



**REPRESENTATIONS OF  
CHIVALRY, GENDER RELATIONSHIPS AND THE ROLES OF WOMEN  
IN THE PLAYS OF JAMES SHIRLEY**

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**August 1994**

*Awarded 1994*

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## ABSTRACT

James Shirley was one of the most prolific playwrights of the Caroline period, yet the critical trend has been to view him as a derivative playwright whose work, in comparison with that of other Renaissance or Restoration playwrights, offers little or no worthwhile contribution to English literature. Seeking to break from the tradition of comparative criticism that typifies Shirleian scholarship, this study examines specific thematic trends and structures inherent in Shirley's plays.

In order to establish a working structure of the multiple discourses that constitute the gender-based roles and relationships in the plays, this study examines the feminine roles of wife, whore, witch, cross-dressed woman, Amazon and warrior woman, and the masculine roles of husband, lover, pimp, trickster, fop and rapist.

The dissertation is divided into seven chapters, the first of which examines the various discourses of love and marriage that appear in the plays. Traditional notions of masculine superiority are brought into question by Shirley's introduction of a new ideal of marriage based on love and mutual respect. The next five chapters investigate specific, socially defined masculine and feminine roles, and the impact of Shirley's marital ideal upon individuals' and society's changing perceptions of these roles. Traditional social constructions of feminine chastity are challenged by individual women characters, resulting in the general refashioning of gender-based relationships. The final chapter deals with the developing nature of masculine honour from a medieval chivalric ideal to a frequently

misunderstood and misrepresented Caroline moral and behavioral structure.

This study shows that Shirley's plays construct a new form of male-female relationship based on gender-interdependence, and that his work has greater historical and literary importance than it has hitherto been accorded.

## STATEMENT

This dissertation contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any university or other tertiary institution. To the best of my knowledge and belief, the dissertation contains no material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made in the text.

I consent to this dissertation being made available for photocopying and loan if accepted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

Suzanne Roberts

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## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

I am deeply indebted to my supervisors, Dr Alan Brissenden and Dr Heather Kerr, for their invaluable contributions to this study.

I am grateful to the late Emeritus Professor John Colmer and Mrs Dorothy Colmer for their books, advice and encouragement. I have also benefited from the advice and assistance of Ms Robin Eaden.

Finally, my thanks to the staff of the Barr Smith Library, University of Adelaide, for their patience and assistance, particularly those staff members in Special Collections.

## NOTE ON PROCEDURES

I have quoted Shirley from the Gifford and Dyce collection of 1833 regardless of whether more recent editions exist. References to Shirley quotations are given in the format as follows: (Volume, Page). References to other plays are given in full and, where possible, as Act.Scene.Line. All plays, whether by Shirley or by others, are dated on their first occurrence in the text or notes. Dates follow those given in Alfred Bennett Harbage, *Annals of English Drama 975-1700*, revised by Samuel Schoenbaum, 1964.



## INTRODUCTION

### PART I

#### Biographical Details

Of the twentieth-century biographies of Shirley, Arthur Nason's 1915 biography remains the most detailed and substantiated account of Shirley's life,<sup>1</sup> although it has been partly updated and superseded by more recent research.<sup>2</sup> To date, the most useful summary of Shirley's biographical details is Marilyn Thorssen's,<sup>3</sup> and the most useful in-depth study is Sandra Burner's.<sup>4</sup> The following sketch is taken primarily from these two accounts although, for the sake of brevity, substantiating evidence, which both Thorssen and Burner provide in full, has been omitted.

Born in London in September 1596, James Shirley began his playwrighting career in 1625, the year of Charles I's accession to the throne, and continued until the closing of the theatres in 1642. Before this time he had spent some years at St John's College, Oxford, but had left without taking a degree,<sup>5</sup> receiving, rather, a B.A. from St Catherine's College, Cambridge, in 1617. Married in 1618 to Elizabeth Gilmet, the daughter of St Albans' mayor Richard Gilmet, Shirley apparently worked as a vicar in Wheathampstead, eight kilometres from St Albans.<sup>6</sup> In 1621 he became Master of the St Albans Grammar School, and remained in this position until moving to London and beginning his career as a playwright.

Shirley's first play, *Love Tricks*, was registered in 1625 and performed that same

year at the Phoenix in Drury Lane<sup>7</sup> for the Lady Elizabeth's Men. Immediately thereafter the onset of plague necessitated the closing of the theatres for the rest of the year and, upon their reopening, Queen Henrietta's Men was the company newly resident at the Phoenix. Shirley wrote an average of two plays per year for this company until 1636 at which time plague again closed the theatres, the Queen's Men disbanded and Shirley left for Ireland.

Shirley's popularity grew considerably during the period he wrote for the Phoenix, and commendatory verses indicate that he was upheld by his friends and admirers as a major reason for the growing success of that theatre. William Habington, for example, in his commendatory verse on *The Grateful Servant* (1629), writes

thou'st given a name  
To the English Phoenix, which by thy great flame  
Will live . . .

(I, lxxxii)

Shirley also enjoyed favour with the court. On the title page of *The Bird in a Cage* (1633) he describes himself as "Servant to Her Majesty," and the notice in Gray's Inn Register of his admission in January 1633/34 refers to him as "one of the Valets of the Chamber of Queen Henrietta Maria" (Armstrong, ed., *Poems* xiv). The title was probably honorary, and unlikely to indicate that Shirley actually belonged to the queen's household; nevertheless, there may have been some stipend attached to this courtly recognition. In the dedication to *The Bird in a Cage* Shirley further associates himself with the queen by attacking William Prynne, utter-barrister of Lincoln's Inn, for his apparent libel against her<sup>8</sup> in his then recently published *Histrion-mastix, or the Players Scourge and Actors Tragedy*. In 1634 Shirley received the honour of being commissioned by the Inns of Court to write *The Triumph of Peace*, the costly and extravagant masque<sup>9</sup> designed to demonstrate to Charles and Henrietta the royalist loyalty of the Inns and to distance the Inns from Prynne's ideas and activities. The courtly favour enjoyed by Shirley was not without its problems however, and it has been argued that the closing of the theatres was not the sole reason for Shirley's London departure. His insistence on maintaining some degree of moral

independence in his plays, that is, his failure to pander unquestioningly to the egotisms of the court, has been cited as a possible reason for what Shirley himself called his loss of preferment (I, 101),<sup>10</sup> and his subsequent removal to Ireland.

Shirley's prolific publishing record has led to Allan Stevenson's suggestion that Shirley and Christopher Beeston, manager of the Phoenix, may have had a written contract to the effect that Shirley had right of publication, a state of affairs that might thus account for the personal interest shown in his dedications.<sup>11</sup> However, as Simon Trussler points out,

only five of Shirley's 22 plays for Queen Henrietta's Men were published while he was still writing for them, evidently with their approval - but no less than thirteen further plays from that period went into print between 1637 and 1640, once the relationship had ended. And *none* of the six plays Shirley wrote for the King's Men between 1640 and 1642 was published during that time, only reaching print in a collected volume of 1653. . . .<sup>12</sup>

Like Richard Brome's, Shirley's contract probably prevented him from publishing any plays without his theatre company's consent. The ongoing London publication of his plays whilst he was working in Dublin for the first Irish theatre<sup>13</sup> indicates that Shirley wasted no time in making an arrangement with the two booksellers William Cooke and Andrew Crooke once his contract with Beeston had ended.<sup>14</sup> This high rate of publication may also be an indication that any so-called loss of preferment did not diminish the contemporary popularity of Shirley's work.

On his return to London in 1640, Shirley became chief playwright for the King's Men at Blackfriars, resuming his written average of two plays per year. Civil unrest closed the theatres in 1642 and the abruptness of this is evidenced by the fact that Shirley's last play written for the King's Men, *The Court Secret* (1642), was not able to be performed until the Restoration. During the war, Shirley became an active Royalist, perhaps accompanying his patron the Earl of Newcastle into battle.<sup>15</sup> In 1650/51 he admitted to the Committee for Compounding with Delinquents that he "did adhere vnto and assist the fforces raysed ag[ains]t Parl[iamen]t in the Late Warres" (Armstrong, ed., *Poems* xv).

It was perhaps after the battle of Marston Moor in 1646 that Shirley returned to London, publishing his volume of *Poems* that same year. In 1647 he wrote the address to the reader for the Beaumont and Fletcher first folio. He wrote and published two Latin grammars,<sup>16</sup> which indicates his likely return to teaching,<sup>17</sup> and during the 1650s he wrote a number of masques probably, as Marilyn Thorssen suggests, "for his school boys as private entertainments" (Thorssen, ed., *Lady of Pleasure* 35). In the 1658 address "To the Candid Reader" of *Honorio and Mammon*, a "moral . . . in dramatic ornament" based on his masque *A Contention for Honour and Riches* (1625-32), Shirley explains that the piece

is like to be the last, for in my resolve, nothing of this nature  
shall, after this, engage either my pen or invention.

(VI, 3)

Shirley's words were no empty threat for this was to be the last of his dramatic works.

Virtually nothing is known about the final years of Shirley's life. He died as a result of trauma caused by the Great Fire of London, and was buried with his then-wife Frances (nee Blackburne)<sup>18</sup> on October 29, 1666. Named in Shirley's will are three sons and two (married) daughters, as well as various friends and other relatives. Shirley's estate was relatively large, indicating he lived out his life in comfort.

### **Editions and Criticism**

Edited by William Gifford and Alexander Dyce, *The Dramatic Works and Poems of James Shirley* (1833) remains the only available collection of Shirley's complete works. Simon Trussler indicates that this six volume edition "has now become more accessible in a facsimile reprint" (Trussler, comm., *Hyde Park* XXI),<sup>19</sup> but as I can locate only one other Shirley scholar who is aware of this reprint,<sup>20</sup> it can hardly be said to have been successful in enlarging the number of Shirley's twentieth-century readers. Other Shirley anthologies include the 1888 collection of one masque and five of Shirley's plays edited by Edmund Gosse,<sup>21</sup> and the 1941 collection of Shirley's poems edited by Ray Armstrong.

Various Shirley plays have appeared in twentieth-century anthologies of Renaissance plays, and Ruth Zimmer provides an excellent bibliography of these.<sup>22</sup> In 1965 the publication of *The Traitor* marked the beginning of a number of twentieth-century editions of Shirley's plays.<sup>23</sup> In 1979 and 1980 critical editions of nine of Shirley's plays were published in the *Renaissance Drama Series*,<sup>24</sup> followed by two for *The Revels Plays* in 1986.<sup>25</sup> The Royal Shakespeare Company's programme/text of *Hyde Park* was published in 1987. Kim Walker's 1988 edition of *The Duke's Mistress* is the most recent edition of a Shirley play.<sup>26</sup>

Compared with other playwrights of the English Renaissance and despite the fact that he wrote over thirty plays, there has been relatively little critical attention paid to Shirley over the last three hundred years, despite regular mention of him as a major Caroline playwright in anthologies and reference works. The increased concentration on Shirley as a subject for doctoral dissertation since the 1950s (see bibliography) identifies the second half of the twentieth century as the period of greatest interest in Shirley since his death.<sup>27</sup> Most of the critical attention that has been paid to Shirley is biographical; Forrest Black calls it "scholarship rather than criticism,"<sup>28</sup> and it has not yet resulted in any significant theatrical revival of Shirley's works. Indeed, in recent years it appears that only three of Shirley's plays have been produced: *The Cardinal* in 1970 and 1979,<sup>29</sup> *The Lady of Pleasure* in 1978<sup>30</sup> and *Hyde Park* in 1987.<sup>31</sup>

### **The Gifford and Dyce Edition**

Reverend Alexander Dyce brought out *The Dramatic Works and Poems of James Shirley* in 1833, seven years after the death in 1826<sup>32</sup> of the collection's original editor, William Gifford. Before his death, Gifford had edited the majority of Shirley's plays, and Dyce's contribution comprises everything in volume 6 after the first two plays as well as the introductory section in volume 1 entitled "Some Account of Shirley and His Writings" (Gifford and Dyce, eds., *Works* preface). The collection had evidently long been awaited.

Robert Fehrenbach notes that in 1812 the editors of *Biographia Dramatica* called for the publication of a complete edition of Shirley's works, saying "At the time of passing this sheet through the press, we are informed, that Mr. Murray, bookseller, in Fleet street, has such an edition in the press."<sup>33</sup> Twenty years later in 1832 John Genest complained that the promised edition had still not appeared.

In Aug. 1830 I requested a friend to give me what information he could about Shirley - his answer was - "Shirley's works will certainly not come out next winter - the five volumes containing the plays are printed, and the sixth, which will complete the work, only waits the Bookseller's speaking positively to the Editor, whom he has engaged to finish it - but he delays doing this from week to week, so that it is impossible to say for certain when it will be ready. . . ."<sup>34</sup>

The following year saw the publication of the six volumes, which were received with some praise. The immediate response that followed in *The Quarterly Review* lamented the timing of the publication, saying that "A few years ago these volumes would have excited more general interest, and stood a chance of more extensive popularity;"<sup>35</sup> however, it goes on to insist upon the importance of the volumes.

The present edition of Shirley . . . closes that prolific but brilliant series of our dramatic authors, without which no library, which pretends to comprehend the more valuable body of English poetic literature, can be considered perfect.

("The Dramatic Works . . ." 2)

With spelling and punctuation modernized to suit the tastes of its nineteenth-century readers,<sup>36</sup> there is much that makes the Gifford and Dyce edition unacceptable according to today's editorial philosophies and practices. By inserting, deleting and altering words, often silently, the edition standardizes the informal flow of Shirley's language into regular iambic pentameter.<sup>37</sup> There are few explanatory footnotes, and of these many are inadequate. Credit must be given to the editors' scene divisions, however, which have provided a solid foundation for all subsequent editions of Shirley's plays.

Despite the inadequacies of the Gifford and Dyce edition, for the sake of consistency I have relied upon it as my primary source throughout this thesis. My aim has not been to produce a definitive interpretation of any single play, nor have I attempted to

catagorize the plays into discrete genres.<sup>38</sup> Rather I have sought to provide an overview of some of the thematic concerns of the plays as a whole and to analyse Shirley's work with regard to a series of independent, specific structures of my own definition. Thus each play or section of a play is examined according to the primary interests of the chapter in which it appears, and, while their presence is here noted, editorial errors of the primary texts are judged to be of little significance to the arguments and conclusions of the thesis.

### **This Study**

For too long Shirley has been seen as a transitional playwright, bridging the developmental gap between the literature of Elizabethan / Jacobean theatre and Restoration theatre. His eclecticism has often been noted,<sup>39</sup> but it is a mistake to interpret his use of recognizable characters and plots as plagiaristic or detrimental to his literary achievement. As Kenneth Ericksen comments, Shirley was not alone in this practice.

Few Elizabethan dramatists used original plots in their plays preferring to develop plots chosen from earlier drama, history, or stories from both England and the continent. Shirley is no exception.<sup>40</sup>

The critical trend has been to view Shirley either as a less-than-talented imitator of the earlier playwrights such as Jonson and Fletcher, or as a precursor, albeit largely inadequate, of Restoration drama. The perceived lack of any dramaturgical development or single dramaturgical position in Shirley's tragedies<sup>41</sup> has been in part responsible for his categorization as a derivative, decadent playwright (Walker, ed., *Duke's Mistris* 8). Conversely, it is the perceived presence of a stylistic development in his comedies from "comedy of humor" to "urbane and sophisticated comedy" (Wertheim 105, 224) that has led to the continued identification of Shirley's work as anticipatory of Restoration theatre.<sup>42</sup>

The tradition of historical comparison that typifies conventional Shirley criticism has led to a blinkered understanding of Shirley's literary achievement. Marvin Morillo, for example, in comparing Shirley to Jonson, Shakespeare and Middleton, condemns Shirley's

comedies as inconsistent and sporadic (Morillo, ed., *Humorous Courtier* 7),<sup>43</sup> and Katherine Cousins argues that

because Shirley's tragicomedies have been consistently viewed as imitations of Fletcher's, it is impossible to situate them in any critical perspective that does not include Fletcher.<sup>44</sup>

Time and again critics have reached the same conclusion regarding Shirley, the conclusion that, as Andrew Riemer also finds,

Shirley's historical importance is perhaps greater than the intrinsic value of his work.

(Riemer 424)

However, with little investigation carried out on the plays themselves, such conclusions can only remain damaging and unjustified. Clearly there exists a need to rectify the limitations of past critical practice, to concentrate on trends and structures inherent in Shirleian drama in order to construct a meaningful context against which comparative criticisms may be set. The expansion of Shirleian criticism in this direction constitutes an area of research for which this thesis is a preliminary study.

## PART II

### i

In her study of James Shirley's heroines, Ruth Zimmer finds that Shirley "creates a new heroine different from any that precede or follow her."<sup>45</sup> Shirley's "new woman," suggests Zimmer, is typified by the following characteristics: forwardness, pride, quick wit, cleverness, moral discrimination, and strength and nobility of mind and character (Zimmer, *Heroines* 122). Her "'independent' virtue" (Zimmer, *Heroines* 174) enables her to fight against attackers and accusers, and she vindicates herself with wit and spirit. It is through these new women, says Zimmer, that Shirley highlights the social issues and conflicts he finds in his own society, making his audience aware of the social injustices experienced by

Caroline women (Zimmer, *Heroines* 70).

To celebrate Shirley as an unwavering advocate of women's rights solely on the basis of Zimmer's investigations is not necessarily justified. The historical period in which Shirley wrote was a time of momentous social change in England. Throughout the reign of Elizabeth I, women's roles had been brought into the public sphere for discussion, questioning, redefinition. That England not only had a woman ruler, but a woman ruler who refused marriage, was the cause of much dissent throughout Elizabeth's reign. Although Elizabeth and her advisers shrewdly managed images of her gender to her ongoing advantage, Elizabeth's position of leadership inevitably raised controversies regarding the role of women in family, church and society, and the so-called 'woman problem' raged through the early decades of the seventeenth century. Many women found masculine and non-traditional clothing to be a great weapon against the dominant, confining domestic roles; others cut their hair. Ongoing arguments appearing in pamphlets and other publications, whether 'staged' or not,<sup>46</sup> worked to advertize and perhaps encourage the changes in role and representation that some women seemed to be seeking. James I's infamous misogyny did little to quell the trends.

It was in this climate of gender consciousness that Shirley's playwrighting career began. Writing for the Queen's Men and with women constituting a significant percentage of his audience,<sup>47</sup> it is hardly surprising that many of Shirley's female characters appear enterprising and spirited. Such would be only natural for characters who, as Sandra Burner points out, were frequently required to take major roles in the plays.

Both [Ford and Shirley], perhaps responding to the growing female segment in the audience, portray women similarly, often assigning major roles to them.

(Burner 49)

Such female characters were the necessary and entertaining ingredients for social commentary, and, as Martin Butler suggests, social commentary was a major function of the Caroline theatre.

It seems likely . . . that the theatres were important as a focus around which this society could constitute itself and develop its own self consciousness.<sup>48</sup>

Caroline theatre was a place of discussion and dialogue. The playwrights communicated directly with their audiences via the ever-increasing numbers of prologues and epilogues (Butler 111), and they provided models for social behaviour by creating images of their patrons on the stage. The wide circulation of manuscripts (Neill 344) prolonged the life of these images and provided opportunities away from the theatre for discussion of its drama by its "self-consciously sophisticated" (Burner ix) audience. The hybridized mix of courtiers, Inns of Court men, gallants, ladies, merchants, country gentlemen, prostitutes and even soldiers that made up the bulk of Shirley's theatre audience were flattered to see themselves depicted on the stage, and revelled in the satirizing of other recognized social groups (Burner 54-57).

Fascinated by displays of formal, mannerist elegance, the dramatic quality most revered by Shirley's audience was what the Carolines called "wit." According to Michael Neill, "wit" was a general term which could refer to anything from personal satire to the various theatrical techniques designed to satisfy "the audience's insatiable thirst for novelty" (Neill 357).<sup>49</sup> In the prologue to *The Example* (1634) Shirley calls the theatre "this bar of wit," referring to the audience as "commissioners of wit" (III, 282) sitting in judgement over the play.<sup>50</sup> In *The Royal Master* (1637) the conceited secretary Bombo sermonizes to his mistress on the role of wit in royal court society, implying wit to be a valuable and much coveted asset.

I had a wholesome wit  
I' the country, ask the parish and the parson,  
For I kept company with those that read,  
And learn[']d wit by the ear: if any slip from me,  
As where there is a plenty some will out,  
Here are so many wit catchers, a lost maidenhead  
Is sooner found . . .

(IV, 146)

Fowler, in the aptly titled *The Witty Fair One* (1628), is described as

a reputed wit

I' the town, affected by young gentlemen  
For his converse . . .

(I, 278)

Wit, therefore, is an enviable and fashionable quality. In the same play the gentleman Clare hopes that Penelope has "more wit than to trust [Fowler's] voluble courtship" (I, 284). Wit is an essential weapon, for both men and women, in the battle of the sexes. Mammon, in *Honoriam and Mammon* (printed 1658), equates wit with a feisty sort of common sense that has allowed her to retain her independence from men.

Some may  
Traduce my fame, and charge me with a levity  
And frequent change; but I have been less constant,  
Because I found no man had wit enough  
To manage me, or worth enough to invite  
The stay of my affections . . .

(VI, 81)

It is wit that allows women to gain the upper hand in courtship rituals. In *The Ball* (1632) Honoria and Rosamond are openly and simultaneously courted by the over-confident Lord Rainbow. Determined to enjoy both women, he draws lots to decide which woman will be his wife and which will be his mistress; when both lots prove to be blank, Rosamond explains the mystery.

'Tis quickly solv'd: your lordship was too confident;  
We never were at such a loss, my lord,  
As with the hazard of our wit or honour  
To court you with so desperate affection.

(III, 85)

It is to their wit that Honoria and Rosamond appeal when teaching Lord Rainbow a lesson, and it is the women's wit, again, that Lord Rainbow rewards when he concedes defeat and offers both women jewels with no expectation of return favour.

Shirley's audience delighted in clever dialogue and battles of wit, and Sandra Burner attributes this to the audience's possible desire for an experience beyond the confines of passive entertainment.

The witty dialogue in *Hyde Park*, for example, and in Shirley's other London comedies defines the taste of his audience. Dialogue that is more important than action and that depicts character is possible only with a

sophisticated clientele, such as might also include playgoers trained in debate and casuistry as the Inns of Court men were. In the relative ease of his relationship with his audience, Shirley's London comedies anticipate the audience participation in analyzing a play; criticism had become a topic of polite conversation.

(Burner 56-57)

Although wit is often presented as little more than superficial cleverness,<sup>51</sup> it may also function as a protection against attacks upon honour and virtue, and thus become, particularly for women, a means of attaining some measure of independence. That many of Shirley's female characters display this quality of wit may not, therefore, be a reflection of Shirley's deliberate identification and representation of women as social victims, as Ruth Zimmer suggests; these witty women may simply be an indication of Shirley's considerable ability to cater to the tastes and fashions of his audience.<sup>52</sup>

## ii

Shirley's Caroline audience was occupied with issues of social mobility, economic competitiveness, political upheaval and change. Charles I, adopting the practice introduced by his father, sold knighthoods and other titles, and thus enabled the gradual erosion of the English caste system to continue. The presence of Henrietta Maria, a Catholic queen in a fiercely Protestant country, coupled with the ever-increasing political strength of the Puritan movement, challenged set ideas of religion and spirituality. Although the majority of the population was of lower or peasant-class and unaffected by alterations at the other end of the social order, the impact of these factors upon lifestyle, culture and the social and spiritual identity of the upper-middle and gentry classes was severe.<sup>53</sup>

Constructions and reconstructions of the past provided images of an ideal, simple world, and supplied a collective social security against the uncertainties and shifting dynamics of the present. Notions of chivalry, notes Maurice Keen, were essential to Renaissance individuals', especially Renaissance men's, self-fashioning.

[Chivalry] had a key impact in the fashioning of the idea of the gentleman . . . and of his mode of living. It did so by enmeshing in a web of mental

association his social accomplishments, his 'courtliness' (especially in regard to women) and his skills in horsemanship, the hunting field and sword play, and the social virtues to be expected of him, his courage and his generosity, his loyalty. . . .<sup>54</sup>

Prince Leonario, in *The Doubtful Heir* (1638), is praised by the nobleman Ernesto for his chivalric traits, being described as "noble in his nature, active, bountiful, / Discreet, and valiant" (IV, 281). In *The Constant Maid* (1636(?)-40) Justice Clement also appeals to the chivalric ideals of courtesy and valour when he defines the complete man as "[both a] scholar and a soldier" (IV, 511). Noting that in seventeenth-century paintings men are displayed in the full armour of their knightly predecessors, Carolyn Swift asserts that

the seventeenth-century chivalric romance gave courtly readers in Renaissance England a model and validation.<sup>55</sup>

By presenting medieval chivalry as the historic ideal, Shirley's plays provided his Caroline audience with reassuring visions of the strength and solidity of their social past. Chivalry not only yielded glorious and romanticized images of war, power and success, it contained set ideologies on behavioral issues and provided clear definitions of appropriate masculine and feminine activity. It was to chivalric tradition that Jacobean and Caroline society looked for structures of honour and definitions of individual worth. Shirley's plays take advantage of this sentimentality by using specific chivalric constructs as the bases for contrast and comparison with representations of the present.

Images of love provide the primary link between past and present in Shirley's plays.

In *The Grateful Servant* Foscari describes the virtues of his unhappy page Dulcino:

he suffers, sir, for love, in that  
He is a gentleman; for never could  
Narrow and earthly minds be capable  
Of love's impression . . .

(II, 22)

Love is the privilege of the new type of Caroline nobility, those people who, in their adherence to chivalric tradition, are noble of heart and noble of mind regardless of their social status or lineage. "Love," says Clara in *The Court Secret*, "stoops to no prerogative / Of birth, or name" (V, 459). Love is presented in Shirley's plays as an omnipotent,

flawless, spiritual power. John Nims calls Shirley's type of love "a possessive force which cannot be resisted."<sup>56</sup> "Love," says Maria to Clara, "can obey no law but what it likes" (V, 458), and in *The Cardinal* (1641) Celinda recognizes "there's a fate in love" (V, 303). This equating of love and fate is in keeping with the Platonic Love philosophies of the Caroline court.<sup>57</sup> Despite the fact that Shirley's audience would, therefore, at least have been familiar with, and probably even empathized with the type of love depicted in his plays, Elaine Kalmar complains that

Shirley feels no need to explain love or justify its goodness and desirability. He seems to assume its worth. . . .<sup>58</sup>

Kalmar's complaint seems unwarranted, however, for there appears to be no need for Shirley to explain his privileging of love or to justify the goodness contained in his representations of love. In raising love to the status of a religious ideal, Shirley provides a comprehensive definition of love that forms the foundation of his plays. It is against this construct of love that Shirley's characters act, and it is through their questioning of love, their misunderstanding of love, their attempts to avoid or control love that Shirley's plays reflect the tensions within the changing order of roles and discourses that define social and domestic gender-based relationships.

Dependent upon his definition of love is Shirley's presentation of three areas of gender-relevant discourse: marriage, feminine chastity and masculine honour. This thesis investigates both Shirley's representations of these categories and the implications of Shirley's differing representations for the men and women in his plays.

### iii

This thesis provides an examination of various aspects of Shirley's plays that are dependent upon his definition of love. The chapters, while each an independent discussion, are interrelated through theme and content, and are founded upon Shirley's formation and definition of the courtship-marriage experience.

Chapter 1 examines the various structures of love and marriage that appear in Shirley's plays. Marriage is fundamental to the social relations between men and women. Marriage, as Elaine Kalmar points out, is the primary type of male-female relationship in Shirley's plays that is directly dependent upon love.

All of Shirley's tragedies and most of his comedies deal with love and marriage, especially the problems which result from the custom of enforced marriage, that is, the custom of arranging marriages without regard to love or compatibility.

(Kalmar 1)

Chivalric structures of enforced marriage and marginalized, secret love underlie Shirley's presentation of the new and emergent constructs of Platonic love-marriage relationships. Combining the requirements of chivalric love relationships with the moral strictures of Caroline Platonic Love, Shirley's plays portray issues relevant to the Caroline court and gentry society. As emergent ideologies, the Platonic love-marriage constructs challenge the dominant love-marriage structures that are unnoticed by society and are accepted as social norms. Also challenged by Shirley's new definition of marriage are those constructs of marriage that are residual, those constructs that are relevant and active but frequently questioned by society.<sup>59</sup> Shirley introduces marriage as an ideal where the woman, although not independent from the man, is no longer defined as his possession or chattel. Rather, marriage is a relationship of mutual dependence. Introduced is the notion of marriage as a perfecting union, providing spiritual, sexual and social completion for both men and women. Shirley's women participate actively and independently in love and courtship rituals and, once married, they enjoy a status spiritually independent from their husbands which is in contrast to the chivalric definition of a wife as merely an extension of her husband.

The attempts of many of Shirley's male characters to transform their virtuous female relatives (wives, daughters) into morally corrupt and socially unacceptable figures form the material for discussion in Chapter 2. Masculine (mis)representations of women as bawds and whores are exposed as inaccurate and deficient, revealing a contrast between

generalized masculine and feminine perceptions of women. Feminine virtue, a quality equivalent to feminine chastity but not confined to sexuality, becomes a standard of contrasting definitions: where Shirley's men see virtue as a quality a woman must actively seek if she is to attain spiritual legitimacy, Shirley's women perceive virtue as a quality of womanhood itself. Not all of Shirley's characters accept these new discourses of marriage and not all of those characters who embrace the more traditional marital values are men.<sup>60</sup> Shirley's characters act and evolve in accordance with the views they expressly support as well as in response to the conflicts that result from their encounters with opposing views. By presenting and then challenging chivalric definitions of marriage, chastity and honour, Shirley exposes as ideological various popular 'truths' that dominated English Renaissance thought and society, hence creating a dialogue of multiple discourses in the plays.

Men's natural superiority to women and women's inherent predisposition for sin are two normative beliefs dominating the Caroline period that Shirley challenges in his plays. Ideas of gender equality, such as are inherent in Shirley's definition of marriage, can develop into threats of feminine superiority and thus reinforce, perhaps even exaggerate, the perceived need for the masculine containment of women. Witchcraft and cross-dressing are two stereotyped techniques used by women in their traditional quest for domination over men. Chapters 3 and 4 address these techniques individually and investigate the effects they have upon the characters and action of the plays. Although the activities of women are traditionally believed to constitute the major threat to the structures underlying masculine dominated society, neither witchcraft nor cross-dressing is a uniquely feminine role. By contrasting representations of female witches with male witches, Chapter 3 identifies Shirley's male witches as charlatans, social criminals as distinct from the spiritual criminals that female witches apparently personify. Similarly, in their cross-dressing exploits discussed in Chapter 4, Shirley's men are again revealed as pranksters and tricksters who sin against social order. In addition, however, they are seen to embody a spiritual threat to the essential order of nature that possibly exceeds the threat presented by

cross-dressed women. Through cross-dressing, men risk accusations of effeminization and the compromise, if not the absolute loss, of their masculine honour.

Chapter 5 explores the relationship between the realm of masculine honour and those women classed as occupying one of the related but distinct roles of Amazon and warrior woman. Seeking to survive entirely without men, in Shirley's plays the Amazon battles for emotional and sexual self-sufficiency rather than the traditional Amazonian prizes of social and physical independence. Like those who cling to chivalric ideologies of marriage, the Amazon refuses to accept any notion of gender equality, embracing, rather, the ideal of feminine superiority. Using the courtship process as the battle arena, Shirley stages conflicts between various characters, both male and female, and the Amazon, thus promoting again the discourse of equality and compromise within marriage. In contrast to the Amazon, Shirley's warrior women seek to maintain inter-gender harmony by providing men with much-needed images and reminders of masculine honour. Warrior women's displays of masculine honour do not constitute a threat to masculine dominance. They are temporary, and work to contrast the constancy of feminine loyalty and virtue with the abasement of masculine lechery and corruption.

Chapter 6 deals with the idea of men as sexual sinners whose honour and spiritual salvation is dependent upon the undeviating purity of feminine chastity. Women's assumed predisposition towards sexual sin is challenged by Shirley's representations of rape. The theme of rape is vital to a study of the social structures and discourses emergent in Shirley's plays because, as comparisons between the plays and the legend of Lucrece reveal, any attempts at resolving rape remain highly problematic for Shirley's characters. Rape is an activity destructive to both men and women, yet, in accordance with traditional ideologies, feminine sacrificial death remains the only solution to rape in Shirley's plays. The idealization of feminine chastity inherent in the death solution is in keeping with discourses of marriage and feminine independence emergent in the plays; however, such a solution to rape conflicts directly with possibilities of sexual equality between husband

and wife. Rape, as a product of the breakdown of masculine honour, embodies the inversion of Shirley's marital ideal and is perhaps the most dangerous form of social, moral and spiritual threat presented in the plays.

