, theme or, more important, characterization is often sacrificed to plot; and even his ethics may be compromised by stage effect.

This is illustrated in The Picture, the didactic theme of which is that adumbrated in the plays of his collaboration with Fletcher: the dishonour of doubting the honour of a woman hitherto proved chaste and faithful. In this play, indeed, both husband and wife doubt each other's honour. Sophia believes the stories of her husband's lust for Queen Honoria and vows to revenge herself in kind. Her resolution is made in a speech which does not correspond with the earlier characterization of her as a chaste wife. She tells her informants, Richardo and Ubaldo:

... chastity
Thou onely art a name, and I renounce thee,
I am now a servaunt to voluptousnesse,
Wantons of all degrees and fashions welcome
You shall be entertain'd, and if I stray
Let him condemne himselfe, that lead the way. 115

115 The Picture (1630), III, ii, Sig. I₃r.
The change in Sophia's character produces such an alteration in the magic picture of her that her husband Mathias is convinced of her dishonesty, and he is willing to be unfaithful indeed with the Queen. When Sophia has later shown how she revenged herself on Ricardo and Ubaldo it is Mathias who comes off worse for doubting her honour. Sophia declares to him:

... the foul aspersions
In your unmanly doubts cast on my honor
Cannot so soon be washed of. 116

Yet, when even the King and Queen join with Mathias' other friends in asking his pardon, Sophia at last forgives him.

As well as illustrating the lesson that a chaste wife should not be doubted, The Picture is also an example of one of the most important aspects of Massinger's didacticism: an education in the meaning of honour. Mathias is taught a lesson by Honoria as well as by Sophia. The Queen teaches him not to be dishonourable, even when provoked to be so. At the same time, Mathias himself rids Honoria at once of pride, self opinion and lust so that she calls on heaven for mercy, lamenting that she has wandered out of the tract of piety. 117 While Mathias teaches Honoria, Sophia, helped by her maid, works a cooling revenge on Ubaldo and Ricardo. Thus the play contains more than one lesson, however small, in the meaning of and retention of honour in men and woman.

The lessons are clear enough, but one has to ask if they are acceptable from such instructors, particularly Sophia. In order to use

116 Ibid., V, ii, Sigs. N1v - N2r.
117 Ibid., IV, iv, Sig. L3r.
the device of the magic picture successfully Massinger had to change Sophia's character from that of a chaste wife to a lascivious one in all but deed. Then, in order to teach Ricardo and Ubaldo their lesson, and Mathias his, she has to change back again. This vacillation is of the same kind as that of characters in Fletcher's tragicomedy, but it weakens the characterization considerably, and lessens the force of Massinger's didacticism. Sophia is no more fit to lecture her husband on the meaning of honour than he would be to lecture her.

A similar discontinuity of character mars the lesson in one of the plays in which Massinger's balance of didacticism and plotting is most evenly maintained, The Guardian. Even the construction of the play is carefully worked out so that the first two acts reveal most of Massinger's teaching about honour and the last two are given over to romantic comedy.

The play unfolds around the lives of a mother and daughter, Jolante and Caliste, whose fortunes are influenced by their differing attitudes to honour. Before the play opens revenge for family honour has led to the banishment of Severino, Caliste's father, who married Jolante without the consent of her brother, Monteclaro. In revenge for this Monteclaro fought Severino. He was presumed to have been killed, and Severino was consequently banished. At the beginning of the play Caliste is seen talking to her two suitors. The first, Adorio, ridicules her honesty, and refuses to marry her, though he would like her to be

his mistress. Caldoro, in contrast, protests his lawful love and strikes Adorio for his dishonourable solicitation. Attention is next directed to Jolante who is seen to fall in love with Laval, a stranger who sues to the King of Naples for her husband's pardon. This love is so strong that she is persuaded by her immodest confidante, Calypso, to meet Laval. Unknown to her mother, Galiste has arranged to elope on the same night with Adorio who is now willing to marry her. Both these assignations are to be aided by darkness; both are frustrated by it.

Severino returns to his house and, finding Laval outside, sends him away. Thinking to surprise his wife, he discovers her arrayed to meet a lover. Severino assumes that she has already been unfaithful and swears revenge. He goes to meditate on it in another room and while he is gone Calypso changes places with Jolante. Severino returns, stabs Calypso and cuts off her nose. She is thus punished for being a bawd. She again changes places with Jolante who, by boasting a miraculous cure from her wounds, persuades Severino that her faith is un tarnished. Thus Severino is cured from suspicions of a wife hitherto faithful but, not only was Jolante willing to be unfaithful if she got the chance; her lesson is taught by means of a blasphemous lie.

Meanwhile, in the darkness Galiste has mistakenly gone off with Caldoro and her maid Mirtilla with Adorio. In the morning both couples discover their mistake. Galiste is at last persuaded to listen to Caldoro's suit while Adorio, feeling that he is being punished for his lust by his loss of Galiste, nevertheless keeps Mirtilla with him as he
goes to look for his mistress. Caliste and Caldoro find them first, however. Adorio has fallen asleep in Mirtilla's lap. Seeing them together, Caliste's love for Adorio turns to hate. Finally, both the young couples together with Caldoro's guardian, Alphonso, King of Naples and Laval are taken prisoner by the banditti who bring them before their leader, Severino. The King is impressed by Severino's nobility and justice, but declares that he cannot pardon his murder of Monteclaro. But, with the kind of happy discovery typical of Fletcherian tragicomedy, such as Philaster, all these difficulties are solved. For Laval reveals that he is Monteclaro. Nevertheless, at the very end of the play, in a manner that is again reminiscent of Fletcher's, Massinger clouds the happy atmosphere for a moment as Adorio declares that he still wants revenge for the dishonour of the blow given him by Caldoro. When Caldoro acknowledges that he was in the wrong, Adorio's wounded honour is healed.

Massinger's teaching concerning honour is worked out with great care in the juxtaposition of scenes and characters in the first two acts of the play and in certain set speeches throughout. As has been seen already, the first scene shows the contrast between Adorio's and Caldoro's attitudes to honour with reference to Caliste. The second act reveals the difference between Jolante's and Caliste's conceptions of honour and shows how each was influenced by an immodest companion. Jolante, who prides herself on her continence between Severino's visits, upbraids her daughter for stopping to talk to libertines who make her
fame the quarrel of their swords. Jolante seems to think that a woman's honour is best preserved by her avoidance of men. Caliste is ready to believe and obey her mother, but Mirtilla tells her,

I grant your honor is a specious dressing,
But without conversation of men,
A kinde of nothing; 119

Caliste is persuaded by Mirtilla to make trial of Adorio's love. The following scene shows how Jolante is not averse to the bawdy conversation of Calypso. This hint that Jolante's pride in her honour may be an outward show is confirmed by her sudden passion for Laval. Indeed, she expresses her feelings thus:

I am in my honor sick, sick to the death,
Never to be recovered. 120

A few moments later, encouraged by Calypso, Jolante has decided to satisfy her passion. Giving the bawd money and a jewel, she exclaims on how dearly she is forced to buy dishonour. 121

From the relationship between honour and female chastity the audience's attention is directed towards duelling honour, as Adorio's friends advise him how to revenge the dishonour of Caldoro's blow. Lentulo advocates giving Caldoro the bastinado, while Camillo thinks that he should hire assassins to kill his enemy. Adorio, however, declares that he will steer his own course. This decision indicates a change in his attitude to honour which is reflected very soon afterwards in his resolve to meet Caliste's chaste desires with marriage. Yet while Adorio

119 Ibid., II, p. 17.
120 Ibid., II, p. 22.
121 Ibid., II, p. 23.
is planning to make his love for Caliste honourable and lawful, Mirtilla has conceived for him hopes of love which she acknowledges to be "loose", and determines to win him from her mistress. The second act closes with an illustration of the difference between Jolante's desires and Calypso's representation of them in the latter's interview with Laval. The reputation which Jolante has so long preserved is destroyed by her bawd as a prelude to the abandonment of her chastity. 123

The third act stands halfway between the didactic consideration of honour in the first two and the romantic intrigue of the last two by combining both elements. The amusement of the confusion in the flights of Caliste and Mirtilla is balanced by the seriousness of Severino's attempt to revenge the supposed dishonour of his wife. Honour in this act is seen at work in situation rather than in the conflict of or juxtaposition of characters. Jolante, waiting to receive her lover, sees that her lust is a punishment for forbidding her daughter's lawful marriage. Faced with her avenging husband, she realizes that his desire for revenge is just. This interpretation of the working of divine justice is, however, no less blasphemous than the false interpretation which she gives to Severino when she claims that her wounds have been miraculously cured. Thus not only character, but ethics, suffer in Massinger's concentration on surprise and didacticism at all costs.

In contrast to Jolante and Sophia, Margaret in A New Way to Pay Old Debts is an acceptable instructor in the value of honour. One of the

122 Ibid., II, p. 29.
123 Ibid., II, pp. 33-36.
acting advantages of both Sophia and Jolante is the scope which both parts offer to a good actress; what these vacillating characters lose in the study they gain on the stage. Conversely, in *A New Way to Pay Old Debts*, all the variety of emotion which reaches a climax in a fit of apoplexy is concentrated on Sir Giles Overreach. Thus his daughter Margaret is able to appear as a normal girl whose attitude to honour is sane, consistent and, therefore, acceptable. Overreach's sense of honour is, like everything else about him, corrupted by his avarice. He wants Margaret to dishonour herself so that he may force Lord Lovell to cure this dishonour in a wealthy marriage. This contrasts strongly with Margaret's own conception of honour which is, accordingly, much more acceptable than that of Jolante or Sophia. Camiøla in *The Maid of Honour* is also portrayed consistently. This is because the main effect of the play is achieved, not by a change in her character (though she is also represented as one who has to struggle with her passions), but by the realization of those around her that her reverence of the sanctity of religious vows is sincere. Because it is essential for the full appreciation of the surprise of her entrance into the Church, she has to be shown as consistently chaste and religious. It is her lover, Bertoldo who is insincere in his vows and unfaithful to Camiola. It is therefore in keeping with Camiola's essentially normal attitude to honour that when Adorni fights Fulgentio in defence of her honour, she should reject this service as unnecessary for one whose honour is undoubted. She revenges herself on Fulgentio by appealing to the

124 *A New Way to Pay Old Debts* (1633), III, ii, Sig. C1.
125 *The Maid of Honour* (1632), III, iii, Sigs. C1v - C2r.
King, who decrees that Fulgentio shall suffer his displeasure till Camiola herself shall sue for his pardon.

If Massinger was successful in the portrayal of a consistently good character, he was also successful in the portrayal of a villain in whom inconsistencies of character are less disturbing because they may all be interpreted as variations in shades of evil. This is seen in two of four plays in which Massinger uses revenge for honour as a secret motive which is to surprise the audience in the last act: The Duke of Milan and The Unnatural Combat. The action of the former play springs from Francisco's desire to avenge the dishonour done to his sister Eugenia by Duke Sforza of Milan. This motive is not revealed, however, until after Francisco has contrived the death of Sforza's Duchess, Marcella. Francisco's method is similar to that of Iago. He seeks revenge for honour by trying to inflict dishonour on the Duke whose delight is in his wife's unsuspected chastity, innocence and honour. First he tries a direct appeal to the Duchess to receive his love, but she firmly rejects this impudent attempt to taint her honour. Francisco next works to make the Duke believe that Marcella is false. The accusation is made by the Duke's own mother and sister, but he refuses to believe it, and therefore Francisco "confesses" that the Duchess pursues him for love. The Duke tests her constancy by telling her that Francisco is dead. Marcella's anger has already been aroused by the knowledge of her husband's command that she should be murdered if

126 The Duke of Millaire (1623), V, i, Sig. K {4} v .
127 Ibid., I, Sig. D {7} v .
128 Ibid., Act III, Sig. E {3} v .
he is killed at war. Marcelia exclaims that she loves Francisco and thus foils herself into the grave as her husband stabs her for being dishonourable in intention.\textsuperscript{129} Finally, having poisoned the Duke and tortured him with the knowledge that he killed an innocent wife, Francisco confronts him with Eugenia. The Duke dies asking for Francisco’s forgiveness. In the \textit{Duke of Milan} the teaching is directed against the excessive, lustful love of Sforza for his wife. The concept of revenge for honour provides a basis on which this excessive love is seen to lead to a jealousy that results in revenge for a supposed dishonour. At the same time the revelation of Francisco’s motive in dishonouring the Duke not only explains the reason for his machinations, but gives the play an interesting prospect of development which was unexpected at the beginning of the fifth act.

The secret motive of revenge for honour is used twice in \textit{The Unnatural Combat}, a tragedy which is more obviously didactic. Revenge for honour is the mainspring of the plot. The teaching of the play is that the only justifiable vengeance is divine. At the beginning of the action Malefort Junior announces that he wishes to avenge a wrong done to his honour by his father, the Admiral of Marseilles. He challenges him to a duel and is killed. He dies without having revealed the grounds upon which he considered himself dishonoured beyond hinting that they are concerned with his mother. A more obvious motive for revenge is seen in Beaufort Junior’s desire to avenge the dishonour of having his promised bride, Theocrine, taken from him by her father, Malefort Senior.

\textsuperscript{129} \textit{Ibid., IV, iii, Sig. K_3^v.}
Having shown this desire active in Beaufort Junior, Massinger can reveal that the same dishonour prompts the revengeful actions of Montrevile. Malefort Senior first dishonoured Montrevile by cheating him of his mistress to make her his second wife. When their daughter, Theocrine, had grown up she was promised to Montrevile as his bride. This promise was broken when Beaufort Junior, a wealthier suitor, appeared. To revenge these two dishonours, or examples of the same dishonour, from the hand of Malefort Senior, Montrevile rapes Theocrine, who then dies. It is only in the last scene of the play that the audience is reminded that the reason for Malefort Junior's revenge is still unrevealed. When Malefort speaks of vengeance for Theocrine's rape, Montrevile tells him that if he were a just examiner of himself he would not accuse Montrevile. The final revelation is, however, brought about by supernatural means. The appearance of the ghosts of Malefort Junior and his mother makes the Admiral confess that he murdered her, his first wife, in order to marry Montrevile's promised bride. Yet, in revenging this wrong to his mother, Malefort Junior had failed. This was because he was not

For her revenger, ... 130

This lesson, which is also allied to the idea that the son should not disobey his father, is finally made more pointed as divine vengeance, in the form of lightening, strikes Malefort dead.

130 The Vnnaturall Combat (1639), V, ii, Sig. L1v.
In *The Bondman* and *The Bashful Lover* the secret motive is of justice, not revenge, for each play shows how a woman's honour is to be restored. In the former play Pisander had wanted to kill Leosthenes to avenge the dishonour done by the latter to Pisander's sister, Statalia. Love for Cleora causes Pisander to disguise himself as a bondman and neglect his revenge. When he has revealed his identity, however, he confronts Leosthenes with Statalia whom Leosthenes silently consents to marry, thus repairing her honour.\(^{131}\) Thus the elements of surprise and disguise combine to produce another of Massinger's inconsistent characters; but as Leosthenes does not have the role of an educator for their dramatic worth in honour his changes of purpose can be appreciated in a play in which honour is not predominantly important. In *The Bashful Lover* Ascanio calls on Galeazzo to revenge a wrong done to Ascanio by Alonzo. Galeazzo complies, overcoming Alonzo in battle. Ascanio does not want the death of his injurer, however. He is, in fact, Maria who had yielded her honour to him upon his promise of marriage. He had later deserted her and so, at the end of the play, when she and Alonzo have been married, her father declares that her honour is salved.\(^{132}\)

These two plays illustrate the extremes of Massinger's linking of plot and didacticism. *The Bondman* is mainly concerned with the place of slaves in society and the connection between revenge for honour and this theme is tenuous. Pisander's setting aside of revenge does, however, provide a parallel to General Timolian's decision to study pity rather than revenge for the revolt of the slaves. In *The Bashful Lover*

\(^{131}\) *The Bond-Man* (1624), V, iii, Sig. L3.

\(^{132}\) *Three New Plays* (1655), 'The Bashful Lover', V, p. 72.
revenge for honour, though providing the basis of only the subplot of the play, is nevertheless closely related to its didactic purpose which will be discussed later in an examination of his last plays.

Both the faults and virtues of Massinger's characterization and of his blending of plot and didacticism are seen in *The Parliament of Love*. Education in the meaning of honour and honourable behaviour is the basis of this play's fourfold plot. The first strand of the plot concerns Bellisant who believes that honour is nothing unless chastity meets and resists temptation.\(^{133}\) Her later action shows how, by resisting temptation herself, Bellisant not only retains her honour, but restores the honour of her tempter, Clarindore.\(^{134}\) She seems to yield to him, but in fact he is tricked into sleeping with his own wife. He is brought to repentance and becomes honourable as he accepts his forsaken wife. The theme of this strand is well presented and the presentation is supported by good characterization of Bellisant. The lesson of the second strand is marred by a frivolity close to Fletcher's and the sacrifice of justice to surprise. The educator in honour is Leonora, who wishes to teach Cleremond for wanting her to yield to him a few days before their wedding. She considers this solicitation such a wound to her honour that she refuses to marry him at all.\(^{135}\) Her seriousness is to be questioned when she considers herself an instrument of the *Revenge of Cupid* and *Hymen* on his lust. Moreover, the form which her revenge takes is certainly not an instructive one. She


\(^{134}\) Ibid, V, i, 2414–2419.

\(^{135}\) While according with the concept that a woman was dishonoured by dishonourable solicitations, this contrasts with Fletcher's idea that it was no dishonour for a girl to yield to her contracted spouse.
commands Cleremond to kill his best friend. He fights with Montross, and is defeated. This defeat is a dishonour which repays him for his dishonouring of Leonora whom he is finally allowed to marry. The injustice of Leonora's punishment is recognised by the King who would have had her become an anchoress had not Montross survived. The last two strands of education in the meaning of honour are woven together as two courtiers combine to remedy the attempts at dishonour which they and their wives suffer from insolent courtiers. Their intention, as stated by Dinant, is a moral one, but once again the method is at fault. Dinant says to Chamont:

all waies are honest that we take to revenge vs on theirs lascivious monkies of the Court that make it theirs profession to dishonour graue Citizeins wiues nay those of higher rank.