In Chapter 7 Shirley's use of duelling as a method of highlighting men's lack of understanding regarding the nature of masculine honour is investigated. Looking to chivalric tradition for images of honour, many of Shirley's men, like their counterparts in Caroline society, indulge in individual combat as proof of their personal honour. Hardly requiring feminine encouragement, indeed, often ignoring women's efforts to be specifically discouraging, the attempts by Shirley's male characters to reconstruct chivalric displays of knightly combat are revealed as dishonourable and degraded. Furthering the breakdown of traditional definitions of masculine honour is Shirley's depiction of controversies surrounding the notion of the dependence of honour upon lineage. An ideology residual but still strongly influential in the Caroline period, Shirley's presentation of the issue of masculine honour is a reflection of an area of Caroline social consciousness that was undergoing a period of active redefinition. The new discourse of honour presented in the plays, although reflected in the behaviour of men, is not dependent upon masculine displays of valour and daring. Rather, masculine honour becomes something akin to feminine chastity and virtue; no longer judged primarily in the context of male homosocial relationships, masculine honour finds its definition and identity within constructs of love and marriage.

Through independent examination of the feminine roles of wife, whore, witch, cross-dressed woman, Amazon and warrior woman, the majority of Shirley's women are revealed as self-reliant and fully capable of self-definition. In contrast to chivalric tradition, the status of each woman's chastity is not dependent upon the actions of men, for Shirley's men, whether occupying the traditionally threatening roles of pimp, trickster and rapist or the supposedly protective roles of father, lover, husband and champion, have the power neither to control women nor to dictate the essence of womanhood. In their failed attempts

to define femininity by exercising force over the sexual behaviour of women, Shirley's men are seen to forfeit, or at least compromise, their masculine honour. However, although they enjoy a spiritual and emotional identity distinct from men, Shirley's women remain dependent upon masculine definitions for the social representations of feminine chastity. Similarly, masculine honour, traditionally related to femininity through the knight's chivalric adoration and idealization of his lady, is presented by Shirley as essentially dependent upon women. Thus, it is not that Shirley's heroines<sup>61</sup> or heroes are of an inherently new and different breed that sets them apart from the characters of the Elizabethan / Jacobean and Restoration dramas. Rather, it is the structures underlying the relationships between his men and women that constitute the difference. Shirley's plays construct a form of male-female relationship, based on gender interdependence, which was new to drama: the spiritual and sexual (at least within marriage) equality of the sexes.

## CHAPTER ONE

### **‘The Prerogative of heaven’: Love and Marriage**

It is against the moral and social measure of love that Shirley’s characters define and contextualize their intergender relationships. The definition of marriage emergent in Shirley’s plays advocates love as an ideology upon which relationships of sexual equality are based. Shirley’s definition of idealized, love-based marriage is in contrast to the structure of marriage that was rooted in traditional gender definitions of male superiority and that was dominant in Caroline society. However, as elements of the medieval Courtly Love tradition were reflected strongly in the Caroline court’s system of Platonic Love, it is useful to compare the love experiences of Shirley’s courtly characters against a background of medieval, chivalric love. Chivalric tradition bestowed upon love an ennobling quality, and this quality is included in Shirley’s ideal of love. Chivalric tradition required a knight to submit himself in love and worship to the lady of his desire, and this relationship is reproduced in the courtship experiences of Shirley’s characters. Through the courtship-marriage process, Shirley’s noblewomen enact Courtly Love traditions and exhibit some of the experiences of Caroline followers of Platonic Love. Emphasizing the mixed morality of the wedding night, Shirley reconstitutes elements of both love systems into a new, emergent definition of marriage.

From the early Renaissance right through to and including the Caroline period, the dominant view was that a child’s gender depended entirely upon the amount of heat present during conception and pregnancy. As Thomas Johnson recorded in his 1634 translation of Ambroise Paré’s works:

Male children are engendered of a more hot and dry seed, and women of a more cold and moist: for there is much lesse strength in cold than in heat, and likewise in moisture than in drynesse. . . .<sup>1</sup>

Women existed biologically as incomplete men. In *The Example Confident Rapture* is entirely in keeping with this ideology when he explains the difference between men and women:

nature only huddles [a woman] into the world  
When she sends forth a man . . .

(III, 301)

It was "the defect of heate in women, which could not drive and thrust forth those parts as in men" (Paré, *Workes* 128) that served as an explanation for the natural inferiority of women. Inferior in body and gender, women were also thought to be inferior in mind and spirit. Women lacked rationality, and thus lacked control over their own passions and desires. As a consequence, women were more inclined towards sinful behaviour than men, especially in the areas of domestic power, where they sought continually to dominate their husbands, and in sexuality, where their appetites were immorally ravenous. The view of the woman as the 'weaker vessel' was an attitude engrained into every member of society at an early age through the homilies, which were sermons covering every aspect of living. First published by Edward VI, the collection of homilies was reissued by Elizabeth I in 1562 with instructions that they be read every Sunday and Holy-day in every parish church, and contained such statements as

For the woman is a weak creature, not endued with like strength and constancy of mind: therefore they be the sooner disquieted, and they be the more prone to all weak affections and dispositions of mind, more than men be; and lighter they be and more vain in their fantasies and opinions. . . .<sup>2</sup>

Despite the medical and religious evidence for the inferiority of women, both real and fictional women often found themselves idealized specifically because of their femininity and elevated far beyond this lowly position. In Shirley's tragedy *The Traitor* (1631), for example, the duke surrenders his gender-based superiority and, using a trope that is indicative of his political position, places himself in the role of servant to the woman

Amidea.

Thou dost with ease  
Captivate kings with every beam, and mayst  
Lead them like prisoners round about the world . . .

(II, 141)

Certainly Amidea is both beautiful and virtuous, but it is the fact that Amidea is a woman that seems the prime source of her advantage.<sup>3</sup> Similarly when Vittori, in *The Young Admiral* (1633), is called to war he assures his young mistress that she will be better off without him; his death would free her from their love vow and set the world of men at her feet.

Princes will court thee then, and at thy feet  
Humble their crowns, and purchase smiles with  
provinces.  
When I am dead the world shall doat on thee . . .

(III, 134)

While her femininity works as a potential advantage for a woman in fictional gender relationships, it also works as a disadvantage, reinforcing the woman's position of inferiority to men. "That ever man / Should be so dull of soul to love a woman!" exclaims Orseolo in *The Humorous Courtier* (1631; IV, 531); the implication is of a degeneration in the nature of any man who responds to the wiles of a woman. Antonio in *Love Tricks* (1625) cries out to his sister Selina, "you are a baggage, and not worthy of a man" (I, 12). Clearly men by their nature are superior to women, who must make themselves deserving of masculine acknowledgment and attention.<sup>4</sup> Yet, as the example of Infortunio baring his heart to Selina in *Love Tricks* shows, these same inferior women retain a paradoxical ability to wield power over their masculine superiors.

Love hath made you a throne to sit, and rule  
O'er Infortunio, all my thoughts obeying  
And honouring you as queen . . .

(I, 10)

It is love that provides the gauge by which men and women may compare the relative power of their gender positions. In *The Brothers* (1626) Fernando is captivated by Jacinta and, in a description to his brother Francisco, elevates her to the level of the angels:<sup>5</sup>

and I saw  
 A smile shoot graceful upward from her eyes,  
 As if they had gain'd a victory o'er grief,  
 And with it many beams twisted themselves,  
 Upon whose golden threads the angels walk  
 To and again from heaven.

(I, 202)

Francisco's response is glib and direct, almost prosaic: "I do believe, / By all these metaphors, you are in love" (I, 202). Again love is identified as the factor influencing a man's interpretation of a woman. Love is a shifting dynamic, providing changes to and inconsistencies in gender definitions. Love is a system in itself; it not only defines gender positions and relationships but it also provides a structural basis for social and moral behavioral patterns. Ideologies of love have played a significant role in religious and political systems throughout the ages. As these systems have evolved, so have ideas of love and, therefore, both literary reflections and formations of love.

The institution of Courtly Love came into being in the latter part of the twelfth century. Written by Andreas Capellanus, *De amore (Of Love)* appeared as the most influential medieval treatise on the fundamental theory of Courtly Love.<sup>6</sup> Various forms of such a love system had existed previously, but, through the literature and philosophies of Capellanus and of the troubadour poets, the medieval, chivalric version of Courtly Love introduced for the first time the notion that love was an ennobling quality.<sup>7</sup>

The effect of love is that no greed can cheapen the true lover. Love makes the hirsute barbarian as handsome as can be: it can even enrich the lowest-born with nobility of manners: usually it even endows with humility the arrogant.<sup>8</sup>

This medieval introduction of the ennobling quality in love was in contrast to the early Christian tradition that had labelled love as a weakness or disease (Monter 121). Nevertheless, this earlier tradition was not obstructed by the troubadours' expressions of love. Rather, the differing views of love remained intact and, as indicated in Shirley's plays, were to coexist for centuries to come. To Gerard, in *Changes, or Love in a Maze* (1632), love is a state to be avoided: "The sword wounds gently, but love kills indeed" (II,

326). On the other hand, *The Ball* has Barker, in typical troubadour fashion, claiming to the Lady Honoria "Your love will perfect me" (III, 89). Of the four plays written by Shirley which contain *love* in the title, three of their titles indicate that love, if not directly unwelcome, at least represents a state of confusion: *Love Tricks*, *Love's Cruelty* (1631), *Changes, or Love in a Maze*. Only *The Doubtful Heir* with its subtitle *Rosania, or Love's Victory* openly advertises support for the process and effects of love. The confusion surrounding views of love is neatly expressed by Theodosia in *The Royal Master* when she highlights the paradox created by the various notions of love, sighing, "There is no cure for love, but love or death" (IV, 158).

With any changes in the definition of love come alterations to notions of gender and gender relationships. Medieval Courtly Love offered a new role for the women of the aristocracy. Endowing love with an ennobling quality resulted in the giver of love, the woman, being dominant over her lover. The man's role was to seek out and earn love, hence the elevated position enjoyed by some fictional women over their masculine lovers. Like the Virgin Mary, who had been popular amongst her own cult of worshippers since the first centuries of the Christian church,<sup>9</sup> the noblewoman now represented divinity and spirituality, and, as the embodiment of love, had the power indirectly to make her masculine worshipper more noble through encouraging him to perform deeds of knightly valour (Barber 88). Richard Barber emphasizes how essential the woman's Courtly Love role was to the order of chivalry, which formed the social, economic and religious foundation of medieval, feudal England.

Chivalry and the worship of fair ladies are so intimately bound up as to become almost indistinguishable; the knight who aspires to military glory does not yearn to lead armies in Alexander's footsteps, does not dream of the gold of power, but longs to shine for his prowess as an individual, that he may earn the silver of his lady's love.

(Barber 71)

The noblewoman was placed upon a symbolic pedestal. It was her responsibility to select a man she deemed worthy to be her knight (Monter 124). The noblewoman then served

as the spiritual inspiration for her chosen knight, providing encouragement for his displays of valour, displays tailored to increase the knight's honour, status and reputation.

A further characteristic of Courtly Love, again attributed to the troubadour poets, disallowed any overlap between Courtly Love and marriage. Theoretically, the marital relationship was entirely separate from the romantic, chivalric relationship enjoyed by the knight and his lady. Eileen Power explains this completely extramarital nature of the Courtly Love relationship.

It was the essence of courtly love that it should be a thing freely sought and freely given; it could not be found in the marriage of feudalism, which was so often a parental arrangement, binding children in the interests of land. Fiefs marry but men and women love. True, the adored lady was always a wife but always someone else's wife. This was one of the rules of the game.<sup>10</sup>

As with the majority of aristocratic marriages of the later Renaissance, medieval noble marriage tended to be a political and financial arrangement between parents in which the children had little say and even less control. Once married, the wife - naturally inferior, a daughter of Eve - was subordinate to her husband. She was expected to bear her husband's children, oversee the running of his household, and obey him in every respect. As F.J.C. Hearnshaw explains, it was this very business of marriage that remained, at least to the troubadours, the most formidable obstacle to romance and love:

Ladies were encouraged to seek and find the emancipation of illicit intrigue, and were carefully instructed in the ways by which jealous husbands could be outwitted and their conventional fury evaded. . . . Chivalric gallantry, therefore, as is abundantly evident from the songs which exalt it and the romances which record its doings, was a gigantic system of bigamy, in which every lady was expected to have both a husband and a *paramour*; and every complete cavalier, besides the wife to whom for business reasons he was bound, a goddess, whose commands he unhesitatingly obeyed, and whose cause he upheld against all comers.<sup>11</sup>

Although in the early stages of its development Courtly Love may have often appeared as just an institutionalized excuse for adultery, by the end of the medieval period and on into the Renaissance, the theory of Courtly Love had become strictly platonic, its natural eroticism transformed into "a source of infinite spiritual possibilities" (Power 24). Years

later, in the second quarter of the seventeenth century, it is this emphatic idealism that is reflected in the Caroline brand of love, the Platonic Love Cult. Whether the medieval Courtly Love roles were representations of actual, lived experience is a matter for contention. Nevertheless, this does not discount from the significance of the tradition's influence over the social fashions of later generations. As Eileen Power comments

It is probable that the idea of chivalry had far more influence upon men and women of later ages than it had upon medieval life

(Power 27-28)

The Platonic Love Cult, introduced into English court society by Henrietta Maria, Charles I's French queen, maintained close ties with the chivalric philosophies of love.<sup>12</sup> Medieval ideals of love and spiritual elevation were revived out of the wholly literary realm they had occupied for over a century and introduced into actual court society.<sup>13</sup> In contrast, the advice given to common people in conduct books and marriage manuals placed love in a far more pragmatic light. In 1622 William Gouge advised that love is the consequence of a virtuous and happy marriage, not the inspiration or cause of the coupling. Indeed, love, as a continuation of mutual liking, is distinctly utilitarian and unromantic.

If at first there be a good liking mutually and thorowly settled in both their hearts of one another, loue is like to continue in them for ever...<sup>14</sup>

Similarly, in 1624 William Whately counselled husbands and wives to work at loving one another.

Let the husband loue his wife...and let wiues be louers of their husbands...pray often each with other, and each for other, & that will breed much loue. Do much good to the soules of each other, and you shall not chuse, but be kindly affectioned to one another.<sup>15</sup>

Here, love is not the ideal basis of marriage but simply an aspect of the relationship to be worked at and cultivated by husband and wife in order to strengthen and sustain the marriage.

Henrietta Maria's Platonic Love Cult brought with it an emphasis on chastity, for men now as well as women, that mirrored the preaching of conduct books but that was relatively new in the context of courtier behaviour. Yet the Platonic Love Cult did not

sacrifice the sense of playful flirtation and colourful gaiety which had accompanied preceding love traditions. Indeed, critics have suggested that it was the gaiety and fashionable liveliness rather than the moral strength of the Love Cult that participants found most attractive.<sup>16</sup> In a letter dated June 3, 1634, James Howell wrote to a friend in Paris:

The Court affords little News at present, but that there is a Love called *Platonic Love*, which much sways thereof late; it is a Love abstracted from all corporeal gross Impressions and sensual Appetite, but consists in Contemplations and Ideas of the Mind, not in any carnal Fruition. This Love sets the Wits of the Town on work. . . .

(cited in Fletcher 176)

One aspect encouraging the lightheartedness of the cult was the fashion of writing love letters and poetry to one's Platonic mistress, whether she was of flesh and blood or an imaginative creation.<sup>17</sup> As Graham Parry points out:

Waller had his Sacharissa, Herrick his Julia, Lovelace his Lucasta, Carew his Celia, Habington his Castara, each poet lyrically responsive to the perfection of his mistress, whose mind is a platonic abode of beauty, goodness and truth.<sup>18</sup>

In addition to the work of recognized poets, open, almost impersonal letters of compliment often found their way into print (Fletcher 181-82), and seemed written more for the pleasure of creating texts of fanciful, witty and spirited language than of pursuing intimate relations. Caperwit, in *Changes, or Love in a Maze*, parodies this fashion in his romantic glorification of the adjective.

Adjectives! would you have a poem without adjectives?  
They are the flowers, the grace of all our language:  
A well chose epithet doth give new soul  
To fainting poesy; and makes every verse  
A bride; with adjectives we bait our lines,  
When we do fish for gentlewomen's loves,  
And with their sweetness catch the nibbling ear  
Of amorous ladies . . .

(II, 302)

Compared with an actual letter of compliment, written by James Howell to Lady Elizabeth Digby, Caperwit's acclamations are hardly exaggerated:

Madam: It is no improper Comparison, that a thankful Heart is like a Box of precious Ointment, which keeps the Smell long after the Thing is spent. Madam (without Vanity be it spoken) such is my Heart to you, and such are

your Favours to me; the strong aromatic Odour they carried with them  
diffused itself thro' all the Veins of my Heart. . . .

(cited in Fletcher 181)

With the letter writer's mistress-recipient the bestower of favours in love rituals, the letter is clearly in the Courtly Love tradition. The lover's highfalutin, almost self-deprecating language elevates his mistress, and the non-confidential nature of the letter encourages the elevation of women generally. This literary devotion to women, not confined to poetry and letter-writing, altered the way in which women were regarded by men at court; Marvin Morillo suggests that

the influence of the queen's court can be detected in Shirley's early plays, notably in The Humorous Courtier: the superiority of the women in the play, and in subsequent plays, an arrangement which helped shape the pattern of his comedies of manners, may be partly attributed to the new position of women at court.

(Morillo, ed., *Humorous Courtier* 77)

The public face of the Platonic Love tradition worked specifically to encourage the praise and flattery of all women, and this is well evidenced in Shirley's prologue to *The Coronation* (1635).

But what have I omitted? Is there not  
A blush upon my cheeks, that I forgot  
The ladies? and a female prologue too! -  
Your pardon, noble gentlewomen, you  
Were first within my thoughts; I know you sit,  
As free, and high commissioners of wit,  
Have clear, and active souls, nay, though the men  
Were lost, in your eyes, they'll be found again;  
You are the bright intelligences move,  
And make a harmony in this sphere of love.<sup>19</sup>

(III, 459)

Despite the self-indulgence of its language, the Platonic Love Cult served not as an excuse for immorality and infidelity but, as Erica Veevers observes, it provided a structure for decency and modesty in sexual practices.

The theory of Platonic love led in practice to certain conventions. . . . Strict moral restraints and the lady's own virtue guarded her from any improper advances, although within these restraints a high degree of social intimacy was permitted between men and women.<sup>20</sup>

Adultery and all other forms of unchastity were outlawed in the court of Charles

I which, as D.R. Watson reports, was one of the most formal in Europe.<sup>21</sup> Unlike the court of James I in which sexual excesses occurred commonly and openly, any sexual machinations and misdemeanours in Charles I's court were seen as unacceptable, and thus were confined strictly to the realm of secrecy. The Platonic Love Cult, with its worship of court ladies and habits of ostentatious respect and gallantry towards women, offered both the appearance and actuality of chastity within heterosexual and heterosocial relationships. Of course, not all was as morally pristine as appearances suggested. Morillo argues that Shirley's refusal to avoid satirizing the court sins of flattery, sycophancy and corruption was a strong influence in his lack of fortunes from 1634 on (Morillo, "Preferment" 101-17).<sup>22</sup> Shirley himself, in the 1639 dedication to *The Maid's Revenge* (1626), asserted "I never affected the ways of flattery: some say I have lost my preferment, by not practising that Court sin . . ." (I, 101).

Politically, too, the Platonic Love Cult had an important role to play, as Erica Veevers notes.

The extension of the concept of 'Love' beyond the personal, to a principle of universal peace and harmony approved by 'heaven', made a useful political statement in the 1630s in line with the arguments for peace being advocated by Charles.

(Veevers 3)

The advocacy of marriage and chastity served as a useful political tool for Charles who made use of the symbol of Christian marriage and the analogy between family and state as the means for the moral and political restructuring of his court and kingdom.<sup>23</sup> In the 1630s Sir Robert Filmer's then unpublished writings reflected much of Charles I's ideology.

If we compare the natural duties of a Father with those of a King, we find them to be all one, without any difference at all but only in the latitude or extent of them. As the Father over one family, so the King, as Father over many families, extends his care to preserve, feed, clothe, instruct and defend the whole commonwealth. His wars, his peace, his courts of justice, and all his acts of sovereignty, tend only to preserve and distribute to every subordinate and inferior Father, and to their children, their rights and privileges, so that all the duties of a King are summed up in an universal fatherly care of his people.<sup>24</sup>

Making use of the Platonic Love Cult for political ends was a shrewd strategy on Charles' part, because the Cult clearly had its roots in the medieval chivalric ideal and was thus necessarily attractive to the Caroline aristocrats who were enveloped in a wave of chivalric sentimentality. The strong interest in heraldry that endured during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, notes Arthur Ferguson, was one way in which ties were sought to link the present to past chivalric practices.<sup>25</sup> Although chivalric practice was no longer practical to the style of Elizabethan, Jacobean and Caroline warring, it continued to influence and direct the fundamental structure, education and running of court and 'proper' society. The chivalric training of the page and squire was made more formal than ever before (Hearnshaw 27), and of course the Platonic Love Cult's elevation of women was also a consequence of the Caroline preoccupation with chivalric courtesies.

However, for all its usefulness, the Platonic Love Cult created inherent theoretical difficulties both in the relationships between men and women and in the issue of gender-related role definition. The institution of Courtly Love had provided the medieval aristocratic woman with a role containing two distinct elements: obedient, subservient child-bearer, and divine, idealized goddess. These two elements were clearly defined and separated. The man to whom the noblewoman was subservient, her husband, was entirely distinct from the man she dominated in love. The marital relationship was overt, whereas the chivalric, courtly romance was enshrined in secrecy. Although she was required to embody and perform opposing and contradictory roles in her relationships with men, there was no danger of these roles overlapping. The medieval noblewoman was faced with no confusion about the essential nature of herself and her position in society.

Equally, the Caroline common woman experienced no difficulty in self-definition, for she was provided with strict guidelines and definitions explaining what was expected of her from God, her parents, her husband and society at large. The ideal wife was "a mirror of modesty"<sup>26</sup>. Where the most valuable quality in a husband was kindness, in a wife it was obedience. The ideal wife was

the tongue of silence, the hand of labour, and the heart of love:...her voice  
is musicke, her countenance meekness, her minde vertuous...

(Breton 30)

Caroline women, in their role of wife, were required to aspire to extremes of social and moral virtue and were expected to be capable of assisting and comforting their husbands in every situation. The woman, as wife, was

a comfort of Calamity, and in prosperity a companion, a Physician in  
sickness, and a Musician in helpe: her wayes are the walk toward heauen,  
and her Guide is the Grace of the Almighty...

(Breton 28)

As she is defined in early seventeenth-century conduct books and marriage manuals, the ideal wife is constructed as an other-worldly creature, a spiritual paragon, expected to sacrifice her desires as an individual in order to serve her husband and her God. Although guilty of spiritual and probably physical adultery with her knight-lover, the medieval noblewoman was expected to aspire to a similar ideal of wifedom. Consequently, with its sentimental penchant for things medieval, the Caroline court also adopted this ideal, with the Platonic Love order necessitating particular emphasis on marital chastity.

Set within these confines of the strict chastity required by Platonic Love, Shirley's Caroline fictional lady, unlike her troubadour counterpart, is unable to entertain the attentions, physical or not, of an extramarital lover. Yet, she retains her role as the provider of ennobling love, and so the requirement that she dominate her lover remains. Thus Shirley's Caroline fictional ladies are faced with a conflict between the love ideal which raises them on a spiritual pedestal over their masculine lovers, and the social experience of marriage which leaves them subordinate to their husbands who, in this time of Platonic Love and chastity, must also be their lovers. The Caroline fictional woman, as Linda Woodbridge indicates, is faced with the confusing prospect of being treated as first a goddess and then a servant by the same person, an experience never accorded to the medieval noblewoman.

Chaucer had proposed a compromise between woman as worshipped mistress and woman as submissive wife: a man might be a woman's

"servant in love, and lord in marriage"; and the Renaissance followed his lead. But linking courtly love to marriage showed up courtly love in an odd light: why should a man grovel before a woman he is shortly to dominate in marriage?<sup>27</sup>

This situation not only results in the Caroline nobleman questioning his role in courtship, it also negates the potential existence of any rational and straightforward Caroline female self-concept. Where the medieval noblewoman was logically able to embody simultaneously the roles of dominant goddess and submissive wife, Shirley's Caroline noblewomen must enact these roles one after the other. This is achieved through the courtship-marriage process.

In accordance with the Platonic Love beliefs fashionable at the court of Charles I, Shirley's plays portray marriage as an ideal. Marriage is the perfect relationship between a man and a woman who share a level of idealized, spiritual love for each other. In *Honoriam and Mammon* Alworth refers to "the most holy character of marriage" (VI, 76). Berinthia, in *The Maid's Revenge*, calls it "the sacred knot of marriage" (I, 110).<sup>28</sup> Shirley's ideal of marriage also encompasses social requirements; it is a state of mutual chastity, of appreciation and respect on the husband's part and obedience and loyalty on the part of the wife. Marriage is the idealistic union of physical and spiritual, of social and ideal: "where the hearts meet, there only marriages are sacred" (II, 451) says the duke in *The Bird in a Cage*.

Such descriptions of marriage as an ideal are not new but are themselves based on another ideal, the ideal, ennobling love. Although a wife is both subservient and inferior to her husband, the presence of love in the marital relationship requires that she also fulfil her traditional role as goddess, inspiring her love-partner to heights of spiritual honour. Marriage based on love implies two unions: a spiritual union, characterized by the man and woman falling in love and exchanging vows, and a physical union, the sexual and social coupling characteristic of married life. By separating the physical and spiritual factors of matrimony, the contradiction forming the basis of the definition of the feminine nature is

cast in a new light. It is not in marriage itself but during the courtship process that the spiritual love union is formed, that the love relationship, theoretically, is pure and holy, and that the woman is elevated and idealized. It is during courtship that the woman exerts some control over the behaviour of her masculine lover. This superior position enjoyed by women during courtship is only available to women of the nobility. Men of the lower classes were not expected to experience any such overwhelming, spiritually ennobling force from their intended wives. Each common man's superior position to his lover remained constant through courtship and into marriage, and so such men had no difficulty in defining their courtship roles. Instructional manuals suggest that the most pressing responsibilities weighing on the man who was considering marriage included such things as ensuring the security of his financial position and obtaining the advice and consent of his parents.

Whosoeuer then is yet vnmarried, and would be sure to marrie lawfully, must haue speciall care of two things: First, that he marry with a fit person: Secondly, that if he haue parents, he take their consent with him.

(Whately 28)

It was the role of the husband, as the dominant partner, to manage the marriage and to direct and supervise the activities of his wife. Thus, men were advised that obedience was the most valuable quality to look for in a potential wife.

If thou be a man, beware thou meete not with one to gouerne, who it shall be ten times more hard and troublesome to rule, than to please almost any ruler.

(Whately 62)

Chastity, modesty, selflessness and humility were other virtues necessary to seek in a potential wife. Courtship amongst commoners tended to be a time of gaining consent and acceptance from both the intended husband and wife as well as their families, their church and the local community.

In contrast to this utilitarian approach to courtship time, courtship set against Platonic Love and courtship in Shirley's plays functioned as an opportunity for witty banter and game-playing between the sexes. Courtship in Shirley is often a time of jollity and apparent emotional frivolity. To protect her reputation, a woman must remain chaste in her

courtship dealings but, as the young widow Celestina advises her friends in *The Lady of Pleasure* (1635), such moral restraint "takes not from the freedom of our mirth, / But seems to advance it":

Some ladies are so expensive in their graces,  
To those that honour them, and so prodigal,  
That in a little time they have nothing but  
The naked sin left to reward their servants;  
Whereas, a thrift in our rewards will keep  
Men long in their devotion, and preserve  
Ourselves in stock, to encourage those that honour us.

(IV, 32)

Jacinta in *The Brothers* expounds a similar doctrine of prudence in courtship when she says,

I should  
Be held not worth his person, and too light,  
At his first breath of courtship, to fall from  
My virgin strength, and give myself his captive.

(I, 218)

Once married, the woman becomes her husband's captive, reverting to her 'natural' position of subservience to her husband.

In Section XXI of *The Lawes Resolutions of Womens Rights* (1632) the double requirement of a spiritual promise and a physical union to legitimize marriage is asserted: "When to the Consent of minde, there is added Copulation of body, Matrimonie is consummate."<sup>29</sup> The Renaissance ideal of matrimony combines and reconciles spiritual bonding with physical union in a manner unknown within the medieval Courtly Love tradition. However, as Erica Veevers notes, the coterie of Platonists in Queen Henrietta Maria's court often took their beliefs to the extreme, proclaiming that spiritual union alone was sufficient for the ideal relationship.<sup>30</sup>

Possession of the beloved, passion and its fruition, are the death of ideal love; marriage can result only, at best, in friendship.

(Veevers 18)

This unrealistic perspective probably, as Graham Parry suggests, reflects the lighthearted, gaming nature of the Caroline Love Cult rather than any serious philosophy (Parry, *Golden*

Age 190).<sup>31</sup> Indeed, Henrietta Maria, mother of nine children, was not averse to reproduction.

Shirley's own references to Platonic Love focus more on the moral dangers of the misuse and abuse of such a cult rather than on indulging in superficial argument and philosophical repartee within the cult itself. Horatio, in *The Duke's Mistress* (1636), finds in his distorted view of Platonic Love the explanation for his preference for ugly women.<sup>32</sup>

Howe'er you may interpret it my humour,  
Mine's a Platonic love; give me the soul,  
I care not what coarse flesh and blood enshrine  
it . . .

(IV, 229)

Similarly, the unnamed Lord in *The Lady of Pleasure* appeals to a corruption of the conventions of Platonic Love in his attempt to initiate an unchaste relationship with the young widow Celestina.

Why, my good lady,  
Your sex doth hold it no dishonour  
To become mistress to a noble servant  
In the now court Platonic way.

(IV, 94)

Despite this literary lampooning of the Platonic Love Cult, the notion that spiritual union (love) is the *initial* requirement for a successful marriage seems mandatory. Of arranged marriages, Soranzo in *The Grateful Servant* says, "in such marriages hearts seldom meet" (II, 8), thus implying failure and unhappiness in the coupling. The spiritual union is necessarily privileged over the physical union. It occurs first, before the physical union, and is entire in itself, not dependent upon the physical for completion. "Since you have made a marriage in your hearts, / The church shall soon confirm it" (II, 311), says Mistress Goldsworth to her daughter and her daughter's suitor in *Changes, or Love in a Maze*. The implication is that spiritual union alone is not sufficient to constitute marriage. In *The Traitor*, Cosmo questions Oriana over her love for Pisano:

But dost thou love him perfectly, with a

Desire, when sacred rites of marriage  
Are past, to meet him in thy bed, and call him  
Thy husband?

(II, 126)

Perfect or complete coupling, according to Cosmo, requires both spiritual and physical elements, and this ideology is standard in Shirley. As the duke says to Octavio and Domitilla, the young lovers in *The Royal Master*,

nothing wants but to  
Perfect, with holy ceremony, what  
Your hearts have seal'd.

(IV, 186)

In contrast to the independent moral acceptability of spiritual union, physical union requires a spiritual element for it to be legitimized. Marriage without love is something other than marriage. Without love, as Ursini explains to the lady Cornelia in *The Opportunity* (1634), the physical, matrimonial union can only be a social convenience, an example of possession rather than satisfaction:

if I obtain'd  
A favour from the duchess to propound  
My wishes, and plead for me, I know well  
The soul is not her subject: could her power  
Bestow your body on me, and that I  
Could boast myself lord of [that] beauteous frame,  
Without your mind, I were more tyrant to  
Accept than she to force; and answer for  
A crime more fatal than the ravisher's.

(III, 449)

To force the unwilling Cornelia, or any woman, into an undesired marriage, that is, a marriage devoid of any love union, is rape, and it is "A crime more fatal than the ravisher's" because it is a double rape: it is a rape of body and a rape of mind, occurring on both the physical and the spiritual planes. The mind is usurped of its freedom to select a love partner and the body is required to participate in unwanted sex.

In Baldesar Castiglione's *The Book of the Courtier* (1528) it is argued that the rapist can never gain spiritual possession of, or enjoy spiritual communication with his female victim:

the mind is seized by desire for the beauty which it recognizes as good, and, if it allows itself to be guided by what its senses tell it, it falls into the gravest errors and judges that the body is the chief cause of the beauty which it enshrines, and so to enjoy that beauty it must necessarily achieve with it as intimate a union as possible. But this is untrue; and anyone who thinks to enjoy that beauty by possessing the body is deceiving himself and is moved not by true knowledge, arrived at by rational choice, but by a false opinion derived from the desire of the senses.<sup>33</sup>

Using the Neoplatonic language of beauty as the representative quality of this spiritual realm, Castiglione's character Pietro Bembo explains how any pleasure gained through rape is deceptive because it can never be a true spiritual union.<sup>34</sup> Like rape, rashly marrying simply to sate sexual desire does not constitute a spiritual union. In 1622 William Gouge counselled his readers that such hastiness in coupling leads to a marriage which, although socially and legally recognized, is illicit in the sight of God.

Contrarie is the adulterous and brutish practice of such as so soone as they cast their eie on any whom they like, neuer aduise or consult about a right and due proceeding vnto mariage, but instantly with all the eagernesse and speed they can, like brute beasts, seek to haue their desire and lust satisfied. Though to keepe themselues free from the penalty of the lawes vnder which they liue, they procure meanes to be married, yet they declare a lustfull and adulterous mind.

(Gouge 197)

Clearly, whether one is a courtier or a commoner, first a spiritual and then a physical union is required in order to create a rightful marriage.

In *The Traitor* Pisano, spiritually contracted to Amidea, seeks to break this contract so that he may be free to pursue a more financially rewarding marriage to Oriana.

Lady, I am come  
To render all my interest in your love,  
And to demand myself again . . .

(II, 121)

Upset and surprised, Amidea, motivated by her love for Pisano, nevertheless relinquishes all claim to him. Consequently, she experiences spiritual despair. Amidea, having exchanged vows of love with a man who now will not receive her in marriage, has had her love taken from her. Although Pisano insists that he will return to Amidea that promise of love she has given him, it is not within his freedom to do so. As Jane, in *The Wedding*

(1626-29), explains, spiritual love can be given truly only once, and thereafter remains beyond social and mortal control:

though my father would have been  
So cruel to his own, to have wished me marry him,  
It was not in the power of my obedience  
To give consent to't, for my love already  
Is dedicate to one, whose worth hath made  
Me but his steward of it . . .

(I, 404)

With the ideal of matrimony dependent upon the love ideal, the union created by courtship becomes as spiritually binding as marriage is legally binding. When Leonora's father in *The Gamester* suggests she marry Delamore, a young man who already shares a love union with his mistress Violante, Leonora despairs: "Their hearts love hath seal'd up i' th' eye of heaven, / 'Twere sacrilege to part 'em" (III, 222). The spiritual love contract, once vowed upon, cannot be rescinded, for the gift of love occupies a realm beyond mortal choice and thus cannot be undone by any person, regardless of whether one is a participant in or observer of the union. Pisano's return of Amidea's love can only be inauthentic and, in this sense, having had her spiritual honour forced from her, Amidea has been raped.<sup>35</sup> She therefore must fulfil the obligation of rape victim; she must die, and, indeed, she intends to do so: "Death, my lord, / I hope, shall be my husband" (II, 165).<sup>36</sup>

The new centre of Pisano's attentions is Oriana. Oriana is as miserable as Amidea but her situation is in direct contrast to Amidea's, for here matrimony is promised without the support of a spiritual love contract.

Oriana:        Dear Amidea, do not think I mock  
                  Your sorrow; by these tears, that are not worn  
                  By every virgin on her wedding-day,  
                  I am compell'd to give away myself:  
                  Your hearts were promis'd, but he ne'er had mine.  
                  Am I not wretched too?

(II, 164)

Fortunately for her, Oriana is not destined to suffer the rape(s) brought about by undesired marriage, for the wedding between Pisano and Oriana does not take place. Pisano will not be allowed to go through with his marriage to Oriana because

the world takes notice of a contract;  
He's much to blame if he should wrong so sweet  
A lady as Amidea.

(II, 154)

Taking revenge upon Pisano for the wronging of his sister, and thus the dishonouring of his family, Amidea's brother Sciarrha kills Pisano. Ideal love is transcendent over all social and otherwise mortal bonds and its course cannot be altered by the whims and fashions of Shirley's characters. As Cornelia in *The Opportunity* observes, "it has been yet a rule, / Love and religion cannot be compell'd" (III, 449). Pisano fails in his attempts to avoid the spiritual prerequisite for marriage because, in the society within the universe of Shirley's plays where marriage has been strictly defined on social, spiritual and moral levels, success is impossible. The necessity of Pisano's failing his attempt to thwart the marriage ideal does not preclude the possibility of Shirley's characters experiencing unhappy, unsuccessful marriages. Nevertheless, without spiritual coupling, marriage - happy or not - cannot exist, and thus it is inherent to this definition of marriage in Shirley's plays that marriage cannot result from an act of rape.

Both Biblical law and the contemporary law of Caroline society, however, insist that marriage *can* result from an act of rape:

rape deserved alwayes death by Gods Lawes, unlesse the woman ravished were unbetrothed, so that the ravisher might marrie her, as you may read *Deuteronomy, chap.22.vers.23.* and by the Civill Law.

(T.E. 377-78)

Although the deaths of Lucrece and Philomel remain as models for the behaviour of the majority of Renaissance literary rape victims, Jacobean playwrights in particular also provided evidence that they agreed with the notion of marriage as a solution to rape.<sup>37</sup> Such playwrights, suggests Suzanne Gossett, used marriage as a device to restore social order to the chaos created by rape and hence to bring about a happy ending.

The ostensible happy ending retains the notion that a woman is marked as the property of a man who has sexual relations with her, but it does not confront her feelings as she enters the marriage.

(Gossett 324)

In not examining the woman's feelings, plays using this technique ignore the spiritual aspect that is of such importance to the definition of marriage in Shirley's plays.

In *The Wedding*, Shirley himself uses marriage as a resolution to rape, yet, even while using this device, on no occasion does Shirley allow marriage to appear as a definitive solution to rape. Lucibel has been raped by Marwood before the action of the play. Lucibel, the only child of a widowed mother, is unmarried and uncontracted, and thus is without a male champion and protector. She disappears after the rape, re-entering the society disguised as a male and using her new identity to resolve the chaos that has been created by the rape. Once Lucibel is free to resume her female identity she is able to claim marriage as her right, for it is not until Lucibel exposes her disguise that Marwood accepts moral responsibility for his act of rape. Marwood's final action, agreeing to marry Lucibel, cements Lucibel's position as the wronged (and raped) victim. In accordance with the teachings of the Old Testament, the marriage represents a victory for Lucibel and it becomes Marwood's punishment.

If a man find a damsel that is a virgin, which is not betrothed, and lay hold on her, and lie with her, and they be found;  
Then the man that lay with her shall give unto the damsel's father fifty shekels of silver, and she shall be his wife; because he hath humbled her, he may not put her away all his days.

(Deuteronomy 22.28-29)

Marwood himself admits to the punishing nature of his marriage to Lucibel, explaining that the marriage "shall begin my recompense" (I, 447).

Although apparently a social victory for the rape victim, marriage to the rapist is not presented as a moral victory. In defining the uncontracted woman as the possession initially of the father and then of the rapist, Deuteronomy does not address the role of love in its recommendation of matrimony. In allowing Lucibel to become the wife of Marwood, Shirley still insists, through the character Beauford, on the lack of success the marriage will have in remedying the rape:

they that have spoil'd virginity,  
Do half restore the treasures they took thence,

By sacred marriage.

(I, 386)

The treasures - feminine chastity, masculine honour, social order - can be only half restored. Despite successfully avoiding the death which is the usual fate of the rape victim, marriage to the rapist remains an unsatisfactory arrangement for both man and woman involved. Given the play's resolution, the structure of *The Wedding* seems dependent upon a definition of rape as a mere social and structural device. However, the morality of the play transcends these limitations by recognizing the difficulties that occur when a social solution is prescribed for a moral and spiritual problem. Beauford's comment regarding incomplete restoration foreshadows these difficulties; at the very least, it is a recognition that marriage cannot undo or satisfactorily resolve an act of rape.

Even marriage of the highest moral ideal, marriage to Christ, cannot adequately answer rape in Shirley's plays. In *St. Patrick for Ireland*, a play of deliberately Catholic theme written by Shirley while in Ireland, Emeria is raped by Corybreus and, through a course of events which hinders her suicide, she takes revenge upon Corybreus, murdering him. Confessing all to her true love Conallus, Corybreus' brother, Emeria realizes she has lost all hope of ever physically consummating her spiritual tie. When introducing her to his mother, Conallus does not deny Emeria's virtues, but that she is no longer worthy to be his wife is clear.

She is, I dare not name how much dishonour'd,  
And should have been the partner of my bosom,  
Had not a cruel man forbid my happiness,  
And on that fair and innocent table pour'd  
Poison, above the dragon's blood, or viper's.

(IV, 435)

Emeria finds herself unable now to commit suicide or marry. Her future is decided by St. Patrick:

You will be spouse to an eternal bride groom,  
And lay the sweet foundation of a rule,  
That after ages, with devotion,  
Shall praise and follow.

(IV, 437)

As with the marriage between Marwood and Lucibel in *The Wedding*, Shirley uses Emeria's entering of a nunnery, her marriage to Christ, as a device to resolve the upheaval and confusion caused by rape without actually addressing the rape itself. Shirley makes no judgement on the appropriateness or not of such a solution in *St. Patrick for Ireland*. However, in a later play *The Imposture*, nunneries come under ridicule for their role in confining young women such as Juliana to the sterility of virginity and the unfruitfulness of chastity:

'tis pity so much  
Sweet flesh should be engross'd, and barrell'd up  
With penitential pickle, 'fore their time,  
That would keep fresh and fair, and make just work  
For their confessions.

(V, 191)

Shirley makes clear the point that no amount of time spent or penance done in a nunnery will absolve the corruption that rape (or any other form of non-virtuous behaviour) inflicts upon a woman's chastity. The sexually and spiritually compromised Juliana not only perceives that her marriage to Christ is insufficient to wash away her stain, she also realizes that she must remain forever in the potential position of having new dishonours forced upon her.

Was't not enough  
To rob me of my honour, the chief wealth  
Of virgins, and confine me to my tears,  
Which ne'er can wash away my guilt, (should I  
Live here to melt my soul into a stream  
With penitence,) but, when I had resign'd  
The world, with hope to pray, and find out mercy,  
You must thus haunt me with new shame, and brand  
My forehead here, as if you meant to kill  
My better essence by despair, as you  
Have stain'd my body?

(V, 198)

Even Christ, it seems, is not an adequate protector and champion of the raped and dishonoured woman. Nevertheless, through the act of rape, the realms of physical and spiritual experience are identified and made distinct, and the woman is no longer faced with the contradiction within her identity that is a consequence of ennobling love being a

necessary component of marriage.

The marriage between Marwood and Lucibel in *The Wedding* is a theatrical device existing beyond the concerns of Shirley's love-marriage philosophy, and thus it is not a satisfactory union for either Marwood or Lucibel. Those marriages that do adhere to the courtship-marriage process, however, may also be problematic. Shirley's male characters consistently brand marriage an undesirable institution created by women so that they may have control over men. As Fowler says in *The Witty Fair One*:

Dost think I am so mad to marry? sacrifice my liberty to a  
woman; sell my patrimony to buy them feathers and new  
fashions?

(I, 289)

This is ironic. Marriage enables men to maintain control over women by defining and containing the realm of feminine virtue and thus, as William Whately emphasizes, establishing certainty regarding the legitimacy of their sons.

From this fountaine flow all the cleare streames of legitimate children...  
Debarre marriage, and you shall have no families kept, no names maintained  
amongst men, but either this great habitation, the world, must fall, for want  
of lawfull heyres, to beasts and birds alone to possesse it, or else, which is  
worse, be intruded vpon by base and mis-begotten men.

(Whately 23)

Rolliardo, in *The Bird in a Cage*, disagrees with Fowler, claiming, "When holy marriage frames us in one piece, / Angels will envy me" (II, 439). Shirley's coupling of masculine condemnation of marriage with masculine reverence for marriage highlights the contradictions experienced by his men within the process of courtship and marriage (as well as reflecting the contradictions characteristic of men's behaviour towards women). Marriage is confusing. A mistress who is at one moment a goddess becomes at the next moment a virtual domestic slave. What is the cause of this direct reversal of the power relationship between the man and the woman?

The moment of transition, the moment when the woman ceases in her role as goddess, is the wedding night. For the goddess figure - virginal, innocent, untouched - to become the wife - chaste, knowledgeable, silent - the woman must experience a gain in

knowledge. This is represented by the sexual experience of the wedding night. In *The Cardinal* the evil Cardinal attempts to insinuate his way into the virgin Duchess's bed by arguing,

if you will be kind, and but allow  
Yourself a knowledge, love, whose shape and raptures  
Wise poets have but glorified in dreams,  
Shall make your chamber his eternal palace;  
And with such active and essential streams  
Of new delights glide o'er your bosom, you  
Shall wonder to what unknown world you are  
By some blest change translated.

(V, 346-47)

The Cardinal identifies sexual intercourse as a knowledge that has the power to transform experience, and although the context is of rape, his comment applies directly to the wedding night experience.

Indicating the confusion that existed surrounding the morality of the wedding night, William Whately, in his seventeenth-century conduct book, felt it necessary to justify the sexuality of the wedding experience so as to redeem matrimony itself.

Marriage is a lawfull ordinance for all sorts: no vnmarried man shall sinne by marrying; no maide shall sin in taking a husband. Any batchelour may make himselfe a husband; any virgin may make herselfe a wife: and for the act it selfe, no sinne shall be imputed unto them, for though the manner of doing, and such common circumstances, as cloath all actions, they may behaue themselues sinfully. Offend not in the manner and circumstances, and in the thing it self thou shalt not offend, if thou contract matrimony, whosoeuer thou be.

(Whately 21)

It is in the context of the wedding night's moral uniqueness that, in 1589, George Puttenham described the woman at this stage of her development as not only undergoing significant change, but herself as an unnatural creature, a changeling.

In the morning when it was faire broad day, & that by liklyhood all tournes were sufficiently served, the last actes of the enterlude being ended, & that the bride must within few hours arise and apparrell her selfe, no more as a virgine, but as a wife, and about dinner time must by order come forth *Sicut sponsa de thalamo*, very demurely and stately to be sene and acknowledged of her parents and kinsfolkes whether she were the same woman or a changeling, or dead or alive, or maimed by any accident nocturnall.<sup>38</sup>

That Puttenham indicates some uncertainty about the effect of the wedding night

on the woman is perhaps an indication of the potential danger of the wedding night. During the transition between the ideal roles of goddess and wife, the woman, in gaining knowledge of her own sexual identity, enacts on an individual level Eve's fall from grace.<sup>39</sup> The sexual knowledge she gains is a power which potentially may be wielded against society and used to undermine masculine definitions of women. Clariana, in *Love's Cruelty*, is proof of the danger a sexually aware woman can be; rather than remaining true to her husband, she chooses to increase her knowledge further by adopting the path of adultery. She rejects the masculine demand for chastity, thus endangering the social structure by acting to undermine its patrilineal foundation. The identification of the wedding night as the woman's fall from grace works generally to protect the dominant order from such assault and to enable the reassertion of the position of masculine dominance. No longer is virgin strength available for the woman to depend upon as a universal defence against masculine jeering and innuendo.<sup>40</sup> The wedding night is a climactic moment in the man's experience of the courtship process, for it is his moment of triumph. Gratiana, the bride in *The Wedding*, provides much mirth for her male spectators.

She is to be married, or arraign'd, i' the morning, and at  
night to suffer execution, and lose her head.

(I, 377)

It is by the sexual act that the man is able to bring the woman down from her elevated height of virginity and spiritual purity, and reduce her to a position of inferiority and relative social unimportance. "Where is the lady that must be undone tonight, / Your daughter?" (I, 392) enquires Lodam, a wedding guest, of Gratiana's father.<sup>41</sup> Marriage, with the accompanying physical, sexual union of the wedding night, provides opportunity for the woman's animalistic, lustful nature to be fulfilled, and so as a result of the wedding night the woman becomes a possession and a subordinate of her husband. The once dominant and transcendently pure woman now falls from her position elevated by love and the man, having experienced no alteration to his moral character, assumes his 'natural'

position of dominance. Hence in *The Imposture* Hortensio speaks of "the noose of matrimony" (V, 219) in which he wants to catch Florelia.

It is the instability of the feminine nature which is thought to reverse the power relationship. The masculine nature is portrayed as constant throughout the courtship process, and it is this belief in his own consistency which allows each man to resolve the illogicality he experiences in his roles of subordination in courtship and dominance in marriage. Each woman participating in the courtship rituals in Shirley's plays, forced to confront a fundamental inconsistency within her own nature, must endure a vital problem of self-definition. The man's experience is seen as merely a consequence of the innately inconsistent (and therefore innately inferior) feminine nature, and the unwavering strength, dominance and consistency of the essential masculine nature is finally reaffirmed.

However, marriage, as a perfect union, implies that both men and women are in some way lacking prior to their achieving this state. As Bellamente in *Love's Cruelty* explains, "A wife is man's best piece, who, till he marries, / Wants making up" (II, 252). Thus is implied the danger that, in completing her husband, a wife may actually exceed him. The masculine identity, it seems, is not as stable and complete as most of Shirley's male characters would have us, or themselves, believe. Bellamente goes on to describe how a wife provides completion for the masculine character, for the man himself, by providing him with both the means by which he may enter Heaven and the means by which he may reproduce himself, thereby keeping the earth fruitful for the glory of God:

she is man's  
Arithmetic, which teaches him to number  
And multiply himself in his own children:  
She is the good man's paradise, and the bad's  
First step to heaven; a treasure, which who wants,  
Cannot be trusted to posterity,  
Nor pay his own debts; she is a golden sentence,  
Writ by our Maker, which the angels may  
Discourse of . . .

(II, 252)

Leonato, in *The Imposture*, speaking of his impending marriage, refers to the priest as "The

holy man, whose charm shall perfect us" (V, 242). The marriage ritual is a spiritual charm that not only indicates a fulfilment but actually instigates that fulfilment. Leonato and his beloved are to be "perfected" in being united. The implication is that, separated, the genders are incomplete and it is only in union - spiritual, physical and social - that full existence may be realized. Although she is referring specifically to the gentleman Thornay here, Chrysolina's description of marriage in *Changes, or Love in a Maze* can be applied to all men:

marriage is an act,  
That doth concern his whole life, and in something  
May mar, or profit his eternity . . .

(II, 323)

In being joined in matrimony, the man and the woman become one and, legally and spiritually, this new whole is masculine. Despite the emphasis placed upon the changeable, almost fickle, feminine nature, it is through the power of love and of marriage that the women in Shirley's plays are able to perfect and complete their men.

## CHAPTER TWO

### **‘I would not have this shame’: Whores and Cuckolds**

The stereotyped female in Shirley's plays is dominant over the man during courtship and subordinate to him in marriage, and this is due to the role love plays in the characters' matrimonial preparations and experiences. However, love is not the sole element influencing women's experiences of contradiction in their dealings with men. What women are allowed to do and be is defined by men. That the essence of femininity and the social roles deemed appropriate for women are masculine definitions indicates that men are responsible for patrolling the behaviour of women and for confining women to the prescribed social, moral and spiritual feminine arenas.

In at least three of Shirley's plays, *The Gentleman of Venice*, *The Gamester* (1633) and *The Example*, prominent female characters are accused by husbands or other close male relatives of non-virtue and corruption. The men seek, in short, to turn the women into whores. These women all pass symbolically through a role of feminine dishonour, through the masculine perception of their unchastity, before being reinstated, by those same men, to a position of honour and chastity. Men presume that women must work to overcome the weaknesses of the feminine nature in order to achieve chastity. The inevitable existence of feminine weakness and the possible existence of an ideal level of feminine virtue are indications that the masculine definition of women is based on the tradition that there are two feminine ideals: the holy perfection of the Virgin Mary figure and the base corruption of the figure of Eve. Women possess the honourable and inspirational qualities

of chastity and virtue, yet simultaneously women are natural agents of lust and temptation. Women are changeable creatures, and thus inferior to men. To perpetuate women's inferiority, it is the task of men to ensure that women realize and experience all the masculine-defined elements of the collective feminine nature. It is in order to confirm, perhaps perversely to prove, that women embody both the corrupt and the idealized aspects of feminine nature that many of Shirley's male characters indulge in attempts to force beautiful, noble, virtuous women into situations of dubious morality.

Contrary to the masculine view, this experience, for the women, is not an experience necessary for the fulfilment of their femininity; rather, it is a loss of femininity. Lord Fitzavarice, overwhelmed by the virtue of Lady Peregrine in *The Example*, exclaims, "you must be more than woman, and you are so" (III, 315); yet women maintain that femininity *is* virtue. For a woman to experience the male-enforced adoption of the unchaste roles or whore and bawd is to endure a loss of womanhood. Lady Peregrine is concerned that she will "sell woman in me" (III, 311) if she compromises her virtue. When the court lady Celinda dares to accept the gifts and attentions of the wicked, murderous Columbo, the duchess in *The Cardinal* asks "is this a woman?" (V, 321).<sup>1</sup> The woman is faced with the problem of self-contradiction within her identity. She is pressured by the masculine forces in society to act ostensibly to fulfil a portion of her feminine nature; however, it is her own experience that such unchaste actions can only lead to the forfeiting of her feminine nature. While this process of dishonouring may temporarily defeminize the woman, it will not leave her reputation (or chastity) unredeemable: instead of combating and attempting to alter men's behaviour, Shirley's virtuous women enact the paths laid for them by the men but they use these paths for their own feminine fulfilment by redefining the masculine contexts. Shirley depicts these women as symbolically fulfilling roles of dishonour and unchastity through indulging in whorish masquerades, in order to arrive at some new height of subservient virtue. The women take advantage of masculine misrepresentations of feminine virtue by transforming the contradictory principle fundamental to the masculine

definition of feminine nature into a process of development and transition. The woman's experience is a symbolic process in which each woman realizes the innate, base element to her (masculine-defined) nature so that she may transcend this component and attain that other portion of her nature which is spiritual and ideal. By revealing the woman's experience as a linear progression, the contradiction in the definition of the feminine nature - the contradiction of the simultaneous existence of sin and purity - is able to be overcome without negating the definition. Thus, the chaste woman emerges from the unchaste role with virtue and chastity intact, having successfully personified, to the men involved, both conflicting elements of her feminine nature without, as the audience is made aware, actually compromising her own unwavering chastity. The process takes the woman from Eve to the Virgin Mary. The idealized virgin role is expressed as the finally dominant portion of the feminine nature. In this way, the all-encompassing strength of feminine chastity is reaffirmed as the basic measure by which all human (male) deeds may be valued.

In *The Gentleman of Venice* Claudiana's virtue is challenged by her husband when he attempts to turn her into a whore. Claudiana is virtuous and chaste. She is innocent of all sin save the accident of marrying Cornari, a man who is unable to father children. Claudiana is an obedient wife and, in an attempt to thwart the situation that has left him with an ill bred and ignoble nephew as his sole heir, Cornari relies upon this obedience when he schemes to have his wife fall pregnant by another man in order to claim the bastard as his own son and thus his heir. Cornari kidnaps the noble English gentleman Florelli with the intention of compelling his captive to impregnate his wife. He says:

Behold! and take, as lent, this treasure from me;  
I must expect it back again with interest.

(V, 67)

Cornari assures Florelli of Claudiana's nobility and virtue, and yet he himself seeks to compromise these qualities. His intention is to prostitute his wife, and this intention is supported by the language of the play. "Am I practis'd in those arts / Of sin, that he should take me for a courtesan?" (V, 58-59) cries Claudiana to her husband. She goes on

to highlight his role in the tragedy if she is to become a whore.

Claudiana: If I must be a whore, and you a -  
 Cornari: Stay;  
 And I a - what?

(V, 59)

Cornari refuses to acknowledge the logic of his wife's definition of the situation. He refuses to accept the humiliation and dishonour that he is bringing upon himself; he denies the ignobleness and selfishness of his actions with the justification that he is acting out of love and humanity.

I must pity  
 Thee, Claudiana; but my stubborn fate  
 Will have it so: it is to make thee live,  
 Although we both must suffer; and I, like  
 A father, thus, whose child, at play upon  
 A river's bank, is fall'n into the stream,  
 Leap in, and hazard all to save a little.

(V, 67)

In allowing his wife to fulfil her maternal destiny, it is Cornari who makes the supreme sacrifice, and Claudiana can only gain. "It is to make thee live," rationalizes Cornari, yet his actions can only lead to the death of Claudiana. For Claudiana to lose her chastity, even for her husband's cause, is a sin that can only be atoned for in blood. It is perhaps ironic that Cornari also realizes the necessity for blood: "Proceed, / A little blood will wash away this deed" (V, 59), he says. What Cornari fails to note is that the blood to cleanse the loss of Claudiana's virtue must be spilt by the death of Claudiana herself, and not by the death of the unwilling captive Florelli.

Contrasting with the virtuous Claudiana, the play contains an actual prostitute Rosabella. Ironically, unlike Claudiana, Rosabella does not have her virtue questioned. Neither is her vocation questioned nor is it challenged by any character, including the honourable men who enter her bawdy house in order to arrest her customers. Rosabella is treated as a business woman who provides a service, and she is secure from accusations regarding the immoral nature of her work. Although given no respect, the tacit acceptance of Rosabella and her existence is a reflection of the vital social function she performs. As

a business woman, she is concerned with providing a service at the right price. When her customers are arrested it is not their welfare that concerns Rosabella, but the welfare of her business: "Who pays for the wine and banquet?" (V, 54) she demands. Because she and her kind are officially despised by society, there is no one to come to Rosabella's rescue. "I shall be undone," she cries with thoughts of financial ruin, only to be met with Malipiero's mocking retort, "Undoing is thy trade" (V, 54). The disregard for the welfare of the whore is made all the more potent by the fact that Malipiero is one of Rosabella's customers.

Although refusing to acknowledge the label, Cornari persists in his role of procurer. He tries to persuade his wife to revel in her unexpected, albeit temporary, sexual freedom, encouraging her to make the most of this opportunity for unpunished whoredom.

Thou may'st  
Pretend thyself some pleasant bona roba,  
Or take what name and shape thou wilt.

(V, 58)

Again the language of prostitution is used, this time by Cornari himself. Claudiana's response - "I am undone" (V, 58) - echoes the words spoken to the prostitute Rosabella: "Undoing is thy trade." Clearly, Shirley is encouraging his audience to draw comparisons between Rosabella the prostitute and Claudiana the wife.

Cornari plays the role of procurer entirely, from arranging the meeting to collecting payment. Wielding a pistol, he locks Claudiana and his prisoner the Englishman Florelli in a room together. He later reappears with pistol and rapier for the purpose of killing Florelli.

Thou dull islander!  
'Cause you can dance, and vault upon a hobby-horse,  
Do you think to mount madonas here, and not  
Pay for the sweet career?

(V, 73)

Cornari believes that sexual intercourse has occurred, and now, as with any act of prostitution, it is time to demand payment. The price is more than a few jewels or ducats,

it is Florelli's life. Even so, as the language suggests, this sacrifice is still payment for a sexual favour; Claudiana has still been prostituted by her pandering husband.

"A Sermon Against Whoredom and Uncleaness" emphasized the relationship between women and property, and warned of the damage that can result from the illicit sexual behaviour of women.

What patrimony (or livelihood), what substance, what goods, what riches  
doth whoredom shortly consume and bring to naught!

(*Certain Sermons* 131)

The danger of prostitution is clear. The patrilineal property system, dependent on consistently knowable paternal descent, represents the essence of society. To introduce the whore into family and nobility is to break down distinctions between chaste and unchaste women and between legitimate and illegitimate children, thereby resulting in the destruction of the family and, ultimately, in social chaos. Yet the whore, exiled from 'proper' society, continues to play an integral part in the social order: Fowler, in *The Witty Fair One* refers to "this staple commodity of whoring" (I, 334). The whore is a masculine construction and serves to reinforce the Renaissance notion of women as innately sinful creatures, thus enabling the continuation of masculine control over women by holding them and their inherent potential for wrongdoing constantly under suspicion. The whore also serves a basic masculine desire and, in so doing, again reinforces the authority and superiority of men. Thirdly, in remaining a figure to be despised by society and especially by virtuous women, the whore performs a protective function, ironically safeguarding the virtue of those very women who despise and condemn her most. In remaining unmarried and unchaste, the whore protects the institution of marriage by allowing it to approach its ideal of perfect chastity (on the woman's part, that is) where the paternity of the children can never be questioned.

The idea of the protective prostitute is not new. "Remove prostitutes from human affairs," wrote St. Augustine, 'and you would pollute the world with lust.'<sup>1</sup> In *The Traitor* Sciarrha also recognizes this protective function. When his sister becomes the

object of the duke's lustful desires, Sciarrha cannot understand why his family and honour must be thrown into turmoil when there are other, more appropriate avenues clearly available to fulfil the duke's heated ambitions.

Are all the brothels rifled? no quaint piece  
Left him in Florence, that will meet his hot  
And valiant luxury, that we are come to  
Supply his blood out of our families?

(II, 111)

Cornari, however, seeks to break down this necessary and protective distinction between chaste wives and unchaste whores, the result of which would be the destruction of the social and financial security of marriage. Cornari must be made to realize the potential consequences of his actions; he must be punished. Accordingly, the language of the play ceases to be of pimps and prostitutes as Cornari realizes in horror that his scheming has led to his own cuckolding. The legacy of his name is fulfilled as *Cornari* finds himself a *cornuto*, a cuckold.<sup>2</sup> In actuality, however, Claudiana's virtue has remained intact; instead of indulging in unchaste activities during their incarceration together, she and Florelli spent the time praying for Cornari. Nevertheless, for Cornari the shame and imagined cuckoldry is real. He is unaware of his own masquerade, and thus his new role carries a profound effect, suggesting bloody consequences.

No man is more fit to die,  
Than he that has been capering with my wife.

(V, 73)

Cornari does not falter in his intention to murder Florelli. However, his motivation and the language in which he expresses his intention have changed significantly.

The whore, because she is a whore, has no claim to virtue. Claudiana, however, is not a whore. She is a chaste and honest wife. The honour of her husband, moreover, depends upon Claudiana's reputation, her reputation for virtue.<sup>3</sup> Upon discovering another man in his wife's bedchamber Ferdinand, in *The Doubtful Heir*, exclaims to his adulterous wife,

As if your lust had not enough of shame

And mischief to me, but your malice must  
 Appear in't too. With what security  
 Can I expect to live, when she begins  
 So soon to poison me?

(IV, 337)

The wife's unchaste behaviour results directly in the shaming of her husband. When Valerio tries to force himself upon Ardelia in *The Duke's Mistress* Ardelia produces a pistol and threatens him, saying:

I shall do a benefit  
 To the world, in thus removing such a traitor  
 To man, and woman's honour.

(IV, 256)

The compromise of a woman's chastity is clearly a threat to men in general as well as to the individual woman involved. Yet, Cornari is willing to sacrifice his possession of his wife's sexuality. However, no sooner is he convinced he has become cuckolded that Cornari realizes that his wife's virtue is inextricably intertwined with her sexuality. Still Cornari is able to see only the social and moral damage he has inflicted upon himself; Claudiana's suffering remains relatively unimportant. Nevertheless, the situation ceases to be one of prostitution. From the unfulfilled roles of pimp and whore, Cornari and Claudiana return to their initial identities of husband and wife. And it is Cornari, and not his wife, who is returned "back again with interest;" he finds himself not merely husband, but, at least until he is convinced otherwise by Claudiana and Florelli, he finds himself cuckolded husband.

From her initial position of wifely virtue Claudiana, at the interference of her husband, must experience the positions of prostitute and then adulteress before being allowed to reclaim her virtue. In compelling the virtuous woman to appear unchaste, the masculine view of women as essentially lustful and sinful is preserved. In proving women to be individually representative of Eve the temptress, the principle of masculine superiority is reinforced and upheld.

*The Gamester* also contains a man who seeks to create a whore from a virtuous

woman. Having married for money, Wilding neglects his wife, preferring to court his attractive and youthful ward Penelope. He seeks to prostitute Penelope to fulfil his own lust. Although the contexts differ, Wilding and Cornari are similar in that they are both examples of men who try to corrupt virtuous women for their own personal gain. However, Wilding goes one step further than Cornari. He seeks not only to prostitute his ward Penelope, but he also attempts to turn his own wife into a bawd for the purpose of helping him to attain the favours of the reluctant Penelope. Wilding appeals to his wife, saying of Penelope,

I find her cold and peevish, how she may  
Be brought about I know not; 'twould shew well,  
And be a precedent for other wives,  
If you would put your help to't.

(III, 191)

Mistress Wilding is predictably outraged by her husband's request; she refuses to comply. Wilding immediately regrets approaching his wife but does not alter his intention to violate Penelope.

I have gone too far, o' conscience; this may  
Spoil all: and now I think upon't, I was  
A coxcomb to discover any party;  
I must deny't again, and carry things  
More closely.

(III, 192)

However, Wilding has been more successful than he imagined. His wife *does* approach Penelope in the role of bawd, and she does appeal to Penelope to prostitute herself for the sake of fulfilling Wilding's lustful desires.<sup>4</sup>

Modesty  
Will not allow me to discourse my wish  
In every circumstance, but think how desperate  
My wound is, that would have so strange a cure:  
He'll love me then; and, trust me I'll not study  
Revenge, as other wives, perhaps, would do,  
But thank thee . . .