In this speech lies the core of one of Massinger's weaknesses: his inability to fit both the character and the method of the instructor in honour with the nature of the instruction. Dinant's revenge on Nouall for his pursuit of his wife Clarinda is to administer potions which make Nouall impotent. Then, taunting him with the offer of Clarinda, Dinant makes him confess his dishonourable intentions. At the same time Chamont has his servants whip Perigot till he cries murder. Chamont's wife Lamira, herself triumphs over Perigot. Both the courtiers are taught never again to desire to boast that a Lord is their cuckold but the method of their instruction is no more moral than Leonora's; and in using such methods Dinant and Chamont are no

137 Ibid., IV, iii, 1552-5.
138 Ibid., IV, v, 1859-60.
more acceptable moral tutors than Jolante or Sophia.

Massinger's work was not all vitiated by such ethical inconsistency. In his best plays the union of plot and didacticism is coherently achieved and what he has to teach about honour is worth attention. This may be seen in The Fatal Dowry, written with Nathan Field between 1616 and 1619. It is not until the end of the second act that any indication is given of the play's development into a tragedy of honour: but in three speeches at the end of this act lies the core of the tragedy. First, Beaumelle indicates that her marriage to Charalois is against her wishes and that if her former suitor, Nouall Junior, but speaks to her, he will undo her. Secondly, Nouall Junior's friend Pontalier indicates that the former's interest in Beaumelle is less worthy than love. It is the pursuit of her honour. Finally, when Pontalier's advice to his friend to leave this pursuit has been rejected with scorn, he pronounces,

Pousse on then, starres, worke your pernicious will.
Onely the wise rule, and preuent your ill.

The wise, personified by Charalois' friend Romont and Beaumelle's maid Florimel, try in vain to prevent the ill brought upon Beaumelle and Charalois by Nouall Junior and Beaumelle's dishonourable maid, Bellapert. It is Bellapert who admits Nouall Junior to Beaumelle's presence and then leaves them together. Nouall Junior uses his opportunity to speak to Beaumelle. She is, as she had expected, undone.

139 The Fatall Dowry (1632), II, Sig. E4v.
140 Ibid., II, Sig. F1r.
in intention at least. Before intention can become act Florimell, who
cares for her mistress's honour,\textsuperscript{141} fetches Romont. Romont, who is
anxious to prevent his friend's dishonour and who considers himself a
servant to Beaumelle's honour too,\textsuperscript{142} dismisses Nouall Junior and tries
to reform Beaumelle. She resents his interference and \textit{scorns} what she
calls a homily read "in the praise of goodwife honesty".\textsuperscript{143} Romont then
tries to warn her father, Rochfort, of her intentions, but she succeeds,
through a pretended \textit{love of honour}, in bringing Rochfort's wrath down
on Romont's own head. Nevertheless, Romont next tries to warn Charalois
himself, protesting

\begin{quote}
I not accuse thy \textit{wife of act}, but would
Preuent her \textit{Precordure}, to thy dishonour,
Which now thy tardy sluggishnesse will admit.\textsuperscript{144}
\end{quote}

Charalois meets this warning with angry disbelief and dismisses Romont
as a curious impertinent.

It is by accident that Charalois finds his wife and her \textit{lover}
together. He forces Nouall Junior to fight in defence of Beaumelle's
honour, and kills him. Charalois declares that thereafter he will act
with honour. First, he sacrifices the wealth of Beaumelle's dowry and
then her love. She is repentant of her wrong and recognises her
husband's worth, too late, for his honour will not let him love her
again.\textsuperscript{145} Charalois makes her father act in his capacity as judge to
pronounce his \textit{verdict} on Beaumelle. Rochfort upbraids her for stealing
her husband's honour and says that she deserves no forgiveness. Charalois
seizes on these words as his authority to take justice into his own

\begin{footnotes}
\item[141] \textit{Ibid.}, III, Sig. \textit{F}^2_V.  \\
\item[142] \textit{Ibid.}, III, Sig. \textit{F}^4_F.  \\
\item[143] \textit{Ibid.}, III, Sig. \textit{F}^4_F.  \\
\item[144] \textit{Ibid.}, III, Sig. \textit{G}^4_V.  \\
\item[145] \textit{Ibid.}, IV, iv, Sig. \textit{I}^3.  \\
\end{footnotes}
hands; and kills Beaumelle. She dies approving his action, but Rochfort cries out that he had spoken as a friend to justice and Charalois' wronged honour; not as a father. At this point the father of Nouall comes to seek revenge for his son's death; but he seeks legal vengeance, and Charalois is tried in open court. In face of the evidence of his earlier restraint from revenge and of Nouall Junior's guilt, Charalois is acquitted. Pontalier and Romont, however, ever anxious for their friends' honour, take revenge into their own hands. Pontalier kills Charalois in revenge for the death of Nouall Junior, and Romont kills him immediately. As Romont's crime could be interpreted as a revenge upon Pontalier's contempt of court, his sentence is mitigated to banishment. The last words in the play speak for justice and against private revenge:

Charmi We are taught
By this sad president, how just soever Our reasons are to remedy our wrongs.
We are yet to leave them to their will and power,
That to that purpose have authority. 146

Thus even justifiable revenge is interdicted. Pontalier, who has constantly urged Nouall Junior to revenge the dishonour caused him by Romont, dies himself at Romont's hand, acknowledging that

I receive the vengeance, which my loue
Not built on vertue, has made me worthy, worthy of. 147

In the main, however, the play's didacticism is implicit rather than explicit. It is expressed in action rather than speech, as may be seen in the character of Romont. He stands in the same relationship to

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146 Ibid., V, Sig. L.4
147 Ibid., loc. cit.
to Charalois as Pontalier did to Nouall Junior. He is rebuked on all sides for his interference in the affairs of his friend's honour and is barely saved from complete condemnation at the end of the play.

This outline of the plot shows how the concept of revenge for honour is used by Massinger in a pattern that contains only one surprise: the accidental nature of Charalois' discovery of his wife with Nouall Junior. Otherwise the play follows a conventional path to the conclusion. The revenging husband kills his wife's lover and is himself caught in a web of counter revenge. Yet even this conventional use of revenge for honour cannot be separated from the dramatists' didacticism. Romont's attempts to warn his friend from impending dishonour underline the contrast between his concern for honour and Charalois' blind trust in his wife as guardian of his honour. The scene in which Rochfort judges Beaumelle and her husband kills her illustrates the difference between public and private justice. The counter revengers at the end of the play show private vengeance as a distortion of justice, while Romont's and Pontalier's ideas of friendship distort the concept of honour.

The concept of revenge for honour is neither the only nor the most important basis of the teaching in *The Fatal Dowry*. It provides sufficient motivation for the actions of Romont, Charalois and Pontalier, and their actions are condemned. It is not, however, the force that compels them towards tragedy. As the title of the play suggests, the right use of riches is perhaps a more important theme. Indeed, Romont implies that
it is the acquisition of riches that has corrupted Charalois' sense of honour as well as his sense of friendship. Another theme is the right use of justice, which is illustrated in all three trial scenes of the play, but most graphically in the trial of Beaumelle. Revenge for honour is no less cogent than the other themes of the play, but it is not the whole play.

It cannot be determined exactly how great Massinger's share in The Fatal Dowry was. It is usually assumed, however, that he wrote all the last act, and so the credit for its teaching should go to him alone. Weight is added to this belief by a consideration of his continued interest in all the ideas adumbrated in The Fatal Dowry and in the didacticism of all the plays of which he was sole author.

In The Roman Actor the fusion of didacticism and plot is no less successful than in The Fatal Dowry. Revenge for honour motivates the murders of Paris and of Cesar. The murder of Paris is also an illustration of one of the themes of the play: the conflict between private and public justice. This, in turn, is closely connected with ideas concerning the duties of the sovereign. Caesar, discovering his Empress, Domitia, with Paris laments that he cannot pardon him. It is Paris himself who urges his sovereign

But for this

_Alas you cannot, nay you must not Sir_  
Nor let it to posteritie be recorded  
That _Caesar_ vnreueung'd, sufferd a wrong,  
Which if a privaye man should sit downe with it  
Cowards would baffell him.  

148 Ibid., Act III, Sig. H^r^.
149 Vide Roberta F. Brinkley, Nathan Field, the Actor Playwright (New Haven, Conn., and London, 1928), pp. 81-93.
150 The Roman Actor (1629), IV, ii, Sig. H^r^.
This argument has the effect of bringing the Emperor, the source of justice, down to the level of a lawless citizen. He executes private revenge on Paris. He has previously dispensed with justice in his acquisition and therefore this action serves as a further example of the weakness of Cesar's character. The murder of Cesar himself by the women whom he has dishonoured, Domitia, Domitilla and Julia,\textsuperscript{151} is more than a conventional counter revenge or even the rise against a tyrant. It provides Massinger with an opportunity of pronouncing, through the Tribune, against regicide and of adding point to what has been shown in Cesar's own actions:\textsuperscript{152} private revenge debases the sovereign and those near him in authority.

In the plays so far discussed Massinger's use of revenge for honour has been seen to be related to a didactic purpose which is itself connected with honour or revenge for honour. In \textit{The Renegade}, however, the concept of revenge for honour provides the plot of the play, but its teaching is concerned almost exclusively with Christian doctrine. The action originates in Vitelli's quest to avenge the dishonour of his sister, Paulina, who has been captured for use as a servant of Asamberg, the Viceroy of Tunis. As in \textit{The Bondman}, the brother's attention is distracted from the pursuit of revenge by love for a woman. It is, however, lust rather than love that causes Vitelli to swerve from his purpose when Donusa falls violently in love with him and seduces him to their mutual dishonour. Their love is discovered and they are imprisoned

\textsuperscript{151} They are also added by Parthenius, who thereby avenges his father's death.

\textsuperscript{152} Act V, Sig. K\textsubscript{4}. 
by Asambe#g. Donusa is to die, not because she has dishonoured herself, but because she loves a Christian. In Vitelli himself there is a struggle between his desire to avenge his sister's honour and his dishonest love of Donusa; between the theory and practice of Christianity. Donusa personifies the struggle between love and lust; between Christianity and Islam. Tutored to repentance by Francisco, his Jesuit confessor, Vitelli reveals himself a true Christian by enduring torture and by converting and baptising Donusa. Finally they escape, together with Paulina whose pure faith has preserved her honour in spite of Asambe#g.

In The Renegado revenge for honour is subordinated to themes connected with Christianity: the conflict between Christianity and Islam; the fruits of repentance; the salvation of the soul; the power of the Christian faith. Indeed, for the greater part of Massinger's career, revenge for honour was only one of many ideas that claimed his interest. In his last three extant plays, however, an education in the true meaning of honour is his main purpose.

It is perhaps significant that this was the theme that he chose after a lack of success which had prevented him from putting a play on the stage for two years. It may indicate that Massinger considered that a play about honour would be sure of success; or perhaps he wished to show that his didactic powers, previously mainly concentrated on Christian themes, could be employed on a theme more relevant to the

153 The most striking examples of his Christian didacticism are The Virgin Martyr and The Maid of Honour. The necessity for conversion to Christianity makes a brief appearance in The Emperor of the East.
particular needs of his own day. Certainly the teaching in the pronouncements in all three plays, and in The Guardian and A Very Woman in particular is as outspoken as anything in Massinger's previous work.

The consideration of The Guardian demonstrated one of Massinger's weaknesses: the use of an inconsistent character to present a moral lesson. But Jolante is not the only educator in the play. A more important judge of honour is the King whose speech on duelling thrusts home the previous teaching of character and situation. In the King's words Massinger himself seems to be speaking, not only against private revenge in general, but against its prevalence in England in particular.

When Laval asks the King to pardon Severino, Alphonse replies

We grant you these are glorious pretences,
Revenge appearing in the shape of valor,
Which wise Kings must distinguish. The defence
Of Reputation, now made a Bawd
To murther; every trifle falsly stil'd
An injury, and not to be determined
But by a bloody Duel; though this vice
Hath taken root and growth beyond the Mountains
(As France, and in strangeT fashions her Ape
England can dearly witness, with the loss
Of more brave spirits, then would haue stood the shock
of the Turks army) while Alphonso lives
It shall not here be planted. 155

This speech is important, not only because of what it says, but because it is the King who is speaking, the fountain of justice. The whole scene is, in fact one of the trial scene type in which Massinger's didacticism was used most effectively.

His most formal use of the trial scene is found in *The Fatal Dowry*, not only in that part of the action which takes place in court, but in the trial of Beaumelle. Her execution by her husband and the murders which follow his later public trial are all illustrative of the way in which justice is confounded by private revenge; a theme which runs through all the trial scenes in Massinger's work. It is seen in the King's condemnation of Leonora's cruelty in *The Parliament of Love* and in Cæsar's confusion of public and private duty in his murder of Paris in *The Roman Actor*.

The appeal of Camiola to the King in *The Maid of Honour*, of Laval to King Alphonsus in *The Guardian* and of the Duke of Messina to the Viceroy in *A Very Woman* are miniature trial scenes which demonstrate, not only that it is right to appeal for public justice rather than to execute private revenge for honour; but that such justice must be impartial. As Camiola has proved herself chaste, sincere and religious, the King decrees that Fulgentio shall suffer royal displeasure till she herself sues for his pardon. In this respect Camiola is placed in a position in some ways similar to that of Isabella in *Measure for Measure*, though Camiola's dishonour is a slight offence compared with that intended to Isabella. The impartiality of justice is made clear in the Viceroy's refusal to torture or imprison the Prince in *A Very Woman*. Both the Duke of Messina and the Viceroy's own daughter, Almira, plead with him to exact some revenge for supposed killing of Don Martino, but the Viceroy knows that he has no right to take such action. Moreover, when Martino, who is not dead, utters a
groan, the Viceroy remarks to his father, the Duke of Messina, with considerable asperity:

The care of his recovery, timely practis'd,
Would have express'd more of a Father in you.
Then your impetuous clamors for revenge. 156

In *The Guardian*, on the other hand, the sovereign's impartiality is shown in his refusal to grant pardon for an offence - a fatal result of revenge for honour - which deserves death. His justice in refusing to repeal the sentence against Severino is reflected in Severino's own confession that since his flight

My being hath been but a living death
With a continued torture. 157

Even when the King has himself been impressed by Severino's own nobility and justice at the end of the play he still refuses to pardon Monteclaro's murder. Only the revelation of Laval as Monteclaro saves Severino from at last facing his deserved punishment.

Massinger also used a type of trial scene to show the operation of divine justice. In *The Unnatural Combat*. Malefort Junior's revenge fails because he was not a divinely appointed agent. Divine justice "tries" Malefort senior when he is visited by the ghosts of his wife and son. Sentence is passed and executed as he is killed by lightning. Divine justice is seen to operate equally miraculously in the deaths of the murderers and persecutors of Dorothea in *The Virgin Martyr*. In this play, as in *The Renegado* the persecution and torture of a Christian are

156 Three New Plays, 'A Very Woman', I, p. 16.
used in the same way as the trial scenes. The provide an opportunity for didactic speeches which are not out of place in their setting.

Although Massinger pronounces clearly against revenge for honour in general, it seems that he excepted revenge for marital honour; for there is no indication in The Guardian that the audience's sympathy should not be with Severino in his desire to execute revenge on Jolante. This is a just punishment rather than a revenge. Jolante herself acknowledges this, and despite her previous vacillations, one must accept her sincerity when she says

Most miserable woman! and yet sitting,  
A Judge in mine own cause upon my self,  
I could not mitigate the heavy doom  
My incens'd husband must pronounce upon me.  
In my intents I am guilty, and for them  
Must suffer the same punishment, as if  
I had in fact offended. 158

This idea is, of course, weakened considerably by the fact that she avoids her punishment and vindicates herself by a blasphemous lie, but the teaching of the lines is clear. Although he does not say so in so many words, Massinger is here thinking of revenge as a punishment, not so much for dishonour, as for sin. The very fact that Calypso and not Jolante suffers, indicates that a just punishment will find the right object. What is more important, this speech indicates that honour is as much an attitude of mind as the keeping of physical laws.

This idea, which is a contribution to the Jacobean and Caroline

158 Ibid., III, p. 51.
dramatists' study of revenge for honour that is shared by Massinger and Ford, is fully worked out in *A Very Woman or The Prince of Tarent*. This plays also contains Massinger's other themes of the relationship between justice and revenge and regeneration through reeducation in the meaning of honour. Indeed, it is the finest example of the latter theme. The method of education is that used with Duarte in *The Custom of the Country*. A young man, Don Martino Cardenes, who thinks himself punctiliously honourable, is rescued from death in a duel in order to learn the true meaning of honour. The audience first hears of Martino as the successful suitor for the hand of Almira, daughter of the Viceroy of Sicily. When his success is related to his rival, Don John Antonio, the Prince of Tarent, he decides to leave Palermo. Before he goes he is sought out by Martino. From Martino's first appearance it has been obvious that he has a strange conception of courtesy. He cannot understand why the Prince should be granted a last interview with Almira. As Leonora, the Duke of Messina's niece retorts,

> You may ask
> As well, what any Gentleman has to do
> With civil courtesie. 159

Similarly, when he meets the Prince, Martino cannot understand why Don John Antonio does not consider himself dishonoured in his ill success. Presuming to advise the Prince on how he should behave, Martino says,

> And may I prevail with you as a friend,
> You never shall, nor while you live hereafter
> Think of the Viceroy's Court, or of Palermo
> But as a grave, in which the Prince of Tarent
> Buried his honor. 160

159 *Three New Playes* (1655), 'A Very Woman or The Prince of Tarent', Act I, p. 8.
160 Ibid., I, p. 10.
Martino further explains why the Prince should consider himself dishonoured, but the latter replies calmly that

... All mans honor
Depends not on the most uncertain favor
Of a fair Mistris. 161

Not content to accept the Prince's standard of honour, Martino taunts him, answering his request to see Almira by striking him. Thus provoked, the Prince draws his sword and wounds Martino, as all think, mortally. Martino himself realizes immediately, however, that he suffers justly. 162

Martino's wounds are cured by skilful physicians, but it takes even greater skill on the part of Doctor Paulo to cure his mind. Upon recovery from his wounds Martino reveals that he has learnt how guilty was his rashness; that it was not only unmanly and unmannerly to wrong the Prince, but that it was wrong to be urged to this by his love of Almira. This lesson results in Martino's renunciation of women's love. In order to cure his mind completely, Doctor Paulo has to replace Martino's melancholy with a more positive philosophy of life. As the Doctor's piety is stressed as well as his skill 163 one must assume that his conception of honour is intended to be a Christian one. As honour is Martino's obsession he has to learn what true honour is. In order to cure and teach him, Doctor Paulo speaks to Martino of honour through the mouths of different kinds of people, his method being similar to Corax's treatment of Prince Palador in Ford's Lover's Melancholy.

161 Ibid., I, p. 11.
162 Ibid., I, p. 12.
Disguised as a Friar he tells Martino a story which is based upon love falsely leading to anger and a duel in a wrong cause. He relates how his friend was killed by him in a duel, thus purposely making the tale blacker than Martino's in order to stress the healing power of repentance. The cure begins to work as Martino declares,

Honor is
Vertue's allow'd ascent: Honor that clasps
All perfect Justice in her arms; that craves
No more respect then what she gives; that does
Nothing but what she'll suffer. 164

Thence he deduces that if Don John Antonio had done to him what he did to Don John, he should have killed him. Therefore he should kill himself in order to right Don John Antonio.