(III, 207)

Like every bawd, Mistress Wilding is motivated by personal gain. She does not seek to profit financially, but hopes that her efforts will result in her regaining the love of her

husband. Penelope is understandably horrified at Mistress Wilding's odd request, but, along with the audience, she is soon made to understand that Mistress Wilding has merely been trying her virtue. Penelope has passed the test and is now able to participate in Mistress Wilding's scheme, a scheme that is designed to secure the honour of all involved, including the honour of Mistress Wilding's undeserving husband. With their complex plan, much intrigue and the help of Will Hazard, a male accomplice, Mistress Wilding and Penelope manage to convince Wilding that he has been cuckolded. Like Cornari in *The Gentleman of Venice*, Wilding is only an imagined cuckold, but his experience is actual enough.

I am justly punish'd now for all my tricks,  
And pride o' the flesh. I had ambition  
To make men cuckolds; now the devil has paid me,  
Paid me i' the same coin . . .

(III, 260)

Cuckoldry with its automatic implication of loss of honour is the punishment the man must face for his ignoble attempts to turn a virtuous woman into a whore.

With the importance of honour confined to the upper classes, seventeenth-century lower class society found it necessary to punish cuckoldry rather than merely treat it as a punishment in itself. One form of punishment consisted of cuckolds being made to 'ride skimmington'. The skimmington, a large ladle, was used to beat the cuckold as he was forced to ride through the streets on a horse facing backwards. G.R. Quaife explains that the parade was designed to warn against feminine domination.

As the cuckold was seen as a victim of female deceit and unnatural domination, he was often the subject of such a ride.<sup>5</sup>

To ride skimmington was, therefore, a tool for the oppression of women; it focused on the dishonour of a man who could not control his wife. "A woman's government is soft, and fit / For babes to bow to" (IV, 556), claims Orseolo in *The Humorous Courtier*, and to allow a woman more authority than she is entitled to is fundamentally a masculine failure. Rufaldo, in *Love Tricks*, upon discovering he has married a shrew, cannot bear the thought

of the public contempt he must endure if his plight, his failure as a man, is made known.

He begs his wife to allow their shameful domestic affairs to remain a secret.

Oh, I have married a devil! I shall be utterly disgraced, if this be known: [*aside.*] Pray, sweet wife, let me beg one request of you, that you would not discredit me; I will be content to endure your pleasure; do not forsake my house. .

(I, 63)

The practice of riding skimmington is an indication of the shame and ridicule experienced by both the cuckold and the brow-beaten husband in the early seventeenth century. Martin Ingram also cites examples of the public derision the lower class Caroline cuckold must experience.

Cuckolds . . . were often savagely mocked: horns or antlers were hung up on their houses, or neighbours grimaced or made horn signs at them with their fingers.<sup>6</sup>

Both Cornari and Wilding, neither of whose marriage and honour is ever compromised, suffer under the mistaken belief that they have been dishonoured, that they have been cuckolded.<sup>7</sup> In being cuckolded, even only apparently, the implication is that the women involved do fulfil the unchaste roles assigned to them by the ignoble men. The women do not actually compromise their virtue; rather, their unchaste behaviour is dependent on the perceptions of men. The women are identified and categorized on the basis of masculine perceptions. On no significant occasion is the audience kept in ignorance of the misperceptions of the men involved. The men, therefore, are depicted as short-sighted and unenlightened. As self-proclaimed cuckolds, both Cornari and Wilding are finally suffering for their ignoble plotting, a suffering which is fundamentally social. As indicated by the skimmington rides, the slur is not simply upon their ability as husbands, but their ability as men. The women, encouraged to behave dishonourably by the men, remain virtuous. They merely masquerade before the men as bawds and whores, and it is fitting that the downfall of the men is brought about by their own unsuspecting masquerade.

It is through their apparent adoption of the non-virtuous roles imposed upon them by the ignoble Wilding that Mistress Wilding and Penelope maintain their chastity. Both women are temporarily defeminized by the process. In appearing to take on the role of bawd (if only momentarily), Mistress Wilding adopts the position of a trier of feminine virtue, a role traditionally reserved for men, and thus forfeits a measure of her femininity. In flaunting the marriage vow - Mistress Wilding by allowing her husband an infidelity, and Penelope by offering herself as that infidelity - both women undergo the defeminization involved in (apparently) rejecting their own chastity. Yet both women pretend to comply with Wilding's wishes only to force Wilding back to a path of honourable and noble action. It is ironic that, through relying on the so-called corruption of the feminine nature, the only figure exposed as corrupt is the man.

In *Love's Cruelty* Shirley provides a third example of how a man's disregard for feminine virtue may result in a situation of prostitution. Sebastian, a private gentleman, suddenly finds himself ennobled by the Duke of Ferrara. It is clear, both to Sebastian and to the members of the court, that the titles bestowed by the duke are advance payment for an illicit association the duke intends to have with Eubella, Sebastian's daughter. Although obviously concerned about the situation, Sebastian feels powerless to speak before the duke.

Shall I be choak'd with honours, and not speak?  
Where is my courage? shall a few gay titles  
Corrupt a father?

...  
Is there no trick to give a man a spirit?  
I would be valiant; I dare not talk.

(II, 205)

Cornari and Wilding become bawds through deliberate choice and considered action. Here, Sebastian finds himself in the position of bawd to his own daughter through inaction. Ideally, the strength of Eubella's chastity should be enough to protect her from the duke. Eubella has already nobly withstood the lustful advances of Hippolito, another man who wished her as a mistress but would not accept her as a wife. By Hippolito's own admission, she would not comply with his corrupt wishes because "she was too honest" (II,

198). The strength and constancy of Eubella's virtue has thus been proved; it is a certainty.

Sebastian, however, is unable to trust his daughter when it comes to protecting his own reputation.

Why should any  
Promotion charm my honest tongue? I'd rather  
Plough my own acres with my innocence,  
Than have my name advanc'd by poison'd honour.  
He must not whore my daughter.

(II, 202)

Sebastian's prime concern is for himself rather than his daughter. If Eubella were to succumb to the duke, Sebastian would be dishonoured and labelled as a procurer of the most devious type: not simply one who lives off the illicit earnings of women, but one who has gained by the corruption of his own daughter. Sebastian is overwhelmed by his own perverse insistence that he has already become a bawd, and so he forfeits his honour. He convinces himself of the lack of virtue of his daughter Eubella, thus insisting that his own reputation has been corrupted, that he has become a bawd. Sebastian seeks to regain this lost honour through a direct complaint to the duke.

Lord me no lords,  
I groan under the burden of your honours,  
And here resign all; give me but my daughter.

...  
laws  
Are most unjust that punish petty thieves,  
And let the great ones 'scape.

(II, 232-33)

However, Eubella has not compromised her virtue. The complaint is premature and Sebastian is thrown in jail for insulting the duke. Now Sebastian is socially as well as morally powerless. Now he has no choice but to depend wholly upon the virtue of Eubella. It is only with the removal of Sebastian that Eubella is free to use her strength of virtue to secure her own release from the duke's heated intentions, as well as her father's release from the duke's jail.

Wilding, Cornari and Sebastian are characterized by their inability to accept and trust in the strength of feminine virtue. In keeping with the dominant view of the time, the

men all assume that women, by their very nature, covet sexual excess. "Of women's unnatural, unsatiable lust, what country, what village doth not complain?"<sup>8</sup> demanded Robert Burton in 1621.

Of Shirley's plays, *The Example* provides perhaps the greatest indication of the normative strength of this view of women as creatures innately drawn to sins of the flesh. Sir Walter Peregrine is a soldier who uses war as an excuse to escape the financial debts incurred in his civilian life. When his wife Lady Peregrine is offered, by Lord Fitzavarice, the release of her husband's mortgages in return for sexual favours, she immediately recognizes the situation as one of prostitution, and flatly refuses to take any part in it.

I'll rather choose to die  
Poor wife to Peregrine, than live a king's  
Inglorious strumpet; can you think, my lord,  
Should I give up my freedom to your bent,  
And for the pride of wealth, sell woman in me  
(For she must lose that name that once turns  
whore) . . .

(III, 311)

Lord Fitzavarice is so impressed by Lady Peregrine's display of virtue that he grants the release of the mortgages anyway. Walter Peregrine unexpectedly arrives home and, hearing his wife's good news about the happy state of his finances, immediately accuses Lady Peregrine of whoring.

Thou most undone of women, did my absence  
So forfeit me, or ebb of wealth corrupt  
Thy giddy soul, thou couldst imagine I  
Would thank thy lust to piece up my wild ruins?

(III, 324)

It is Lady Peregrine herself who tells her husband of the honourable release of his debts, yet he is capable only of believing in the corruption of his wife. She can say nothing to convince him otherwise, for the situation provides Walter Peregrine with ample evidence to prove he has been justified all along in his expectations of the nature of women. To the audience, on the other hand, Walter Peregrine's attitude to his wife ironically enables the reassertion of the already proven strength of her chastity.

Eventually Walter Peregrine is convinced of his wife's virtue, and they resume their marriage on happy and conventional grounds. This introduces a problem. How can a woman who has, in the eyes of the patriarchy, overcome the base portion of her nature in favour of enduring chastity and transcendental purity, be subservient to her husband? More particularly, how can a such a woman be subservient to her husband when he has clearly displayed a lack of fidelity? The resolution may be contained in the distinction between the temporary social world and the everlasting spiritual world. Once chastity has been proven as the enduring characteristic of the noblewomen in Shirley's plays, these women must live a socially enforced subservience to their husbands. However, husband and wife are seen to share a proven spiritual equality. "[T]hou / Art all the joy I have, half of my soul" (III, 473), says Polidora to the man she is to marry in *The Coronation*. Of her intended husband in *The Royal Master* Theodosia says, "we both / Breathe from one soul" (IV, 180). Cassandra in *The Young Admiral* describes her relationship to her lover Vittori by saying, "we are one soul" (III, 131). Shirley provides no indication that a wife endures a spiritual subservience to her husband. Indeed, their equality in the eyes of God may imply a level of intimate equality not witnessed by general society; and the Captain suggests as much to his friend Sir Walter Peregrine in *The Example* when he describes Lady Peregrine as Walter's "noble wife and friend" (III, 346). Thus it is with this knowledge that she is not wholly inferior to her husband that the women in Shirley's plays are able to assimilate the contradictions of their social, domestic roles into a lasting and convincing definition of self.

Like Claudiana in *The Gentleman of Venice* and Mistress Wilding and Penelope in *The Gamester*, Eubella, in *Love's Cruelty*, has successfully resisted the pressures placed upon her by men. Each of these characters is an example of a virtuous woman who exercises power of choice in the matter of the status of her own virtue. Always remaining within their role of virtuous, obedient submissiveness, these threatened women make their choice not to become unchaste, and, usually after some emotional turmoil and mental

suffering, the women are able to maintain and protect their choice without compromise. Florelli denies that Claudiana ever made such a choice or, indeed, that she played any active part in the resistance of temptation, claiming, rather, that "Providence / Chain'd up our blood" (V, 75). Although Claudiana agrees with the importance of the role of 'Providence', she also seeks recognition for the success of her own moral strength, for the constancy of her "chaste resolve" (V, 77). The audience, having witnessed numerous scenes where Claudiana defends her chastity, is encouraged to accept the active nature of Claudiana's role. Will Hazard, the man who aids Mistress Wilding and Penelope in the execution of their scheme in *The Gamester*, not only accepts the independent nature of the womens' actions, he also publicizes the influence they, as women, may exercise over men through their strength of virtue.

Seeing their chaste simplicity, I was won  
To silence, which brought on my better fortune.

(III, 277)

It was the women's choice of behaviour, then, that dictated Will Hazard's reactions. In *Love's Cruelty*, Eubella's rejected lustful suitor Hippolito acknowledges the woman's opportunity for choice when he recognizes that Eubella "was too wise to be a whore" (II, 198). If wisdom is required by the woman who does not become a whore, then the implication is that at the moment of temptation the woman's reaction is based on both rational thought and decision making.<sup>9</sup> Whether the challenge against virtue is elicited by husband, father or monarch, the woman is free to make the decision to remain virtuous. However, perhaps this choice, indeed, any choice available to the oppressed minority that sustains the wishes of the dominant social group, is inauthentic. If the choice is to be a genuine choice, the woman must be able to exercise the right to go against the wishes of society; she must be able to choose to reject her masculine-defined status as a virtuous woman and to become a whore.

In *The Gentleman of Venice* Shirley does not reveal whether the prostitute Rosabella has chosen to live and work as a whore or whether she has had this position forced upon

her. The question is not raised because, while not entirely a social asset (her existence does contribute to the moral downfall of various men in the play), Rosabella is representative of a social inevitability. Rosabella works in a house in an unnamed area of Venice; she has no social power; she represents the lower or lower-middle class prostitute. Like the fictional cuckolds of lower class seventeenth-century Caroline society for whom loss of honour meant little, loss of chastity for the fictional prostitute of the lower class, that is, the shame and degradation associated merely with being a whore, is also not a deterrent. When Rosabella's clients are arrested during their bawdy banquet, Rosabella herself does not get taken to prison along with the others. They are arrested for being ignoble, immoral and corrupt. Rosabella is immune to questions of personal morality; morality is only for those who can afford it. For the prostitute, prostitution is a business, and so Rosabella's only concern is with receiving payment for the wine and banquet. Her punishment cannot be on moral grounds; it must address material concerns. Thus Rosabella is punished by the financial loss she must sustain due to the arrests.

Although Shirley does cause Rosabella to be punished for her prostitution, the non-moral basis for punishment indicates Shirley's awareness of Rosabella's position as a protective prostitute, her position as a social construction protecting the ideal of feminine chastity within marriage. Rosabella, or the whorish role she represents, is not a threat to society. In order for a woman to use her chastity or, more correctly, her unchastity to threaten masculine dominance, she must either subvert or reject the system of morality enforced by the society. To do this, she must first be affected by this system of morality and, in the majority of Shirley's plays, the system requires that she be a member of the nobility. The other four women discussed at length in this chapter, Claudiana in *The Gentleman of Venice*, Mistress Wilding and Penelope in *The Gamester* and Eubella in *Love's Cruelty*, have all been examples of the potential social danger an unchaste noblewoman may represent. None of these women actually fulfils her unchaste role, and so the potential danger to the patrilineal social structure is transformed into an concrete

reaffirmation of the structure. To have a noblewoman actually become unchaste not only implies the ability to choose to go against masculine rule and become a whore, but this choice also represents a significant danger to social stability. Shirley provides one example of just such an unchaste noblewoman.

In the second plot in *Love's Cruelty*, the noblewoman Clariana is betrothed to the gentleman Bellamente. However, she is physically attracted to Bellamente's closest friend, Hippolito, who finds himself unable to resist his own attraction to her. The honourable Hippolito remains troubled by his fascination with Clariana, because it does not abate even after she and Bellamente are married:

are not other women  
As fair and tempting? or am I hurried  
By violence of my fate to love her best,  
That should be most a stranger?

(II, 227)

Now a wife, Clariana does not repent of her lustful desires, and actually encourages the development of her relationship with Hippolito. Their emotionally adulterous relationship is consummated and, where Hippolito is immediately regretful of the situation, Clariana revels in her own wickedness.<sup>10</sup>

Hippolito: What pity 'tis these pleasures are not lawful.

Clariana: Lawful! that would take much from the delight and value.

(II, 238)

Prior to the act of adultery, Clariana is an entirely acceptable woman. She is a noble, beautiful, and chaste maid. She is on the brink of social success, for she is engaged to be married. Her future is clear: she will be a chaste and obedient wife, bear her husband's sons, and be a respected and respectable member of court society. In short, Clariana has everything a woman can have; she represents the ideal of femininity. Yet Clariana spurns these advantages when she commits adultery, when she becomes a whore. From her position within the society, Clariana consciously chooses to reject all social and moral principles. She does everything in her power to conceal this decision and to retain her virtuous reputation; nevertheless, she is discovered and her nonvirtuous behaviour

results in her ultimate social exile.

In *The Duke's Mistress* Horatio adopts an attitude that suggests that one ought to expect women such as Clariana to commit adultery. Of women he says to his friend Bentivolio:

They work with spirits, man, and can do wonders,  
Specially a handsome woman, from whose false  
And sly temptations all my wits defend me!

(IV, 207)

Horatio's logic is that a beautiful woman is more likely to be a temptation to a man than an ugly woman and thus a man with a beautiful wife is more likely to be cuckolded. Ruth Kelso found this to be a common philosophy amongst Renaissance writers:

if a wife is beautiful, her husband will enjoy her but must fear sharing her with others; if she is ugly, he cannot enjoy her himself though secure from fear of competitors. The solution usually advised was to seek mediocrity, enough beauty to escape boredom and temptation elsewhere, and to promise comely children, but not so much as to cause suspicion and worry.<sup>11</sup>

According to Horatio, if adultery occurs due to a woman's beauty, then the fault is entirely hers and responsibility does not fall on the shoulders of the man involved. In 1650, some fifteen years following the licensing of *The Duke's Mistress*, harsh Puritan legislation saw adultery become a capital crime. Although juries refused to condemn any person, many were convicted with lesser sentences. The accused man could escape conviction by pleading ignorance of his lover's marriage, whereas the woman had to establish that her husband had been absent at least three years.<sup>12</sup> The legislation, like Horatio's reasoning, was based on the principle of the greater guilt of the female in adultery.

At the end of *Love's Cruelty* Clariana dies. She is stabbed by her husband Bellamente primarily for two reasons: first, for the unchastity which caused her to make Bellamente a cuckold and, second, for the wickedness and envy which caused her to attack her lover Hippolito with a dagger. But Clariana's death is not merely punishment for her wanton and unchaste acts. Clariana's behaviour shows that it is possible, as a woman, to transcend the position forced upon her by unquestioned masculine rule and to reject the

basic tenets and authority of that rule.

Through temporary lapses of personal honour, Cornari, Wilding and Sebastian also threaten masculine domination. However, these threats materialize as unintentional consequences of the ignoble and short-term means by which the men attempt to achieve their goals: Cornari wants an heir, Wilding wants an illicit liaison with Penelope, and Sebastian wants a noble reputation. The men's threats are potential, and it is ironic that the decision by various women to remain chaste is the basic reason why these potential threats are destined never to be realized. The social threat caused by Clariana's behaviour differs fundamentally from the men's threats. Clariana deliberately seeks to subvert the dominant order.

The woman who adopts the masculine-defined role of chaste wife is respected by and accepted into society. Although the prostitute is despised by society, she, too, has a definite role within the society and so is allowed to exist. The adulteress seeks to challenge society by not accepting either role, by not accepting masculine control. In becoming an adulteress, Clariana enjoys appearing as a virtuous wife while secretly being a whore. She combines the two separate roles into a sexual freedom which equals that of masculine sexual freedom, thus rejecting the essential dominance of men. The masculine sexual freedom which Clariana pursues is that form of sexual liberty commonly referred to as the double standard, an aspect of which is described by Ester Sowernam in *Ester Hath Hang'd Haman* (1617):

if a man abuse a maid and get her with child, no matter is made of it - but as a trick of youth; but it is made so heinous an offence in the maid that she is disparaged and utterly undone by it.

(Shepherd, ed., *Women's Sharp Revenge* 103)

Like the court of Charles I, Shirley's plays seem to advocate a code of chastity equal for men and women; this code is ideal, and remains distinct from the actual practices of Caroline society upon which Clariana apparently bases her decision to act unchastely. Although asserting the need for masculine chastity within marriage, Winfield in *The Ball*

gives evidence for the presence of the sexual double standard in Caroline society, saying to Lucina, "We vow no chastity till we marry, lady; / 'Tis out of fashion indeed with gentlemen" (III, 73). Lucina then further emphasizes the largely unquestioned dominance of the acceptability of the double standard when she agrees to marry Wilding despite his admission. Thus the ideology of chastity that is emergent in Shirley's plays is not of a single standard of fidelity for men and women in general, but of a single standard within marriage.

Ironically, in seeking to achieve a sexual position comparable to that which she perceives to be enjoyed by men, Clariana's experience, particularly her death, reflects the experiences of Shirley's unchaste male characters. Shirley simply does not allow the existence of the double standard which encourages masculine sexual freedom within marriage; like the unchaste Clariana, the unchaste men in Shirley's plays are punished for their behaviour.

As Clariana lies dying, she begs forgiveness for her sins and, as proof of her repentance, offers a warning to other would-be adulteresses.

Oh! forgive me,  
Good heaven! I have wrong'd thee, Bellamente. -  
Oh wives, hereafter, mean your hearts to them  
You give your holy vows . . .

(II, 265)

The masculine social order is victorious. Not only has the feminine threat, Clariana, been eliminated, but before her death she, in admitting her wrongdoing, has been converted to the leading social doctrine. The chaos caused by Clariana's rejection of social, sexual principles is finally resolved by her assertion of those same principles.

Although Clariana rescinds her rejection of society, that initial rejection remains significant. Certainly Clariana's death indicates the ease with which society may assimilate such rejection, and Shirley uses her repentance to reaffirm the all-encompassing strength of the social order. However, the fact that Clariana, one woman, is able to expose and reject the underlying dogmas of the masculine dominated society implies a level of

feminine power that is both significant and tangible in its ability to infiltrate and undermine the dominance of the masculine grasp on the social order.

*The Lady of Pleasure* also deals with the theme of adultery but instead of exposing and punishing the adulteress, the resolution remains problematic in that the sin not only goes unpunished but is allowed to exist unrecognized. The play's title character, the lady of pleasure, is the noblewoman Aretina, wife to Sir Thomas Bornwell. In an attempt to escape the boredom of the unsophisticated and unassuming conventions of the country, Aretina has defied her husband's wishes by forcing their entire household to move to the city. Here she realizes the legacy of her name<sup>13</sup> by indulging in endless parties, gaming, banquets and other vain and immodest social pursuits. She spends money carelessly and unnecessarily and attracts the company of foolish and parasitic courtiers. It is with one of these courtiers, Kickshaw, that Aretina decides to have an affair. She employs the services of Madam Decoy, a procuress, who entices Kickshaw to the meeting point by means of an anonymous love letter and a jewel. On arrival, Kickshaw is lead in blindfolded by Decoy's two henchmen who then depart. Decoy, disguised, convinces Kickshaw to remain the night and couple with her. This he does and, per the women's arrangement, it is Aretina and not Decoy with whom he shares the darkened bed-chamber. Adultery is now added to Aretina's list of misdemeanours.

Aretina's act of adultery is unique. Apart from Decoy, no one other than Aretina herself, not even Kickshaw the man involved, knows that Aretina is an adulteress. It would seem that Aretina has successfully duped the masculine constraints put upon her sexuality. She is still a member of a repressed social group but has found a way to overstep prescribed moral and behavioral boundaries. Surprisingly, despite her success and the guarantee that she can never be exposed, Aretina repents, promising her husband she will behave virtuously in the future.

Heaven has dissolved the clouds that hung upon  
My eyes, and if you can with mercy meet  
A penitent, I throw my own will off,

And now in all things obey your's.

(IV, 98)

Aretina does not explain her sudden change of mind, nor does her husband enquire. They exit the stage together for a brief period during which time she apparently tells him of her desire to repent but, given his ready acceptance, it seems that she has not told him of the adultery. Rather, Aretina repents the social and financial excesses that went continually against her husband's wishes. Her change of heart seems genuine but still the adultery remains secret:

Already  
I feel a cure upon my soul, and promise  
My after life to virtue. Pardon, heaven,  
My shame, yet hid from the world's eye.

(IV, 99)

In *Love's Cruelty* Clariana, although initially revelling in her sin, repents her shameful actions. Aretina, on the other hand, seems to have no difficulty in coping with her "shame" and this, coupled with the fact that virtually no one knows of her adultery, suggests that symbolically Aretina may not be an adulteress at all. A sin hidden from society is apparently no sin at all, or at least not a very important one.

Oddly, and unlike any other of Shirley's works, *The Lady of Pleasure* does not address the issues of sin and corruption but instead side-steps any attempt to secure moral order in the all-consuming act of reinstating social order. Social order, however, can only be the *appearance* of order. Aretina's repentance to her husband represents her recognition of the need for social salvation rather than a desire for spiritual salvation. The implication is that to *appear* nonvirtuous is more sinful than to *be* nonvirtuous. Consequently Aretina sets about righting appearances. She has been observed in the company of Decoy and so expresses the intention to win the procuress over to virtue, claiming "my counsel may recover her" (IV, 99). Aretina also counsels Kickshaw, threatening to expose the act of fornication he confessed to her (ironically this is the act in which she was involved) if he does not change his ways.

I'll voice it  
Louder, to all the world, your horrid sin,  
Unless you promise me religiously,  
To purge your foul blood by repentance, sir.

(IV, 99-100)

Although she promises herself to a life of virtue and although she does not succeed in her bid to live outside social rules and expectations, she has, it seems, achieved what no woman in her position could ever hope for. Aretina has survived as an unpunished adulteress. But Aretina's position does not compromise the all-consuming social need for feminine virtue that is made evident by the moral trials of Shirley's virtuous women, for the social influences working within *The Lady of Pleasure* are not as passive as they might first have appeared. Aretina is punished for her non-virtuous behaviour and, as the next chapter explores, it is through the ethics of appearance, the relationship between beauty and virtue, and, most specifically, the horror of ugliness that Aretina is made to repent.

## CHAPTER THREE

### **'Have I contracted such a leprous form': Appearance, Witches and Magic**

Shirley's plays occupy the unique historical position of being able to comment on the symbolism of witchcraft mythology without having to pander to the previously constraining views of his society regarding the actuality of witches. Both Elizabeth I and James I held an active interest in witchcraft, and in 1597 James I published a treatise on the subject: *Dæmonologie*; it was republished in 1603, the year he came to the English throne. In contrast, Charles I shared no such preoccupation and the subject was not an overt concern of the Caroline court. Despite this apparent lack of interest, the mythic tradition and place of witches was still strong at the time Shirley was writing and this enabled him to include in his plays widespread references to witches and their craft. Although current interests in the danger and importance of witches were waning and becoming officially less paranoid and less superstitious, many members of Caroline society still believed in witches. The multiplicity of Caroline attitudes is neatly expressed by Bonamico who, successfully using magic as the key to duping the courtiers in *The Bird in a Cage*, refers to "this believing age" (II, 385), while himself occupying a position outside such apparent naivety or superstition. While never denying the possibility of witches, Shirley equally provides no indication or proof of their necessary existence, and the decision to believe or not is left entirely to the audience. What Shirley does do is make use of the dominant mythology of witches to aid in his representations of gender relations and, in particular, gender-based power struggles. In contrast to female witches as spiritual criminals, male witches are presented in Shirley's plays as social criminals. Men's desire

is for personal gain through manipulation of the social order whereas women's desire is to manipulate and redefine the very basis of society, the natural order. The fundamental weapons that are used by women in their struggle to dominate men and that are depicted in Shirley's plays in terms of witchcraft include the ethics of sexuality, age and appearance.

The Neoplatonic Renaissance attitude toward feminine beauty and virtue was that the two were inextricably interconnected. In the same way that politics, religion, ethics and domestic life were ever seen as interdependent,<sup>1</sup> so a woman's physical appearance had a direct bearing on her spiritual stature. Baldesar Castiglione explains these ethics of beauty:<sup>2</sup>

beauty springs from God, and is like a circle of which goodness is the centre. And hence, as there can be no circle without a centre, there can be no beauty without goodness. Thus a wicked soul rarely inhabits a beautiful body, and for that reason outward beauty is a true sign of inward goodness.  
(Castiglione 330)

If beauty is a favour from God then ugly or ill-favoured women are ill-favoured by God. Ugly women are necessarily despicable in nature, thus making the distinction between a woman who is ugly and a woman who is a follower of the devil - a witch - merely arbitrary.<sup>3</sup> Startup, attempting to convince Frances of the attractiveness of her face in *The Constant Maid*, takes for granted the association between ugliness and witchcraft.

A worse face would become the country; nay,  
There are but fifteen women in the parish  
I live in, of which twelve are counted witches,  
And wear beards.

(IV, 474)

It is this series of connections - between non-virtue, ugliness and witchcraft - that leads to Aretina, in *The Lady of Pleasure*, deciding to repent. "The truest wealth / Shines from the soul" (IV, 8), says Bornwell to his wife, but it is not until she begins to detect her own lack of spiritual wealth and virtue being reflected in her physical appearance that Aretina sets about correcting her wrongdoings.

The ideology of witchcraft and ugliness is introduced into the play when Kickshaw, the man with whom Aretina intends to have an adulterous liaison, is brought to the house

of Madam Decoy, the procuress. Disguised as an old woman, Decoy, on Aretina's behalf, offers Kickshaw gold and riches in return for his sexual favours. Kickshaw immediately rejects the offer on the grounds that he does not wish to deal with the devil,<sup>4</sup> and hence witchcraft begins its active presence in the situation.

Though she sent for me,  
I hope she has another customer  
To do the trick withal; I would not turn  
Familiar to a witch.

(IV, 64)

Vain and greedy fop that he is, Kickshaw rapidly rethinks his decision when faced with Decoy's insistent and convincing justifications.

My wealth shall make thee glorious; and, the more  
To encourage thee, howe'er this form may fright  
Thy youthful eyes, yet thou wilt find, by light  
Of thy own sense, for other light is banish'd  
My chamber, when our arms tie lovers' knots,  
And kisses seal the welcome of our lips,  
I shall not there affright thee, nor seem old,  
With rivall'd veins; my skin is smooth and soft  
As ermines . . .

(IV, 65)

Kickshaw is quickly won over by visions of financial wealth and social success. Without ever admitting to being a witch, Decoy takes advantage of Kickshaw's impression by using witchcraft implicitly as the explanation for why her body, which will really be Aretina's body, will appear youthful and attractive to the touch when they are making love. This piece of information, as Kickshaw himself concludes, "doth more / Confirm she is a devil" (IV, 66), and it is with this belief that Kickshaw goes to the bed-chamber and to his destiny.

I am preferr'd, if I  
Be modest and obey: she cannot have  
The heart to do me harm, an she were Hecate,  
Herself.

(IV, 66)

So the coupling is complete and all that remains is for Aretina to reveal to Kickshaw that it was actually she with whom he spent such a pleasurable and profitable

evening. He arrives at her house the next day sporting an expensive costume and boasting of new-found riches. Aretina urges him to reveal the secret source of his sudden wealth, which, after much pressing, he does.

What think you first  
Of an old witch, a strange ill-favour'd hag,  
That, for my company last night, has wrought  
This cure upon my fortune?

(IV, 91)

Kickshaw not only indulges in a literal description of his lover as witch, he also credits her with the traditional witch's role of healer, healing his severely depleted fortunes. Aretina is understandably shocked by Kickshaw's suggestion that his benefactor, Aretina herself, is the devil.

'Twas a she devil too, a most insatiate,  
Abominable devil, with a tail  
Thus long.

(IV, 91)

Aretina presses him further. "Goodness defend me! did you see her?" (IV, 91) she asks, seeking evidence for Kickshaw's unintentional but wild and disturbing attacks against her.

Kickshaw replies

No, 'twas i' the dark; but she appear'd first to me  
I' the likeness of a beldam, and was brought,  
I know not how, nor whither, by two goblins,  
More hooded than a hawk.

(IV, 91)

In Kickshaw Shirley provides an example of the way superstitions and preconceptions may discover witches and witchcraft where there are none. Logically, Kickshaw has erred in his conclusion about the presence of supernatural forces because he lacks the one vital fact that there were two women that night and not one. Yet Aretina is in full possession of the facts and she, too, begins to be convinced by Kickshaw's description. Aretina finds herself questioning the very make up of her nature and substance. Examining her own reflection she despairs:

'Tis a false glass; sure I am more deform'd:  
What have I done? - my soul is miserable.

Aretina is convinced of her spiritual ugliness and decay even though it is not reflected physically. She is sure the error of the mirror will soon be corrected and prove her as ugly as she is unchaste. Aretina repents not because she is an adulteress or an excessive socialite, but because being these things seem certain to make her a witch. The crime of adultery is thus punished and cured not through the traditional avenue of masculine control that is reliant upon guilt, but through the fear and horror associated with being a witch and with (in the Neoplatonic tradition) reflecting physically, in extreme ugliness, the moral and spiritual corruption that, by definition, constructs the witch.

Aretina's fear of physical decrepitude reveals the general attitude shown by her society to aging and aged women. She repents her position of spiritual and social sin (adultery and excess) directly because of her fear of a set of consequences (aging and loss of attractiveness) that are natural and inescapable. Aretina's fear of aging is understandable. Once a woman is old, she has lost her capacity to attract idolizing knights (or courtiers or gentlemen); she no longer deserves the attention of men.<sup>5</sup> She is an outcast. Unlike young women who are legitimate women, old women symbolically cannot exist for men because they are neither attractive nor reproductively useful. Therefore, they cannot exist at all and those who do must, by default, be evil.<sup>6</sup> With beauty an indication of virtue and worth, and ugliness and age signifying the opposite moral stance (Fraser 101-02), the old woman is alienated from society. As Luys, in *The Brothers*, explains to his father,

I cannot  
With any patience think of an old woman,  
They are agues to my nature; she that lives  
To threescore is a witch, and fit for fuel,  
By the civil law.