Doctor Paolo's servants prevent the execution of this false idea, and the Doctor continues to instil into Martino the right ideas of honour. An English slave comes to him in the habit of a courtier. He tells no tale, but teaches directly. Martino realizes immediately that the statements that a mistress should be allowed a choice of suitors and the lover be a stranger to jealousy point directly at himself. Apt for instruction, he hastens to the next lesson. He eagerly asks of the Doctor, who is disguised as an old soldier, what the height of honour is. The reply comprises Massinger's ideas of the relationship between honour and justice and that honour comes from within, being expressed in honourable behaviour. The doctor says that the height of honour is

164 Ibid., IV, p. 61.
No man to offend,
Ne'r to reveal the secrets of a friend;
Rather to suffer, then to do a wrong;
To make the heart no stranger to the tongue;
Provok'd not to betray an Enemy,
Nor eat his meat I choak with flattery;
Blushless to tell wherefore I wear my scars,
Or for my Conscience, or my Countries wars;
To aim at just things; if we wildly run
Into offences, wish 'em all undone.
'Tis poor in grief for a wrong done to die,
Honor to dare to live, and satisfy. 165

Martino appreciates this teaching immediately, exclaiming that this
honour bears the right stamp. The cure is completed when the doctor re-
enters as a Philosopher while Martino's Good and Bad Genius sing to him.
Moreover, Martino recognises that it is a cure. All he can desire now
is to meet the Prince again, and when he learns that he is found,
Martino declares,

... there's hope,
Fair hope left for me, to repair mine honor. 166

To Martino's father this indicates the desire for another duel,
and tension rises as Martino and the Prince meet, and the former recalls,

Sir, 'tis best known to you, on what strict terms
The reputation of mens fame, and honors
Depend in this so punctual age, in which,
A word that may receive a harsh construction,
Is answer'd, and defended by the sword. 167

He asks the Prince if he would be as tender of another's credit as of
his own. The Prince replies that he were unjust else. The climax is
reached as Martino declares that he has received deep wounds from the
Prince's hands; his honour has been tainted and soiled; he must have

165 Ibid., IV, p. 63.
166 Ibid., V, p. 101.
167 Ibid., loc.cit.
satisfaction. These words seem to be the prelude to a duel, but Martino states that his satisfaction is:

... That you would forgive
My contumelious words, and blow, my rash
And unadvised wildness first threw on you.
Thus I would teach the world a better way,
For the recovery of a wounded honor,
Then with a savage fury, not true courage,
Still to run headlong on. 168

The lesson is clear enough, but Massinger is not content to leave it so.

Martino continues,

I'll add this, He that does wrong, not alone,
Draws, but makes sharp his enemies sword against
His own life, and his honor. I have paid for't,
And wish that they, who dare most, would learn from me,
Not to maintain a wrong, but to repent it. 169

Never before had Massinger been so outspokenly didactic. A Very Woman is, indeed, the best example of his use of tragicomedy. Martino's nearness to death brings about his regeneration. His attitude towards honour is changed and, as a result, he becomes a truly honourable man according to Massinger's definition of honour. Nor is Martino the only person to be affected by his experience. Almira too, suffers from an excessive melancholy because of it. Her cure is worked by the teaching of the Prince when he is disguised as a slave. The story that he tells her is, in fact, an account of her own usage of him. It is parallel to Doctor Paulo's story of the Friar. It comes home to Almira. She sees that she has treated the Prince badly in preferring his less honourable rival. As soon as Almira has come to this realization her health and

168 Ibid., V, p. 102.
169 Ibid., loc. cit.
spirits improve remarkably, and she resolves to leave Martino for Don John Antonio. In the recognition of the worth of true honour, as seen in the Prince, her cure, like Martino's is complete. As she has no longer any desire to marry Martino and as he has decided to give up the love of women, the way is open for her to marry the Prince at the end of the play.

There is also a change in the character of Martino's father, the Duke of Messina. When he first learns of the Prince's escape from custody he goes mad with rage and brutally demands the deaths of the wife and children of the Captain of the Fort. He believes that he has been cheated of justice for his son's supposed death. Obviously, to him justice is a cruel force. At the end of the play, however, he is actually afraid lest Martino will fight again with the Prince. He has quite lost the cruelty and desire for revenge which he displayed earlier.

Besides the main theme of reeducation in the meaning of honour A Very Woman also illustrates both the impartiality of justice and the impartiality of friendship. The former is exemplified in the Viceroy whose conduct has already been considered. Impartiality of friendship is expressed in the relationship between Pedro and the Prince. Pedro, instead of championing his sister Almira's cause against the Prince, actually plans his escape from the Fort. Thus, in their own way, even the subsidiary themes of the play are related to Massinger's condemnation of revenge.

170 Ibid., IV, p. 73.
171 pp. 336-7 supra.
172 Vide Act II, p. 17 et seq.
In *The Bashful Lover* revenge for honour is the basis of the subplot concerning Maria and Alonzo, yet it expresses all the teaching of the play. In order to test Maria's attitude to revenge for honour her father, Octavio, upbraids her for administering to the wounded Alonzo. He tells her

Revenge,
A sovereign balm for injuries, is more proper
To thy rob'd honor. 174

In replying, Maria speaks with the same understanding of honour as did Doctor Paulo. Maria is a woman who is unafraid, not only of contemporary convention, but of the attitudes of men in the world in which she lives. With considerable heat she rejects her father's offer of help in torturing Alonzo:

... Fate hath brought
My Enemy (I can faintly call him so)
Prostrate before my feet: shall I abuse
The bounty of my fate, by trampling on him?
He alone ruin'd me, nor can any hand
But his rebuild my late demolish'd honor.
If you deny me means of reparation
To satisfy your spleen,you are more cruel
Then ever yet Alonzo was; you stamp
The name of Strumpet on my forehead, which
Heavens mercy would take off; you fan the fire
Ev'n ready to go out; forgeting that
'Tis truly noble, having power to punish,
Nay King-like to forbear it. I would purchase
My husband by such benefits, as should make him
Confess himself my equal, and disclaim superiority. 175

There is something of Shakespeare's Portia in these lines, and an echo of Helena, too. There is a force of conviction behind them which makes

173 See pp. 325-6 supra.
175 Ibid., III, p. 51.
them contrast sharply with the words of Fletcher's Lucina. The same conviction illuminates the speech and actions of Galeazzo whose philosophy of love and honour is:

... He that loves
His Mistress truly, should prefer her honor
And peace of mind, above the glutting of
His ravenous appetite: He should affect from her,
But with a fit restraint, and not take her
To give himself: ... 176

These speeches point to Massinger's surpassing of Fletcher in the discussion of revenge for honour. Massinger could always make his characters speak convincingly of their attitude to honour because he had strong convictions about honour and revenge himself which seem to have strengthened the more he considered them. In The Unnatural Combat he was content to leave his teaching against revenge implicit. In The Guardian and A Very Woman probably written more than a dozen years later, he pronounced openly upon the meaning of different kinds of honour and interdicted revenge for honour.

Massinger's strength lay in his uniting of plot and didacticism; but his weakness lay there also. This is seen in the conclusion of A Very Woman. Though the play was probably originally written by Fletcher before Massinger's extensive revision the retention of an ending which is very Fletcherian is not in accordance with the play's teaching. Had the play been written by Fletcher alone one might have accepted the mutual rejection of Almira and Martino and her alliance

176 Ibid., V, p. 81.
to the Prince with the same amused surprise with which one accepts
the happy ending of *The Queen of Corinth*. Massinger, however, intends
this ending as a culmination of Martino's and Almira's reeducation
in the meaning of honour. The surprising ending is not, therefore,
so much a straining of situation as of character and theory. It is
surely a straining of even the most exalted idea of honour to make
Martino yield Almira to the Prince because he believes the Prince to
be a worthier, more honourable man.

This is the most extreme example of Massinger's straining of
situation to fit his theory. In *The Guardian* the instruction in the
meaning of honour which Severino receives is brought about by a straining
of character as well. Such faults are the more apparent because the
same kind of instruction is successfully given in other plays. In *The
Emperor of the East*, for example, Theodosius is brought to repent his
distrust of a chaste wife by the simple device of disguising himself as
a friar and hearing her confession. Then, when he has established her
innocence it is learnt that her supposed lover, Paulinus, is in fact
an eunuch. This discovery, which is comparable with that of the
revelation of the identity of Bellario in *Philaster*, strengthens rather
than weakens the play's teaching that unjust suspicions against a
chaste woman are even more wicked than unnecessary. 178

178 It may be noted that Theodosius makes as much of his wife's gift
of an apple to Paulinus as Othello did of Desdemona's supposed gift
of the handkerchief to Cassio. Othello's fabrication of virtues
in the handkerchief is paralleled in Theodosius' assertions about
the apple (*The Emperor of the East* (1632), IV, iv, Sig. K*2*). His
exclamation that he thinks he finds Paulinus on her lips (*Ibid*, IV,
iv, Sig. K*1*) seems to echo *Othello* III, iii, p. 325b "I found not
Cassio's kisses on her Lippes."
Massinger's greatest general fault springs from his preoccupation with didacticism. He can, unlike Fletcher, make his characters speak convincingly about honour (even when their own changes of attitude are most obvious) because he was himself interested in the concepts of honour and revenge for honour. Nearly all his serious characters are, therefore, mouthpieces for his didactic interests. One is, however, aware constantly that they are only mouthpieces. Their voices are full of conviction; but they are one and the same voice: Massinger's own. He was, in fact, more interested in his ideas - and they were many - than in his serious characters.

Massinger was not, however, without ability to create living characters who convince us of their reality. They are, on the whole, his comic characters such as Gothrio, Borachia or Calandrino. Among his serious portrayals of character few spring to mind so vividly, except possibly Camiola, Rochfort, Theocrine or Maria. Massinger was able to combine his powers of comic characterization and the creation of comic situation with his didacticism in such plays as The City Madam and The Great Duke of Florence. In these plays his purpose is as serious as in his tragedies or tragicomedies, but his touch is lighter. It is perhaps to be regretted that Massinger's steadfast purpose in setting forth his ideas on so many subjects, including Christianity and revenge for honour, led him more to serious than comic drama.
Massinger's convictions, expressed in his serious characters, make these characters live in a way that Fletcher's do not; but they have no existence independent of their creator. Massinger had the beliefs of a great dramatist, but one is always aware that they are his own. He lacked the creative imagination to show them as the convictions of people living and thinking within the framework of his plays.

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Honour and Revenge for Honour in the Plays of John Ford

John Ford was the last great tragic dramatist before 1640. His work as a whole forms a fitting conclusion to the greatness of Jacobean and Caroline tragedy because it reflects not only the ideas and influences of his contemporaries, but looks both backwards towards the Elizabethan drama and forwards to the decline of the tragedy of honour which is most apparent in the work of James Shirley. What was probably Ford's earliest play, The Witch of Edmonton, written with Dekker and Rowley, contains both the lightness and crudity of Elizabethan domestic drama. His great tragedies, 'Tis Pity She's a Whore and The Broken Heart, are close to Massinger in thought and expression. The former reflects an interest similar to Middleton's in the relationship between dishonour and sin; the latter, with Love's Sacrifice, demonstrates, as did the work of Massinger, the difference between public justice and private revenge. Ford, however, had stronger powers of characterization than Massinger and achieved a greater concentration of tragedy than he. Ford's Chronicle History of Perkin Warbeck is a Jacobean treatment of the Elizabethan chronicle play. His tragicalcomies demonstrate the didacticism of Massinger's handling of Fletcherian tragicomedy; but Ford succeeds, where Massinger does not, in making his endings suitable to didacticism. Only in The Fancies, Chaste and Noble, does Ford use a Fletcherian surprise to bring about his conclusion. As Professor

1 James Shirley was a more prolific tragic dramatist but, for reasons which will be discussed in the following chapter, his work does not merit the detailed treatment accorded to other Jacobean and Caroline dramatists who used the concept of revenge for honour.
2 Vide Clifford Leech, John Ford and the Drama of his Time (1957), pp. 28, 127.
Clifford Leech has said:

His happy endings are not simply the result of chance or of the intervention of Providence. They are achieved, in The Lover's Melancholy and The Queen, through the contrivance of a man skilled in the nature of human distress and able to find a means to cure it. In The Lady's Trial it is primarily the firm resolution of the sufferer, Auria, that makes all come right. 3

Although Ford's command of tragic verse is one of the most important aspects of his dramatic achievement, 4 the greatest difference between his work and that of his contemporaries lies in his analysis of character, in "the dissecting of emotion in distress." 5 This is most obvious in his application of the Burtonian theory of melancholy to human behaviour, but it is also clearly seen in his treatment of the influence of different concepts of honour on the human mind. As has been seen earlier, good characterization is the first essential for an adequate handling of the concept of revenge for honour in prose as well as in drama. Because his insight into character is so great, Ford's examination of honour and revenge for honour is the most interesting and the most penetrating of the late Jacobean and Caroline periods.

Ford's study of the effect of concepts of honour on the mind was, in fact, as detailed and as conscious as his study of the effects of melancholy. That he was strongly interested in the development of the tragedy of honour is apparent even in the plots and stage mechanisms of

3 Ibid., p. 104. I cannot entirely agree with the last statement. See pp. 381 - 383 infra.
5 Ibid., p. 126.
his plays. The influence of Othello is remarkable in Love's Sacrifice and The Queen. 'Tis Pity she's a Whore contains echoes of Bussy d'Amboise - not merely in the torturing of Annabella, but in the warning letter written in blood and, to some extent, in a resemblance between the parts played by Friar Bonaventura and Chapman's Friar Comolet. There are also in Ford's plays occasional echoes of The Spanish Tragedy and of Tourneur, Webster and Shakespeare. Obviously he was interested in the tragedy of honour as it had been handled by the finest of his predecessors. What Ford did was to face up to some of the most serious problems caused by the effects of concepts of honour on character and behaviour and to examine them in detail. The problems of honour which interested him most were those caused by a broken marriage contract, by a disparity between inherent honour and outward appearance of honour, and by a tension between the code of honour dictated by convention and that based on virtuous behaviour.

Ford's treatment of the first of these problems is adumbrated in two of his earliest works, The Witch of Edmonton and The Lover's Melancholy. In the former play, which has close affinities with A Yorkshire Tragedy and The Miseries of Enforced Marriage an artificial solution is provided. Frank Thorny, who has made Winifred an honest woman, is forced by his father into marriage with Susan. Torn between

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6 Other echoes are indicated by Lord David Cecil in The Fine Art of Reading (1957), p. 81.
7 These are considered by Peter Ure in 'Marriage and the Domestic Drama in Heywood and Ford', English Studies XXXII (Amsterdam, 1951), pp. 200 - 216.
two women, to each of whom he is married and owes both love and duty, he stabs Susan and attempts to escape with Winifred. This action is not, however, explained as the result of a sense of dishonour, but of his possession by the devil. A sense of the horror of the broken contract is foreshadowed in *The Lover's Melancholy* when Prince Palador asks Eroclea

... what ayre

Hast thou perfum'd, since Tyranny first rauisht
The contract of our hearts.8

This image is the same as that of Penthea's description of her marriage as a rape done on her truth.

In *The Lover's Melancholy*, however, there is no tragedy. Full restitution is made to Eroclea in her marriage to the Prince. For in writing this play Ford was more concerned to analyse character in the light of Burtonian theory than to study the effect of the code of honour upon it. The influence of Burton was strong throughout Ford's writing career, but it is much less obvious in his later works than in *The Lover's Melancholy* and *The Broken Heart*. On the other hand, his interest in the strain imposed upon character by the demands of the code of honour — whether a conventional or self-conceived code — seems to have increased with every play he wrote; and the seeds of the tragedy or problem to be presented in one play are often to be found in an earlier work.

Thus the greatest part of the tragedy of *The Broken Heart*, published

8 *The Lovers Melancholy* (1629), IV, 7.11, pp. 68-9.
four years after *The Lover's Melancholy* is concerned with the suffering of a man and, more particularly, a woman dishonoured through the breaking of their marriage contract. On the other hand, Ford's definition of real honour is not something towards which his ideas develop during his career. It is stated clearly in *The Broken Heart*. Ford's characters, not his own ideas, develop towards a full acceptance of its absolute standards. It is the measuring stick against which all their ideas of honour must be set. Only in Ford's last play, *The Lady's Trial*, does he demonstrate the truth of his definition by showing characters who avoid tragedy by living according to its tenets rather than those of a worldly and conventional code of honour. Because the appreciation of this definition is requisite for an understanding of Ford's examination of

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Although the chronology of Ford's work is still uncertain, two of the three discussions of it which have appeared in the last four years—Professor G.E. Bentley's in *The Jacobean and Caroline Stage*, iii (1956), pp. 433-464 and that of H.J. Oliver in *The Problem of John Ford* (Melbourne, 1955), pp. 47-9—support the impression that *The Lover's Melancholy* was Ford's earliest independent work (though Professor Bentley does, in fact, date Perkin Warbeck 1622-32? and *The Broken Heart* c. 1627-31?). Professor Leech, on the other hand, believes that 'Tis Pity ... was Ford's first independent work (*John Ford and the Drama of his Time* (1957), pp. 49, 132).

Without necessarily agreeing with his precise datings, I accept H.J. Oliver's proposal for the order of Ford's composition, which is:

- *The Lover's Melancholy*
- Beauty in a Trance (lost)
- *The Broken Heart*
- [The Queen]
- *Love's Sacrifice* and 'Tis Pity ...
- *Perkin Warbeck*
- The Fancies Chaste and Noble
- *The Lady's Trial*
honour and revenge for honour, it is necessary to quote it in full.

At the beginning of the third act of The Broken Heart the philosopher Tecnicus tells Orgilus that

Honour consists not in a bare opinion
By doing any act that feeds content;
Braue in appearance, 'cause we thinke it braue:
Such honour comes by accident, not nature
Proceeding from the vices of our passion
Which makes our reason drunke. But reall Honour
Is the reward of vertue, and acquir'd
By Justice or by valour, which for Bases
Hath Justice to uphold it. He then failes
In honour, who for lucre of (sic)Revenge
Commits thefts, murtherers, Treasons and Adulteries,
With such like, by intrenching on just Lawes,
Whose sou'reaignyt is best preseru'd by Justice.
Thus as you see how honour must be grounded
On knowledge, not opinion: For opinion
Relyes on probability and Accident,
But knowledge on Necessity and Truth:

Within The Broken Heart itself it is a concept of honour based on opinion, not knowledge, that causes Bassanes to drive his wife Penthea almost to distraction. Her final madness and death, the murder of her brother Ithocles by her formerly contracted lover, Orgilus, and the latter's sentence to death are all induced by the sense of dishonour in Orgilus and Penthea.

Their situation is similar to that of Sebastian and Isabella at the beginning of Middleton's The Witch. During Orgilus' absence Penthea has been married, against her will, to Bassanes. Orgilus' reaction to this is the same as Sebastian's: he wants possession of his love.

10 The Broken Heart (1633), III, i, Sigs. E₂vf - E₃fr.
Modern editors read "lucre of revenge".
Ford's concern is, however, with the dishonoured woman, so her interview with Orgilus does not take place until the audience has first learned something about her relationship with her husband, Bassanes. Bassanes is first seen discoursing at length on the means whereby wives may cuckold their husbands. He holds that

... all are false. On this truth I am bold,
No woman but can fall, and doth, or would  —

Considering what the audience knows of the circumstances of Penthea's marriage it might be expected that she has given her husband cause to reach this opinion. Her appearance immediately belies this expectation. Penthea is so melancholy that she can accept even her husband's unkind views of marriage with patience. The prospects of a visit to her brother and the court and of being magnificently dressed for the occasion fail to cheer her. She tells Bassanes

... I need
No braueries nor cost of Art, to draw
The whitenesse of my name into offence;

Yet even such an answer cannot quell Bassanes' jealous fears for his honour. So fixed is his false opinion of women that he is willing to believe Penthea capable of cuckoldling him by incest with her brother.

The contrast between this idea of Penthea and the reality of her truly honourable character is made even more striking in her meeting with Orgilus. Despite his eloquent pleas, she refuses to be unfaithful to her marriage vows; even though she believes that this marriage has

11 Ibid., II, i, Sig. C4r.
12 Ibid., II, iii. Sig. D1r.
ruined her, divorcing her body from her heart. She dismisses him, roughly, as she herself knows, but sighs after he has gone

... Honour

How much we fight with weakness to preserve thee. 13

Tecnicus's advice to Orgilus on the meaning of honour is given in the following scene. Though the lesson is given to Orgilus alone, its teaching is made clearer by the contrast between its standards and those of Bassanes. It is immediately after Tecnicus has spoken to Orgilus that Penthea is discovered discussing the causes of her melancholy with Ithocles. She tells him that he has ruined her by forcing this marriage upon her, making her a faith-breaker, a spotted whore:

For she that's wife to Orgilus, and liues
In knowne Adultery with Bassanes,
Is at the best a whore. 14

Just as Ithocles has realized that this forced marriage has dishonoured not only Penthea, but his family's reputation, Bassanes rushes in to avenge an even greater, but imaginary dishonour. His mind runs on bawdy door-hinges, bed-sports, rankness of the blood: all leading to his cuckoldom by bestial incest. For this he comes to exact revenge. Penthea calms him by protesting that she has never offended his honour even in thought. Ithocles then takes her into his protection and Bassanes is left to vow repentance and amendment of life.

The jealous husband may work his own cure for his self-inflicted dishonour, but Penthea's sadness is past remedy. She loses her reason.

13 Ibid., II, iii, Sig. E4v.
14 Ibid., III, /ii/, Sig. E4v.
As her pathetic utterances reveal in their subtle distortions of meaning, her mind runs always on her wrecked honour.

ruin'd by those Tyrants,
A cruel brother, and a desperate dotage!
There is no peace left for a ravish't wife
Widdow'd by lawless marriage; to all memory,
Penthea's poore Penthea's name is strumpeted.  15

Penthea resolutely starves herself to death. Her honour was grounded on her truth to Orgilus. That truth was ravished in her marriage to Bassanes. She takes the only course which she feels open to a ravished and dishonoured wife - the course of Fletcher's Lucina - suicide.

Ford expresses neither approval nor disapproval of her action. Penthea's standard of honour was her own. Although she considered her marriage adulterous, she nevertheless expected Orgilus to be happy in a second choice. In adopting and acting upon Penthea's sense of dishonour Orgilus neglects the standard of honour given him by Tecnicus. This neglect of real honour brings on a tragedy which involves not only himself, but Calantha, the Princess of Sparta whom Ithocles loves.

Feigning reconciliation with Ithocles, Orgilus lures him to Penthea's apartment. There he traps him in a mechanical chair and taunts him, inveighing against his cruelty in planning to live happily with Calantha while Penthea was dying of misery. Ithocles is undaunted, and declares that his courage, keen as Orgilus' revenge, shall welcome the point of his adversary's weapon. Orgilus stabs him to death. As he dies, Ithocles acknowledges the justice of this vengeance for the wrongs done...
to Penthea's forced faith and forgives his murderer for having executed it.

But it is not justice, as Calantha, the source of Justice in the state makes clear. Her first act as Queen of Sparta is to sentence Orgilus to death. He elects to die by bleeding and, embracing the noble sufferance that he had expected, pierces one of his own veins. He dies fully recognising the meaning of all that he has done, and recalling the prophecy of Tecnicus:

Revenge proues its owne Executioner.16

The tragedy closes with the fulfilment of the philosopher's second prophecy in which the significance of the broken marriage contract is brought out most strongly. Calantha refers to Ithocles as her neglected husband, and weds herself to his corpse, saying

Thus I new marry him whose wife I am;
Death shall not separate us: ... 17

Her stately and symbolic act adds a final touch of solemnity to the picture Ford has given of the evils arising from the disregard of a marriage contract. Yet there is a difference between Penthea and Calantha. Penthea is dishonoured because her true marriage can never be fulfilled; as a woman violated she dies of shame. Calantha is not dishonoured. It is death, not dishonour, that has divorced her body from her soul. In one sense she dies of grief; yet in another she goes to find true married happiness. She smiles in death.

16 Ibid., V, ii, Sig. K2v.
17 Ibid., V, ii, Sig. K3v.
The problem of a disparity between inherent honour and outward appearance of honour is considered in three of Ford's plays: Love's Sacrifice, The Queen and 'Tis Pity She's a Whore. The first of these shows the attitude to honour of a woman who is the antithesis of Penthea. Penthea considered that her marriage to Bassanes made her a whore in deed, but not in thought. Biancha in Love's Sacrifice is guilty of adultery in thought, but not in deed. This play has other echoes of The Broken Heart. The Duke's jealousy of his beautiful young wife is akin to Bassanes' jealousy for his wife, and there exists between the Duke and his sister a close bond similar to that between Ithocles and Penthea.

The opening of Love's Sacrifice is, moreover, reminiscent of The Changeling, though Biancha, unlike Beatrice Joanna, is already married when another man falls in love with her. Moreover, just as Beatrice Joanna fell because she came within the power of an unwanted lover, so Fernando, Biancha's lover, meets death because he falls into the power (though he does not know it) of a woman whose love he has scorned.

The Duke of Pavia has fallen in love with and quickly married Biancha, the daughter of a gentleman of Milan. She is greatly renowned for her beauty and when the young lord Fernando first sees her he loves her. At the same time Fiormonda, the Duke's widowed sister, falls in love with Fernando. Fiormonda herself even condescends to offer her love to him, but he rejects the offer. In revenge she sets about the working of Fernando's downfall through the discovery of whom he really loves.
Ford does not represent the scene in which Fernando first declares his love for Biancha. Instead, he emphasizes her chastity by showing how she rejects him for a third time, telling him that he will rue his lust if he speaks again. In this she is as firm as was Penthea in rejecting Orgilus. Fernando, like Orgilus, is unwilling to desist from his pleas. As he is meditating on writing to her of his love he is interrupted by the arrival of Roderigo d'Avolos, secretary to the Duke and tool of Fiormonda. By confronting Fernando with pictures of Fiormonda and of Biancha, d'Avolos discovers which lady he prefers.

D'Avolos can soon tell Fiormonda, not only that Fernando loves Biancha, but that he has made an excuse to stay at court while the Duke rides abroad. Fiormonda loses no time. She leaves Biancha and Fernando alone playing chess. Fernando takes the opportunity of once more pressing his suit to Biancha. Again she rejects him, threatening to revenge his boldness if he persists. D'Avolos, who has overheard the conversation, does not believe this. Just as he could detect the piercing adultery of Fernando's eye, so he sees that Biancha's words are contrary to her wishes. He reports to Fiormonda that the Duke is as good as cuckolded. Fiormonda resolves

To stirre vp Tragedies as blacke as braue;  
And sending (sic) the Lecher panting to his graue.18

D'Avolos has construed Biancha's feelings aright, for she soon visits Fernando in her night mantle, with her hair about her ears.19

18 Loves Sacrifice (1633), II, $^\text{iii}$, Sig. $F_1^{iv}$.
19 Ibid., II, $^\text{iv}$, Sig. $F_1^{iv}$: stage direction.
She wakens him from sleep to tell him that she has always loved him. Yet Biancha is determined to live a constant wife. To prove her sincerity she offers herself to Fernando, but threatens to kill herself if he accepts her offer. Deeply moved by this, Fernando vows never to prophan her sacred temple with his wanton appetite. They renew vows of love, kiss and part.

Biancha has made the fatal mistake of assuming that she can preserve the outward appearance of honour after she has dishonoured herself in thought. Penthea acknowledged her love of Orgilus; but she would permit no signs of love between them. The tragedy which Massinger's Jolante realized was her due, but avoided, falls upon Ford's Biancha. She is guilty in her intents and has to suffer the same punishment as if she were guilty in deed. The dishonour in her heart is unable to be held in unexpressed. It breaks down her discretion and self-control. She is observed by d'Avolos trying to steal a kiss from Fernando in public. The secretary mutters comments on this which he intends the Duke to overhear. In this and the following scene Ford follows the corresponding scene in Othello in which Iago voices his suspicions of Desdemona's honesty. Hearing that he is a cuckold, the Duke, like the Moor, raves in his agony. He declares his hatred for Biancha and determines that d'Avolos shall produce proof of her guilt. He is, however, slow to act against the supposed lovers, but Fiormonda and d'Avolos together make him dwell on Biancha's adultery, picturing a bastard succeed to the Dukedom, till the Duke finally bids them cease, declaring:
you shall see Caraffa
Equall his birth, and matchlesse in revenge. 20

When the Duke is next alone with his wife he tells her that he has
dreamt that she cast down his cap of state while Fernando crowned him
with horns. Unable to disguise his belief in this symbolism, he
terrifies Biancha by threatening to mince her flesh. At this she
protests

Hang on mine honour, 'twere no blame in you
If you did stab me to the heart.

Duke: The heart?
Nay, strumpet, to the soule; and teare it off
From life, to damne it in immortall death. 21

The Duke's passion is ill disguised, and yet Biancha cannot see it
as a warning that he suspects her honesty. When he sets the conventional
trap of pretending to go on a journey only to return suddenly, Biancha
is caught. She visits Fernando a second time in her night attire and
laments that they cannot be united. They are exchanging kisses when
the Duke and d'Avolos enter with their swords drawn and accompanied
by two other courtiers and a guard. Fernando is dragged away. Biancha,
left to face her husband's wrath, boldly taunts him with being too weak
to kill her and too ugly to be her husband. She boasts of her love for
such a fine man as Fernando. She protests that her love was innocent,
but regrets the fact. This is too much for the Duke. He exclaims that
she tempts him to her ruin. She has committed adultery, bastardized

20 Ibid., IV, $\text{Sig. H}_2$.
21 Ibid., IV, $\text{Sig. I}_3$. 
the issue of a prince. Finally, he concludes

Now turne thine eyes into thy houering soule,
And doe not hope for life: would Angels sing
A requiem at my hearse? but to dispense
With my Revenge on thee, 'twere all in vaine:
Prepare to dye. 22

Biancha welcomes death, making only the request that Fernando's life may be spared. When the Duke is unable to kill her Fiermonda calls him a coward. Spurred on by this taunt he takes Biancha's hand in farewell and, killing her learns the truth concerning her honesty. He kills her saying,

Here's blood for lust, & sacrifice for wrong. 23

Like Othello, he learns that his sacrifice is a murder. When he goes to execute revenge on Fernando the latter convinces him that Biancha was innocent of adultery. The Duke's first impulse, like Othello's is to commit suicide, but he decides later that he must live to see his Duchess nobly interred. Later, going to pay tribute to her memory he is met by Fernando in his winding sheet. Fernando will not let the Duke enter the tomb. It is a place which belongs rightly to him. He bids the Duke revel in his murders. The Duke orders Fernando to be seized, but Fernando cheats him by drinking poison. Then, realizing how much he has lost in the deaths of a pure wife and a good friend, the Duke himself commits suicide.

At the end of the play, as at the end of The Broken Heart private revenge is punished by public justice. Roseilli, succeeding to the

22 Ibid., V, 171, Sig. K2v.
23 Ibid., V, 171, Sig. K2r.
Dukedom dispenses the justice which the previous Duke neglected. Though the Duke knew that d'Avolos was an "arch-arch-deuill" he left him unpunished. Roseilli's first act is to take order for d'Avolos' death. His next act is to divorce himself from his new-married wife, Fiormonda, so that she may pass the rest of her life in repentance and religious devotion.

In the story of the Duke, Biancha and Fernando, Ford illustrated more strongly than in The Broken Heart the evil of judging honour by appearance; by probability and accident; opinion rather than knowledge. He intended to stress that, however much she may have sinned and appeared guilty in thought, Biancha was true in deed to her marriage vows. The Duke's sacrifice for sin is a murder, and so the final revenge for murder must be executed on him. He had stronger proof of his wife's guilt than had Othello, and yet at the end of Love's Sacrifice one does not feel the sympathy for him that one feels for the Moor at the end of Othello. This is the result of Ford's own attitude to revenge for honour.

That Ford disapproved of revenge for honour not grounded on absolute proof of injury is made clear through the subplot of Love's Sacrifice, which concerns Ferentes and the women he gets with child. The fathers of the two younger women urge them to meditate on revenge, and later they assist them in the performance of it. The betrayed women's attitude to vengeance is voiced by Julia. When she and the others have murdered Ferentes and returned to the court with his children in their arms, she says,
Be not amaz'd, great Princes, but vouchsafe
Your audience: we are they have done this deed:
Looke here, the pledges of this false mans lust,
Betray'd in our simplicities: He swore,
And pawn'd his truth to marry each of vs;
Abus'd vs all, vnable to reuenge
Our publike shames, but by his publike fall,
Which thus we have contriu'd; nor doe we blush
To call the glory of this murther ours:
We did it, and wee'11 justifie the deed. 24

Justice, in the person of the Duke, decrees their imprisonment, calling
them "monstrous strumpets", but they are later released and two of
them are made honest women, after a fashion, by marriage.

25

The Queen is a tragicomic handling of the disparity between outward
reputation and inherent honour. Like Massinger's tragicomedies, it
seeks also to cure a wrong opinion of honour. At the end of the play
its lesson has been accepted. The true worth of inherent honour is
established and the outward signs of dishonour are rejected. In the
main plot a jealous husband is anxious to commit vengeance on a wife
honest in thought and deed. Unlike Penthea and Biancha, the Queen of
Arragon has no love for anyone but her husband, the young lord Alphonso
who, because he hates women had raised a rebellion against her. The
rebellion was crushed and Alphonso, expecting execution, received
instead the Queen's pardon and her offer of marriage. Once married,
Alphonso assumes full sovereignty as husband and as king. His hatred of
woman persists, however. Like Bassanes' idea of women, it is based on
a false opinion which remains uninfluenced by the knowledge of his own

24 Ibid., III, J iv J, Sig. Hv
25 The ascription of this play to Ford, first made by Professor Willy
Bang in his edition of 1906, is now generally accepted. Vide
Materialien zur Kunde des Alteren Englischen Dramas, XIII (Louvain,
1906), pp. vii-viii.
virtuous wife. Alphonso forbids the Queen his presence. An old courtier Muretto, (following Burtonian theory) realizes that the only way to cure one such extreme passion is to oust it by another. The second passion is to be jealousy, and so he sets to work to make Alphonso believe that the Queen cuckolds him with Petruchii. He works upon Alphonso in almost the same way as d'Avolos did upon Duke Caraffa and Iago did upon Othello. He speaks to him of what he has observed between the Queen and Petruchii:

... some odd amorous glances, some sweet familiar courtous toying smiles; a kind of officious boldness in him, Princelike and Queenlike allowance of that boldness in him again; sometimes I might warily overhear her whispers. But what of all this? There might be no harm meant. 26

Alphonso is soon convinced that it is impossible his wife should be honest. When he later discovers her wearing a ring which he had sent to Petruchii, he declares to the assembled court:

Petruchii there
Hath a loud speaking conscience, can proclaim
Her lust, and my dishonour. 27

Refusing to listen to Petruchii, he sends him to prison. To punish the Queen he declares that if, within a month, a champion appears to defend her honour, he himself will avouch the accusation and fight upon it. If none comes, the Queen shall be beheaded.

Nevertheless, Alphonzo is not constant in his resolution. In a scene which shows Fletcher's influence on character in tragicomedy he vacillates between passion inspired by the thought that he is a cuckold

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26 The Queen or The Excellency of her Sex (1653), III, ∫i∫, Sig. D1f.
27 Ibid., III, ∫ii∫, Sig. D3β.
and the passion inspired by the Queen's beauty. Nevertheless, the more she and Petruchio protest their innocence, the more Alphonso believes in their guilt and his public shame. For this his wife must die.

In the final act the Queen prepares for death which she welcomes as happiness since life is irksome. Alphonso agrees that death is happiness

\[\text{... if the cause} \]
\[\text{Make it not infamous: But when a beauty} \]
\[\text{So most incomparable as yours, is blemish'd} \]
\[\text{With the dishonorable stamp of whoredom:} \]
\[\text{When your black tainted name, which should have been} \]
\[\text{(Had you preserv'd it nobly) your best Chronicle,} \]
\[\text{Wherein you might have liv'd, when this is stain'd,} \]
\[\text{And justly too; the death doth but heap} \]
\[\text{Affliction on the dying.} \]

The challenge is sounded and three champions appear. First comes Valasco who is determined to defend his Queen's honour despite her injunctions not to take up arms against the King, his sovereign. Then comes Petruchio to whom the quarrel rightly belongs and, finally Muretto enters and explains all his plan of curing Alphonso's hatred of women. His plan has succeeded, and Alphonso and his excellent Queen are reunited.

If The Queen is a much weaker play than Love's Sacrifice it is nevertheless more straightforward in its motivation. Alphonso's passions are strong and he is guided by them alone. Once his jealousy is aroused he does not seek any real proof of his wife's guilt before he puts her honour to the test of judicial combat. This method of settling a quarrel of honour seems to be one which Ford deems just. It is never

28 Ibid., V, ii, Sig. F r.
questioned and, from references to the combat in other plays, it seems to have been considered by Ford as the best revenge for honour.  

Ford's last tragic study of the effects of a disparity between the show of honour and real honour is found in 'Tis Pity She's a Whore. But there is more to his study of honour in the play than that. It is a play which deals with much more complicated problems of honour and revenge for honour than any of the others. The pressure of the conventional code of honour is seen to be so great that it perverts even the mind of a holy man. Throughout the play dishonour is seen as sin, and in this it contrasts with Love's Sacrifice. The imagery of Love's Sacrifice implied that adultery was a sin; the words of 'Tis Pity She's a Whore state clearly that it is so. The heart of the problem is the grim realization of that which was an unfounded suspicion in the mind of Bassanes: a husband has to exact vengeance for dishonour suffered through his wife's incest with her brother. At the same time the husband has already betrayed another man's wife. In fact, each of the sinners in the play have an ambivalent attitude to their sin and their dishonour.