(I, 197)

For Luys, a young, unmarried gentleman, elderly women are not only eyesores of personal inconvenience, they are a public threat. A woman who lives to a ripe age is unnatural.

Such a woman, in Luys' opinion, is necessarily a witch and thus deserves to be put to death.<sup>7</sup> Carlos, Luys's father, censures Luys' comments, yet his own beliefs on the topic appear to be similar, for his advice is that "A *young* wife will cure / This angry heat of blood" (I, 197; my italics). The most popular Renaissance idea of a witch was a woman who was old, ugly and usually poor or of inferior social standing (Fraser 112; Quaife 31).<sup>8</sup> Although Aretina in *The Lady of Pleasure* cannot hope to avoid the aging process, her repentance does have the positive outcome of halting her rate of spending and thereby protecting the financial position of herself and her husband. Aretina may end up old and ugly but she will always retain her social position as Lady Bornwell with its accompanying financial guarantee. Her change of morality has not stopped her from becoming a witch because the threat was never really there, but it may have secured her from accusations of witchcraft in years to come.

Volterino, in *The Imposture* is also convinced of the necessary evil that characterizes women who dare to live beyond their accepted roles of fertile youth and maternal maturity. Volterino has been wrongly promised the hand of Florelia by her scheming son Bertoldi. He punishes Bertoldi by threatening to make the young man marry Volterino's own aged mother. Describing to Bertoldi the fate that awaits him, Volterino draws the following picture of his mother:

She's something old: till the last night, I saw her  
not  
These forty years; since when, she's grown so ugly,  
I dare not own her; and some think the reason  
Of her deformity to proceed from witchcraft.

(V, 263)

Again age in a woman is defined as unnatural. It is a deformity that is the direct result of witchcraft and that works to undermine the mother-son relationship. Volterino goes further, asserting that his 'mother' is not only a victim of witchcraft, but has actually become a witch. Explaining that she is due momentarily from her morning travels during which she will have made various transportational use of a sieve then an egg-shell and then a distaff,

Volterino reaches the climax of his threat by having this monstrous creature, who is really Pandolfo a servant in disguise, appear before the stricken Bertoldi. Bertoldi's reaction upon seeing the 'woman' he is expected to marry confirms the view that ugliness in women is a state of immorality.

Is this your mother?  
Come, I'll be hang'd; 'tis the more handsome  
destiny . . .

(V, 264)

For Bertoldi, marriage to this witch is literally a fate worse than death (in particular death by hanging - the punishment for witches) and he escapes the arrangement only by bribing the disguised Pandolfo. Horatio's view of women in *The Duke's Mistress* further strengthens the connection between ugly women and witches. In direct opposition to the Neoplatonic tradition, Horatio claims that a beautiful woman has a more base and sinful soul than an ugly woman, whose soul is as beautiful and pure as she appears not; that is, the more beautiful a woman, the blacker her soul. He speaks of the "false and perjur'd natures" (IV, 219) of beautiful women, prompting the question from Valerio:

how long have you been possess'd, sir?

With these  
Ill-favour'd, deform'd women? You're bewitched sure!

(IV, 219)

Clearly it is the ugly women, the witches Horatio so favours, who have cast a spell to furnish him with such unnatural beliefs, beliefs which remain intact despite the fact that the two main female characters in *The Duke's Mistress* actively and entirely disprove his conviction. The two women are both beautiful and virtuous. Ardelia, the duke's "bright mistress, / Than which the world contains no richer beauty" (IV, 204), continues to repel the duke's lustful advances until her true love Bentivolio is "lost / In wonder of [her] innocence" (IV, 225). Euphemia, the duke's wife, "A lady of / A flowing sweetness" who "Can want no beauty" (IV, 194) earns the admiration of the courtier Silvio by acting virtuously and generously while being brutally snubbed by her husband. Silvio wonders

"how her nature may, / Thus cruelly affronted, keep that soft / And noble temper" (IV, 194). Both women have excessive demands put upon them and both remain, in opposition to Horatio's philosophy, virtuous and chaste. The constraints defining the two categories of witches and acceptable women are thus reinforced and perpetuated.

Although physically and socially beyond sexual relations, the old woman and witch is traditionally possessor of an insatiable carnal lust. Angela Ingram notes that

women's evil actions are almost always 'sin' rather than 'crime', and sexual sin is the most frequently depicted.<sup>9</sup>

Henricus Institoris and Jacobus Sprenger's 1486 text on witchcraft *Malleus Maleficarum* (*The Witch Hammer*), misogynist in the extreme, was, once it had been translated into English, probably the most influential and comprehensive authority of the English Renaissance to be written on witches. First published in translation in 1584, there followed six editions of the text published in England before 1669. The lustful, sinful, dangerous sexual desire of witches is clearly documented in the publication:

women satisfy their filthy lusts not only in themselves, but even in the mighty ones of the age, of whatever state and condition; causing by all sorts of witchcraft the death of their souls through the excessive infatuation of carnal love, in such a way that for no shame or persuasion can they desist from such acts.<sup>10</sup>

In 1621 Robert Burton also reported the extreme lust of old women:

when she is . . . an old widow, a mother so long since . . . she doth very unseemly seek to marry; yet whilst she is so old a crone, a beldam, she can neither see nor hear, go nor stand, a mere carcass, a witch, and scarce feel, she caterwauls, and must have a stallion, a champion, she must and will marry again, and betroth herself to some young man, that hates to look on [her] . . .

(Burton 56)

That the haggard, ugly, old-woman-witch is characterized by a voracious sexual appetite provides society with a point from which to attack and ridicule the witch. Not only, however, is the witch's desire for sexual fulfilment ridiculous, it is also dangerous: sexual contact with a witch was believed to be the cause of venereal disease as well as all other forms of illness. It is to the raging and uncontrollable epidemic of syphilis that lasted

from the beginning of the sixteenth century until the second half of the seventeenth century that Stanislaw Andreski largely attributes the Renaissance pre-occupation with the threat of witches. Syphilis, an "illness caught through sin,"<sup>11</sup> reinforced the importance placed upon female chastity, and upon the belief that all women were by nature prone to sexual temptation and misdeed. Symbolically, this insurmountable lust attributed to the witch represents her desire to rejoin society. The ascribing of lust projects upon the witch her desire to participate as a functioning woman within a heterosexual relationship, and to *not be* a witch. On this level, the witch can be recognized as being forced into her identity as a witch, therefore revealing all accusations of her being a witch, of her wanting to be evil, as hypocritical and perverse. Volterino refers to the "devouring appetite to man's flesh" (V, 263) of his 'mother' the witch and this is a direct development of the idea of women as essentially sinful and lustful, developing as they age over the years symbolically from whore to witch.

Through sexuality and carnal sin women are able to control men, and it is this dominance which is of most threat to the patriarchy: "All witchcraft comes from carnal lust, which is in women insatiable" (Institoris and Sprenger 47). In Shirley's plays, where the focus is not upon sex but rather upon love, it is the ideal of love which is influenced by witches and magic. Love replaces sex in its role of the main weapon of witches and, like sex, begins to adopt negative qualities of its own. Angellina in *The Sisters* (1642) is virtuous, noble and chaste, a pointed contrast to her vain and selfish sister Paulina. Upon meeting Angellina, Prince Farnese falls in love with her. "I know not, but there's magic in her eyes" (V, 412), explains the prince to Antonio, Angellina's uncle. The sexual appeal of even the most virtuous of women is immediately associated with magic and even in this idyllic situation the woman cannot escape the negative associations inherent in witchcraft, for Antonio replies "Magic! an she be a witch, I have done with her" (V, 412). Although the love the prince holds for Angellina is noble and in no way damaging to himself or any other character, Antonio retains his belief in the necessary evil of love, insisting upon the

dangers inherent in such a magic that, he implies, leaves men victims to the power of women.

All men that are in love deal with the devil,  
Only with this difference, he that dotes  
Upon a woman is absolutely possess'd;  
And he that loves the least is haunted  
With a familiar.

(V, 413)

Again, through the assertion that all women are a danger to men, comes the implication that all women are witches.

"She hath a tongue would almost tempt a saint / To unbelieve divinity" (V, 256), says Leonato of Juliana in *The Imposture*. Like the witchcraft of the ancient Sirens, "who with their sweet melody entice the passers-by and kill them . . . causing them to forsake God" (Institoris and Sprenger 46), the power inherent in the woman's language is its ability to tempt the man, thus indicating a connection with carnal sin, and indeed Leonato refers to Juliana as a whore (V, 256). Although Juliana is said to be guilty of a sexual misconduct that has occurred before the action of the play, she remains innocent throughout the play, a victimized and unwilling participator in all deceptions. Yet Juliana is cloistered in a nunnery for her sexual deeds and this imprisonment can be seen as symbolic punishment for being a witch. On the other hand, the fact that Juliana *is* in a nunnery implies that of all the characters it is she who is closest to God and furthest from unholy influence. If she is accused of witchcraft and other sin it must be the other characters in the play, specifically the men, who are introducing these sinful qualities. The fact that Juliana continues to be identified as a witch indicates the extent of her social powerlessness. Her position is representative of the lack of power experienced by all women; whether or not they have been accused of being a witch, all women are, by definition, potential witches.

The powerlessness of women is emphasized when it is remembered that rumour and hearsay served as primary weapons in the detection of witchcraft and the accusation of

witches throughout Renaissance England. Shirley emphasizes this when Volterino, describing an old woman in *The Imposture*, outlines some of the most common characteristics attributed to witches.<sup>12</sup>

I mean she is  
 A witch herself, and has two cats, they say,  
 Suck her by turns, which some call her familiars.  
 She has not had a tooth this thirty years;  
 And you may kiss her with a sponge i' your mouth,  
 She is so full of phlegm, else she'll go near  
 To strangle you: and yet they say she has  
 A most devouring appetite to man's flesh.  
 You may have a devil of your own to attend you;  
 And when you're melancholy,  
 She'll make you ghosts and goblins dance before you,  
 Bring bears and bandogs, with an o'ergrown ape,  
 Playing upon the gittern.

(V, 263-64)

Volterino's information is housed within the realms of rumour or report, identified by the repeated phrase "they say." The usual method for leaving in doubt or directly damaging a woman's reputation, it is also an indication that to be a witch is to have one's self overtly and fundamentally defined by others.<sup>13</sup> Volterino knows the woman he is describing is not a witch but he in his description, like Shirley in his plays, is able to draw on a well-established system of superstition in order to convince his audience.<sup>14</sup>

In a society that no longer condones the use of the sword,<sup>15</sup> it is men's language that serves as a chivalric weapon, enabling a man to protect a woman's virtue and reputation from the verbal insinuations and attacks of others. In *The Witty Fair One* Fowler has been snubbed by the virtuous Penelope and her maid Winnifride and considers how to gain his revenge:

what if I report abroad she's dishonest? I cannot do them a worse turn than to say so: some of our gallants take a pride to belie poor gentlewomen in that fashion, . . . confidently boast the fruition of this or that lady, whose hand they never kissed with the glove off: and why may not I make it my revenge, to blur their fames a little for abusing me?

(I, 347-48)

Fowler's description of the use of language as a weapon relates directly to the destruction

of the women's chastity. Accusations of witchcraft are only a minor development of this.

It is perhaps ironic that language, the means most commonly used to denounce a witch and the weapon over which the witch has no control, is itself defined in terms of magic throughout Shirley's plays. Antonio, secretary to the duchess in *The Cardinal*, recounts to the duchess how he survived delivering her letter when the recipient was made furious by the contents.

Soon as he  
Had read again, and understood your meaning,  
His rage had shot me with a pistol, had not  
I us'd some soft and penitential language,  
To charm the bullet.

(V, 296)

It is using the trope of magic that Antonio describes how he was able, with a charm of words, to calm the anger of another man and to avoid a potentially violent outcome.<sup>16</sup>

Language is warned against in *Malleus Maleficarum*, being defined as one of the "three things in nature"

which know no moderation in goodness or vice; and when they exceed the bounds of their condition they reach the greatest heights and the lowest depths of goodness and vice. When they are governed by a good spirit, they are most excellent in virtue; but when they are governed by an evil spirit, they indulge the worst possible vices.<sup>17</sup>

(Institoris and Sprenger 42)

The power of language, when used for good, is such that "the tongue of one prudent man can subdue the wrangling of a multitude" (Institoris and Sprenger 42). Conversely, language has the power to cause social and spiritual destruction and chaos.

A backbiting tongue hath disquieted many, and driven them from nation to nation: strong cities hath it pulled down, and overthrown the houses of great men.

(Institoris and Sprenger 42)

The constant association in Shirley's plays of both the idea and the use of language with the word 'charm' indicates a significant bias within the plays towards emphasizing the positive aspect of the power of language. To 'charm' is "to influence, enthrall, powerfully attract or engage . . . by beauty, sweetness, or other attractive quality" (*OED* v.<sup>1</sup> 5.). A

'charm' is also a "spell," and 'to charm' is "to practice magic" (*OED* v.<sup>1</sup> 3.). The beneficial associations of the word are emphasized, in that such magic is particularly protective, and serves "to fortify against evil or dangers" (*OED* v.<sup>1</sup> 2.). Much of language's *charm* in Shirley's plays is associated with love and this again presents the positive emphasis that seems so prevalent in Shirley's ideologies of love. This kind of magic has no connection with the stereotyped witchcraft wielded by Volterino's witch. Shirley's conjoining of love and magic separates magic from witchcraft, and elevates magic into the realm of the ideal.

It is only when the power of language is appropriated by women that it becomes dangerous and may be used for the directly evil purpose of gaining control over men. "[Y]ou have tongues like the hyena, / And only speak us fair to ruin us," exclaims the betrayed Bellamente to his mistress in *Love's Cruelty*. Unlike witches who, despite the bias towards women, could be of either gender, women were indisputably disadvantaged when it came to language. A woman who was outspoken or loud was defined as a scold, a crime which, by definition, could only be committed by women (Fraser 103). When, in *The Duke's Mistress*, the duke says of Ardelia "What charm is in her language!" (IV, 211), the situation is double-edged. The duke is happily enraptured by Ardelia but his court, his virtue and his wife the Duchess Euphemia all must suffer because of this attraction. Ardelia also suffers because the attentions of the duke are unwanted, and Shirley allows his audience to see Ardelia's virtue and innocence even though the tacit blame from the other characters remains directed at her for much of the play.

The Renaissance tradition of witchcraft appears to have its roots in the healing arts, healing of the body being closely related to healing of the spirit, mind and emotions; hence the connection between actual medicinal charms and Shirley's language of charming. Healing was particularly a feminine role because medicine was included in the realm of domestic duties, often being related to culinary knowledge.<sup>18</sup> A knowledge of medicinal plants, herbs and practices was expected of medieval women of all classes. However,

noblewomen were specifically expected to be skilled in herbal remedies as one of the tasks commonly required of the medieval lady was to nurse sick knights or knights injured in battle.

In *The Faerie Queene* (1590-96), an Elizabethan reconstruction of a medieval tradition, the squire Timias is wounded in a battle and Belphebe the "noble huntresse"<sup>19</sup> tends his wounds. Spenser gives a description of how she collects the appropriate ingredients, which include Tobacco, Panachœa and Polygony, and prepares the treatment.

The soueraigne weede betwixt two marbles plaine  
 She powdered small, and did in peeces bruze,  
 And then atweene her lilly handes twaine,  
 Into his wound the iuyce thereof did scruze . . .

(Spenser III.V.33)

That this art of herbal medicine is a practice of the noble classes is indicated when it is described as a part of Belphebe's skill "taught of the Nymph, which from her infancy / Her nourced had in trew Nobility" (Spenser III.V.32). Belphebe's "lilly handes" are an indication of her noble status as well as her beauty. Timias, recovering from his wounds, acknowledges Belphebe as his spiritual saviour, and this parallels the experiences of the medieval lady and Caroline noblewoman both of whom are revered as a goddess by adoring knight and courtier-lover respectively.

Angell, or Goddesses do I call thee right?  
 What seruice may I do vnto thee meete,  
 That hast from darkenesse me returnd to light,  
 And with thy heauenly salues and med'cines sweete,  
 Hast drest my sinfull wounds? I kisse thy blessed feete.

(Spenser III.V.35)

Timias is unaware of the identity of the woman who heals him, yet adopts the knightly attitude of lady worship, treating Belphebe with a courtesy appropriate to the highest noblewoman by raising her to the status of a heavenly being. Traditionally a knight's wounds, earned in battle, are proof of his noble worth and of his being deserving of a lady's love. In an inversion of this tradition, Timias sees his wounds as a moral deformity from which he is rescued by the virtuous healing magic of the goddess figure, but he is

also saved through the woman's knowledge of herbs, a knowledge he as a man does not and need not possess.<sup>20</sup>

This scene in *Spenser*, although not directly referred to by Shirley, provides a template of behaviour for the characters in *Love Tricks*. Felice re-enacts Belphebe's role when she uses her healing knowledge to nurture Infortunio who is suffering from extreme distraction and melancholy. Felice and Selina, sisters, have independently sought exile in the country, and it is here that Infortunio's melancholy leads him. Unknown to each other - Felice is disguised as a shepherdess and Selina as a shepherd - the two sisters tend the unfortunate Infortunio, but it is left to Felice, apparently the only woman present, to wield the curative magic of herbal remedy. She takes charge of the situation, instructing her sister the 'shepherd' in 'his' role.

Get him to sleep; your presence, I see, is powerful;  
Yonder is a pleasant arbour, procure him thither,  
While I prepare the herbs, whose precious juice  
May, with heaven's blessing, make him well again.

(I, 69)

Upon recovering from his bout of madness Infortunio recognizes the "physician-like" authority of Felice's "art" by which she could "recover nature's loss" (I, 78) and asks her to reveal to him the cause of his distemper. "You were in love," (I, 78) Felice correctly replies. The woman's knowledge of herbal magic implies a knowledge of disease and bodily functioning, and to this Shirley adds Felice's knowledge of spiritual functioning. It is a woman who has caused Infortunio's sickness and a woman who has healed him, yet nowhere in the play is the implied role of witchcraft alluded to. Rather, Infortunio is to blame for his weakness, his lack of faith in love. Selina urges him to

let once reason,  
So late recovered, teach you love yourself,  
Reserv'd for nobler fortune.

(I, 79)

Infortunio acknowledges the criticism: "It is true, / I am a very fool" (I, 79). The scene's symbolic relationship is to a form of witchcraft that is apparently non-damning to women,

a benign form of witchcraft that cures the physical functioning of the body and the emotional functioning of the mind and spirit: the power of feminine chastity. Wounded in a duel in *The Example*, Lord Fitzavarice scorns the advice to find himself a surgeon, preferring rather to seek out the company of Bellamia: "she but with a smile / Can cure all wounds" (III, 360). It is Bellamia's inspirational chastity that contains the promise of a cure.

Shirley's plays present this ideology of the healing women's magic as developing towards a plane of restoration that is moral and spiritual rather than physical. The feminine tradition of herbal cure is not lost in Shirley, however. Foscari in *The Grateful Servant* acknowledges the doctoring efforts of the Princess Leonora: "my wound, / Which owes a cure unto thy pretty surgery . . ." (II, 17). And in *The Wedding* the Park-keeper carries the injured Marwood home saying, "my wife is a piece of a surgeon, and has been fortunate in some cures" (I, 388). The medieval noblewoman healed the body of her wounded knight, but the Caroline wife is also able to heal the spirit of her husband, making him whole.<sup>21</sup> She is her husband's helpmeet and subordinate, and it is the man who is the beneficiary of this healing, perfecting magic.

This controversial assertion of women's essential innocence as healers and wielders of magic is in direct opposition to the historically changing understanding of witchcraft, as explained by William Monter:

The medieval version of witchcraft was new because it viewed sorcery as an organized diabolical conspiracy, thereby reversing an older Christian tradition (also found in some classical sources), which viewed magic and sorcery primarily as superstitions and illusions.

(Monter 121)

If witchcraft was viewed as an organized conspiracy, then it was primarily a female conspiracy. The healers known as cunning folk, a term signifying both genders, were common in the Renaissance and had to be careful to keep their names free from stain, as their protection depended simply upon the local belief that they did only good (Fraser 116). However it was the women, particularly the wives of apothecaries, who became identified

as potion-makers, a dangerous position from society's point of view, notes Margaret Hallissy, allowing them undue control over men.

In the Middle Ages and the Renaissance, the purpose of the potion is to govern male behavior, so it is a powerful symbol of female dominance and, conversely, loss of male control.

(Hallissy 60)

The creation of love charms and potions rapidly became identified as a common activity of witches (Hallissy 61-62). Doubtless a serious threat to the patriarchy wherein marriage formed the basis of social and economic control, reports of love potions and charms were often at the centre of anecdotal evidence against witches, as well as occurring on the stage.

Dependent upon love as an ideal, Shirley's use of love charms is symbolic rather than actual. In *Love's Cruelty*, although Clariana is engaged to Bellamente, it is the attentions of Hippolito that she secretly encourages. Hippolito regrets the feelings he has for her and tries to quash them. "There's the devil already" (II, 228), he exclaims to himself when social convention dictates that he spend time with Clariana despite the temptation evoked by her mere presence. Clariana also describes their mutual lust in terms of evil. Unlike Hippolito, however, she does not attempt to resist the temptation to be with him and uses the idea of witchcraft as a convenient explanation for her apparent willingness to compromise her chastity, even going so far as to imply some magical control on Hippolito's part.

[I] declare myself  
At your dispose; but I suspect you have  
Some command more than natural; I have heard  
There has been too much witchcraft exercised  
To make poor women doat.

(II, 228)

If Hippolito can be identified as the agent of influence, then Clariana can remain the innocent and passive victim. "I / am sure something has strangely wrought on me" (II, 228), confesses Clariana to Hippolito, thus reiterating her position as blameless while seeking to imply the existence of some tangible influence, perhaps a love potion, that is at fault. Hippolito shares Clariana's desire to be seen as innocent. Sydney Anglo notes the

Renaissance tendency to believe in astral influences where the cosmos, "filled with demonic and angelic intelligences," is thought to wield some measure of control over the lives of mortals.<sup>22</sup> It is from within this astral context that Hippolito seeks the excuse of magic, speaking of the relationship between Venus and Mars:

when they  
Are in conjunction, they incline us mortals  
Strangely to love, and lie with one another.

(II, 228)

Both Clariana and Hippolito wish to be seen as victims of this all-powerful magical force of love. Certainly John Nims, attributing their sins not to villainy or deliberation but to the overwhelming power of their passion, sees them as victims.

Clariana kills Hippolito not for revenge but to prevent another woman from having him. And Hippolito immediately strikes back at Clariana because of an impulse of rage, not of revenge. . . . To some extent, the faults of both Clariana and Hippolito are thought of as involuntary, beyond their control.  
(Nims, ed., *Love's Cruelty* lxiii)

However, both Clariana and Hippolito must be seen as being responsible for their actions. They cannot claim unavoidable obedience to an omnipotent love force because the love they experience is not a Courtly, ideal love. Hippolito does not worship or seek to earn Clariana's attentions; his focus remains on a desire to "lie with one another," a continuing emphasis on lust and physical satisfaction. Clariana also speaks of a love that is less than ideal. She continues to speak in terms of magic but she debases the metaphor by connecting it with flattery and greed and no longer implies a mysterious or heavenly influence.

It is not possible any but yourself,  
With all the magic of his tongue or fortunes,  
Could bribe me from Bellamente . . .

(II, 229)

The lapsing of the values in Clariana's metaphors provides an indication of Clariana's own lapsing facade of innocence for, once the act of adultery has occurred, Clariana no longer denies active participation in the situation. When Bellamente first told Clariana that his friend Hippolito did not wish to see her, Clariana mockingly wondered if Hippolito was

afraid she would poison him.

Dares not see me! why,  
Am I so terrible? does he fear I shall  
Transform him? Sure Minerva never dress'd  
My hairs, he should imagine I present  
Medusa to him. Dares not see me! I  
Shoot no infection, nor breathe any mist  
That shall corrupt him; what's his reason, pray?

(II, 195-96)

With Clariana's guilt now exposed, the irony of this speech becomes evident (Black 44) and the way is made clear for her eventual punishment in death.

Perhaps the greatest threat embodied by Clariana is her ability to appear as other than she is, that is, to appear helpless and innocent when she is spiritually corrupt.<sup>23</sup> The ability for one person to deceive another, specifically for a woman to deceive a man, is another dangerous element of the witch's power. Consequently, make-up and other aids to beauty were seen as belonging within the realm of witchcraft: it is by these means that the ugly woman may appear young and beautiful and so dominate a man by enticing him to evil.

There is no man in the world who studies so hard to please the good God  
as even an ordinary woman studies by her vanities to please men.  
(Institoris and Sprenger 46)

This attitude to the magical and therefore sinister nature of such deceptive beauty practices is outlined in *The Sisters*.

And what  
Age do you think the other gentlewoman  
Carries, that simpers so? the miracle  
Of painting! She presents scarce five-and-twenty;  
But if you credit church records, she numbers  
But five short of threescore. Medea had  
No charms like her to preserve youth and beauty:  
She hath the art of making eyes, new hair,  
And is an excellent midwife; she hath cur'd  
A man that had no nose, and a court-lady  
That had no tongue.

(V, 398)

As if boasting that the make-up artist's powers outdo those of the witch Medea were not enough, she is also presented in the traditional witch role of healer as well as the associated

witch role of midwife. Francescina, the maid who describes this woman's unique attributes, is eager to have her chaste and modest mistress, the lady Angellina, indulge in some of this fine feminine magic. Angellina's response is less than favourable.

These are transcendant qualities.  
Since 'tis my uncle's pleasure, they may wait;  
But not to serve me.

(V, 398)

The role of the witch is further isolated through being overtly discouraged in the play by the woman who is representative of ideal virtue. Painted beauty is a cover, a ploy devised to conceal the deformities of ugliness and of aging. It undermines the test of outward beauty as an indication of inner virtue. If the face is painted so may be the virtue and thus the use of cosmetics was frequently condemned in the Renaissance literature, especially in conduct books. Phillip Stubbes' diatribe *The Anatomie of Abuses* (1583) labels the practice as "this whorish and brothellous painting and coulouring of faces."<sup>24</sup>

Ironically, it was the successful use of just such beauty aids that enabled Elizabeth I to strengthen her political position and personal image. Although throughout her reign Elizabeth I worked at becoming progressively more masculine in her public and political image,<sup>25</sup> she also took into account her appearance as a woman and, since many subjects would never see her in person, her appearance as presented in prints and portraits. Christopher Haigh describes how this control of the queen's public image increased as Elizabeth aged.

There appears to have been some official decision in about 1594 that Elizabeth should be pictured as eternally youthful, presumably to prevent fears for the future. Although the face of the famous 'Ditchley portrait' became a pattern for the rest of the reign, in the copies it was rejuvenated into the softer face of a young woman. In 1596, the Privy Council ordered officials to seek out and destroy all unseemly portraits, which were said to have caused the Queen great offence: the object of the campaign seems to have been the elimination of the image of Elizabeth as an old woman, and engravings which showed her age appear to have been destroyed.<sup>26</sup>

Certainly, as Haigh implies, an aging monarch may present a picture of diminishing sovereign power or strength.<sup>27</sup> As a woman, however, and particularly as a woman

occupying an unnaturally dominant social position, Elizabeth also had to avoid the damaging associations with ugliness and age. By manipulating the representations of her physical appearance that served for public consumption, by using her portrait as a means of propaganda, Elizabeth managed never to age, and thus protected herself from potential accusations of aging, ugliness and witchcraft.

Men's loss of control due to the illegitimate dominance of women appears to be the fundamental threat underlying the Renaissance notion of witchcraft. That the threat may result from a masculine lack of faith in love and virtue, as occurs in *Love Tricks*, was a possibility not considered in the social realm. Because the healing tradition provided women with a most obvious source of power, female healers continued to become increasingly identified as being of evil intent and increasingly identified as witches. Although some distinction did remain between good magic and bad magic, or white witches and black witches, there was a danger, as Brian Levack notes, in being associated with any kind of magic.<sup>28</sup>

In actual practice . . . white witches were usually treated more leniently than black witches. In England they were usually prosecuted in the ecclesiastical rather than the secular courts and given only spiritual penalties. In some areas they were not even prosecuted. Nevertheless, many white witches, being known to cure the sick, were also suspected of harming them and thus became assimilated to black witches.<sup>29</sup>

The most socially acceptable medical role for women was midwifery, yet midwives enjoyed no more protection than any other type of healer and were similarly dependent upon a good reputation for the maintenance of their safety. Even a successful birth could not always ensure the midwife's safety. With access to the unnamed, unbaptized baby, the midwife was believed to be in the position to undermine the structure of masculine dominance by tampering with the spiritual existence of the child. As a protective measure against her potential power, notes Carl Bridenbaugh, ecclesiastical authorities sought to ensure that each midwife swore an official oath which included promising

not to substitute one infant for another, not to employ any sorcery or incantation, nor to cut off the head, nor to dismember or hurt any newborn

child, as well as to use pure water and the official christening words for the sacrament of baptism.<sup>30</sup>

Evidently midwives were thought to be capable of committing any or all of the crimes they were made to swear against. Accordingly, midwives come under particular attack in *Malleus Maleficarum*, being accused of taking both physically and spiritually diabolical liberties with newborn babies.

For when they do not kill children, then, as if for some other purpose, they take them out of the room and, raising them up in the air, offer them to devils.

(Institoris and Sprenger 66)

The midwife is responsible for the spiritual legitimacy of the child. It is within her power to make the child a changeling, progeny of the devil. She is also responsible for the life of the child, a position fraught with opportunities for devilish interference. In *Love Tricks* when Bellamente learns of his wife's adulterous relationship with Hippolito, he plans to kill Hippolito

with less compunction than a witch  
Flays a dead infant for his skin, to perfect  
A hellish incantation.

(II, 237)

Responsible for the spiritual existence of the child, the midwife was also responsible, literally, for the (apparent) paternity of the child. Midwives were often required in court bastardy cases to give information on oath when they had been present at the birth of the child (Bridenbaugh 109), and Martin Ingram reports how the midwife could be commissioned to discover the father's name in cases of unwed mothers:

midwives and 'honest neighbours' commonly interrogated the woman at the very moment of birth, refusing to aid the delivery if she refused to name the father and invoking fears of death, judgement and hell if she was thought to be making a false accusation.

(Ingram, *Church Courts* 262-63)

Once a father had been named, the economic upkeep of the child became his responsibility and was no longer a burden on the community; thus great emphasis was placed on getting any name, probably often regardless of the truth. Asked by Mistress Wilding in *The*

*Gamester* to reveal the illicit social habits of her husband and his employer, Wilding's page refuses, comparing the confidentiality involved in his occupation with the conspiratorial reputation of the midwife's:

my master is my master;  
My feet are at your service, not my tongue.  
I would not forfeit my recognizance,  
And shame the tribe; pages and midwives are  
Sworn to be close.

(III, 205)

Although the midwife performed a vital social service, she was placed in the inherently threatening position of controlling and defining the paternity of the child. Bostock, promising to prove his bastardy to Lucina in *The Ball*, says, "I'll bring the midwife" (III, 34). It was not only the economic consideration that made illegitimacy so threatening; honour and the need for men to protect their reputations was also an important factor, as the Duke of Venice indicates when, in *The Gentleman of Venice*, he describes the dishonour he must endure because of his accursed son.

This fool is the dishonour of my blood;  
He declines all that's noble, and obeys  
A base and vulgar appetite: he dwells  
Like a disease within my name . . .

(V, 17)

The duke's son is later found to be the son of a gardener and not of royal or even noble blood. The need to be certain of paternity is emphasized, for the impostor-son's ignoble behaviour is attributed entirely to his parentage. Similarly when Sciarrha displays ignoble behaviour in *The Traitor*, his sister Amidea immediately questions his parentage.

Come not near him, Florio,  
'Tis not Sciarrha; sure, my brother's nurse  
Play'd the impostor, and with some base issue  
Cheated our house.

(II, 119)

Thus, in addition to paternity, the midwife is seen to be responsible for behavioral traits of the baby. It is in accordance with this view that Caperwit, in *Changes, or Love in a Maze*, attributes his predisposition for writing poetry to the midwife who delivered him:

I were born a poet . . . the midwife wrapt my head up in a  
sheet of sir Philip Sidney; that inspired me. . . .