This is seen immediately in Giovanni's revelation to the Friar that he is suffering from an unnatural passion for his sister. The Friar declares that he is lost in sin and recommends him to overcome this passion by prayer and repentance. Giovanni gladly accepts this

29 See, for example, The Broken Heart, IV, iv  , Sig. I₂√ ; Love's Sacrifice, V, ii  , Sig. K₃√ .
advice as a means of freeing himself from the rod of divine vengeance; but it does not work. He bitterly complains

I have even wearied heaven with prayers, dried vp
The spring of my continuall teares, even steru'd
My veins with dayly fasts: what wit or Art
Could counsel, I have practiz'd; but alas
I find all these but dreams, and old mens tales
To fright unsteady youth; I'm still the same,
Or I must speake, or burst; tis not I know,
My lust; but tis my fate that leads me on.30

Giovanni turns his back on the advice of religion and reveals his love to Annabella. She pities him and becomes his mistress. Their mutual joy lasts till she becomes pregnant. In desperation brother and sister turn to the Friar who had previously warned Giovanni that he would have to face heaven's anger for sin. The Friar repeats this to Annabella, who weeps bitter tears of repentance. At this the Friar shows his own lack of distinction between dishonour and sin in advising her that

Heauen is mercifull,
And offers grace even now; 'Tis thus agreed,
First, for your Honours safety that you marry
The Lord Soranzo, next, to saue your soule,
Leaue off this life, and henceforth live to him.31

The Friar's placing of honour before the soul is significant. He is telling Annabella to cover one sin with another, to hide her own dishonour by dishonouring Soranzo in making him father her incestuous issue.

The marriage takes place, but shortly afterwards Soranzo discovers his dishonour and drags Annabella in to answer for her sin.32 It is

30 'Tis Pity She's a Whore's (1633), I, [ii], Sig. B4.<br>31 Ibid., III, [iv], Sig. F4.<br>32 Ibid., IV, [iii], Sig. G4: Enter Soranzo vnbrac't, and Annabella drag'd in. Cf. Bussy d'Ambois (1607), V, i, Montsurry bare, vnbrac't, dragging Tamyra in.
just that she should answer for her sin because her previous has borne no fruit. She tells her husband defiantly

You were deceiu'd in mee; 'twas not for loue
I chose you, but for honour; ... 33

Like Biancha, Annabella glories in her lover's good looks; but even when Soranzo threatens her with torture and death she refuses to reveal his name. The arrival of Vasques prevents Soranzo from inflicting further injury on her. Vasques tutors his master in revenge and persuades him to leave the settling of wrongs to his direction. Once he has discovered from the chattering old nurse that Giovanni is Annabella's lover he puts out the nurse's eyes to punish her for her tattling and goes to instruct Soranzo in revenge.

In a later scene Annabella has become repentant once more. The Friar rejoices at this and carries to Giovanni a warning letter written in Annabella's blood. But Giovanni has by now so far abandoned religion that he jeers at the Friar and refuses to heed the letter or the warning. He accepts Soranzo's invitation to a feast and so is ready to walk into the outraged husband's trap. Before the feast, however, he sees Annabella again and learns that, genuinely repentant, she is resolved thereafter to live honest to her husband. Giovanni calls her faithless, yet he sees that she must be saved from public dishonour at the feast. He stabs her, crying

Thus dye, and dye by mee, and by my hand,
Revenge is mine; Honour doth loue Command. 34

33 Ibid., IV, \[iii \], Sig. H_r.
34 Ibid., V, \[v \], Sig. K_v.
Thereafter events move swiftly to the culmination of revenge for honour. Giovanni comes to Soranzo's feast with Annabella's heart upon his reeking dagger's point. Having saved her from public shame he publicly boasts of the deed, claiming that he has honoured his revenge in the same way as he honoured the fate which has compelled him to incest. He boasts of how he enjoyed Annabella to the disgrace of her husband. Soranzo, hearing all this, would execute present vengeance on his wife till he learns that it is her heart that Giovanni is holding. They fight, and Soranzo is killed. To avenge his master, Vasques fights with Giovanni till he is surrounded by the banditti who, summoned by the word "Vengeance" stab Giovanni to death. Giovanni dies unrepentant, and Vasques alone remains to answer to the Cardinal for his share of the tragedy. Once again a holy man is seen to lack a true sense of justice. Vasques's sentence is only banishment. He is therefore able to depart rejoicing that he, a Spaniard, outwits an Italian in revenge. In this sentence, therefore, justice is perverted.

Indeed, the whole atmosphere of 'Tis Pity She's a Whore is of perversion: perversion of natural instincts, of the sense of honour and of justice. Even before Giovanni has revealed his love for her, Annabella expresses an unnatural delight in his physical appearance. Later she admits to him that she has long loved him. Thus, neither of them heeding the laws of nature or religion, they begin their incestuous relationship in which each destroys the other's honour.

35 Ibid., V, [vi], Sig. K4r.
The disparity between outward and inherent honour and the perversion of a sense of honour are most apparent in Annabella. She seems honest, but is not. She contracts a dishonourable marriage in order to preserve a show of honour when she bears her brother's child. Yet, paradoxically she is the one who is finally brought to repentance and a determination to lead a new life. Giovanni first ignores sin and then dishonour. Instead of caring for his sister's honour, he ruins it in incest, and finally he has to execute revenge on her himself. In doing so he saves her from the public dishonour she would have had in her husband's revenge; but the shock of this deed costs Giovanni the life of his father also. Soranzo himself seems an honourable husband, but he too has had his sense of sin and honour perverted and cannot distinguish between the outward show of marital honour and its inner truth which he has himself destroyed by betraying Hippolita, Richardetto's wife.

Richardetto and Hippolita both attempt revenge for her dishonour. Soranzo had sworn vows of love to Hippolita and then rejected her, alleging the unlawfulness of the vows. He even preaches at her on her dishonest behaviour which has led (as they both think) to the death of her husband. Richardetto is not dead, however, and he incites Grimaldi to fight Soranzo. Bergetto is killed in mistake, but Grimaldi does not have to suffer for the crime. The Cardinal receives him into the protection of the Pope: an act which carries the same lack of justice as Vasques' banishment. Richardetto is the one person in the play who learns the truth about revenge for honour, but he learns his lesson at the cost of Hippolita's life. She attempts to poison Soranzo
but Vasques sees to it that she drinks the poison herself. In her death Richardetto learns that vengeance belongs to heaven and not to private men. He tells his niece

My wretched wife more wretched in her shame
Then in her wrongs to me, hath paid too soon
The forfeit of her modesty, and life.
And I am sure (my niece) though vengeance hour, Keeping aloafe yet from Soranzo's fall,
Yet hee will fall, and sinke with his owne weight.
I need not (now my heart persuades me so)
To further his confusion; there is one
Aboue begins to worke, ... 36

The vengeance of heaven is, indeed, the most appropriate because, where men would avenge dishonour, heaven has to avenge sin. He who dishonoured another man's wife is dishonoured by his own. Through that dishonour comes Soranzo's death, as Giovanni, having dishonoured himself and his sister, becomes the instrument of divine revenge on Soranzo. At the end of the play Soranzo is not merely a husband who has suffered dishonour and death; he is a thoroughly dishonourable man who has justly received the reward of dishonour and sin. Vasques is censured because it was he who revealed to Soranzo the full extent of his dishonour and instructed him in vengeance. Had Vasques remained silent, Soranzo would have continued to live dishonoured, but his life and the lives of Giovanni, Isabella and their father would have been saved. Once the dishonour was known, Soranzo felt the need for revenge. His was a human revenge for honour which the play demonstrates to be essentially unjust. Only heaven can execute a just revenge, a revenge

36 Ibid., IV, [ii], Sig. G4r.
for sin. Men, the play implies, should be content with private dishonour rather than to find death and public shame in unjust revenge.

In Ford's examination of problems of honour the tragicomedy of The Fancies, Chaste and Noble stands between 'Tis Pity She's a Whore and The Lady's Trial. It resembles the former play in the treatment of the difference between real and apparent honour, and the latter in its presentation of the tension between the conventional code of honour and that based on virtuous behaviour.

The play is set in a community in which corrupted honour is made the foundation of the acquisition of worldly honour. Ford's two themes are expounded in three parallel plots in each of which the men who judge honour by the conventional code are blind to honour inherent in virtue.

The main plot concerns the way in which young Livio achieves preferment by sacrificing the honour of his sister Castamella to Octavo, the aged Duke of Sienna. In the first scene Livio is persuaded to this act by Troylo Savelli, the Duke's nephew, who points out how all around them have acted in a similar way. At first Livio is appalled at the suggestion of turning his sister into a whore, but when Troylo assures him that all may be accomplished without scandal he agrees to make Castamella one of the Duke's "Fancies". Having sacrificed the honour of his sister's virtue for the acquisition of wealth and position, Livio finds himself able to wear his new livery without any qualms of
conscience. Indeed, he can announce to his sister's suitor, Romanello:

Name and honour.
What are they? a meer sound without supportance,
A begging chastity, youth, beauty, hansomesse,
Discourse, behaviour which might charm attention,
And curse the gazers eyes into amazement;
Are Natures common bounties. So are Diamonds
Uncut, so flowers unworne, ...

Later, however, Livio is assailed by fresh doubts concerning the safety of his sister's inherent honour, her chastity; but Troylo explains that Octavo is impotent and so no harm can come to her. Castamella herself discovers signs of what she takes to be dishonourable practices in the Bower of Fancies and rejects out of hand the suggestions of the old woman who looks after the girls there. She tells her

Religious matron) some great mans prison,
Where Virgins honours suffer Martyrdom.
And you are their tormentor; let's lay downe
Our ruin'd names to the insulters mercy!

Castamella's inherent honour is preserved by her own virtue as much as by Octavo's impotence, but by joining the Bower of Fancies she loses her reputation for honour. For this reason Romanello, believing her to be ruined, rejects her, declaring to Livio

Were there another Marquesse in Sienna
More potent then the same who is vice-gerent
To the great Duke of Florence, our grand Master;
Were the great Duke himselfe, here, and would lift up
My head to fellow pompe amongst his Nobles,
By falsehood to the honour of a Sister,
Virging me instrument in his Seraglio;
Ide teare the Wardrobe of an outside from him
Rather then live a Pandar to his bribery.

37 The Fancies Chast and Noble (1638), I, /i/7 , p. 12.
38 Ibid., II, /i/7, pp. 28-9.
39 Ibid., IV, /id/7, p. 61.
Ironically, Romanello makes this fine statement after he has abandoned his own sister in the distress caused her by her dishonourable husband. His sister Flavia's husband, Fabricio, becomes bankrupt and, fearing that she would not live with him in poverty, divorces her. He pleads in court that she was contracted to another before her marriage to him. This divorce repairs his fortunes, for he gains a thousand ducats from the lord Julio who then marries Flavia. Just as Castamella was promised as a "fancy" without her knowledge, so Flavia is divorced without her knowledge or consent. When she is at last given an opportunity of telling Fabricio that she would have loved him still despite his poverty he complains of his loss. At this Flavia retorts:

Call not
Thy wickednesse thy losse; without my knowledge
Thou soouldst me, and in open court protestedst
A precontract unto another, falsly
To justifie a separation, wherein
Could I offend to be believ'd thy Strumpet,
In best sense an Adulteresse ? so conceav'd
In all opinions, that I am shooke off,
Even from mine own blood, which although I boast
Not Noble, yet 'twas not means, for Romanello
Mine onely brother, shunnes me, and abhors
To owne me for his sister. 40

Flavia has to make a virtue of necessity by living honest to Julio. Her dishonour is not her fault. When she is threatened with real dishonour from Camillo and Vespuci she seeks her brother's aid, beseeching

... if I be thy Sister,
And not a Bastard, answer their confession,
Or threaten vengeance, with perpetuall silence. 41

The two dishonest courtiers confess their attempted sin and Romanello

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40 ibid.,II, \( \text{Ibid.}\), p. 19.
41 ibid.,IV, \( \text{Ibid.}\), p. 58.
makes peace among them. Moreover, realizing that Flavia is herself virtuous he accepts her again as his sister. Yet even this lesson does not teach him to judge honour by inner virtue, for it is after this reconciliation that he rejects Castamella.

The third plot is a lighter treatment of the same theme. Secco distrusts the honour of Morona, the old guardian of the Fancies, whom he has married. As Secco is himself young he suspects that his old wife has been faithless with another young man, Nitido. He openly declares his belief in this and would take a fitting vengeance on Nitido. Even in the face of Secco's threats, however, the young man protests his innocence. Secco is finally convinced that he is not a cuckold and he and Morona are reconciled.

The tension between the two codes of honour - virtuous and conventional - is seen in the attitude of Livio and Romanello to Castamella. Castamella herself is guided by virtue, but suffers because her brother and suitor think only of outward appearances and are guided by convention in their attitude to them. The former would sell her inherent honour for gain, and even when his attitude changes to one of concern for her chastity, he is careless of her virtue and thinks more of her reputation. The latter rejects her because her reputation is lost, seeking no proof of any loss of inherent honour. Nevertheless, from this rejection Castamella achieves some happiness, for she is left free to marry Troylo whom she really loves.
Flavia is the person in the play who suffers most. Her situation and character are most interesting because of their resemblances and contrasts to those of Penthea. Like Penthea, Flavia is unwillingly divorced from the man she loves. Indeed, where Penthea was only contracted to Orgilus, Flavia had actually lived with Fabricio as his wife. Moreover, Penthea suffered most from the dishonour that she felt in her own mind and body. Flavia suffers public shame, being openly considered as a strumpet and adulteress and being rejected by her husband and her brother. Nevertheless, Flavia does not, like Penthea, wish to die. The difference between her sense of honour and Penthea's is the difference between a part and a full acceptance of Tecnicus' standard of honour. Penthea's knowledge of her own honour is grounded on truth: her spiritual truth to Orgilus and physical fidelity to Bassanes. Flavia's knowledge of honour is based on necessity and truth. She knows, as Penthea knew, that dishonour is thrust upon her by external circumstances; but she accepts, as Penthea did not, the necessity of living by a new standard of honour, the honour of her second marriage. Flavia is essentially more confident in the knowledge of her inherent honour than Penthea.

The fact that there is this difference between Penthea and Flavia does not necessarily imply a criticism of either concept of honour. Each woman accepts a concept of honour which is grounded completely on her own character. It is due to Ford's power of analysing character that we can appreciate that neither woman could have behaved any
differently in the dishonourable circumstances that beset her. Moreover, Ford's characterization in each case is influenced by one more contrast between the two women. Penthea is married to a jealous husband whose opinion of woman's faith and honour cannot be altered by her own conduct, no matter how chaste she is; Flavia can make the best of her marriage to Julio because she knows that he, at least, loves her.

Ford's plays show that those who seek revenge for honour are they whose concept of honour is falsely based on opinion, not knowledge. Penthea's self-conceived opinion of dishonour, though right for her and in keeping with her own character, leads to her suicide, the unjust murder of her brother by her former lover and the just sentence of death on the latter. Duke Caraffa murders Biancha, executing a murder for lust on an innocent woman. The fact that his action punishes her for the adultery already committed in her heart is accidental. Soranzo would kill Annabella, but Giovanni, construing her genuine penitence and desire to live honest to her husband as a dishonourable faithlessness to him, forestalls him. In The Queen and The Fancies, Chaste and Noble the recognition of "real honour", based on virtue removes the need for revenge by death or by the lesser, but in some ways more painful form, that of rejection.

In each of these plays a man conceives a false opinion of woman's honour and, as a result, both of them suffer; yet in each play Ford's
pattern of circumstances which governs this false opinion is different. At one extreme, Penthea's virtue makes no impression on her jealous husband's opinion of her; and, at the other, Annabella's preservation of an outward form of honour deceives her husband and makes his wrath the more terrible when the deceit is discovered. It is in his last play, The Lady's Trial that Ford demonstrates how the honour based on virtue triumphs over the demands of convention when both husband and wife follow the same virtuous conception of honour.

The Lady's Trial tells of the temptation endured by a young wife whose elderly husband leaves her at home while he seeks worldly honour and reputation abroad. Auria leaves Spinella with many instructions for the safe preservation of her honour and reputation for honour; yet, for all that, he is not afraid that she will betray either. It is his friend, Aurelio, who had always opposed the match, who expresses doubts about Spinella's ability to remain honest. He says to Auria

... you have a wife, a young,
A faire wife; she, though she could never claime
Right in prosperitie, was never tempted
By triall of extremes, to youth and beauty,
Bayts for dishonour, and a perisht fame. 42

Aurelio's fears concerning the actual temptation of Spinella are justified, but his judgment of her liklihood to succumb is not. She is tempted by the young lord Adurni, who invites her and her sister Castana to a private banquet. Spinella accepts the invitation in good faith, and when she discovers Adurni's intended dishonour she

42 The Ladies Triall (1639), I, Sig. B 4. 
scornfully rejects him, saying

Doe not study
(\textit{My Lord}) to apparrrel folly in the steed
Of costly colours, henceforth cast off farre
Far from your noblest nature, the contempt
Of goodness, and be gentler to your fame,
By purchase of a life to grace your story. 43

She is still persistently rejecting his addresses when Aurelio bursts in upon them. He believes the worst of Spinella and so berates her that, instead of pleading her innocence and turning to her husband, who has just come home, she runs away to hide herself at her cousin's house. Aurelio urges Auria not to pity her, but seek revenge. Auria rejects this suggestion with surprise and horror:

Revenge! for what? (uncharitable friend)
On whom? let's speak a little pray with reason,
You found Spinella in Adurnies house,
Tis like 'a gave her welcome very likely,
Her sister and another with her, so
Invited, nobly done; but he with her
Privaty chamberd, he deserves no wife
Of worthie qualitie, who dares not trust
Her vertue in the proofes of any danger. 44

Aurelio continues to protest, but Auria rebukes him even more strongly:

Fish, your faith
Was never in suspition; but consider,
Neither the Lord nor Lady, nor the bawd
Which shuffled them together, opportunitie
Have fastnedstaine on my unquesion'd name,
My friends rash indiscretion was the bellowes
Which blew the cole now kindled to a flame,
Will light his slander to all wandering eyes.
Some men in giddie scale ore doe that office
They catch at, of whose number is Aurelio: 45

Nevertheless, this quarrel over honour is soon patched up and together Auria and Aurelio go to see Adurni. Adurni surprises them with a
willingness to confess all the wrong that he had intended to Spinella. Once again Aurelio tries to interfere to arouse Auria to vengeance, but Auria bids him be silent. Adurni himself recognises that there might be cause to expect revenge for honour from Auria, but claims that by making a free confession he has robbed Auria of the right to exact revenge. Both Auria and Aurelio are puzzled what to do in these circumstances. As they go to welcome Spinella, who has returned, Auria declares

... Aurelio, friend
Adurni Lord, we three will sit in counsel
And peace a hearty league, or scuffle shrewdly. 46

Spinella herself surprises them by her confidence. In asserting her innocence she too chastises Aurelio:

... that tongue,
Whose venome by traducing apostlesse honour,
Hath spread th' infection is not more mine enemie,
Then theirs', or his weake and besotted braines are,
On whom the poysen of its cankred falsehood
Hath wrought for credit to so foule a mischiefe. 47

By this time, however, Aurelio's insinuations are beginning to press upon Auria's trust in Spinella. Maddened by despair, Spinella calls on him to conclude his difference by revenge. At this Auria recognises her honesty and a true reconciliation is made possible. As a final act of trust in his wife and Adurni, Auria bestows his sister Castanna on the latter in marriage.

The play concludes with the settling of a proposed revenge for honour arising out of the subplot in which Levidolche, a wanton who has

46 Ibid., IV, l. iii 7, Sig. L2v.
47 Ibid., V, l. ii 7, Sig. K1.
divorced her husband Benatzi in order to live with Adurni, but her offer is rejected by the latter. Benatzi visits Levidolche in disguise and tries to win her love. She recognises him and offers herself to him if he will avenge her honour on Adurni, for whom she first dishonoured herself and Malfato, Spinella's cousin, who has also rejected her offer of love. Benatzi arrives to execute vengeance for honour just as Adurni has been reconciled to Auria and Spinella. The vengeance is prevented by Levidolche's explaining that she has known Benatzi all along and has now married him in his disguise so that she may lead a new and honest life.

In his earlier plays Ford shows husbands and brothers acting in the conventional way required by the code of honour. Husbands, lovers or kinsmen who believed themselves dishonoured by their womenfolk immediately seek revenge. For Orgilus this entails the murdering of Ithocles. Caraffa tortures and kills Biancha and would have killed her lover too, had the latter not poisoned himself. Alphonso was prepared to fight to the death to settle the quarrel of his wife's honour. Giovanni avenged the loss and his and his sister's honour by the deaths of herself and her husband. The Fancies contains threatened vengeance for honour which is not executed.

In The Lady's Trial, however, Ford at last represented the ideal husband who will not revenge without absolute proof of dishonour. He is the type towards which all the others had been developing. Bassanes
had believed he was dishonoured only after hearing that his wife and her brother were to be alone together. Alphonso, like Bassanes, learnt that his wife was to be alone with another man and believed her to be unfaithful. Caraffa saw his wife embracing his friend when she was dressed in her night attire, and believed her an adultress. If any of these men had doubts of their judgment it was because their wives were beautiful. This is particularly true of Alphonso. In The Lady's Trial Ford presents a husband who loves his wife for her own good qualities and not merely because she is fair. Because he loves her Auria trusts Spinella. He can always call her "my Spinella", and even when he is driven almost to belief in her guilt he can confidently affirm to Aurelio:

Impossible, had you stood wisely silent,  
but my Spinella, trembling on her knee,  
Would have accused her breach of truth, have bg'd (sic)  
A speedy execution on her trespass,  
Then with a justice lawfull as the magistrates,  
Might I have drawne my sword against Adurni.  

Auria, moreover, is not the only person in The Lady's Trial to free himself from the bonds of convention. Adurni surprises even the punctilious Aurelio by his free confession of guilty intentions. Thus he robs Auria of the right to revenge. Suspecting Adurni's motives, Auria comments,

Sure Italians hardly  
Admit dispute in questions of this nature,  
The tricke is new.  

48 Ibid., III, \[ \text{Sig. C} \]
49 Ibid., IV, \[ \text{Sig. I} \]
There is much more than the trick itself that is new. What is new is Ford's representation of characters who can think and move independently of the demands of the code of honour. In earlier plays, such as Marston's *Malcontent*, men were brought to realize that the demands of the conventional code of honour were unjust; that mercy and repentance were better fruits of dishonour than revenge. But Auria and Spinella need no tutors; it is their standard of honour which shows up the standard of the conventional code as false and artificial. Their honour is based on knowledge, not opinion. They are contrasted with Aurelio - and the contrast is intentionally sharp - the representative of worldly, conventional men of honour. Against their criterion of honour Aurelio's is shown to be not only rash, but uncharitable.

In earlier plays Ford had shown successful and unsuccessful revenges for honour, explaining the reasons for them. In *The Lady's Trial* the futility of revenge for honour is fully demonstrated. The play's lesson, Ford's last word on honour, is the same as his first:

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recall Honour
Is the reward of vertue, and acquir'd
By Justice or by valour, which for Bases
Hath Justice to uphold it. He then fails
In honour, who for lucre of Revenge
Commits thefts, murthers, Treasons and Adulteries,
With such like, by intrenching on just Lawes,
Whose sou'raignty is best preserv'd by Justice.
.... honour must be grounded
On knowledge, not opinion: For opinion
Relyes on probability and Accident,
But knowledge on Necessity and Truth:
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Chapter IX

Conclusion

The definitions of honour given by Tecnicus in *The Broken Heart* and Doctor Paulo in *A Very Woman* protest against the conventional code of honour upon which tragedies between 1600 and 1640 were based. They also reflect the dramatists' interest in something that was a social problem in their day. In each case the audience is instructed as well as the characters on the stage. Such is the organisation of these plays, however, that this didacticism is not obtrusive. This cannot be said of what was probably the earliest of these formal discussions of honour in drama, Ben Jonson's only consideration of revenge for honour: the speeches of Lovel in *The New Inn*. Lovel does not set out to define honour as did Tecnicus or Doctor Paulo, but what he says comprises a definition of honourable behaviour with regard to women and to duelling. Of the former he says:

... what's more monstrous, more a prodigy,
Then to heare me protest truth of affection
Vnto a person that I would dishonor?
And what's a more dishonor, then defacing
Anothers good, with forfeiting mine owne?
And drawing on a fellowship of sinne;
From note of which, though (for a while) we may
Be both kept safe, by caution, yet the conscience
Cannot be cleans'd. For what was hitherto
Cal'd by the name of loue, becomes destroy'd:
Then, with the fact: the innocency lost,
The bating of affection soone will follow:
And Loue is never true that is not lasting.
No more then any can be pure, or perfect,
That entertaines more than one object. Dixi. 1

1 *The New Inn* (1631), II, ii, Sigs. E5v - E5r.
This is particularly interesting because it is the only detailed treatment of dishonour to women in didactic drama apart from the few words of Galeazzo in *The Bashful Lover*. What Lovel says of true valour touches on revenge and revenge for honour (though the latter is not specified) and forms a notable antithesis to the speech of Monsieur in defence of the law of reputation in *Bussy d'Ambois*. Of true valour Lovel says

> It springs out of reason,
> And tends to perfect honesty, the scope
> Is always honour, and the publicque good;
> It is no valour for a private cause.

**Beaufort** No ? not for reputation ?

**Lovel** That's mans Idoll,
Set vp 'gainst God, the maker of all lawes,  
Who hath commanded vs we should not kill;  
And yet we say, we must for reputation.
What honest man can either feare his owne,  
Or else will hurt anothers reputation ?  
Feare to do base, vnworthy things, is valour,  
If they be done to vs, to suffer them,  
Is valour too. ²

Of "angry" as distinct from "true" valour he remarks that

... it proceeds from passion, not from judgement:  
Then brute beasts haue it, wicked persons, there 
It differs from the subiect: in the forme,  
'Tis carried rashly, and with violence:  
Then i' the end, where it respects not truth,  
Or publicque honesty; but mere revenge. ³

Finally, his consideration of the cause of true valour recalls

Severino's censuré of duelling in *A Very Woman*:

> Such poore sounds  
> As is the lie, or common words of spight.

² *Ibid.*. IV, iv, Sig. F₄ᵢ.  
³ *Ibid.*, IV, iv, Sig. F₄ᵣ. 
Wise lawes thought never worthy a revenge;
And 'tis the narrownesse of human nature,
Our poverty, and beggary of spirit,
To take exception at these things.\(^4\)

These three discussions of honour by Jonson, Massinger and Ford mark the culmination of a development in the tragedy of honour from drama mainly concerned with personal relationships to that which examined a problem of more universal application: the relationship between revenge for honour and justice. This important theme first appeared, not in the drama itself, but in the finest Elizabethan prose work, Sidney's Arcadia. It was not until some years after his death that Sidney's conception of the substitution of public justice for private revenge for honour was similarly expressed in trial scenes in the plays of Shakespeare. None of the plays in which these scenes occur - Measure for Measure, All's Well That Ends Well, The Winter's Tale - is a tragedy, though they are all concerned with the near tragic consequences of revenge for honour. They are sombre comedies in which a false standard of honour is replaced by a true, dishonour is purged, and justice and mercy bring the inflictors of dishonour to repentance and amendment of life.

In this group of plays, to which Cymbeline may also be added, the final public restitution of honour symbolizes the appeal of the just to the fountain of justice in the state: the sovereign. It provides an opportunity for twofold teaching, directed alike to the audience and to the characters in the play. When applied to these plays the

\(^4\) Ibid., IV, iv, Sig. F^o^.
word 'trial' implies not only a formal court scene or appeal to the sovereign, but a testing of values and, if necessary, a reeducation in the meaning and appreciation of honour. So Leontes in The Winter's Tale faces no formal charge, but nevertheless is tried in his separation from Hermione till he is ready to come to her with a new understanding of her honour and her worth.

Shakespeare's plays are not, however, as completely devoted to instruction as those of Marston or Massinger. His work is richer in ideas than that of his contemporaries. Moreover, Shakespeare is no moral satirist. Angelo has a false conception of honour and justice. He is wicked; but he is not vicious. In the plays of Marston, Tourneur, Webster and Middleton vicious characters abound. It was partly as the result of the audience's love of the older tragedy of blood, lust and murder and partly from their own moral inclination that such dramatists as Marston and Middleton were led to use satire as a means of educating the audience in the meaning of honour. By presenting a world of lust and corruption, dishonour and sin - the world of The Revenger's Tragedy, of The Malcontent and of Woman Beware Women - and showing in it the purging effect of true honour and justice or the corrupting, soul-destroying effects of dishonour and sin, they were able to fascinate their audience while giving them moral instruction. This combination of good in evil is indicative of an ambivalent attitude to sin found not only in writers themselves, but also in characters of
the plays themselves. It is epitomized in the reaction of Beatrice Joanna to Deflores.

Although prose writers and dramatists shared this ambivalent attitude to dishonour and sin, the former did not examine it because they were not sufficiently interested in the influences of the code of honour on character. It would not have been in keeping with their moral aims to examine the commonest situation of dishonour in drama - that of an adulterous relationship - with anything else than moral rectitude. Paradoxically, the dramatists whose studies of dishonour were most detailed were the dramatists whose works were most moral. The drama may appear to be less moral than Elizabethan or Jacobean prose fiction, but the influence of Christianity is much stronger on it.

This is seen particularly in the imagery and language of the tragedy of honour - in the "labyrinth of sin" of A Woman Killed with Kindness, the image of the soul as a caged bird in The Duchess of Malfi, of virtue as a "poor staid fisherman" in Bussy d'Ambois, and in the constant repetition of words rich in the doctrinal implications of salvation: sin, mercy, repentance, heaven, immortality. It will be noticed that the images quoted are from Jacobean plays while the words, though found in early dramatic considerations of honour, such as Measure for Measure, are more common in the work of the later dramatists, especially Massinger. In the change which caused a predominance of tragicomedies of honour over tragedy of honour English lost or, rather, transmuted one of its greatest means of expressing its theme: the symbolic dramatic
image. Thus, though his mastery of tragic verse is undeniable, Ford has no central image to crystallize the meaning of his plays. The beautiful words of Pentheas's madness, her memory of a rose garden on a summer's day, indicate a distracted mind, but not a divided soul or dishonoured body.

The reason for this change in dramatic form and expression lies in the influences of different dramatists acting upon each other. It was an age when playwrights had many ideas in common and could collaborate with their fellows of varying ages and abilities. One recalls that Thomas Dekker, the author of such essentially Elizabethan comedies as Old Fortunatus and The Shoemaker's Holiday nevertheless gave a helping hand to the production of Ford's early plays\(^5\), while there was probably no major Jacobean or Caroline dramatist with whom William Rowley did not at one time work. The fact that such collaboration was possible indicates the essential continuity of English drama before 1640. This continuity is reflected in the treatment of revenge for honour by the retention of old ideas along with the development of the new; in the development of the consideration of revenge for honour in the drama as a whole alongside the growth of individual dramatists' power to handle it.

It is in Elizabethan and, to some extent, early Jacobean tragedy that a code of honour is formulated and seen to increase in importance. In these early plays men are heard to declare that they are dishonoured.

\(^5\) Vide Una Ellis-Fermor, The Jacobean Drama (Fourth edition, revised, 1958), pp. 116 (n. 2); 230.
and must seek revenge. Significantly, Othello never states that he is dishonoured. His dishonour is implicit, and this is also true of most sufferers of dishonour in plays after Othello. The fact that in Shirley's plays such statements are frequently made, indicates his own lack of appreciation of the implications of dishonour. In the work of other Jacobean and Caroline dramatists dishonour and revenge may not be connected in words. It is, therefore, necessary for an appreciation of the characterization and motivation of these plays to understand when these ideas were implicitly joined in the dramatists' minds.

Once the basic concept of revenge for honour had been established in English drama - the concept which, in its simplest form, demanded revenge for female unchastity or for the insulting or belying of a gentleman - different dramatists contributed their individual interpretations of it. As has already been indicated, Shakespeare's contribution to the examination of the concept of revenge for honour in drama was to stress that justice and mercy, not revenge, should be meted out for dishonour. At the same time, his presentation of the complex pattern of Othello's reaction to dishonour indicates a growing interest in the effect of dishonour on the mind and of the way in which other desires could be hidden under an expressed wish for revenge for honour. This interest may be traced through the work of Webster - particularly in The Duchess of Malfi - through Middleton's picture of the corruption wrought by dishonour and sin to Ford's representation of the mental
agony caused by the conflict between the virtuous and conventional codes of honour.

Individual dramatists' interest in other themes besides revenge for honour added breadth to the consideration of revenge for honour in the drama as a whole. The conflict between public justice and private revenge, linked with the Jacobean conceptions of kingship, gives poignancy and a fresh interest to the situation of the dishonoured husband in *The Tragedy of Valentinian* and in *The Maid's Tragedy*. It may here be remarked that the loss of dramatic imagery in the work of Beaumont and Fletcher is compensated, in these two plays at least, by the shock of concentrated venom of Valentinian's bitter comment to Lucina and Evadne's ironic retort to Amintor. Another aspect of Fletcher's theme in *Valentinian*, the perversion of justice, is a reflection of the same perversion in *Measure for Measure*.

The division of characters into revengers and counter-revengers, the bad who bleed and the good who make them bleed, which was found in early revenge tragedies is obliterated, to some extent, in the complex characterization of later tragedies of honour. This reaches a climax in Ford's *'Tis Pity She's a Whore* in the characterization of Soranzo, the avenger of honour who is himself dishonourable. At the same time, Ford's presentation of the relationship between brothers and sisters and his interest in incest are in the same line of development as Webster's *Duchess of Malfi*, *The Devil's Law Case* and *The White Devil* and Middleton's *Women Beware Women*. Marston's demonstration, in
The Malcontent of a ruler who, having lived disguised in his vicious state, is able to dispense justice for dishonour is echoed in Middleton's *The Phoenix*. Middleton's satiric portrayal of the prostitution of honour is repeated by Massinger in *The City Madam*, *A New Way to Pay Old Debts*, and by Dekker and Massinger in *The Fatal Dowry*.

The influence of Beaumont and Fletcher and of Fletcher alone on the consideration of revenge for honour in drama is, however, different. It is seen in form rather than treatment of theme or character. Fletcher used revenge for honour in tragicomedy as the prose writers used it: to provide striking situations or motives for action. The tragic atmosphere of his tragicomedies is often produced by the threat of revenge for honour on a happy situation. In these particular uses of the concept of revenge for honour he excels. Fletcher was not, however, interested in the concept of revenge for honour as such. His lack of interest is a weakness in his greatest independently written play, *Valentinian*. The result of other dramatists' copying Fletcher's effects in drama was the same as the result of imitation in prose fiction: it arrested its development. This is seen in Massinger's use of revenge for honour in *Fletcherian tragicomedy*. At his best, Massinger was able to unite Fletcher's use of revenge for honour with his own didacticism to produce an ending such as that of *The Duke of Milan*, *The Emperor of the East* or *The Guardian*. These endings are morally and aesthetically satisfying. On the other hand, the conclusions of *A Very Woman* and
The Picture show a flaw in Massinger's moral and aesthetic judgment. In order to achieve a surprising ending he has sacrificed the character of the person who is to educate the audience in the appreciation of honour. The influence of Fletcher on character is, in these instances, united with his influence upon form. The vacillation in tone and mood which is almost a fault in the character of Philaster is indeed a fault in Massinger's Jolante and Sophia and, more particularly, in Ford's Alphonso of The Queen.

The tragedy of honour declined when situation gradually took over from character and motive as its most important feature of interest. This is reflected in the effect of Othello on later tragedies of honour, for Othello was to the tragedy of honour what The Spanish Tragedy was to the tragedy of blood: an influence for good which was capable of misuse. The good influence of it is seen in later convincing portrayals of the agony of the dishonoured husband such as Marston's Duke Pietro or Middleton's Antonio. It is felt in single echoes such as those in Philaster, The Changeling and The Emperor of the East. In The Duke of Milan the influence of the character and rôle of Iago are obvious in Francisco's method of making the Duke believe his wife unfaithful. In Ford's Love's Sacrifice, however, whole passages of Othello are imitated and incorporated in a play whose theme is a twisted version of Shakespeare's.

6 Vide pp. 289, 242 and 347 supra.
7 Vide p. 322 supra.
This imitation in *Love's Sacrifice* points the way towards the combination of the worst use of Fletcherian surprise and of imitation in the work of James Shirley. Shirley used revenge for honour in tragedy as Fletcher used it in tragicomedy. As a result, his tragedies are composed of stage conventions and stock situations from other revenge plays. His tragedies are without passion and, even more than the work of Fletcher, they lack the dramatist's interest in the concept of revenge for honour. The most extreme example of the latter in Shirley's plays is *The Maid's Revenge*. The revenge of the title is founded on a concept of dishonour which, like that of the dishonour of the rejected suitor, is a cloak for an act of spite and malice. There was no written code, and probably no unwritten code, that declared that a woman was dishonoured if her sister outwitted or spited her in love. Moreover, the characterization of Berinthia is faulty. She does not merely vacillate from goodness to devilry; she changes so completely at the end of the play that she can rejoice in her murders of Sebastiano and her sister Catalina. She is, in fact, no more virtuous than Catalina herself.