(II, 284)

The association of midwifery with motherhood, where both women are responsible for the child's legitimacy, provides another reason for linking midwives and witches. When Thomazo in *The Gentleman of Venice* asks Roberto "Are you my father?" Roberto answers, "So my wife assures me" (V, 87). Men, physically alienated from the moment of birth, can only manufacture power after the event, and, as Roberto's reply indicates, men's dependence upon women is never entirely eradicated. In *The Maid's Revenge* Velasco, in thanking Catalina for her help and support during a political and romantic intrigue, recognizes the debt that men owe universally to women.

Was ever mortal  
So bound to woman's care! my mother's was  
Half paid her at my birth, but you have made me  
An everlasting debtor.

(I, 137)

In an attempt to undermine this threat of the woman as all-powerful life-giver, the mother is again and again identified during the Renaissance as the vessel that merely delivers the child and it is the father who, genetically speaking, is the sole parent.<sup>31</sup> William Harvey, Physician Ordinary to Charles I, helped to perpetuate the idea of the woman as vessel with the theory that the woman was entirely passive and it was the active semen of the male that created the child:<sup>32</sup> "the semen arising from the male is the efficient or instrumental cause of the foetus."<sup>33</sup> It is from within this perspective that Bovaldo in *Love's Cruelty* insists it is the duty of all wives to "love their husbands, and, for their sakes, their bastards" (II, 252), whereas a man is never expected to tolerate the bastard children of his wife, being, as they are, another man's threat to his property and to the patrilineal structure of society.

This identification of the mother's role as passive does not work to usurp entirely the woman's position as natural centre of the family. On a symbolically related level, the complete familial dependence of men upon women is reflected in *The Maid's Revenge*.

Sebastiano and Antonio are dependent upon their sisters to effect, through marriage, a legal and blood union to add to their spiritual tie of friendship. Like the mother, responsible for the production of future generations, it is the women here who are responsible for the generation of family. Despite the threat inherent in the mother role, mothers (and wives) must be protected by the patriarchy as it is only through (these) women that men can create relationships with each other and can reproduce themselves. The midwife, responsible for but not productive in the moment of birth, represents the proxy mother and so becomes the site for all attacks latently generated by the threat of motherhood and female reproduction. Women's natural reproductive ability is seen as the basis of women's threatening desire to overcome the masculine-dominated power structure, and midwives are accused of witchcraft on the grounds that they seek to interfere with the 'natural' and 'rightful' dominance of men by interfering with and perverting the feminine physiology of reproduction:

it is witchcraft, not only when anyone is unable to perform the carnal act .  
 . . but also when a woman is prevented from conceiving, or is made to  
 miscarry after she has conceived.<sup>34</sup>

(Institoris and Sprenger 66)

Belief in the midwife's unwarranted control over the birth process lead to her role, like all other medical roles, being usurped by men, who were the only recipients of the new, scientific knowledge introduced and taught during the Renaissance.

If female witches are usurpers of men's right to dominate then it would seem that male witches are less at fault. Without containing a male witch, Shirley's plays deal with the subject of men's magic, and distinguish it from the evil of women's witchcraft. An episode that occurs in *The Young Admiral* involves an apparent power akin to healing magic, although it is wielded by a man and is preventative rather than curative, which is exposed as base trickery. Pazzorello is a cowardly servant in duty to the Princess Rosinda as she attends her father at his battlement camp. The witty page Didimo dupes Pazzorello into believing that he can be made safe from the wars. He discloses to the foolish

Pazzorello that he knows of a secret charm to make Pazzorello invincible.

Thy whole body, triumphant, my Rosicleer, and live to make  
nations stand a tiptoe to hear thy brave adventures; thy head  
shall be enchanted, and have a proof beyond the musty  
murrion: didst never hear of men that have been slick and  
shot-free, with bodies no bullets could pierce?

(III, 128)

Didimo appeals to Pazzorello's romantic ego by creating an image of the glorious, chivalric era in which Pazzorello can anachronistically take part. The "fanciful title" (*OED* 1.) "my Rosicleer" has the effect of playfully knighting Pazzorello. Pazzorello, easily convinced, is willing to put his faith in the morally dubious art of magic: "If this could be compass'd, I should love witches the better while I live" (III, 129). Didimo reassures Pazzorello saying, "a charm shall bring thee off, or the devil shall [say] nay to somebody" (III, 129). Even though the proposed charm is to be concocted for a positive reason - the protection of a life - the emphasis on the relationship between witchcraft and immorality remains. Witchcraft is of the devil, and Pazzorello selfishly and basely intends to use his new-found invincibility not for humanitarian purposes, but to gain personal glory and regal favour. The implication is that even if witchcraft can be used to good purpose, those who choose the option of calling up the powers of darkness do so only for unfavourable reasons. Witchcraft is destined always to be severed from nobility of mind or action.

Didimo's power is not the power of witchcraft, however, but an imitation. He calls upon Flavia, a lady attendant upon the princess, to impersonate a witch. Again it is the ugly old woman figure which is taken as the model for the witch disguise and Didimo praises her disguise with "Flavia! that's excellent; Hecate never look'd so dreadfully" (III, 144). Where Volterino's 'witch' was supposed to be his mother, Didimo introduces the disguised Flavia as his aunt, and so witchcraft remains, like healing, a domestic art. The reason for Didimo's complex game now becomes clear for, having established the authenticity of his witch, Didimo demands Pazzorello hand over his money so as to enable the charm to take effect.

Away with it, as you love yourself! not for your right hand,  
have one piece of gold or silver about you; no charms can  
fasten on you then, her spells can have no power, if you do  
not throw it away instantly . . .

(III, 145)

The disposal of the coins is seen as payment for what Pazzorello refers to as "my armour of magic" (III, 178).<sup>35</sup> Although it is clearly only a trick, Pazzorello's armour remains, in Pazzorello's mind, magical. Didimo tries to convince Pazzorello that the enchantment will last only as long as the current wars, but Pazzorello, overcome with images of his own fantastical future, ignores Didimo. He knows the wars are about to end, and so determines to seek a life of gallantry elsewhere.

I will then go seek adventures;  
We'll wander to relieve distressed damsels,  
Through woods with monsters, and with giants  
haunted,  
And kill the devil, like a knight enchanted.

(III, 179)

What Pazzorello seems to have forgotten here is the debt he owes to the devil for the enchantment in the first place. To kill the devil, the source of *all* magic, is logically to destroy the source of his power and, by implication, himself also.

Remaining neither legally nor socially legitimized, this 'men's magic' provides no social or spiritual threat to parallel the threat of women's witchcraft. Didimo, in his duping of Pazzorello, uses witchcraft merely as a convenient guise for trickery. In *The Bird in a Cage* Bonamico, a poor artist, disguises himself as a mountebank so he may avoid his creditors while making money by duping foolish courtiers. He advertizes his ability to teach men the secret of invisibility, all the while working to maintain his own safety by insisting that his is an "art, whose rules / Are lawful and demonstrative" (II, 388), and which is in no way associated with witchcraft.

I deal not  
With magic, to betray you to a faith  
Black and satanical; I abhor the devil.

(II, 388)

In denying any association with magic, Bonamico does not explain where his powers come

from, and the implicit temptation to attribute to his powers the authority of a magical source remains. Claiming to be master of an art that is both lawful and secret, Bonamico appears to be seeking a reputation of scientific authority. Nicholas Clulee suggests that magic (for men) was in some sense legitimized in the Renaissance, particularly in its connection to science.<sup>36</sup> Perhaps Bonamico is looking for protection by intimating association with such eminent figures typified by his Elizabethan predecessor John Dee. He promises three unsuspecting courtiers that he will prove his skills in invisibility by having only his hand appear before them. They are impressed by Bonamico's willingness to provide empirical evidence of his ability and they pay the required demonstration fee, only to have Bonamico's servant Carlo bring them a letter, which reads as follows:

*Gentlemen, that you may perceive I deal plainly with you, I am now invisible--all but my hand, and here it is; you may with ease read every line, as I promised upon the receipt of your crowns.*

(II, 413)

Immediately the hoax is revealed and Bonamico's role as trickster becomes clear. "I do incline to believe, that we are cheated" (II, 413), admits one of the courtiers, and the situation results in laughter, bantering anger, and a good-natured albeit determined desire for revenge.

What characterizes the activities of both Bonamico and Didimo, the tricksters, is a primary interest in financial gain. Shirley's presentation of men's magic as common trickery differentiates such behaviour from the idea of (women's) witchcraft and does not condemn witchcraft as mere superstition. On no occasion does Shirley disprove or appear to discourage the possibility of the existence of witches. Traditional Renaissance witchcraft remains in the feminine realm and is defined as a means by which women may gain power, in both the social and spiritual arenas. The definition of witches includes those women who are unduly dominant over men. Women who do not fit neatly into one of the socially-defined ideal roles are seen automatically as trying to undermine the confines of the patriarchy and to have illegitimate power and control over men. Such a view, notes Leah

Marcus, meant that Elizabeth I had to be particularly careful in handling her image as a woman in power.

So close was the cultural association between witchcraft and other forms of sexual reversal that individual instances of female domination were often considered evidence of witchcraft or demonic possession. Queen Elizabeth faced the peculiar challenge of keeping the "white magic" of her sacred power as ruler separate from these strong cultural associations.

(Marcus 81)

The association between the domination of women and witchcraft, with its resultant state of chaos or misrule, is a characteristic outcome of the activities of all types of witches. Despite Shirley's recognition of witchcraft as superstition, the representations of witches in his plays continue to support traditional ideologies. The mother dominates the male's ability to become independent, and is, along with the midwife, perhaps a reminder that men simply and practically *do need* women - to be reproduced, to be nursed and to be made legitimate.<sup>37</sup> The siren dominates the sexual strength of the man, his moral and sexual potency, his ability to reproduce for the glory of God. The old woman dominates the man through controlling illness, farming success and by the fact that her very existence is a threat to the patriarchy, an evil within the patriarchy. It is ironic that it is the belief that she wields an inordinate amount of power that leads the woman, who necessarily occupies a socially disadvantaged position, to be identified again and again as witch.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### **‘I but imagined thee a woman’: Androgyny, Cross-Dressing and Disguise**

The construction of appearance, as an indicator both of one’s spiritual value and of one’s ethical relationship to society at large, is not confined to the realm of physiognomy and the attempts, such as the use of cosmetics, to alter one’s physiognomy. Clothing, also, plays a vital part in the construction of appearance and thus in the formulation of identity. From Henry VIII through to Elizabeth I laws governing clothing were detailed, strict and oft-revised. They were also, particularly under Elizabeth’s rule, heavily enforced. In 1604 all Acts of apparel were repealed but, according to Wilfrid Hooper’s long-standing and convincing argument, this was the result of a constitutional technicality rather than any alteration in social philosophy.<sup>1</sup> After this time the members of the nobility continued to experience the need to distinguish themselves from the lower classes, particularly in the light of the rapidly rising wealth of the merchant class.

More threatening to social order than challenges to class distinctions is the challenge to gender definitions. In Shirley’s plays, traditional masculine definitions of masculinity and femininity are put into question by the behaviour of cross-dressers. Like those of his male magicians and tricksters, the activities of Shirley’s male cross-dressers, such as Morello in *The Bird in a Cage*, are presented as attempts to alter the social and not the spiritual order of society. However, the equating of men’s cross-dressing with effeminization leads to such behaviour being perceived as causing perhaps a greater threat to the natural order of masculine superiority than the behaviour of those women who seek to emulate and dominate men by adopting masculine dress. Further, Shirley’s female cross-

dressers are presented as attempting to protect the patriarchy rather than, in accordance with the dominant masculine definition of female cross-dressing, to overthrow it. As the experiences of Rosania in *The Doubtful Heir* and Lucibel in *The Wedding* indicate, far from attaining a position of personal power, the cross-dressed woman runs the risk of denying and potentially annihilating her own feminine identity.

Shirley's cross-dressed men and cross-dressed women find themselves, to some degree, without a position in society because they disregard the social function of clothing as an indicator of status and as a means by which one may forfeit or attain social acceptance. As Littleworth, a gallant in *The Lady of Pleasure*, says,

Ladies do  
But laugh at a gentleman that has any learning;  
'Tis sin enough to have your clothes suspected.

(IV, 56)

Master Frederick, a scholar, arrives at his aunt's house wearing his academic gown, much to the dismay of Lady Aretina, his aunt, who insists he find a less sombre form of clothing. She refers to his outfit disparagingly as "his academic skin" (IV, 27) thus, by implication, increasing the power of fashion from merely indicating the essential character of a person to actually dictating that character. Her view is not just that clothing is an extension of the body but that, in Renaissance Neoplatonic fashion, clothing along with physical and facial features is an indication of the virtue or corruption of one's inner state. 'Shape,'<sup>2</sup> the signifier for clothing common in Shirley's plays, emphasizes the relationship between one's essence or spiritual shape and the image created by one's apparel or outer shape. In accordance with his aunt's logic, when he changes his outfit Frederick radically changes his behaviour and his attitudes to himself and the world, saying,

I condemn all learning,  
And will be as ignorant as he, or he,  
Or any taffata, satin, scarlet, plush,  
Tissue, or cloth o' bodkin gentleman . . .

(IV, 56)

A man whose appearance is unnecessarily colourful and costly is to be suspected of being

an empty-headed fop, but it is not only men who are susceptible to such influences of clothing. In the same play, the young widow Celestina is accused of being "a puppet, a thing made / Of clothes and painting" (IV, 58).

Decorative clothing was constantly denounced by sixteenth- and seventeenth-century preachers and writers in sermons and pamphlets<sup>3</sup> on the grounds that fashions of such "preposterous excesse" (Stubbes sig. C3<sup>v</sup>) encouraged the sins of lust and vanity. In the sermon "An Homily Against Excess of Apparel" (1562) men who clothe themselves in sumptuous attire are condemned as effeminate:

Yea, many men are become so effeminate, that they care not what they spend in disguising themselves, ever desiring new toys and inventing new fashions.

(*Certain Sermons* 329)

Not only have such men, in becoming less masculine, regressed sexually but they have regressed in maturity as well, desiring toys rather than honest labour. The weakness in clothing represents a weakness in virility and in *Honorio and Mammon* Shirley portrays this through the symbol of the dress sword, the decorative purpose having totally displaced the object's usefulness.

Will not a sword quite spoil your satin doublet,  
And let in too much air? your lips and language,  
Bath'd in the oil of jessamin, will not carry her:  
You have worn a sword thus long, to shew the hilt,  
Now let the blade appear.

(VI, 15)

A weakness in virility implies an unnatural subordination to women. A man is privileged by the clothes he wears in a way that women are not. All children were dressed in skirts until the age of around seven years, when boys were allowed to wear pants.<sup>4</sup> Thus existed a strong cultural basis for the belief that masculine clothing represented a positive development over the feminine dominance of nurse or mother. Hence in *The Gentleman of Venice* Roberto uses clothing as a means to castigate his wife who is too domineering over their son:

My heir, my only boy! - Fetch me a tailor;

He shall have new clothes, and no more be warm  
With the reversion of your petticoats.

(V, 13)

Lisa Jardine notes that in the Renaissance

the elimination of dress difference between men and women implies a narrowing of the gap between the man and his subordinate.<sup>5</sup>

The danger is one of gender confusion, with effeminate male clothing in particular being identified as a danger to the principle of male superiority. In *The Bird in a Cage* Morello is referred to as a "gaudy signior" (II, 444), a fop; here foppishness is directly equated with male cross-dressing. Phillip Stubbes writes "Our Apparell was given us as a signe distinctive to discern betwixt sex and sex" (Stubbes sig. F6<sup>v</sup>). The threat posed by gender ambiguity in clothing was that with the lessening of outer differences between men and women so would follow the undermining of the gender-based power hierarchy. From 1580 to at least 1620 the controversy over the female practice of wearing masculine clothing was at its height. In *The Sisters* Shirley provides an illustration of the situation.

|            |                                                                                                                                  |
|------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Citizen:   | I would present you, madam, with a pair<br>Of curious spurs.                                                                     |
| Angellina: | For what use, prithee?                                                                                                           |
| Citizen:   | For what you please. I see all men of trade<br>Apply themselves to gain relation to you,<br>And I would be your spurrier.        |
| Angellina: | Do ladies<br>Wear spurs, my friend?                                                                                              |
| Citizen:   | They may in time. Who knows what may be done,<br>If one great lady would begin? they ride<br>Like men already . . . <sup>6</sup> |

(V, 401)

According to the Citizen's account, wearing masculine fashions was not the only behavioral change to occur amongst London women, and here the suggestion is perhaps that although these new forms of independence may have been aided by the wearing of masculine fashions, fashion was not necessarily the influencing force. The relationship, however, between fashion in clothing and fashion in behaviour is clearly one of interdependence.

Masculinity in women's fashions was frequently denounced, but the greater threat lay with the potential effeminization and weakening of men. As Linda Woodbridge

suggests,

men had a greater horror of effeminacy than women of mannishness: for a man to behave like a woman was shameful, but for a woman to behave like a man, while unnatural, was at least a step up--into the mannerisms of the higher-caste sex.

(Woodbridge 157)

In *The Bird in a Cage* the courtier Morello disguises himself as a woman in an attempt to bypass the guards and gain access to the duke's daughter who is imprisoned in the castle and allowed no male visitors. Unfortunately for him, Morello's disguise is careless, and the guards notice his breeches beneath his skirt. In fun the guards toy with Morello, demanding bribes and threatening him with molestation until finally they expose his disguise and arrest him. The duke sentences Morello for attempting to see his daughter, and the punishment given is in direct reply to Morello's cross-dressing. As Perenotto, captain of the guard, relates,

the business was merrily discuss'd, and the pitiful projector was judged . . . To wear the petticoat for a month; if he appear without it during the term, he incurs his perpetual exile from court.

(II, 423)

The shame of wearing women's clothing remains only one step removed from the shame of exile. Through jokes and ridicule Morello's masculinity and virility are questioned, but the seriousness of his loss of honour is in no way diminished. The laughter generated by Morello's punishment works in much the same way as the sixteenth- and seventeenth-century English customs of skimmington rides and charivari,<sup>7</sup> where stylized and often festive mocking rituals involving cross-dressing and other comic shaming techniques were used as a weapon of attack against social and sexual insubordination and misdeed.<sup>8</sup> Such corrective rituals, notes Leah S. Marcus, like the more official forms of theatre, used cross-dressing as a stock comic technique as well as a means by which to highlight messages of social and sexual disruption.

In Renaissance England, the image of a ruler who dressed like a woman but acted with the force and leadership of a man was an image associated with riot and festival disorder. As part of the holiday overthrow of normal

hierarchy, a "disorderly woman," often a man in female disguise, could be placed on top: a Maid Marion or a Robin Hood disguised as an old hag, or "Lady Skimmington," the central figure in one of the English versions of the *charivari*, who was impersonated by men dressed as women and led a raucous procession which commonly boiled over into riot.

(Marcus 61-62)

Morello's antics are described as "the best mirth in Italy" (II, 422) but his punishment is extreme in that in being clothed as a woman he is effectively stripped of all social position and power. It is an emphatic reminder of the servility of one in his position, that is, of the subordination of women generally.

"So, now I am as valiant as Hercules when he turned spinster" (II, 405), claimed Morello when he first appeared in his cross-dressing disguise. What Morello has failed to remember is that at this point in the myth Hercules was enslaved to Queen Omphale of Lydia and that this condition was a punishment for murdering his friend Iphitus. Morello has sought to subvert the shame associated with male cross-dressing, but to no avail. Ironically it turns out that Morello is not wrong to compare himself with Hercules; both men end up with similar punishments.

Forced to occupy the position of disgraced and petticoated courtier and already the target of much unpleasant humour and derision, Morello embraces the role of court fool. He cannot be mistaken for a woman but the reconstruction of his position from foolish courtier to professional 'wise' fool does imply a connection between Morello's feminine clothing and the knowledge and insight he gains.

I am the wisest fool, for you play the fool in your old  
clothes, and I have a new coat on.

(II, 424)

Morello focuses upon the foolishness of the other courtiers, a foolishness which his feminine clothing identifies as entirely masculine. No longer a part of court politics and rivalry, he is aware of all petty betrayals, greed and intrigue. Subordinated by his clothing to a position so low in the court that it can only be exceeded through exile, Morello is able to divulge all his discoveries, prompting Perenotto to articulate the significance of his new

role: "Since it is not safe for a wise man to speak truth, 'twere pity fools should lose their privilege" (II, 425).

Although his cross-dressing works less as a disguise than a label inviting scorn, Morello's experiences remain similar to women's traditional experiences. He is socially demoted, paid little serious attention, mocked and ridiculed, and left defenceless. Yet it is through wearing the feminine costume that Morello gains personal insight and social honesty and overcomes his vanity and vacuousness. Symbolically, the masculine character of Morello (comprising position, voice, bravado, social independence and so on) has been completed by the addition of the necessary feminine traits represented by his clothing (chastity, virtue, modesty, piety).

At the end of *The Bird in a Cage* the duke pardons all offenders, thus releasing Morello from his petticoats and restoring order to the chaos that has reigned throughout the play. Although Morello has not experienced existence precisely from a woman's point of view, his final words remain a significant indicator of the unenviable position of women:

I was in hell last, 'tis little less to be in a petticoat,  
sometimes.

(II, 455)

It is as a direct result of his cross-dressing that Morello gains the ability to comment publicly but safely on the unsatisfactory moral and social elements of the court society. More commonly it is women who earn a 'voice' in Renaissance drama through cross-dressing. Lucibel, the daughter of a lady's maid in *The Wedding*, disguises herself as a servant lad. Before the play has begun Lucibel has been raped, she has disappeared as a consequence of this and is believed by her mother to be dead. No one, including the audience,<sup>9</sup> suspects the lad Milliscent of being the unfortunate Lucibel, and so Lucibel's disguise enables her to move freely in the society. Like Morello who, when cross-dressed, is able to speak truths for the first time, so Lucibel, as Milliscent, occupies a privileged position regarding truth. She is the only character who is in possession of all of the facts regarding the chastity of both herself and the major players in the drama, but it is only

dressed as Milliscent that Lucibel can put her knowledge to use. Only while wearing masculine clothing can Lucibel effect the behaviour of others, and only while wearing masculine clothing has she the authority to unite the fragments of the society in which she moves. However, it is only at the end when she is free to regain the status of a woman that Lucibel can resolve her own personal situation and gain a marriage promise from Marwood, her rapist.

Exiled from her society because she cannot fulfil the necessary requirement of chastity, Lucibel imposes an exile upon herself from her own gender. It is only when the outer chaos is resolved by her alias Milliscent that Lucibel has the freedom to attend to the disruption of her personal situation. Morello, in *The Bird in a Cage*, through the process of cross-dressing, effects no change in his society but is himself changed, apparently for the better, as a result of the cross-dressing. Lucibel, on the other hand, must, through cross-dressing, enter her society anonymously in order to effect the changes required to allow herself a position in that society. Once the alterations have been made she must then forfeit all (social, masculine) freedoms and experience gained through cross-dressing and once again embrace a traditional, feminine position. Thus, while Morello's cross-dressing, although a punishment, works as a process of personal discovery and individuation, Lucibel's cross-dressing remains essentially a process of self-denial and a reaffirmation of those masculine social strictures that are placed upon her as a woman.

In *The Imposture* the widow Florelia has enjoyed, but so far rejected, the amorous attentions of two colonels, Volterino and Hortensio. In order to discover their true feelings towards her, Florelia disguises herself in men's clothing and joins her suitors in a tavern. Immediately, in an aside, Florelia exposes her disguise to the audience although the characters on stage remain ignorant of her identity. This aside - "Would I were off again!" (V, 249) - and the others that follow indicate that despite her clothing Florelia continues working from within a feminine subjectivity. Discussing Viola in Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night*, Jean Howard's comments are equally applicable to Florelia.

Viola's is a properly feminine subjectivity; and this fact countervails the threat posed by her clothes and removes any possibility that she might permanently aspire to masculine privilege and prerogatives.<sup>10</sup>

Florelia is uncomfortable in the tavern environment and is both unwilling and, presumably due to the weak constitutions of women, unable to join the men in their drinking. It is her refusal to partake in a toast (ironically a toast in Florelia's own honour) that results in Hortensio throwing wine in her face, insulting her and then striking her. Florelia challenges Hortensio to a duel but, arriving at the appointment without her disguise, she marries him instead, much to Hortensio's happy surprise:

Here was a duel quickly taken up,  
And quaintly too; I did not think to marry  
The gentleman that challeng'd me to fight:  
I thank your device, madam.

(V, 262)

Despite their reconciliation, the duel remains a significant symbol for their marriage, as Florelia's reply indicates:

Thank the blow  
You gave me, sir; I love a man dares strike.<sup>11</sup>

(V, 262)

In retaining a feminine subjectivity and embracing anonymity rather than masculinity through cross-dressing, Florelia's experience, like Lucibel's, represents an instance of gender-based self-denial. Florelia's dabble in cross-dressing emphasizes her inability to be anything other than a member of the less privileged gender. Although she does not necessarily look upon marriage as an undesired state, the cross-dressing, because it results in marriage, works on one level as a punishment for Florelia because it implies the loss of her previously considerable amount (Florelia was a financially independent widow) of social independence.

In *The Doubtful Heir* temporary self-denial is again the result of a woman's experience of cross-dressing, but here the situation is so extreme as to approach self-annihilation. King Ferdinand, having been thought dead, returns to his kingdom with the intention of claiming his right to the throne. He is unknown to the courtiers and the

supposed queen, his cousin Olivia. In order to remain with him during this time of volatile and dangerous political maneuvering, Rosania, Ferdinand's loyal and chaste mistress, accompanies Ferdinand disguised as his page Tiberio. They are captured by Olivia's men and imprisoned together.

Rosania is strong-willed. From her first appearance we find Ferdinand entreating Rosania to do away with her disguise. She refuses and Ferdinand does nothing, allowing himself to be persuaded by her arguments of love and loyalty. At this stage Rosania's experiential gender position is feminine. When Ferdinand is brought before the queen and courtiers for judgement on his supposed imposturing, he believes he is going to be sentenced to death. Again he indicates a desire to reveal Rosania's identity:

Yet shall I publish who  
Thou art? I shall not die with a calm soul,  
And leave thee in this cloud.

(IV, 308)

Again, however, Rosania stops him: "By no means, sir" (IV, 308), contrasting Ferdinand's wordy appeal with the briefest of commands, almost a retort. The included title of respect - sir - is a reminder of Ferdinand's status over Rosania - as man over woman, as king over subject and as lord over page, but the glibness of her reply indicates an authority more appropriate to a man. Rosania, it seems, is gaining power through her disguise and this, because Rosania is neither shrewish nor domineering, is the first clue that there is an alteration occurring within her position of gender subjectivity.

Of all the characters in the drama it is Ferdinand alone who is aware of Rosania's true identity and gender, yet it is he who is primarily affected by her growing power. Rosalind in Shakespeare's *As You Like It* (1598-1600) uses her cross-dressed state to aid and manipulate her lover, but he is unaware of her disguise. Rosania, however, achieves a similar level of manipulation within the love-relationship *even though* her lover is aware that it is she within the masculine clothing. The very real consequences of cross-dressing have here expanded beyond the social sphere to include personal and individual

psychological attitudes.

Despite her decreasing femininity, Ferdinand does try to protect Rosania. While she remains disguised he is unable to protect her as a woman according to the usual methods of chivalry. As events unfold, Ferdinand becomes increasingly less able to act for Rosania's security at all and Rosania finds herself without advice or protection. Ferdinand admits to her "I know not what to counsel" (IV, 324) and Rosania finds herself completely alone in making decisions about how to act. This newfound personal responsibility is not a gaining of independence for Rosania but rather a clue to her vulnerability. Her disguise is not a gaining of freedom but a loss of self. A decreasing femininity does not imply an increasing masculinity. Ferdinand speaks of Rosania's disguise as a "cloud that doth eclipse that brightness" (IV, 300) of her beauty and womanhood, and the implication is that her disguise is merely a cover that leaves the essential jewel of Rosania's chastity and identity unblemished and intact. Rosania, however, is less sure of the constancy of her own identity. She is lost, not only in the machinations of the court but in her own appearance: "What clue can guide me in this labyrinth?" (IV, 320). Her choice of language is not unique. The cross-dressed Selina in *Love Tricks* refers to the confusion wrought by cross-dressing as a "labyrinth" (I, 84), and like Rosania, Selina describes herself as "lost in a masculine habit" (I, 36).

When, in an attempt to have his identity as king recognized, Ferdinand marries Olivia (but refuses to consummate the marriage, a fact unknown to Rosania at this point), Rosania despairs:

I would, when I had lost Ferdinand's heart,  
I had lost my understanding!

(IV, 320)

Rosania is grappling with her own state of uncertainty which has been brought about both by Ferdinand's apparent inconstancy and by her own refashioned, defashioned self. Until this point Rosania's disguise as the page Tiberio has been a temporary measure, for her destiny and intention has always been to marry Ferdinand. Now, however, the position of

Ferdinand's wife is filled by Olivia and, left with no guarantees regarding her future, Rosania possesses no certainty about her own gender or her own identity: "I know not what I feel, nor what to fear" (IV, 324). Dressed as a male and no longer occupying the position of the cherished, if secret, lover of the king, Rosania is unable to adopt the role of wronged, relinquished mistress. Furthermore, Rosania, as Tiberio, is faced with the approaches of Olivia and thus with sexual demands she is physically unable to meet. "Persuade me I am not Rosania" (IV, 322), she demands of Ferdinand when he tells her of his marriage, but Rosania needs no persuading. Her identity has been lost in the limbo of her cross-dressing, the chasm that lies not between the physiological categories of male and female but between the subjectively defined masculine and feminine roles.

With two names, two genders, two identities, Rosania is unable to resolve the conflicts of personhood, oscillating rather within the ever-shifting boundaries of social and gender difference. The instabilities inherent in Rosania's situation are illustrated most clearly in Olivia's attempt to seduce the page Tiberio, a scene riddled with comic irony. Olivia first overturns the gender categories, addressing Tiberio as "Madam" and explaining, "I suppose you a lady all this while, / And I the man" (IV, 334). Then Olivia reverses class relations: "Admit you are a queen . . . I am become your servant" (IV, 334). Finally Olivia returns to the gender issue, discarding the element of frivolity and forcing an actual feminine appearance upon the luckless Rosania:

Miracle!  
 I but imagined thee a woman, now  
 I shall believe thee one indeed; this coldness  
 Becomes no masculine habit. Come, we'll in,  
 And change our sexes; thou shalt wear my clothes,  
 And I will put on these . . .

(IV, 335)

Rather than stripping away the disguise, Olivia's role-playing is an application of layers which serve to confuse and further obliterate Rosania's identity. As she herself admits, Rosania has now become nothing but a "worthless walking shadow" (IV, 333).

Olivia's wanton plans are interrupted when, at the request of Ferdinand, soldiers and

court authorities arrive to witness Olivia's adulterous liaison with the page Tiberio. The final irony occurs when, to avoid the charge of having a man in her quarters, Olivia dresses Tiberio in feminine clothing. The Captain, having earlier learnt Rosania's 'true'<sup>12</sup> gender through overheard conversation, now exposes the disguised Tiberio as Rosania. With no legitimate position in society when cross-dressed, Rosania now discovers she has no place when dressed appropriately either. She is condemned to death and is indeed "now more lost than ever!" (IV, 341).<sup>13</sup>

When, in *Love Tricks*, Antonio's sister Selina disappears on her wedding morning, Antonio dresses himself in her clothing and takes her place in the ceremony. Hilaria, Antonio's beloved, exclaims, "Antonio is lost now" (I, 57), which he is because he has disappeared and cannot be found to attend the wedding. Yet Antonio, as the audience knows, is not missing at all. He is on stage at the centre of events, but he is cross-dressed and therefore, like Rosania, he is lost. He exists but, having entered the realm of cross-dressing, he does not exist for those around him.

The rich gull Bubulcus, in love with Hilaria, tries to impress her by admitting that her beloved Antonio is not lost at all but has been killed in a duel by none other than himself, the valiant Bubulcus. Antonio, unrecognizable in his sister's clothes, witnesses Bubulcus's boasts and fetches officers to have him arrested. In desperation the cowardly Bubulcus admits he has been lying but, unable to prove Antonio's safety, is arrested at the insistence of Antonio himself.

Bubulcus: A Curse of all ill fortune! I killed no body.  
 Antonio: Away, I say; out, villain! hence! for I  
 Do hear my brother's blood for justice cry.

(I, 76)

Again Antonio exists but does not exist. The cross-dressing has displaced the man Antonio from society yet he continues to behave with a masculine level of independence. The disguised Antonio merely acts out the part of a woman with the result that his masculine subjectivity inverts the gender hierarchy. Now married to the aged Rufaldo, Antonio

becomes a scold and a shrew,<sup>14</sup> both brow-beating and physically beating 'her' husband. Antonio, man-woman in disguise, becomes Antonio/Selina, man-woman in behaviour. Antonio/Selina demands Rufaldo not sleep with 'her' and, in a desperate attempt to keep the shrewish nature of his wife secret and thus his reputation intact, Rufaldo begs 'her' to sleep in his daughter Hilaria's quarters. Antonio is only too pleased to be given access to the woman he loves and Antonio/Selina embraces Rufaldo's suggestion (and Rufaldo's daughter). By sending his wife to sleep with a person of the opposite sex, Rufaldo has unwittingly cuckolded himself, yet Rufaldo cannot be a cuckold as he is not really married. Although he remains secure in his knowledge of his own identity, Antonio's gender position has on one level become ambiguous and androgynous.