The best example of the derivative nature of Shirley's tragedy is *The Cardinal* in which a masque is used to commit a murder, revenge is met by counter revenge, a corpse is exhibited, Rosaura feigns madness and later becomes mad indeed; Hernando is a disguised revenger and one who commits suicide. There is a touch of Webster on one of Rosaura's speeches and an imitation of Marston in the play's moral, and

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italicised conclusion:

None have more need of Perspectives than Kings. 9

As Professor Bowers has said, "Fletcherian theatricality has destroyed the real potentialities of the last great tragedy of revenge." 10

Thus, in its decline, revenge tragedy came closest to prose fiction in its treatment of the concept of revenge for honour. It also resembled prose fiction in its use of horror. Shirley's The Maid's Revenge might be a dramatic handling of something from one of the romances of Richard Johnson, 11 and when Giovanni, in 'Tis Pity She's a Whore, comes to Soranzo's feast with Annabella's heart on his dagger one is reminded of Bandello's young lady of Milan or the cruelty of Arsadachus in A Margarite of America.

If prose writers and dramatists had faults in common, they had virtues in common too. The best fiction and the best drama were based on the author's experience of life, his observation of the workings of his fellows' hearts and minds. As it happened, the fiction of common experience, which reached its highest expression in the work of Thomas Deloney, was not especially concerned with the concept of revenge for honour. It was essentially fiction for the middle classes. In general, the drama aimed to please a more cultivated audience. It was, moreover an audience to whom the concept of revenge for honour was an integral part of their experience of life. The prevalence of duelling

9 Ibid., V, p. 69.
11 Vide pp. 164-169 supra.
in Jacobean England is a fact of history. Moreover, in a society where the gentry felt that the increasingly wealthy middle class citizens were encroaching on their rights and privileges, it seemed necessary to them to cultivate a mode of behaviour which would distinguish them from the lower classes. Such a mode of behaviour was based on the code of honour. The code of honour originated in Italy and France, and there were also parallels in life and in drama between the code of honour in England and that in Spain. Nevertheless, the code of honour on the English stage as in English life soon lost all appearance of foreign origin. The English gentry assimilated what they believed to be true concerning honour. There is, therefore, no great difference to be found between the code of honour in plays which have Spanish sources and those of the English dramatists' own inspiration; or between the code of honour found in plays set in Spain and those that are set in England. The examination of revenge for honour in English drama is not, therefore, a matter of abstract intellectual speculation. It is an examination which puts the drama in touch with life. Dishonour could be inflicted upon any gentleman in a play or in the audience, and it could be inflicted through no fault of his own. In discussing or examining the reactions of men and women to dishonour the dramatists were, therefore, dealing with problems which were of great importance to their audience. Where prose writers amused or excite, the dramatists sought also to guide and instruct.

12 Vide C.L. Barber, op. cit., p. 30.
13 A comparison of the Spanish and English codes is given by Professor E.M. Wilson in 'Family Honour in the Plays of Shakespeare's Predecessors and Contemporaries', Essays and Studies 1953, pp. 119-140.
14 Vide C.L. Barber, op. cit., pp. 28; 291-5.
The greatest difference between fiction and drama between 1580 and 1640 lay in their characterization. Prose writers concentrated on the incidents which composed a good story and made little attempt to portray character. Their creative imagination was largely expended on experiments in style and form. Dramatists, on the other hand had, in the revenge tragedy, an accepted and popular form to handle. They were, therefore, free to apply their creative powers to a deeper study of it. Moreover, in the work of Shakespeare drama was given an impetus in this direction which prose fiction lacked. The achievement of Sir Philip Sidney was too far ahead of his contemporaries' thought and expression for them fully to benefit from it.

The result of the dramatists' study of revenge tragedy was the emergence and development of the theme of revenge for honour. It was a theme which offered greater scope for the examination of character - especially the intimate sides of character which are revealed in the relationships between men and women - than any other form of drama. The concept of revenge for honour offered the master of stagecraft, the skilful plotter, ample opportunity for the introduction of surprise into tragicomedy, and it provided the didactic dramatist with material for the criticism of the received standards of honour in the world around him and for the expression of his own conception of what constituted true honour.
Above all, the concept of revenge for honour constituted a challenge to the playwright. So many of them had considered it in so many different aspects and in relationship to other themes that it required the exercise of their finest skill to make situations of dishonour appear fresh, convincing and valuable to the audience. To this challenge the major Jacobean and Caroline dramatists responded. Even Ben Jonson, whose models were never those of his fellows, made his contribution to the study of revenge for honour in The New Inn. Each dramatist brought his own gifts of interpretation or presentation to the tragedy of honour. Thus the response to the challenge - and the fascination - of the concept of revenge for honour produced most of the best tragedy and tragicomedy on the English stage before 1640.

* * * * * *
Applications of the word 'honour' in English drama between 1591 and 1640

The following summary of some of the applications of the word 'honour' as used in drama between 1591 and 1640 is compiled by kind permission of the author, Dr. C.L. Barber, from The Idea of Honour in the English Drama 1591-1700 (Gothenburg, 1957), pp. 148-262.

As dishonour consisted of everything which was opposed to the idea of honour, such an extensive list of the meanings of honour is an invaluable aid to the full understanding of the conditions and qualities which constituted dishonour. The meaning of dishonour is implicit in every application of the word 'honour' because it is simply the negative of that meaning.

In presenting his material Dr. Barber makes the necessary and valuable distinction between the demands of honour which were consistent with those of Christian virtue (denominated by the mnemonic symbol 'v') and those which were dictated by convention (denominated by the symbol 'k') and which were often in conflict with the former. I have, therefore, preserved this distinction by listing the 'k' and 'v' groups of meanings separately. I have also kept Dr. Barber's presentation of material under decades in order to give some indication of the development of the idea of honour within the period. The way in which this development reflects a change of ideas on the stage is clearly seen in the increase of negative definitions of honour in the 'v' group for the decade 1631-1640 which saw the production of plays highly critical of the values of the 'k' group.

1 These are those given under the head-meanings R (reputation), H (honourableness of character, honourable behaviour) and RH (equivocal R / H ) only. The importance of chastity or reputation for chastity as a determinant of honour is sufficiently explicit in the plays which I have discussed. The aspects of honour won by military qualities are also made clear in these plays. Lesser head-meanings are irrelevant to the study of revenge for honour.

2 As Dr. Barber's conclusions are based on explicit statements containing the noun 'honour', it does not necessarily follow that any one definition or application of honour was not implicit in drama long before it was made explicit. For example, the negative definitions of honour as "not being jilted" and "not tolerating a rival" were implicit as early as 1592 (or, probably 1588) in Kyd's The Spanish Tragedy.

3 For example, The Broken Heart, A Very Woman or The Prince of Tarent, The Lady's Trial and The New Inn (1629).
1 Sensitivity to affront, revenging injury, etc.
2 Insisting on one's rights, not being meek (see 53 below)
3 High rank, office, due ceremony, wealth
4 Ostentation
5 Making socially good marriages
6 Not promoting marriage of dependant to an unchaste woman
7 Not performing menial tasks
8 Honour reflected in relatives' loyalty to the ruler
9 Recognizing the claims of friendship
10 Gained by travel
11 Not accepting humiliating peace terms
12 Honour reflected from equivocal \( R/C \) \( R = \) reputation for chastity; \( C = \) chastity

1601 - 1610

13 Observing the rules of duelling, \( \text{i.e.} \) accepting challenges, not refusing or evading them, keeping duelling appointments.
14 Rebelling rather than submitting to injustice from rulers
15 Having authority maintained
16 Precedence
17 Favourable peace terms
18 Honour reflected from lover's military qualities
19 Honour reflected from a relative's virtue
20 Being jealous
21 Successfully completing anything once started

22 Ostentation ii - magnificence

23 Not taking orders from another

24 Killing an unchaste female relative

25 Deceiving and dissimulating in the interests of one's friends or political party

1611 - 1620

26 Not being made to lose face

27 Having distinguished guests, mixing with the great, etc.

28 Seducing a woman (but possibly a pun on the woman's name)

29 Committing murder in the service of the king

30 Suicide

31 Loyalty to fellow criminals

32 Not recanting under a threat

33 Magnificence, hyper-courtesy

1621 - 1630

34 Not being jilted

35 Having illustrious dependants

36 Not being easily accessible to petitioners

37 Not having one's authority flouted

38 Having a good suitor

39 Honour reflected from good qualities of relatives

40 Sexual virility, success in love (see also 50 below)

41 Victory in the war of the sexes
42 Not being under an obligation
43 Politeness to ladies
44 Ostentation iii - hospitality
45 Not breaking off a proposed marriage (see also 49 below)

1631 - 1640
46 Not being outwitted or rebuffed
47 Ostentation iv - keeping up one's position
48 The number of one's dependants or suitors
49 Not withdrawing from a proposed marriage and related contents
50 Sexual virility ii - wenching
51 Not suffering an ignominious death
52 Not tolerating a rival
53 Insisting on one's rights and giving their rights to others
54 Concern about reflected R (= reputation)
55 Observing the laws of civilized warfare

The *V* Group

1591 - 1600
1 Truthfulness (contrast 'K' 25)
2 Keeping oaths and promises (contrast 'K' 25)
3 Keeping a marriage contract (of. 'K' 45, 49)
4 Loyalty to one's ruler (contrast 'K' 14; of. 'K' 8)
5 Not committing treason and murder or treason and witchcraft
6 Not murdering (contrast *K* 24, 29)
7 Honesty
8 Abjuring the world
9 Not cheating and equivocating (contrast *K* 25)
10 Not being ungrateful
11 Sanctity, piety, obedience to the church
12 Not taking bribes
13 Not slandering
14 Not conniving at incest
15 Sexual continence (contrast *K* 50)
16 Not committing bigamy
17 Justice, integrity
1601 - 1610
18 Not conniving at unchastity (contrast *K* 50)
19 Not permitting immédest language
20 Not being corrupt and lecherous
21 Resisting and exposing vice and corruption
22 Modesty, clemency
23 Not betraying a trust
24 Not listening to unchaste proposals
25 Not repudiating one's wife
26 Mercy and forgiveness
1611 - 1620
27 Obedience to civil governors (cf. 4 above)
28 Honour not gained by raping
29 Not being a hypocrite
30 Honesty ii - not accepting money known to be dishonestly obtained
31 Obedience and loyalty to husband
32 Saving the innocent, practising virtue
33 Keeping a vow
34 Keeping a treaty
35 Doing one's duty to one's brother
36 Not being revengeful; not committing crimes for revenge (contrast 'K' 1, 24)
37 Sexual continence ii - not being a libertine (contrast 'K' 50)
38 Peacemaking, preventing a duel (contrast 'K' 13)

1631 - 1640
39 Truthfulness ii not practising deceit and imposture (contrast 'K' 25)
40 Filial piety and loyalty to ruler
41 Not duelling (cf. 38 and contrast 'K' 13)
42 Not abducting
43 Not being corruptible
44 Works of charity
45 Not being guilty of adultery and treason
46 Not condoning murder
47 Refusing a challenge and proving that it is ungrounded (contrast 'K' 13)
48 Making amends to a woman by marriage
APPENDIX II

Causes of dishonour in Drama and Fiction between 1580 and 1640

The aim of these lists, which are not intended to be exhaustive, is to give an indication of the kind of situation in which a character of drama or fiction considered himself dishonoured. The main references are to explicit statements (i.e. that a man considers himself dishonoured or that he desires revenge when that revenge is obviously for honour), but situations in which a given concept of dishonour is implicit are cited for comparison.

Drama I — Marital honour

1 Dishonour in wife's adultery: see Appendix III.

2 Dishonour to marry an unchaste woman
   Shakespeare, Much Ado About Nothing, III, \textit{iii}, p. 111a
   Webster, The White Devil (1612), IV, \textit{iii}, Sig. H^3\textsuperscript{r}.
   Beaumont and Fletcher, The Captain (1647), III, \textit{iv}, p. 60b

   cf. Shirley, The Wedding (1629), Edition of 1633, II, Sig. C^4\textsuperscript{r}.
   The Politician (1655), III, p. 31
   Webster and Rowley, A Cure for a Cuckold (1661), IV, \textit{iii}, F^4\textsuperscript{r}.

3 Dishonour to be refused by one's bride
   Beaumont and Fletcher, The Maid's Tragedy (1619)
   Edition of 1622, II, Sig. C^4\textsuperscript{v}.

4 Dishonour to have bride's reputation stained
   Fletcher, The Wild Goose Chase (1652), III, i, p. 34. (This is a joke as the "groom" is the "bride's" brother; nevertheless it illustrates a received opinion of dishonour.)

Drama II — Prenuptial Honour

1 Dishonour in loss or threatened loss of promised bride
   Shakespeare, Titus Andronicus (1623), I, i, pp. 33b and 35a
   Beaumont and Fletcher, Women Pleased (1647), III, \textit{iii}, p. 34b
   The Island Princess (1647), III, p. 105b.
   Shirley, The Imposture (1653), I, p. 11
   The Cardinal (1653), III, p. 32

   cf. Massinger, The Unnatural Combat (1639), IV, \textit{ii}, Sig. H^4\textsuperscript{v};
   V, \textit{ii}, Sig. K^3\textsuperscript{r}. 
2 Dishonour in stain on beloved’s reputation  
Beaumont and Fletcher, Philaster (1620)  
Edition of 1622, III, pp. 31-2

3 Dishonour caused by mistress being false  
Fletcher and Massinger, Love’s Cure (1647), IV, ii, p. 138b  
Fletcher, Demetrius and Emanthe, Edited by M.McL. Cook and F.P. Wilson (1951):  
IV, ii, 2171-3; V, ii, 2872-9; V, vii, 3276-80

4 Dishonour in loss of mistress or beloved  
Fletcher and Massinger, The Little French Lawyer (1647), I, p. 52a  
The Custom of the Country (1647), I, p. 5a  
of Shirley, The Maid’s Revenge (1639), III, Sig. G1

5 Dishonour when mistress is coveted by another  
Shirley, The Maid’s Revenge (1639), III, Sig. E2r  
Fletcher, Rule a Wife and Have a Wife (1640), I, p. 9

6 Dishonour to be repulsed by beloved  
II, iii, 736-8

7 Dishonour for beloved to prefer another  
Massinger, The Bondman (1624), V, i, Sig. K2v  
A Very Woman or The Prince of Tarant (1655), I, pp. 9-10

8 Dishonour to have lady's favour worn by a rival  
Fletcher and Massinger, Love’s Cure (1647), V, i, p. 142b

Drama III - Dishonour to the Family

1 Family / father dishonoured by son’s dishonour  
Shakespeare, Titus Andronicus (1623), II, i, p. 36a (mother)  
The Revenger's Tragedy (1607), I, Sig. A1f  
Middleton and Rowley, The Spanish Gipsy (1653), III, Sig. F3r

2 Family dishonoured when member seeks to dishonour a woman  
Fletcher, Four Plays ... in One (1647), p. 30a  
Dick of Devonshire, Edited by J.G. and Mary R. Macmanaway (1955),  
III, iii, 1140-1142.
3 Family dishonoured when a girl is jilted
   Shirley, The Traitor (1635), IV, Sig. G₃ᵣ  cf. II, Sig. D₃ᵣ

4 Family dishonoured by sister's / daughter's adultery
   Fletcher and Massinger, The Double Marriage (1647), V, p. 45b.
   Fletcher, Four Plays or Moral Representations in One (1647), p. 36b

5 Family's / brother's honour wounded by girl's dishonesty
   Fletcher, Massinger, Field and Daborne, The Honest Man's Fortune (1647), I, p. 253b.

6 Family / brother dishonoured when a girl is abducted
   Shirley, The Maid's Revenge (1639), III, Sig. Gᵣ₁.
   The Imposture (1653), II, p. 26

7 Dishonour in stain on sister's reputation
   Beaumont and Fletcher, The Maid's Tragedy (edn. of 1622), III, Sig. F₂ᵣ.

8 Brother dishonoured by sister's dishonour
   Beaumont and Fletcher, The Woman Hater (1607), IV, i, Sig. G₂ᵣ.
   Massinger, The Bondman (1624), V, ii, Sig. K₂⁻.
   Fletcher, The Chances (1647), II, iii, p. 9b.

9 Brother dishonoured when sister marries without his consent
   Massinger, The Guardian (1655), II, pp. 20-21
   cf. Ford, The Broken Heart (1633) and Fletcher, The Fair Maid of The Inn (1647) where brothers (Orgilus and Cesario) will not have their sisters marry without their consent.

10 Father and daughter one in dishonour
    Beaumont and Fletcher, Philaster (Edn. of 1622), III, Sig. Gᵣ₁.

11 Parent dishonoured in loss of daughter ( ? rape feared)
    Fletcher, Women Pleased (1647), III, iii, p. 34b

12 Father dishonoured by child's disobedience
    Tourneur, The Atheist's Tragedy (1611), Sig. C₃ᵣ.
1. Woman dishonoured by rape
   - *The Revenger’s Tragedy* (1607), I, Sig. C_{IV} - C_{II}^R.
   - *Massinger, The Unnatural Combat* (1639), V, ii, Sig. K_{IV}^R.
   - *Fletcher, Bona Dea* (1647), III, p. 57
   - *The Tragedy of Valentinian* (1647), III, p. 11a
   - *Fletcher, Massinger and Field, The Queen of Corinth* (1647)
     II, i, p. 5b; V, iv, p. 21b
   - *Middleton and Rowley, The Spanish Gipsy* (1653), I, Sig. E_{II}^R.
   - *Dick of Devonshire*, Edited by J.G. and Mary R. McManaway (1955)
     II, ii, 634–673.

2. Woman dishonoured by abduction
   - *Shirley, The Maid’s Revenge* (1639), III, Sig. G_{I}^R.

3. Woman dishonoured by being jilted or having her marriage contract broken
   - *Massinger, The Bondman* (1624), V, ii, Sig. L_{II}^R.
   - *Shirley, The Traitor* (1635), IV, Sigs. H_{III} V - I_{II}^R.
   - *cf. Beaumont and Fletcher, The Maid’s Tragedy* passim (Aspatia)
   - *Ford, The Broken Heart* passim (Penthea)

4. Woman dishonoured by seduction and by committing adultery
   - *Tourneur, The Atheist’s Tragedy* (1611), IV, Sig. K_{IV} V.
   - *Shirley, The Wedding* (1629), *Edition of 1633*, II, Sig. D_{IV} V.
   - *Fletcher and Massinger, Love’s Cure* (1647), III, iii, p. 135b.
   - *Shirley, The Imposture* (1653), II, i, p. 15
   - *Massinger, The Bashful Lover* (1655), III, pp. 50–51

5. Woman dishonoured by yielding to her contracted husband before marriage (a view not held by John Fletcher).
   - *Dick of Devonshire*, Edited by J.G. and Mary R. McManaway (1955),
     II, ii, 634–673
   - *cf. Webster, The Devil’s Law Case* (1623), V, Sig. K_{III}^R.

6. Woman dishonoured by dishonourable solicitation
   - *Shirley, The Duke’s Mistress* (1638), III, Sig. F_{II} V.
   - *Fletcher and Massinger, The Little French Lawyer* (1647),
     III, p. 61a
     II, ii, 519–521; V, i, 2170–2172.
   - *The Guardian* (1655), I, pp. 8–9
7 Woman dishonoured by having a doubt cast on her honesty (even if justified)
   Shakespeare, Much Ado About Nothing (1623), V, i, p. 117b
   Dick of Devonshire, Edited by J.G. and Mary R. McManaway, (1955),
   III, ii, 1014-1030
   Marston, The Insatiate Countess (1613), IV, Sig. C1
   Shirley, Love's Cruelty (1640), II, Sig. D3v
   Fletcher, Massinger, Field The Queen of Corinth (1647),
   I, ii, p. 4
   Fletcher, Demetrius and Emanthe, Edited by M.McL. Cook and

8 Wife dishonoured by an unfaithful husband
   Massinger, The Picture (1630), III, ii, Sig. I3r.

9 Wife dishonoured by divorce or repudiation of her marriage contract
   Fletcher and Massinger, The Spanish Curate (1647), III, iii, p.37

10 Woman dishonoured when suit of marriage is withdrawn
    Shirley, The Young Admiral (1637), II, Sig. D2v.

11 Woman dishonours herself by jilting her contracted husband
    Shirley, The Doubtful Heir (1653), III, p. 34.

12 Woman dishonoured when the offer of her hand in marriage is refused
    Massinger and Dekker, The Virgin Martyr (1622), I, C2v - C3r.

13 Dishonour for a girl to disguise herself as a man
    Beaumont and Fletcher, Philaster (Edn. of 1622), V, Sig. L2v
    Fletcher, Love's Pilgrimage (1647), I, i, p.6.

14 Dishonour for a younger sister to spite the elder in love
    Shirley, The Maid's Revenge (1639), II, i, Sig. C3r.

Drama V - Military Honour

1 Dishonour in being overcome in fight or battle
    Fletcher, Bonduca (1647), III, v, p. 60.
    The Bashful Lover (1655), II, pp. 23, 29.
2 Dishonour to be disarmed
   Fletcher, The Fair Maid of the Inn (1647), II, pp. 34-5; 36

3 Dishonour to kill a man basely
   Shirley, The Cardinal (1653), IV, p. 44.

4 Dishonour for a soldier to be discharged from the field
   Shirley, The Cardinal (1653), IV, p. 50.

5 Soldier dishonoured by unmanly behaviour
   Dick of Devonshire, Edited by J.G. and Mary R. MacKanaway (1955),
   II, v, 891-3.

6 Dishonour to soldiers to underestimate their valour
   Fletcher, Bonduca (1647), II, i, p. 52.

7 Dishonour to have a doubt cast on one's valour or fidelity
   Fletcher, A Wife for a Month (1647), I, p. 51

8 Dishonour in having one's military achievements unacknowledged, as
   when another person is praised for them
   Fletcher and Massinger, Sir John van Olden Barnavelt, Edited by
   W.P. Frijlinck (Amsterdam, 1922), I, II, 50-55.

9 Dishonour in having one's military prowess excelled
   Fletcher, The Laws of Candy (1647), passim.

10 Dishonour for a soldier not to go to war
    Fletcher, Demetrius and Eunthe, Edited by M.McL. Cook and

11 Dishonour to be taken prisoner
    Massinger, The Maid of Honour (1632), V, ii, Sig. L1 V.
    Shirley, The Young Admiral (1637), I, ISig. C7 V; V, Sig. K1 V.
    Massinger, The Bashful Lover (1655), II, p. 23.

12 Dishonour to have one's prisoner escape or be rescued
    Fletcher, The Island Princess (1647), II, p. 103.
    Massinger, A Very Woman (1655), II, p. 23.
13 Dishonour to be unable to fight for or rescue one's friend
   Fletcher and Massinger, *The Little French Lawyer* (1647), IV, p. 69.

14 Betrayal of the honour of one's country to yield fortress to the enemy

15 Dishonour to be a traitor to one's country
   Shirley, *The Young Admiral* (1637), III, Sig. F₁

16 Dishonour to be disloyal to the sovereign
   Shirley, *The Politician* (1655), IV, p. 42

17 Honour gained in war may be lost by dishonour to the family
   Beaumont and Fletcher, *The Maid's Tragedy* (Edn. of 1622), IV, Sig. G₁; V, Sig. K₁.

Drama VI - Miscellaneous

1 Theft in a Prince is a sacrilege to honour
   Marston, *The Insatiate Countess* (1613), IV, Sig. G₁.

2 Dishonour to doubt a man's word

3 Dishonour to give or be given the lie

4 Dishonour to give up a quarrel after accepting a challenge

5 Dishonour to be accused of treachery or thought a traitor
   Fletcher, Massinger and Field, *The Knight of Malta* (1647), II, v, pp. 30-81.

6 Dishonour to be found guilty of treason
7 The Prince's shame is the subject's dishonour
   Shirley, Love's Cruelty (1640), II, Sig. D2v.

8 Dishonour to a Prince to marry his protégé to a dishonest woman
   Shakespeare, Much Ado About Nothing (1623), II, 111, p. 107a
   IV, 21, p. 414b

9 A wicked or vicious King dishonours the gods
   Beaumont and Fletcher, The Maid's Tragedy (Edn. of 1622),
   IV, Sig. G3v.

10 A man is dishonoured by being called "boy"
    Fletcher, Massinger and Field, The Knight of Malta (1647),
    II, iii, Sig. Kkkkk4v.
    cf. Alphonseus Emperor of Germany (1657), I, i.

11 Dishonour to be treated insolently
    Fletcher, The Fair Maid of the Inn (1647), V, XXX, p. 49.
    Fletcher and Massinger, The Little French Lawyer (1647), I, p. 53.

12 Dishonour to victim to sue for his life when he does not want it
    Massinger and Dekker, The Virgin Martyr (1622), II, Sig. E3v.

13 Dishonour in serving a dishonourable sovereign
    Fletcher, The Tragedy of Valentinian (1647), III, p. 7

14 Dishonour to be deprived of an high office
    Shakespeare, Coriolanus (1623), III, 3111, p. 19a
    Lust's Dominion (1657), II, i, Sig. C2v.

15 Dishonour to kill an old man
    Beaumont and Fletcher, The Maid's Tragedy (Edn. of 1622)
    I, Sig. E1v.

16 Dishonour to be whipped
    Massinger, The Duke of Milan (1623), III, ii, Sig. G2v.

17 Dishonour to have a relative killed
    Massinger and Fletcher, Love's Cure (1647), I, i, p. 126.
18 Dishonour to be accused of dishonesty or dishonour
Beaumont and Fletcher, Philaster (Edn. of 1622), V, Sig. L₁¹.
Fletcher, The Fair Maid of the Inn (1647), I, p. 32.

19 Dishonour to be struck
Fletcher, The Nice Valour (1647), II, p. 158.
Shirley, The Politician (1655), III, p. 35.
Shakespeare, 1 Henry VI (1623), III, iv, p. 109b.

20 It is dishonourable to boast in the conquest of a lady

21 Dishonour to glory in abuse of the laws of marriage
Fletcher and Massinger, The Custom of the Country (1647), I, 5a.

22 Dishonour to be suspected of being ungrateful
Shirley, Love's Cruelty (1640), I, Sig. B₁⁻¹.

23 Dishonour to have to beg a favour
Coriolanus (1623), III, ii⁻¹, p. 18 b.

24 Dishonour publicly to cast a stain on a woman's name
Fletcher, Demetrius and Eunaste, Edited by M.McL. Cook and
F.P. Wilson (1951)
possibly implicit in: V, ii, 2974-8
V, v, 3160-3163.

25 Dishonour to a nobleman to take upon himself the office of
executioner
Tourneur, The Atheist's Tragedy (1611), V, Sig. L₂⁻¹.

26 Dishonour to be hounded for payment of debts
Shakespeare, Timon of Athens (1623), ii⁻¹, p. 83b
Causes of dishonour in English prose fiction 1580-1640

I - Marital Honour

1. Dishonour in wife's adultery cf. Drama I, 1
   - R. Greene, Philomela (1592), passim.
   - R. Johnson, Tom a Lincoln, Edn. of 1655, Sig. I2v.

2. Husband dishonoured in wife's rape
   - Forde, Parismenos (1599), Sig. E3v.

II - Premarital Honour

1. Dishonour to have one's offer of marriage rejected cf. Drama II, 6.
   - Robarts, Pheander, the Maiden Knight (1595), Sig. L1r.

2. Dishonour for beloved to prefer or marry another cf. Drama II, 7.
   - Lodge, Euphues Shadow, the Battle of the Senses (1592), Sig. H4v.
   - Riche, The Adventures of Brusanus, Prince of Hungary (1592), p. 94
   - Forde, Parismus (1598), Sig. P4v.

3. Dishonour to be unfaithful to beloved, even though she does not return one's love
   - Johnson, The second part of ... the Seven Champions of Christendom (1597), Sigs. R3v - R4r.
   - Forde, Parismus (1598), Sig. E3v.

4. Dishonour not to take care of a woman placed in one's protection
   - Forde, Parismus (1598), Sigs. T1v - T1r.

III - Family Honour

1. Dishonour to one's parentage to forget the nature of a gentleman
   - Lodge, Rosalynde (1590), Edn. of 1592, Sig. K1v.
   - cf. Drama III, 1.

2. Father / family dishonoured in daughter's dishonour cf. Drama III, 10
   - Greene, Philomela (1592), passim.
3 Father dishonoured by daughter's flight cf. Drama III, 11
   Riche, The Adventures of Brusanus, Prince of Hungaria (1592), p. 93
   Johnson, The second part of the . . . seven Champions of Christendom (1597), Sig. Q$_4^v$

IV - Woman's Honour

1 Woman dishonoured by rape or attempted rape
   Forde, Parismenos (1599), Sig. S$_1^r$
   Greene, Morando The Tritamemon of Love (1584), Sig. B$_3^v$
   Johnson, The . . . seven Champions of Christendom, Edn. of 1608, p. 137

2 Woman dishonoured by abduction cf. Drama IV, 2
   Forde, Parismenos (1599), Sig. B$_3^v$

3 Woman dishonoured by seduction, though consenting cf. Drama IV, 4
   Johnson, The . . . seven Champions of Christendom, Edn. of 1608, p. 92
   The second Part of the . . . Seven Champions of Christendom (1597), Sigs. K$_4^r$; L$_1^r$; S$_2^v$; S$_4^r$
   The . . . History of Tom a Lincoln, Edition of 1655, Sig. A$_4^r$

4 Woman dishonoured by loving beneath her station
   Greene, Perimedes the Blacksmith (1588), Sig. C$_4^r$

V - Military Honour

1. Dishonour in being overcome in single combat or in battle cf. Drama V, 1
   Robarts, Pheander, the Maiden Knight (1595), Sig. H$_2^r$
   Johnson, The second part of . . . the Seven Champions of Christendom (1597), Sig. A$_4^r$

2 Dishonour in submission
   Lodge, Rosalynde (1590), Edition of 1592, Sig. F$_3^v$

3 Tilting honour lasts only as long as one's success
   Johnson, The second part of . . . the seven Champions of Christendom (1597), Sig. Y$_4^r$
   Forde, Parismenos (1599), Sig. G$_4^r$
4 Dishonour to adventurous knights to spend their days in ladies' bosoms

  Johnson, The Most Pleasant History of Tom a Lincoln (1631), Edition of 1655, Sig. C, v

5 Dishonour to a knight to spend his days in obscurity

  Forde, Parismenos (1599), Sig. C, v

6 Dishonour to hinder a man from a valiant enterprise

  Lodge, Rosalynde (1590), Edition of 1592, Sig. C, v

7 Prince dishonours himself by visiting a courtesan

  Greene, Plænotomachia (1585), Sig. H, v

8 Dishonour to a king if a foreign prince is killed in his court

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9 Sovereign dishonours his country by oppressing a strange knight

  Johnson, The ... seven Champions of Christendom (1596), Edition of 1608, p. 79.

10 Sovereign's dishonour dishonours his country

  Johnson, The second part of the ... seven Champions of Christendom (1597), Sig. K, v.

11 A country is dishonoured by defeat

  Forde, Parismenos (1598), Sig. O, v.

12 It is a dishonour to have one's country insulted

  Lodge, 'A wonderous revenge executed by Megallo of Genova upon the mighty Emperor of Trabisonda', The Life and Death of William Long beard (1593), passim.

VI - Miscellaneous

1 Dishonour to part the bands of friendship

  Forde, Parismenos (1599), Sig. M, v
2 Dishonour to break one's word
Forde, Parismus (1598), Sig. O₃ᵣ

3 Dishonour to break a sacred vow
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4 Dishonour to accuse another wrongly
Forde, Parismus (1598), Sig. L₂ᵣ

5 Dishonour to accuse another of dishonour cf. Drama VI, 18
Greene, Philomela (1592), Sig. H₁ᵣ

6 A man dishonours himself by unjust suspicions of another
Greene, Philomela (1592), Sig. I₁ᵣ
Greene's Vision I, 1592, Sigs. F₃ᵣ; F₄ᵣ.
Forde, Parismenos (1599), Sigs. R₃ᵣ; V₁ᵣ.

7 Dishonour to the dead to leave their body unburied
Johnson, The second Part of the Famous History of the
seven Champions of Christendom (1597), I₃ᵣ.
Appendix III

The Husband's Revenge for Adultery in Drama, 1603-1640

According to the conventional code of honour, a husband was entitled to avenge adultery by killing his wife's lover and, possibly, his wife also. On the other hand, according to Christian teaching, both wife and lover should be pardoned; sin was to be punished rather than the sinner. The following list, given under authors in approximately chronological order, is intended to indicate the originality of individual playwrights in using or varying either the conventional or the Christian pattern of behaviour.

John Heywood, A Woman Killed with Kindness, 1603
The lives of both wife and lover are spared and revenge is left to God, working through their consciences. The wife is separated from her husband, but, starving herself to death, she saves her soul and is reconciled to her husband before she dies.

William Shakespeare, Othello, 1603
The wife is murdered by the husband; the plot to murder her supposed lover miscarries. The wife is proved innocent and the husband commits suicide.

Cymbeline, c. 1610
The wife is to be murdered by another, who saves her life. No action is taken against the supposed lover, whose calumny of an innocent woman is later forgiven.

The Winter's Tale, c. 1611
The wife is imprisoned till she shall be tried publicly. Her innocence is established at this trial by the word of the Oracle. The husband is unwilling to accept this, but is eventually brought to realize her innocence and her worth. An attempt to have the supposed lover poison poisonous miscarries.

George Chapman, Bussy d'Ambois, 1604
The wife is tortured to make her reveal the pandar's identity in order that the lover may be trapped. When the pandar has died of grief and shock, the lover is sent for. He overcomes the husband in single combat, but is treacherously slain. The wife is separated from her husband.
John Marston, *The Malcontent*, 1604
The husband's attempt to have the lover killed is unsuccessful. He divorces himself from his wife's love, but they are later reconciled.

*Parasitaster*, 1604-1606
The jealous husband divorces his wife. He is later punished as a slanderer of her honour and has to beg forgiveness.

*The Insatiate Countess*, c. 1610
The husband takes no action against his wife or her lover, but is miserably aware of the dishonour of this. His wife begs his forgiveness before she dies.

John Webster and Thomas Dekker, *Westward Ho*, 1604
The husband disguises himself in order to observe his wife and in order to bring about the cuckolding of other city merchants. His wife, and the merchants' wives are all innocent; so they are all reconciled.

*Northward Ho*, 1605
The husband declares that he will divorce his wife and make her do penance. She is proved innocent.

Cyril Tourneur, *The Atheist's Tragedy*, 1607-11
Husband and lover kill each other in a duel. The wife commits suicide.

Beaumont and Fletcher, *The Maid's Tragedy*, c. 1611
The guilty wife is brought to repentance and she kills her lover. Then, to prove her love for her husband, she commits suicide.

John Fletcher, *The Tragedy of Valentinian*, 1610-14
Innocent wife, who has been raped, commits suicide. The husband arranges the murder of her violator, the Emperor.

Philip Massinger and Nathan Field, *The Fatal Dowry*, 1616-19
The husband challenges the lover and kills him in single combat. The wife's father, a judge, is asked to decide the case of an adulteress. He deems her worthy of death, and then sees his daughter killed by her husband in front of his eyes.
Thomas Middleton and William Rowley, The Changeling, 1622
The husband locks his wife in a closet and sends her lover to her. The betrayed lover kills her and then himself.

Husband divorces his wife and then remarries her. He even insists on his right to her illegitimate child. No action is taken against the child's father.

Thomas Middleton, Women Beware Women, 1625-27
The husband sins in the same way as the wife and so is killed by the avenging brother of the woman who keeps him. The vengeance of heaven overtakes the wife and her lover, for the poison which she intended for the Cardinal is drunk by her lover (now her husband) and she pledges him in the same cup.

The husband is led to believe that his wife is adulterous in intention. He kills her, and is then tortured by the knowledge that she was innocent.

The Roman Actor, 1626
Husband sentences the informer to death and kills the lover with his own hands. The wife is forgiven, but she boasts of her preference for the lover. The husband signs her death warrant, but in the end he suffers her vengeance for her lover's death.

The Emperor of the East, 1630/31
Supposed lover is sentenced to death and the wife to banishment; but their innocence is established and all ends happily.

The Guardian, 1633
The husband's revenge is, by mistake, executed on the bawd, who is thereby punished for her sins. The wife is innocent in deed, if not in intention, and is later reconciled to her husband. The form of his revenge - the slashing of the arms and cutting of the nose - seems to have been an ancient and primitive revenge for adultery. Mavilla's old suitor spitefully bit her nose off (see p. 141 supra); Knavesby threatened to cut off his wife's nose (see p. 218 supra). Othello, however, threatens to cut off Cassio's nose and throw it to a dog (IV, ii, p. 330a).
James Shirley, *The Wedding*, May 1626?
When supposed lover tells a bridegroom of the bride's dishonour the reaction of the latter is to ask the lover to marry her. He refuses, and the wedding proceeds; but the bridegroom then divorces himself from the bride. Later her innocence is established and the supposed lover has to marry the girl with whom he had actually slept.

*Love's Cruelty*, 1631
The husband silences the servant who witnessed his wife's adultery, and so keeps his dishonour secret. He takes no action against the lover, and only divorces himself from his wife's love. Eventually the wife and lover kill each other and the husband dies of grief.

John Ford, 'Tis Pity She's a Whore, c 1629-33.
The wife's brother-lover prevents her public shame at her husband's hands by killing her himself. He is then killed by the husband.

*Love's Sacrifice*, 1632?
The wife is guilty in heart, if not in deed, and when (having been taken embracing her lover) she boasts of her love for him, her husband kills her. The lover later convinces the husband of their innocence in deed, and he is unpunished. Lover and husband both commit suicide later.

The Queen, ??
Wife's innocence is tried by combat, and established.
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