In 1583 Phillip Stubbes gave a definition of women who cross-dress: "these Women may not improperly be called Hermaphroditi, that is, Monsters of bothe kindes, half women, half men" (Stubbes sig. F6<sup>v</sup>). Dressed like a woman, Antonio does not behave like a man; he does not drink in taverns or challenge slights to his masculine honour. However he does not behave like a woman either, for he oversteps the boundaries of acceptable feminine deportment. Thus Antonio enters, behaviorally, the realm of the hermaphrodite. His shrewish, domineering behaviour makes the woman Antonio/Selina, according to sixteenth- and seventeenth-century popular opinion, a mutation, a corruption, a monster. And the fact that the woman Antonio/Selina is not a woman at all is enough to imply that the cross-dressed Antonio may in fact be an hermaphrodite. As is evidenced by the following passage from Deuteronomy, the step between cross-dressing with its implied behavioral changes and the notion of actual physical changes being brought about by cross-dressing is a very small one:

The woman shall not wear that which pertaineth unto a man, neither shall a man put on a woman's garment: for all that do so are abomination unto the Lord thy God . . .

(Deuteronomy 22.5)

The cross-dresser quickly becomes the abomination and cases of such actual metamorphic

aberration were known to occur in the Renaissance. In his 1573 publication of *Des Monstres et prodiges (On Monsters and Marvels)*, translated into English in part by Thomas Johnson in 1634, Ambroise Paré gives a personal report of just such a metamorphosis.

I saw a certain person (a shepherd) named Germain Garnier . . . who until he was fifteen years of age, had been held to be a girl, given the fact that no mark of masculinity was visible in him, and furthermore that along with the girls he even dressed like a woman. Now having attained the aforesaid age, as he was in the fields and was rather robustly chasing his swine, which were going into a wheat field, [and] finding a ditch, he wanted to cross over it, and having leaped, at that very moment the genitalia and the male rod came to be developed in him. . . . And having brought together Physicians and Surgeons in order to get an opinion on this, they found that she was a man, and no longer a girl. . . .<sup>15</sup>

Belief in the actual existence of hermaphrodites was widespread and long-standing. Even the author of *The Lawes Resolutions of Womens Rights* was so convinced of the existence of hermaphrodites that he (or she) dedicates space to discussion of hereditary procedure in cases of indeterminate gender of the heir.

Of Hermaphrodites I have some kind of doubts, not whether they bee persons, but what persons they bee, If a man die seised, leaving 3. children which bee all Hermaphrodites, whether the eldest shall have all his land, or that it bee partable as among coheires.

(T.E. 5)

As Linda Woodbridge reports, Renaissance literature maintained an interest in

the whole question of the "nature" of men and women, often suggesting that traditional sex roles were undergoing pronounced mutation in the modern world.

(Woodbridge 153)

When, in *Changes, or Love in a Maze*, Sir Gervase Simple discovers he has married a boy in disguise he exclaims, "A boy! Gentlemen, have I married a boy, or is she metamorphos'd?" (II, 363). In a state of confusion at the thought of being discovered in his disguise, Morello, in *The Bird in a Cage* claims:

To tell you true, gentlemen, I am neither a man nor a woman, I am an hermaphrodite.

(II, 408)

Although the guards are merely teasing Morello, their response is in keeping with

seventeenth-century views: "if he be such a monster, our best way is to carry him to the duke" (II, 408). The hermaphrodite is presented as a monstrosity, a freak, a corruption of the true human form,<sup>16</sup> but it can also act as an ideal in representing the perfect, balanced union of opposites and it is this set of positive associations to which Morello (in comparing his own greatness to Hercules') appeals, albeit in vain.

In the masque *The Triumph of Peace* (1634) Shirley describes hermaphrodites as

Between  
An owl and a bat, a quaint hermaphrodite,  
Begot of Mercury and Venus, Wit and Love . . .

(VI, 264)

Here, the idea of androgyny is not confined to gender issues but rather is universalized to include the human qualities wit and love. The perfect balance of opposites and extremes is an ideal worth aspiring to, and one which Elizabeth I made use of in her efforts to quell attacks regarding the illegitimacy of a woman ruler. Winfried Schleiner sums up Elizabeth's standard defence:

Elizabeth was unique, a phoenix who excelled her sex, being not only exempt from the undesirable qualities of women but also gifted with the desirable qualities of men.<sup>17</sup>

The mythological element of the hermaphrodite is stressed in the association between Elizabeth and the phoenix, the androgynous creature who needs no other to reproduce but rises in rebirth from the ashes of its own funeral pyre. In the words of one of her own officials, Elizabeth was "More than a man, and (in throth) sometyme less than a woman" (cited in Marcus 53). Sir Francis Bacon, in his essay *Pan, or Nature*, echoes the symbolism of the phoenix, the notion of divinity in self-production and self-reproduction:

It tends also to the support and perfection of Pan or nature to be without offspring; for the world generates in its parts, and not in the way of a whole, as wanting a body external to itself wherewith to generate.<sup>18</sup>

The last monarch to rule during Bacon's lifetime, Charles I, also relied upon the ideal of androgyny, employing the term *Carlomaria* and applying it, as Graham Parry notes, to the perfect state of marriage.

In the various depictions of this power, Charles is generally presented as the embodiment of Heroic Virtue, and Henrietta variously glossed as Divine Beauty or Love, but in either case they are each other's destiny and fulfilment, and their union means not merely that Britain is guided by an ideal combination of virtue and love but also that the purity of this reign makes it exemplary to all nations.

(Parry, *Golden Age* 184)

Here, the notion of androgyny is not simply a merging of the two genders to create a third, but a union that creates a superior force representing the power of reproduction and perfection: marriage.

Shirley's plays provide examples of various levels of the hermaphroditic state. Morello, as has been suggested, is a comic example of the hermaphrodite as abomination. Rosania in *The Doubtful Heir*, alternating between positions of gender subjectivity until she is displaced entirely, occupies a position representing the conflict inherent in the ideal versus the reality of androgyny. While her position is that of "a Ganymede" (IV, 321), an effeminate and desirable boy, she is also referred to as a "strumpet" (IV, 340), an immoral woman; and the label "fine hermaphrodite" (IV, 339) introduces a sense of the idealized into the gender conflicts she is thought to embody. Finally Rosania is rescued from all extremes by being exposed and then replaced within the category of feminine virtue.

It is Antonio in *Love Tricks* who approaches an embodiment of the unhindered ideal of androgyny. On stage when he is missing, alive when he is dead, Antonio too is dubbed "Ganymede" (I, 72) and the implication here is that he has been immortalized. Antonio's sister Selina also contributes to this symbolic divinizing. At the last minute repenting her decision to marry Rufaldo, Selina has escaped to the country disguised as a shepherd. Upon learning that her marriage to Rufaldo went ahead despite her sudden departure, Selina devises a plan to discover her impersonator. Like everybody else, she believes her brother Antonio to be lost and so takes advantage of his absence to send to her father an invitation in Antonio's name. The message is duly delivered, much to the surprise of Antonio himself who is still undiscovered and wearing Selina's clothes. Now Antonio exists doubly: as Antonio/Selina in the city and as Selina/Antonio in the country. The double

ordering of names is final confirmation that Antonio's symbolic androgyny is taking place at the level of the ideal for Antonio is neither man-woman nor woman-man, he is both; he is a perfect balance of opposites, an hermaphrodite.

Returning to a less symbolic level, the reactions of Antonio and Selina when they learn of their apparent existences elsewhere differ greatly. Antonio has chosen to cross-dress not, like Selina, out of a need for defence and self-preservation but in order to deceive Hilaria's uncooperative father and manipulate his way into a mutually desired marriage with Hilaria. Despite his disguise Antonio is ever sure of his masculinity and identity, therefore, and he accepts the possible existence of another Antonio with ease and some humour.

'Twere pretty if Antonio be multiplied:  
Here's Tricks indeed; I am resolved to see  
What will the end of this confusion be.

(I, 87)

Antonio's position of security is strengthened because his impersonator exists outside the mainstream city society. The imposter's invitation, delivered by a shepherd, has come from the countryside where "a shepherd is a king," nymphs trip over the land and madrigals, not hooks, are used to catch fish (I, 65). For Selina, however, the suggestion of a second Selina, living in the city and married to the man she has rejected, is a direct threat to the existence and legitimacy of the real Selina. It is not safe for her to leave the more lenient confines of the countryside and confront an imposter who has succeeded so completely in the city. She must rely on the magic and benevolence she has found in the environment of her exile, both to expose the imposter and to regain her own identity.

I vow not to forsake these plains, till I  
Possess myself, or be rejected quite.

(I, 84)

For Selina, the matter is one of survival, of the right to a personal identity and a right to the social position into which she was born - daughter to Cornelio, sister to Antonio. There is no guarantee that she will be successful. On the other hand, for Antonio the situation

is never more than a temporary prank, useful but not vital in his quest to marry Hilaria, and it certainly carries no personal threat. The tangibility of Antonio's identity has survived despite a lengthy disappearance and rumours of death whereas Selina, apparently unharmed and participating in society, faces the possibility of remaining 'lost' forever. The danger to Selina is that, like Rosania, if she were to discard her disguise and reveal her true self she may find herself left with no social position at all.

At the end of the play Antonio and Selina meet, and this meeting takes place in the country. Initially introducing themselves to each other *as* each other, they then reveal their true identities. Still the language indicates a difference in personal power directly related to cross-dressing. The disguised Selina accuses the disguised Antonio of seizing Selina's identity, of being a thief, "You have robb'd Selina," whereas Antonio's accusation is that Selina is an impostor, a liar, a fake, "faith, deal honestly with me" (I, 92). The implication is again that Selina has had her identity usurped and is entirely dependent upon the usurper for restitution. Antonio, on the other hand, has merely to throw off his disguise in order to invalidate the identity claims of his impersonator. The intangibility of a woman's essential identity is contrasted with the unquestioned security of a man's identity. Occupying the position of 'necessary other' to the masculine, the feminine identity is created, controlled and dominated by the masculine. The feminine identity is also repressed within the masculine and to cross-dress is to risk, through denial of this masculine containment, total repression, total loss of this identity.

The self-displacement experienced by Shirley's cross-dressed female characters becomes ironic when the primary motivation for cross-dressing is to enable a love situation to succeed. It is both because of her love and to save her love that Rosania, as she explains to Ferdinand, cross-dresses in *The Doubtful Heir*: "I have a heart / That can, for your sake, suffer more" (IV, 300). In *Love Tricks* Antonio also uses love as the reason for his cross-dressing, explaining,

it is for thy sake, Hilaria, I have assumed this habit, the end

will speak it.

(I, 57)

In *The Maid's Revenge* Castabella disguises herself as her late brother's page boy and this is also motivated by love. Castabella's brother, Antonio, has been killed by Sebastiano, Castabella's lover. Before the killing, Sebastiano and Antonio had been best friends. Now the disguised Castabella explains that it was Antonio's wish that she serve Sebastiano should anything happen to him.

Castabella's cross-dressed condition seems to strengthen her position of femininity rather than, as with Rosania, confuse it. Despite her clothing, in a sense Castabella never really acts outside the socially defined feminine role. Fatherless and now brotherless, Castabella's obedience and life should, according to traditional ideology, belong to Sebastiano - her betrothed. Having killed her brother, however, the remorseful Sebastiano cannot bring himself to accept Castabella and so Castabella must disguise herself to be with the man she loves, thus enabling her feminine destiny to be fulfilled. She continues to present and represent the feminine ideals of virtue and honour. She even promotes wifely duty by making use of her position as loyal servant, saying to Sebastiano:

All the ambition of my thought shall be  
To do my duty, sir.

(I, 177)

Castabella's cross-dressing is not enough to secure her marriage to Sebastiano, however. Sebastiano is killed, and Castabella accepts the only honourable path remaining:

And I will leave the world too: for I mean  
To spend the poor remainder of my days  
In some religious house, married to heaven . . .

(I, 185)

Through forfeiting wifhood and motherhood Castabella is destined never to fulfil her sexuality. Her cross-dressing, it now becomes apparent, was an indication not of her femininity but of her sexlessness. And, in discarding her disguise Castabella discards any association with the perfect sexlessness of the androgynous ideal. She is not even allowed the right to occupy an honourable position in Sebastiano's funeral procession.

Castabella's cross-dressing may have proven her love for Sebastiano to Shirley's audience, but is not enough to satisfy the other characters in the play, most notably Sebastiano's father. This, it would seem, may be due to the play's tragic genre, for other instances of cross-dressing in Shirley's plays show cross-dressing to be an accurate test of a woman's love. Fearing she may be compelled to marry her uncle, Princess Leonora in *The Grateful Servant* disguises herself as the page Dulcino and escapes from Milan to Savoy where her lover is duke. Employed by Foscari, Dulcino then finds 'himself' in the centre of a tangle of courtships. Foscari is in love with Cleona and sends Dulcino to tell her of Foscari's safe return. The duke has heard of Leonora's supposed death and so turns his attentions also to Cleona. Foscari, upon hearing of the duke's interest, orders Dulcino to return to Cleona with news of Foscari's own death so that the way may be left open for Cleona to enjoy all the honour and advantage of becoming a duchess:

Shall I be so ungrateful to a lady  
Of such rare merit, when a prince desires  
To make her great, by my unworthy interest  
Destroy her blessings, hinder such a fortune  
From fair Cleona? let her love the duke;  
In this I will express the height and glory  
Of my best service.

(II, 42)

Dulcino tries to talk Foscari out of this course of action but to no avail and actually ends up having, at Foscari's demand, not only to tell Cleona of Foscari's death but also to encourage her affections towards the duke. This, of course, is ironic as Dulcino (Leonora) is herself in love with the duke and she laments her position:

I'm lost i' the springing of my hope; shall I  
Obey him to destroy myself? I must,  
I dare not be myself . . .

(II, 42)

Again the cross-dressed woman finds herself lost and again she is dependent upon a man for both her social identity and her individual right to be herself, her very right to have a self.

In following Foscari's orders and courting Cleona on the duke's behalf, Leonora's

female identity is marginalized further and replaced more strongly by the persona of her disguise, Dulcino. Yet Leonora continues to operate from within a feminine subjectivity. Martyring 'himself', Dulcino explains to Cleona that the earlier news of Foscari's well-being was a lie:

'Las, he was dead before;  
I'm sure you could not choose but hear as much:  
It was my wickedness contrived to mock  
Your credulous heart with a devised letter:

. . .

all my aim was,  
Being a stranger here, and wanting means,  
After my lord's death, by this cunning to  
Procure some bounty from you to sustain  
My life . . .

(II, 47)

In thus accepting all blame for the unhappy situation, Leonora creates for Dulcino an experience parallel to her own tragic position. Her motivation seems strictly feminine: she cannot be with the man she loves and so death is the alternative.

Is not yet  
My poor heart broke? hath nature given it  
So strong a temper that no wound will kill me?

(II, 48)

And still Dulcino/Leonora cannot escape her femininity, fighting back tears, that most feminine weakness: "good heaven . . . keep my eyes from weeping" (II, 47).<sup>19</sup>

Despite her disguise, Leonora as Dulcino remains attractive and beautiful to male characters in the play, and the language they use to describe her feminizes her continually. "What pretty youth is that?" asks Grimundo, and Foscari replies "there are some ladies / Might change their beauties with him" (II, 21). He goes further to talk of Dulcino's chastity: "to his shape he has as fine a soul, / Which graceth that perfection" (II, 21). It is as if Dulcino were a woman. On first seeing Dulcino in Act I the duke is troubled by Dulcino's beauty which, ironically, seems almost to remind him of his lost mistress Princess Leonora. By Act IV the duke is still troubled by his apparently unnatural attraction to Dulcino.

My soul I have examin'd, and yet find  
 No reason for my foolish passion.  
 Our hot Italian doth affect these boys  
 For sin; I've no such flame, and yet methought  
 He did appear most lovely; nay, in his absence,  
 I cherish his idea; but I must  
 Exclude him . . .

(II, 64)

When finally Leonora is exposed beneath Dulcino's guise the duke recalls his unnatural attraction and now realizes its virtue. The love between the duke and Leonora is proven most holy and perfect because it continued to operate despite Leonora's disguise:

as a boy  
 I loved thee too; for it could be no other,  
 But with a divine flame: fair Leonora,  
 Like to a perfect magnet, though enclos'd  
 Within an ivory box, through the white wall  
 Shot forth embracing virtue . . .

(II, 90-91)

Both in her interior life (indicated by weeping and martyring herself for the man she loves) and her exterior<sup>20</sup> life (comments by other characters regarding 'his' beauty and virtue) Leonora remains feminine and does not enter the realm of masculinity that is advertised by her clothing. Nevertheless her own identity is temporarily effaced through the experience. For Leonora the cross-dressing is not a denial of gender but it still works to deny self.

None of the characters in Shirley's plays who cross-dress achieve personal success or attain spiritual achievement as a direct result of their cross-dressing. Although nowhere in Shirley's plays is the practice of cross-dressing unequivocally condemned, it is presented as a highly problematic and therefore undesirable behaviour. Cross-dressing, whatever the motive, results in a slippage of the defining boundaries of masculinity and femininity. It is not that a challenge to existing gender definitions is necessarily unwanted. Rather, it is the unresolved nature of the new gender definitions that must result from cross-dressing that creates the difficulties for Shirley's cross-dressers. Whether monstrously hermaphroditic or ideally androgynous, Shirley's cross-dressers are left without an

acceptable, realistic social position to occupy. Shirley's cross-dressers can only ever exist temporarily and cross-dressing can only ever represent a transitional state, for the possible position that would be occupied by the permanently cross-dressed person remains, in Shirleian drama, ethically undecideable.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### 'We will do such feats': Amazons and Warrior Women

Both Amazons and warrior women figure prominently in Shirley's plays. Through her adoption of masculine clothing and behaviour, it is the warrior woman who appears to deny her gender. However, despite her apparent attempts almost to *be* a man, it is not the cross-dressed warrior woman who embodies the greatest potential feminine threat to masculine homosocial relations and traditions in Shirley's plays. As warrior women, both Emeria in *St. Patrick for Ireland* and Amidea in *The Traitor* are concerned with protecting masculine traditions of honour and marriage, not destroying them. Like Shirley's other cross-dressers, warrior women can only exist temporarily, in transition. The function of the warrior woman is to restore social harmony and, once this is achieved, she resumes her role as a virtuous and socially-acceptable woman. In contrast, choosing a type of attire neither masculine nor traditionally feminine, it is the Amazon in Shirley who provides the greatest resistance and opposition to masculine dominance. Carol, in *Hyde Park*, represents a contemporary Caroline combination of traditional Amazonian traits. Unlike those Elizabethan and Jacobean playwrights who were approving in their portrayals of Amazons, Shirley uses Carol to highlight the negative elements of the Amazonian stereotype. Although Shirley's plays do not support the tradition of the unquestioned dominance of men, neither do they advocate the female dominance desired by Amazons. The Amazon, therefore, in rejecting men and challenging all traditions of marriage, is portrayed in Shirley's plays as unenlightened and socially undesirable.

Mythology defines the Amazon as a creature estranged from mainstream, civilized

society. Throughout the sixteenth century global exploration and travel enabled many stories of newfound Amazon tribes to circulate. Amazons were a source of both respect and horror, for belief in the existence of these women belied the truth of masculine strength and superiority, upsetting the very order of nature.<sup>1</sup> However, the Renaissance Amazon was also romanticized. Reports of Amazon sightings were colourful and often unfounded but, as Marina Warner notes, they were popular and kept alive an overwhelming interest in these exotic, erotic, other-worldly women.

It was an abiding source of fascination, and the facts discovered were aligned to coincide with other travellers' and historians' tales of female kingdoms. The distinguishing characteristics of different tribes' social structures were blotted out by an overwhelming interest in the figure of a woman warrior: the mere sighting of a native girl carrying a weapon could lead an explorer to posit yet another homeland of Amazons.

(Warner 208)

Amazons were popular literary figures, often representative of potentially admirable feminine qualities. As Celeste Turner Wright reports, Elizabethan and Jacobean literary Amazons were sources of pride and pleasure both for men, who found their strength attractive, and for women, who wished to emulate their physical prowess and virtuous dignity.

They serve as models of female magnanimity and courage and are even included, with no comment upon their sex, among many male examples of valor and of "civil nobility."<sup>2</sup>

As an object of desire, the Amazon remained an unattainable ideal, a creature for poets and playwrights.<sup>3</sup> However, Amazons also embodied the idea of social upheaval as their lifestyle represented women's rebellion against men. A sensual and tempting miracle away from society, the Amazon within society was evil, unnatural and dangerous. The distances physically separating Amazon tribes from Renaissance English society meant that the Amazonian threat existed in principle only, yet it was important for society to be warned of the chaos and misrule that would result from an Amazonian invasion or uprising. Thus Amazonian mythology contained much evidence of the cruelty and uncivilized nature of these women. "Oh Amazonian impudence!" exclaims Morose in Ben Jonson's *Epicoene*

or *The Silent Woman* (Jonson III.v.39), and this reaction typifies the Amazonian stereotype as representative of audacious and impertinent women. In this perspective the Renaissance Amazon is a woman who has denied all appropriate feminine habits and traits in a wanton rejection not only of masculinity but of men themselves. Domesticity, subordination, marriage, modest clothing and language, deportment and love are all rejected by the Amazon.

In contrast to these negative associations with Amazons, Carol, in *Hyde Park*, appeals to what she sees as the Amazonian ideal.

Oh love, into what foolish labyrinths  
Dost thou lead us! I would all women were  
But of my mind, we would have a new world  
Quickly. I will go study poetry  
On purpose to write verses in the praise  
Of th' Amazonian ladies, in whom only  
Appears true valour, (for the instruction  
Of all posterity,) to beat their husbands.

(II, 470)

Carol's "mind" consists of a direct opposition to the private and public, personal and cultural basis of Shirley's dramatic society - the process and institution of matrimony. In keeping with Shirley's other plays, love is the fundamental constructing element behind the relationships in *Hyde Park*, with marriage as the symbol of both personal achievement and social success for men and women alike. In dismissing her own society Carol does not succeed in replacing it with a new structure (husband beating is hardly acceptable), yet she continues to reject love out of hand.

My mind, so opposite to all your courtship,  
That I had rather hear the tedious tales  
Of Hollingshed, than any thing that trenches  
On love.

(II, 471)

Carol divorces herself from the basis of her society, and indicates a desire not merely to ignore or to reverse the gender positions within the existing courtship framework, but to abolish the framework altogether.

Were I a man, and had but half that handsomeness,

(For though I have not love, I hate detraction,)
 Ere I would put my invention to the sweat  
 Of complement, to court my mistress' hand,  
 And call her smile blessing beyond a sun-beam,  
 Entreat to wait upon her, give her rings  
 With wanton, or most lamentable poesies,  
 I would turn thrasher.

(II, 472)

Carol would have no lovers exist at all. She ridicules her own would be suitors, as she explains, "when I have nothing else to do, for sport" (II, 476). Courted separately by three men, Carol toys with their honourable intentions, treating them ungenerously and encouraging them without sincerity. Her intentions, clearly articulated to the audience but not to her suitors, are anything but marriage:

a hundred suitors cannot  
 Be half the trouble of one husband. I  
 Dispose my frowns and favours like a princess:  
 Deject, advance, undo, create again;  
 It keeps the subjects in obedience,  
 And teaches 'em to look at me with distance.

(II, 475)

The once private, domesticated affairs of love and courtship now occupy a public sphere, with suitors in love being seen as royal subjects, but the fickleness of Carol's position is clear. It is Carol's belief that she is essentially superior to her suitors being, as there is, one of her and many of them, but the attentions she receives are a direct result of her reacting in apparent accordance with the courtship process she despises. It is the nature of courtship that the woman be idealized, perhaps even idolized, by her suitor or suitors. To this end, Carol is clearly fulfilling courtship requirements. Similarly in keeping with courtship practice, Carol exchanges love tokens with two of her suitors, Venture and Rider. Later they discover that they each cherish each other's gift.

Venture: She has abus'd us.  
 Rider: Let us take . . . counsel;  
               We can be but what we are.  
 Venture: A pair of credulous fools.

(II, 468)

If it has been Carol's intention to discourage the men from playing love games then she

has succeeded. However, instead of discrediting courtship rituals, Carol's actions result in damage to the general reputation and position of women. The male characters do not allow Carol the luxury of individuality; her behaviour is seen to be indicative of the motivations and activities of a single, stereotyped social group called women (or woman). "Who would trust woman after this?" (II, 467) demands Rider. If women are no longer to be trusted then they cannot be controlled and the patrilineal basis to society is under threat. But Carol is merely one woman and she cannot successfully discredit marriage as a means by which masculine control of women is effected. She can only discredit women themselves and thus ironically emphasize the need, from a masculine point of view, for marital containment.

Carol's threatening of society, her rejection of its basic constructs of love, courtship and marriage, and her appeal to an Amazonian ideal all support the proposal that Carol herself is, symbolically, an Amazon. Carol claims the Amazon as the figure of ideal female independence. Literary authority, valour and unquestioned domination in the home are the qualities to which Carol, on behalf of all women, aspires. In 1521 there appeared Brian Anslay's English translation of Christine de Pizan's *Boke of the Cyte of Ladyes* (c.1405), wherein Amazons are commended for their rejection of the bondage and confinement of marriage (Wright 442-43). Pizan's book was not published in English again for over 450 years,<sup>4</sup> so it is hardly surprising that her interpretation of Amazonian behaviour was not widely accepted in early seventeenth-century England, despite Carol's embracing of it. A rejection of marriage, however, is not enough by itself to make Carol an Amazon. Jacinta, in *The Example* also rejects marriage but does not fall into the category of Amazon. "You'll never marry?" asks Lord Fitzavarice and Jacinta answers, "Certainly, not while I have any wit" (III, 305). Like Carol, whose views display "a new doctrine, / From women" (II, 472), Jacinta is dubbed a "strange condition'd gentlewoman" (III, 304). Also like Carol, Jacinta has three suitors whom she mocks, ridiculing their attentions. However, unlike Carol, Jacinta does not mislead her suitors. She is honest with

all of them as to her lack of interest and it is their own folly and not her misleading that leads to their being made into fools. Although she rejects the idea of marriage, Jacinta's behaviour remains virtuous in all dealings with her suitors and thus remains within the courtship code and distinct from any Amazonian subversions.

Her rejection of love and marriage, her wish to destroy the fundamental gender-based power hierarchy constructing the society, is not the only evidence of Carol's Amazonian position, however. Amazons traditionally live outside male-dominated society and Carol, although housed in the centre of seventeenth-century London, manages this also. With neither father nor brother to oversee her domestic life, Carol's closest relative and fellow householder<sup>5</sup> is her cousin, Mistress Bonavent. In the absence of Mistress Bonavent's husband, Carol is under the immediate direction of no man and, she makes it clear, she will retain her independence even after Mistress Bonavent remarries. The character of Mistress Bonavent provides a direct contrast to Carol on this point. With her husband presumably lost at sea, Mistress Bonavent is on the verge of another marriage having kept a seven year vow of chastity in the hope of her husband's return. She is an example of feminine passivity, patience and ideal self-effacing obedience.

I have  
 Been careful of my vow; and were there hope  
 Yet to embrace him, I would think another  
 Seven years no penance . . .

(II, 469)

With her sense of honour and veneration for the past, Mistress Bonavent epitomizes an earlier type of Renaissance dramatic figure. She is in contrast to the new generation of independent and socially mobile female characters, the generation to which both Carol and the play's other major female character Julietta belong. When Carol suggests Mistress Bonavent put off her suitor for twelve months so that she may enjoy a time of independence from both her past and future husbands, Mistress Bonavent responds by organizing her second wedding for the following day.

I should thus

Be held a cruel woman, in [Bonavent's] certain  
Loss, to despise the love of all mankind.

(II, 469)

It is love and duty that motivates Mistress Bonavent to await her husband's return and, failing that, to embark upon a second marriage. By organizing her immediate marriage to Lacy, Mistress Bonavent symbolically protects herself from Carol's scorn and chastisement by providing herself with a male champion to act as defence against Amazonian attack.

Further evidence that Carol occupies an Amazonian position is found in her constant references to sex and sexuality. Despite Mistress Bonavent being a widow and therefore experienced in sexual matters, Carol still manages to tease her with all-too accurate insinuations regarding the wedding night. Carol's glib definition of marriage - "One step to church, / Another into the sheets" (II, 486) - illustrates the immodesty contained in her attitude towards sex. At the Hyde Park foot races Carol discusses the runners' outfits with Mistress Bonavent.

|                    |                                              |
|--------------------|----------------------------------------------|
| Carol:             | Cousin, do they run naked?                   |
| Mistress Bonavent: | That were a most immodest sight.             |
| Carol:             | Here have been such fellows, cousin.         |
| Mistress Bonavent: | It would fright the women.                   |
| Carol:             | Some are of the opinion it brings us hither. |

(II, 499)

Carol's wry comment on the potentially notorious pastimes of female visitors to Hyde Park does not discount her own possible desire to be involved in such activities. When Bonavent (disguised and unrecognized) and Venture draw their swords in anger to fight each other, Mistress Bonavent displays an urgent desire to leave Hyde Park. Carol, however, is enjoying the fray and one cannot ignore the sexual innuendo contained in her response to Mistress Bonavent's pleas that they depart: "What! for a naked weapon?" (II, 501).

All language, but particularly language displaying sexual awareness, is traditionally a masculine tool.<sup>6</sup> Carol's use of language parallels the Amazon's use of military (that is, masculine) weapons. In rejecting the verbal constraints placed on women but keeping

within a virtuous behavioral realm, Carol displaces herself from the mainstream feminine role. Although nowhere in the play is Carol's chastity seriously questioned, her language is beyond the range appropriate to feminine modesty according to the masculine-enforced social terms and confines of the play. Carol displays characteristics both virtuous and unchaste but she fits into neither category completely. Like the Amazon, Carol's active sexual behaviour (that is, her language) causes her to become defeminized without necessarily becoming manly.

Carol's desire for social and personal independence is shared by Julietta, sister to one of Carol's suitors. Speaking of the characteristics fundamental to early seventeenth-century tragicomedy,<sup>7</sup> Mary Beth Rose suggests that

a newly dismissive irreverence toward the past allows a workable, even a desirable, future to be more fully imagined and affirmed.<sup>8</sup>

Unlike Mistress Bonavent, both Carol and Julietta seek freedom from the constraints put upon women by past tradition so that they may gain independence in the present, and both women use language to do this. However, the character of Julietta's language, in contrast to Carol's Amazonian immodesty, remains confined strictly within the traditional definition of virtue.

Julietta, innocent and honourable, indulges in the moral instruction of her two suitors, one of whom is a wanton member of the nobility and the other of whom has tried her unfairly. She remains virginal and virtuous while displaying an independence of identity and expression that overcomes both gender and class distinctions. To her social equal but suitor and masculine superior Trier, Julietta states:

Now I must tell you, sir, I see your heart  
Is not so just as I deserve; you have  
Engag'd me to his conversation,  
Provok'd by jealous thoughts, and now your fear  
Betrays your want of goodness, for he never  
Was right at home, that dare suspect his mistress.

(II, 496)

Trier has introduced and encouraged the friendship between Lord Bonvile and Julietta only

to use it ignobly as an excuse for finding fault in Julietta's constancy to himself.<sup>9</sup> Secure in her virtue, Julietta need look no further than herself for her own defence. Unlike some women of earlier dramas and dramatic genres, she requires no chivalric champion to save her reputation from masculine insinuation, for she has access to the masculine weapon of language. Nevertheless her behaviour is neither Amazonian nor unfeminine.

And I have tried you,  
And found you dross; nor do I love my heart  
So ill, to change it with you.

(II, 536)

The ability for Julietta honourably to reject a suitor is a reflection of the emancipated character of the play's society, of the changing attitudes towards women that are emerging, but that Julietta must be chaste if she is to succeed emphasizes the still traditional and confining view of women's sexuality. "I choose / My husband" (II, 536), insists Julietta and the claim is not one of feminine superiority or dominance so much as independence. This independence is not confined to gender relations but also crosses social boundaries. To her second suitor, the licentious Lord Bonvile, Julietta asserts,

                    sir, unless you prove  
A friend to virtue, were your honour centupled,  
Could you pile titles till you reach the clouds,  
Were every petty manor you possess  
A kingdom, and the blood of many princes  
United in your veins, with these had you  
A person that had more attraction  
Than poesy can furnish, love withal,  
Yet I, I in such infinite distance, am  
As much above you in my innocence.

(II, 529-30)

Here it is actually superiority that Julietta claims, and it is a claim to a spiritual form of superiority with both social and sexual implications. Again she is totally dependent for her authority upon a traditional and masculine definition of virtue. Nevertheless, the realms of private, sexual virtue and public, social honour have become entwined in this new city society. Julietta herself is proof of the interaction between public and private, for she is given a voice in the social arena of the courtship process and, as a woman, is no longer

confined strictly to the private sphere of home with its socially limited existence. Julietta, although still bound to masculine expectations and directives about her sexuality, enjoys a new position of freedom in that she can use these masculine expectations as verbal ammunition against the social and familial behaviour of men.

Carol does not go so far as to indulge in sexual innuendo with men, a tactic that maintains her chaste reputation, yet her language continues to overstep the bounds of virtue. She criticizes her third suitor Fairfield for his respectful attitude towards love and his use of polite, courtship language. Displaying a knowledge of the masculine pursuit of gaming that is enough to be deemed, for a woman in her position, an unwarranted amount of knowledge, she perversely urges Fairfield verbally to abuse her, as she would him, encouraging him to call her all manner of names.

Come, come, you cannot scold  
With confidence, nor with grace; you should look big,  
And swear you are no gamester; practise dice  
And cards a little better, you will get  
Many confusions and fine curses by't.

(II, 473)

For Fairfield to enter into a competition of insults and verbal mud-slinging would be to enter into a battle on Carol's Amazonian terms. In encouraging him to participate in verbal confrontation Carol is constructing an opportunity for herself to satisfy her Amazonian desire for conflict. It is ironic that Carol should challenge Fairfield to scold her, for scolding is a form of behaviour traditionally confined to the unruly feminine realm. Unwilling to dismiss the civility and respect required of him by the courtship structure, Fairfield refuses to do battle with Carol and thus maintains both his honour and his masculinity.

Refusing to do battle on Carol's terms, Fairfield sets about punishing her on his own terms. "I will humble her" (II, 501), he says, for it is Carol's Amazonian arrogance and conceit that must be overcome rather than her inconstancy and game playing. Fairfield, playing on Carol's own assertions, asks her to vow never to love him or desire

to be with him. This, of course, Carol's pride insists she promise; it seems that finally someone is taking seriously her rejection of love. When later Carol's resolve over the promise begins to weaken, so does her capacity to continue as the independent woman: "I must speak to him, / To ease my heart, I shall burst else" (II, 499), she admits. To himself Fairfield reasons "What women are forbidden / They're mad to execute" (II, 501), and hence begins the final battle between lover and Amazon-to-love.

A love-letter that has been written by a third party merely as a poetic exercise provides Carol with a means by which she may approach Fairfield and satisfy her burning and ever-increasing desire to be in his presence. She signs his name to the note, which ends in a promise of suicide if she cannot give her love, and confronts Fairfield with the literary evidence of his apparent infatuation with her, saying she will condescend to love him.

I have no meaning to exasperate  
Thoughts that oppose your safety, and to shew  
I have compassion, and delight in no  
Man's ruin, I will frame myself to love you.

(II, 533)

There follows a verbal battle between the sarcastic Fairfield and the over-saccharine Carol. Again language is the weapon with which the battle is fought. Carol insists that she, by marriage, may preserve the distraught Fairfield's life. She is not to be commended for this decision for, as she repeats,

I do not  
This out of any extraordinary  
Former good will, only to save your life.

(II, 533)

The battle between lover and Amazon-to-love is made perverse in that Carol is not trying to destroy her opponent but alleges to be trying to save him. She is seeking to dissolve the courtship arena by allowing it to succeed into marriage, but she remains an Amazon because she desires marriage only on her own terms; Fairfield is to be taken prisoner. Carol is unwilling to admit her love for Fairfield, yet this is what Fairfield must force her

to do if he is to conquer her. He threatens to castrate himself as a revenge against Carol's peevish behaviour, and it is this threat of Fairfield's, his refusal to play Carol's game any longer, that frightens Carol into submission. Carol's mistake has come in the failure to realise that an Amazon society functions, for the most part, essentially without men. Without undergoing this voluntary exile from masculine and masculine-dominated society, without creating their own social arena, Amazons could not exist, for they, like all other women, are subject to the conditions of the society they occupy. When, in Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (1594-98), Theseus lays claim to Hippolyta as his bride, he can only do so because the once-Queen of Amazons has been defeated.

Hippolyta, I woo'd thee with my sword,  
And won thy love doing thee injuries;  
But I will wed thee in another key,  
With pomp, with triumph, and with revelling.<sup>10</sup>

Fairly and honourably defeated in a battle that has taken place before the action of the play, the Amazon falls in love with her captor. She relinquishes sword for marriage bed and social security, and in so doing forfeits her position as social challenger and independent outsider. She is no longer Amazon.

Far worse than being conquered, however, is to be an Amazon bereft of a sphere of conflict. The conquered Amazon is prisoner or ex-Amazon, but the Amazon without a battle arena does not exist at all. When Fairfield threatens to remove his manhood and himself, and thus remove Carol's opportunity for conflict, Carol admits her love for Fairfield, and the matter is resolved using metaphors of battle and death.

Fairfield: Each other's now by conquest, come let's to 'em.  
                    If you should fail now! -  
Carol: Hold me not worth the hanging.

(II, 535)

Not only is it Fairfield who has been the lone successor in conquest, but Carol is left owing complete obedience to him. If she errs in her submission, the suggestion is that Fairfield has the right to break those vows of conjugal loyalty, for Carol will not be "worth the hanging," that is, somewhat bawdily, she will not be worthy of masculine sexual attention.

Carol has exchanged her position of independent social agitator for one of powerless wife, submissive both to her husband and to the society's definition of feminine virtue.

Elizabethan and Jacobean plays, although often critical of Amazons, did frequently portray them favourably. Shirley's Caroline plays, in contrast, concentrate on Amazonian stereotypes and general characteristics rather than on traditional, individual Amazonian characters, and on the negative rather than positive aspects of the stereotype. For a character of Shirley's to be dubbed an Amazon is invariably to be attacked for lacking the civilized self-control and natural subordination found in virtuous and acceptable women. In *The Gentleman of Venice* the childless Cornari, desperate to see his wife Claudiana pregnant and the future of his property thus secured, has captured Florelli with the intention of forcing him to couple with Claudiana. Florelli, however, is suspicious of Cornari and worries that he is to rendezvous not with the beautiful promised mistress, but is "to encounter with an Amazon" (V, 66). The implications are not only that Claudiana will be unpleasant and perhaps unmanageable but that she will be physically unattractive as well. In placing Claudiana potentially within the Amazonian stereotype, Florelli exposes a problem within that stereotype. The shift from obedient wife to unruly Amazon is a process of defeminization, but it is not an automatic masculinization, and therefore the morality of the process is unclear. Does Florelli not wish to meet with an Amazon because she will prove too sexually active and demanding and thus undermine his position of dominant masculinity, or is the worry that the Amazon will be aggressively virginal and reject the masculine right to sexual compliance? Both scenarios imply a level of social chaos as they are both a direct challenge to masculine rule, but a blurring still remains regarding the Amazon's position relative to the masculine definition of feminine virtue. Officially unchaste due to her rejection of the marriage structure, the Amazon is virginal because of her lack of (regular) contact with men. The association between masculinity and sexual activity (as opposed to passivity) creates a demarcation between the position occupied by a masculine woman and that of the defeminized Amazon.

According to the lusty Bovaldo in *Love's Cruelty*, the Amazon is not a proper woman but a creature only apparently a woman, a close approximation. Bovaldo, drunk and desirous of female company, admits even an Amazon would do to satisfy him.

Now am I addicted to embrace anything in the likeness of a woman. Oh for a chambermaid to wrestle withal! Send for a brace of basilisks . . . now could I o'er-run the whole country of the Amazons. Here's to a Penthesilea.

(II, 225)

Again the Amazon, although aggressive, is in some sense chaste, for Bovaldo recognizes the need to over-run and conquer an unwilling enemy into submission.<sup>11</sup> Some women are more feminine than others; a chambermaid is more feminine than an Amazon. It also seems, at least to Bovaldo, that perhaps some women are more female than others, that some women - Amazons for example - feign their femaleness. Although many texts on Amazonian mythology advocate the argument that Amazons seared off one breast in order to be able to shoot better, an equally significant number of authorities disagree.<sup>12</sup> That this self-mutilation of both body and sexuality remains an undecidable point may itself be significant in discussions about the Amazon's view of her own sexuality. Of importance here, however, is the fact that the historical preoccupation with the Amazon's breasts, severed or not, provides evidence for the Amazon's undisputable femaleness. If Bovaldo wishes to suggest the Amazon is a mere likeness of a woman, his suggestion, it seems, is in response to the unfeminine appearance and behaviour of the Amazon rather than any questioning of her gender.

Although her physiology is assured, the ambiguity of her subjective gender position implies that the Amazon at least suggests and at most occupies a position outside both the male and female gender categories, while constituting elements of both. Although separate and unique from such a type, the Amazon occupies a similar position to the hermaphrodite.<sup>13</sup> Like the hermaphrodite, the Amazon in Shirley approaches, and perhaps embodies, a figure most monstrous, a figure rejecting social mores, masculine structures (and strictures) and natural, physiological distinctions. Thus Shirley's use of *Amazon* works

as an insult to women, a notorious tag designed to remind women of yet another base potential housed within their collective feminine nature. Both Amazons and hermaphrodites are outsiders: the hermaphrodite an outsider to gendered physiology and the Amazon an outsider to gendered behaviour patterns. Leslie Fiedler suggests that the Amazon comprises the extremes of both sexes, that she is "the virgin and the warrior, the absolute poles of masculinity and femininity."<sup>14</sup> However, there seems to be nothing absolute about the Amazon's gender position, and to posit her as occupying a ground comprising the 'very masculine' and the 'very feminine' is to simplify the Amazon beyond accuracy. One point is clear, however, and that is that the Amazon, despite her often extreme defeminization, must remain indisputably female. This is her power and the basis of her threat, that the Amazon may (potentially) displace or defeat men without denying her female identity. In this she differs markedly from those literary warrior women who also dare fight men, but who must disguise themselves as men to do so.

The literary distinction between the Amazon and the warrior woman is most commonly demonstrated with reference to Book V of Spenser's *The Faerie Queene*, the battle episode between the two women Radigund and Britomart. Alan Brissenden summarizes the scene as follows:

When Spenser's Radigund captures Artegall, she forces him to dress as a woman and do menial tasks - her usual practice with male conquests. Uncharacteristically, she falls in love with Artegall but he is saved by the arrival of Britomart, who decapitates his unfortunate gaoler. Although she wields arms so effectively, Britomart remains truly feminine, and it is only the villainous and unnatural Radigund who is an Amazon.<sup>15</sup>

Celeste Turner Wright also implies a distinction between Britomart and Radigund when she asserts that

not the chivalrous Britomartis nor the Diana-like Belphoebe, but only Radigund, symbol of female tyranny, is literally an Amazon.

(Wright 449)

Brissenden identifies Radigund as the Amazon because, through her villainy, she lacks femininity. Wright makes the connection because of Radigund's cruelty. The implication

is that femininity is a virtuous and passive quality and, in keeping with the chivalric code, while it is a quality that may defend itself or the world against spiritual upheaval and wrongdoing, it cannot seek out this wrongdoing. To be feminine is to remain reactive and not enter the realm of the proactive. Femininity is, suggests Mary Beth Rose, on a plane similar to the experiences of religious martyrs throughout history; it is toleration and long-suffering rather than obstruction and prevention:

For the terms that constitute the heroism of endurance are precisely those terms used to construct the Renaissance idealization of woman: patient suffering, mildness, humility, chastity, loyalty, and obedience.

(Rose 124)

The defeminized Amazon is a woman needing no men or masculine props to display capability in acts traditionally open only to men. She has rejected the social and moral norm of (female) monogamy in marriage and thus is an active or proactive agitator to this norm. The warrior woman, on the other hand, may adopt her role only temporarily, while there is a spiritual need for her to act. She seeks not to undermine but to reinforce the structure of marriage. The rule of Queen Elizabeth encouraged a resurgence of interest in Amazonian imagery. In both literature and art Elizabeth was often depicted as a woman of war,<sup>16</sup> but the queen's virginal strength and independence never coincided entirely with the traditional mythology of the self-sufficient Amazons hating or at least rejecting men. Thus the distinction between Amazon and warrior woman is not entirely a twentieth-century construct.<sup>17</sup>

Clothing also distinguishes the Amazon from the warrior woman. The Amazon's female identity is made clear from the outset of any conflict and this is another reason why the Amazon is seen as such a threat to masculine domination. In her choice of clothing, traditionally made of wild animal hides and perhaps in the style of the Scythian horsemen,<sup>18</sup> the Amazon ensures herself an amount of defeminization without ever relying upon the masculinizing use of cross-dressing or disguise. Warrior women, in contrast, are those women who adopt masculine battle attire and masculine weaponry and who attempt

to adopt an active masculine role within the battle realm of the (masculine) code of chivalry. William Caxton, in his 1484 translation of Ramón Lull's thirteenth-century *Le Libre del Orde de Cauayleria*, explains that women, like men of humble lineage, have no place within either battle or the chivalric order.

Shold a squyer be adoubed knyght of vylayns / and of peple of lytyl lygnage  
lowe and vyle mayst thou make knyghtes / And yf thou madest them / thy  
lygnage thou sholdest dishonoure and mespryse / And the noblesse that god  
hath gyuen gretter to man than to woman / thow sholdest make it lasse / and  
brynge hit to vylete / ¶ For by the thynges tofore sayd / thou myghtest chese  
wymmen to be knyghtes / whiche oft haue the myrrour in the hande / by  
whiche thou sholdest mynnysshe and make lowe the ordre of chyualrye . .

<sup>19</sup>

In seeking to operate within chivalric guidelines, the warrior woman must maintain anonymity and must pretend to be a man if she is to be at all successful in her battle.

In *The Cardinal* the Duchess Rosaura's betrothed is murdered by a jilted lover and she is ironically given into the so-called protection of the murderer's uncle. In a conversation with her secretary, Rosaura's waiting-woman Placentia expresses a desire for revenge.

|            |                                                                                                                        |
|------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Placentia: | That I were a man!                                                                                                     |
| Antonio:   | What would'st thou do, Placentia?                                                                                      |
| Placentia: | I would revenge my lady.                                                                                               |
| Antonio:   | 'Tis better, being a woman; thou may'st do<br>Things that may prosper better, and the fruit<br>Be thy own another day. |

(V, 336)

The implication is that men destroy and women replenish the earth. A woman has no place in battle for this is in direct opposition to her essential reproductive role, and this extends equally to situations where women fight not men but other women. In *The Duke's Mistress* Fiametta and Scolopendra, two ugly and foolish women, believe themselves to be rivals for the affections of the woman-hating Horatio. With the mocking encouragement of the courtier Valerio, they argue and prepare to do battle.

|              |                                               |
|--------------|-----------------------------------------------|
| Fiametta:    | Shall I blast<br>This witch, to begin withal? |
| Scolopendra: | Blast me?                                     |
| Valerio:     | Belch backwards,                              |

And then she's a dead woman  
 Scolopendra: I'll tear your snakes.  
 Fiametta: Mine, Hecate?  
 Valerio: Well said, Scolopendra!  
 Horatio: They will not skirmish?  
 Valerio: The devils will run at tilt.

...  
*Sa, sa, sa!* Now sound a point of war.

(IV, 240-41)

With the entrance of the duke the entertainment is interrupted but not before the women have been thoroughly ridiculed by their own behaviour. Despite the fact that honest battle is a noble masculine pursuit, it is an activity that debases women.

If a warrior woman loses her disguise and is exposed as a female (as stereotypically occurs through accidental removal of the helmet to reveal long, erotic tresses of hair), then masculine chivalric strategies are no longer open to her. Her opponent will no longer accept her masculine behaviour for she belongs to the weaker gender who must be protected. As Margaret Hallissy explains,

Publicly acknowledged rivalry is a kind of bonding in which each worthy opponent gives the other the opportunity to demonstrate prowess. Such heroic rivalries must be between equals . . . an earl does not duel with a churl. But women, inferior creatures, cannot participate in this male bonding ritual. In fact, a woman cannot openly and honestly declare herself a man's enemy at all; there are no rituals to express male-female rivalry. Unlike the duel, or its larger equivalent, war, male-female enmity creates a situation in which no one gains glory.

(Hallissy 5-6)

Once her gender has been revealed, if the warrior woman is to continue the conflict, the situation must necessarily go beyond the precepts of chivalry, beyond the rules that make men fight honourably and honestly for the protection of women.<sup>20</sup>

Ironically, the moment when the disguise is revealed and the woman behind the warrior is identified is a moment of extreme power for the warrior woman. The opponent, fighting within the rules of chivalry, is compelled to cease as his combat code insists he cannot do battle with a woman. The warrior woman, however, is bound by no such restrictions and may use her opponent's momentary confusion to her own advantage. The moment is more than the revelation of femaleness, although this overturning of the

expected order is vital to the moment. Polarities and opposites are united in this instant of awe, revelation, broken expectation and disturbance. The power revealed, suggests Stevie Davies, is a divine power, transcending both male and female participants.

Heaven for a split second is glimpsed in the world of matter; eternity in time; the 'feminine' soul comes clean of the 'masculine' body. Such figures are carefully distinguished from the Amazons and their wild bellicosity.

(Davies 49)

Once the moment of revelation and exposure has passed, the warrior woman is no longer warrior. Symbolically she has never been entirely warrior, for she is never a purely independent, self-governing combatant. Her fight is not merely between the two individuals that are herself and her adversary. Rather, as Simon Shepherd explains, her fight is a reaction against the violence and savagery so often experienced by women as a result of the (mis)behaviour of men.

Male chivalric knights sometimes seem to be little more than stewards insisting on the rules of a gentlemen's club. The warrior woman, by contrast, belongs to the gender that is on the receiving end of the oppression and brutality that is contained in 'unchivalrous' male behaviour. For her a breach of the rules is more than an offence against propriety; it is potential violence and rape. She who is capable of behaving as a man and feeling as a woman is not so much insisting on the rules that make gentlemen gentlemen as the conduct that makes people fair to people.

(Shepherd, *Amazons* 11)

That the warrior woman fights her own battles necessitates a redefinition of what those battles are. Through the warrior woman, women take on an identity distinct from and therefore in opposition to the masculine definition of femininity. Thus the warrior woman fights not so much for her own personal survival as for the survival of women in general.

It is in terms of rape that Shirley presents illustrations of the masculine "breach of the rules" to which Simon Shepherd refers. Although the events leading up to the rape or threat of rape are of a genre outside the traditional warrior woman experience, following the moment of rape the events become a symbolic parallel to the warrior woman experience. The moment of rape symbolizes the warrior woman's experience at the moment her gender and identity are exposed. Instead of laying down his sword and falling

in love with her, the male opponent breaks the rules of honour and chastity by using his sexuality to defeat the woman. It is in her response to this unchivalric, unfair and unchaste method of defeat that the woman demonstrates her status as warrior woman.

In *The Traitor* Amidea is faced with the immediate and physical threat of the duke's lustful advances. She attempts to defend herself with a poniard, only to meet with the duke's mocking response: "Ha! / Turn'd Amazon?" (II, 142). But the duke is wrong. Amidea is not an Amazon. She has a virtuous position within the society, she is chaste in language, dress and behaviour, and she seeks not to overthrow the ethics of her society but to enforce them. Nevertheless, when Amidea produces the weapon it appears to the duke that she intends to engage in physical combat with him for her own defence.

Prince, come not too near me,  
For, by my honour, since you have lost your own,  
Although I bow in duty to your person,  
I hate your black thoughts; tempt not my just hand  
With violent approach, I dare, and will  
Do that will grieve you, if you have a soul.

(II, 142)

Despite being the duke's subject and also physically incapable of protecting herself in combat with the duke, Amidea appeals for victory to the spiritual strength of her greater virtue. "Thou dar'st not kill me" (II, 142), says the duke, and, indeed, Amidea has no place to do so. She is not an Amazon and she does not attempt it, choosing rather to point the weapon at herself.

I must not obey,  
To be your strumpet: though my hand be unskilful,  
I shall soon find my heart.

(II, 143)

The duke, unwilling to accept Amidea as a chivalric opponent, does accept her new role for it is a traditional feminine role, the role of martyr. In admitting her lack of skill with the poniard, Amidea gains absolute power in the situation. She thus achieves symbolically the role of the warrior woman, the woman who seeks to protect feminine virtue while adopting some form of masculine weapon or means. The masculinity of Amidea's

behaviour is later recognized and emphasized by Lorenzo, who, while discussing the situation with the duke, describes the event in terms of bravery and war, terms which are traditionally masculine.

I must confess she has been very valiant,  
In making you remove your siege, and shew'd a  
Pretty dexterity at the poniard . . .

(II, 159)

Never does Amidea cease to be recognized as a woman, however. Her ability with the weapon is not noble or daring, but "pretty."

Despite the masculinity of the weapon, Amidea's method is entirely feminine. She wounds her arm in the attempt to make the duke repent his lasciviousness, threatening ever more self-mutilation until either the duke is repentant or she is dead. The Christian associations with the innocent saviour as sacrifice are clear, but with one major alteration from tradition: though it is Amidea who bleeds it is the duke who feels the pain, just as if he were the wounded party in a duel.

There's so much gone  
From me, I cool apace; this action  
Hath shot an ague through me . . .

(II, 143)

The duke repents and Amidea is lead away by her brothers to recover. It is at this moment, collapsing into the protective arms of her male siblings, that Amidea ceases to be a warrior woman. She has won the battle over corruption and is free to resume her preferred role of feminine passivity.

Later in the play the duke again starts chasing Amidea. He threatens to kill Amidea's brother Sciarrha unless Sciarrha can convince Amidea to submit to the duke. Amidea refuses. She is appalled by her brother's display of cowardice.

Who has  
Made you afraid to die? I pity you,  
And wish myself in any noble cause  
Your leader.

(II, 174)

Again Amidea seems to be adopting an attitude if not entirely masculine at least proactive.

Her valour in the face of death is manifest, as Sciarrha's exclamation bears witness: "So valiant!" (II, 174). Again displaying characteristics of the warrior woman, Amidea remains strictly within the feminine role, as the rest of her speech indicates.

When our souls shall leave this dwelling,  
The glory of one fair and virtuous action  
Is above all the scutcheons on our tomb,  
Or silken banners over us.

(II, 174)

As fighter primarily for a general cause rather than for her own personal welfare, the warrior woman Amidea rejects chivalric glory and recognition, again adopting the role of spiritual martyr. Like the martyred Lucrece, whose virtuous innocence acted as inspiration for men to fight, so Amidea's behaviour encourages masculine nobility. However, it is primarily Amidea's valour that acts as inspiration and therefore, where the martyrdom of Lucrece was passive (or at most reactive) and feminine, Amidea is masculine. Yet technically Amidea's valour is based on spiritual strength and virtue rather than martial experience, and this provides the feminine element. Where the Amazon is defeminized but still lacking in masculinity, the warrior woman comprises attributes both masculine and feminine.

When the wicked Corybreus in *St. Patrick for Ireland* is killed by Emeria, the woman he raped, she takes no personal enjoyment in the victory, but thanks the gods for their protection over her.

I have done a justice to the gods in this,  
And my own honour. Thou lost thing to goodness!  
It was a glorious wound, and I am proud  
To be the gods' revenger.

(IV, 414)

Again the warrior woman fights for goodness and a virtuous, spiritual ideal rather than personal glory. Like Amidea, Emeria's weapon was intended for herself. However, ironically interrupted in her suicide by the return of the rapist Corybreus, Emeria stabs and kills him. Emeria's active retaliation indicates the fighting spirit of the warrior woman but her victory is a moment of spiritual and not social recompense.

Yet all this will not help me to my own again;  
 My honour of a virgin never will  
 Return . . .  
 At best I'm but a walking misery.

(IV, 414)

Emeria is not an Amazon but a warrior woman, and therefore, like Amidea, her role as such is temporary. Amidea's symbolic participation in chivalric combat challenges the traditional position of the woman as the passive figure to be protected and venerated. Emeria's chivalric action is more tangible than Amidea's in that she kills her rapist. However, both women must fulfil the feminine destiny that reinstates and preserves chastity through death. Amidea becomes almost entirely passive in her own death, allowing herself to be sacrificed (that is, spiritually saved) and her wrongdoer, the duke, to be murdered by her male protector. Emeria, although she does not die, also symbolically realises her own death by joining a nunnery, thus leaving forever the world of life and reproduction.

Through the mythologies of Amazons and warrior women, Shirley's plays identify the relationship between masculine honour and feminine virtue as a necessary connection. In her symbolic role of Amazon, Carol, in *Hyde Park*, rejects any form of marriage, whether male-dominated or not. However, Shirley's plays support marriage as the ideal, equalizing relationship between men and women, and so Carol is unsuccessful in her attempt at social reform. The weapons of language and masculine honour are used to gain victory over Carol's corrupting attempts at emotional manipulation, and so the Amazon is defeated. In contrast, Amidea and Emeria are successful in their quests as warrior women. Unlike the Amazon, the warrior woman seeks to uphold honourable and chaste relationships between men and women, and fights to protect and preserve individual spiritual purity. It is the role of the warrior woman to defend and maintain traditions of masculine honour so as to ensure the social, sexual and spiritual protection of women. Also unlike the Amazon, who must be defeated and destroyed, the warrior woman, once her aim is achieved, freely rescinds her masculine clothing and weaponry in order to resume her 'natural' role of woman.

## CHAPTER SIX

### 'For though he call'd it love': Rape and Death

Catharine Stimpson argues that there is an apparent lack of association in Renaissance drama between physical violence and rape, this lack being achieved through the preferred use of the term 'ravish': "'Ravish' is perhaps like a poetic gloss that both hints at and denies rape's brutal force."<sup>1</sup> According to the *OED*, to be 'ravished' signifies both "carried away by force; violated; ravaged," (*OED ppl.a.* 1.) and "transported, entranced, enraptured" (*OED ppl.a.* 2.). Underlying the signifier 'ravishment,' therefore, there exists a paradox: the simultaneous existence of the concepts of loss and gain. Certainly the term 'ravishment,' in its association with such things as transcendental, enrapturing experience, lends itself to metaphorical significations and other literary uses that imply good and positive experiences. "Oh, my joy-ravish'd soul!" (I, 434) exclaims Beauford in *The Wedding* when he realizes his true love Gratiana is not dead. And in *Changes, or Love in a Maze* the poetaster Caperwit speaks of "the music of / These ravishing nouns" (II, 302) that he uses in his poetry.<sup>2</sup> However, for more than five hundred years, according to the *OED*, non-figurative uses of 'ravish' have variously signified both the loss and the gain that is implied by the term. Shirley plays on this double meaning in *Changes, or Love in a Maze* when Caperwit and Goldsworth discuss the relative merits of the young gentleman Gerard.

|             |                                                             |
|-------------|-------------------------------------------------------------|
| Caperwit:   | What's he?                                                  |
| Goldsworth: | A gentleman, that would endear himself.                     |
| Caperwit:   | Has he any fancies in him? Can he ravish the ladies?        |
| Goldsworth: | Ravish ladies, sir? that's a dangerous matter. <sup>3</sup> |

On a literal level, the paradox underlying the verb 'to ravish' has evidently long been available to writers in English and for Stimpson to dismiss 'ravishment' as mere linguistic gloss for an act or experience supposedly more brutal, more physical, more *real* is a severe and limiting misrepresentation not only of rape and ravishment, but of the relationships between men and women in Caroline literature.

The meanings of the term 'ravish' cover that which is simultaneously both spiritually satisfying and physically brutal, both the attractive and the repellent. Thus to interpret the moment of revelation of the warrior woman as a moment of rape - that is, of ravishment - is to provide a reading that includes all outcomes of the stereotype. The warrior woman's opponent is ravished (enraptured) by the woman within the masculine armour and, if he chooses to step outside the bounds of chivalry, then the warrior woman is ravished (sexually assaulted) by her opponent. Through the ravishment the warrior woman ceases to impersonate a man. She ceases to exist at all as a warrior woman; in effect she dies.

All of Shirley's rape victims conform to this pattern of death following rape, whether the death is actual or symbolic. Both Lucibel and Gratiana in *The Wedding* are thought to be dead before they are resurrected into virtue and accepted back into society. By joining a nunnery, Emeria in *St. Patrick for Ireland* endures death in terms of social separation. In *The Traitor* Amidea dies at the avenging hand of her brother. Shirley relies upon the mythology of the rape of Lucrece to explain this necessity for death after rape. The dual nature of rape (ravishment) is reflected in the dual nature of its consequences: rape represents both a moral and spiritual threat and a social and physical threat to the patriarchy. By frequently referring to the legend of Lucrece, Shirley's characters can be seen as fashioning their own understanding and experience of rape in terms of the Lucrece stereotype. For example, although the victories of women's deaths indicate the indestructible nature of chastity and virtue, the power of the masculine lust over the woman

is so great that it is commonly perceived to cause moral corruption of the woman regardless of her actual innocence. It is the rapist-duke's lust, not Amidea's innocence, which remains the final focus in *The Traitor*; although Amidea has won the moral war of the fact of the rape, it is the physical battle of the actual ravishment which remains uppermost in the characters' discussion and the audience's attention. Nevertheless, just as Lucrece always knew herself to be an innocent victim, so Amidea knows her own innocence. Amidea's moral steadfastness works not only to redeem patriarchal honour by allowing her to enact the role of sacrificial martyr, it also reveals the superiority of feminine virtue over masculine weakness.

The role(s), the representation(s) and even the very nature of the women in Caroline drama (and possibly in Caroline society) comprise a series of contradictions that may be investigated and described in terms of the loss/gain paradox underlying 'ravishment'. The fundamental oppositions inherent in the definition of these women (and, indeed, the majority of fictional women throughout the Renaissance) focus, primarily, upon masculine definitions of feminine sexuality where each woman ideally embodies both the sinful seductress and the virgin mother. Existing within the spiritual realm, the virgin mother figure represents that aspect of the woman which is corrupted and tainted by the moral, spiritual and political implications of rape, where rape represents a loss for both men and women because of the importance placed by the society upon feminine chastity. Occurring within the realm of feminine experience represented by the seductress figure, physical rape or ravishment is a sexual and sensual experience, and refers to the other component of rape, the sexuality and physicality of enforced sexual intimacy.<sup>4</sup>

Erica Veevers has this to say about the physical element of rape in early seventeenth-century drama:

dramatists . . . were more than willing to titillate audiences by the ambiguities inherent in situations connected with love and sex. If, for instance, there were no rapes on stage, there was often the possibility of one taking place just off stage. . . .

(Veevers 50)

Rape's sexual violence which is the violence of the act's physical component, is emphasized by its very absence from the stage. In watching any drama, the audience plays an active and participatory role, that of spectator. In knowing about the ravishment but not witnessing it directly, the audience is able to enjoy, be entertained by or in some other way react to the physicality of the rape in progress without actually participating in that rape. Far from glossing over the brutality of rape, the absence of the sexual component from the stage places the audience in a symbolically voyeuristic position. The audience is titillated not by participating in (that is, actually seeing) the rape, but by knowing about it, enjoying this knowledge and being entertained by the consequences. Again the desirability inherent in the physical experience comes to the fore, and again this is a particularly masculine experience.<sup>5</sup>

This physical violence of rape "taking place just off stage" is counterbalanced by the direct representation on stage of the social, political and moral violence of rape. In *The Imposture* the courtier Flaviano, on errand for the duke, demands the Abbess provide him with one of her nuns to impersonate the princess.

|           |                                           |
|-----------|-------------------------------------------|
| Flaviano: | You will obey the dukes command?          |
| Abbess:   | Good princes                              |
|           | Punish, not teach us sacrilege; I'll obey |
|           | A thousand sufferings ere such a rape -   |
| Flaviano: | A rape!                                   |
| Abbess:   | Of honour, honesty, religion.             |

(V, 196)

Here it is not a physical, sexual rape but a moral rape that is threatened. When, in *Love's Cruelty*, Hippolito refuses to see his best friend's mistress Clariana until after the wedding, for fear of being tempted by her, Clariana says, "He need not fear I shall / Commit a rape upon his friendship" (II, 196). In this instance rape works as a danger to men rather than women, as it does also in the French King Philip's speech to King John, usurper of the English crown, in Shakespeare's *King John* (1591-98).

England we love; and for that England's sake  
 With burden of our armour here we sweat.  
 This toil of ours should be a work of thine;

But thou from loving England art so far,  
 That thou hast underwrought his lawful king,  
 Cut off the sequence of posterity,  
 Outfaced infant state, and done a rape  
 Upon the maiden virtue of the crown.<sup>6</sup>

The act of rape, when housed within the language of war, destruction and betrayal, becomes the symbol for a great realm of moral as well as socio-political issues, many of which - for example war - are often represented directly on stage. Although King Philip's reference is to "maiden virtue," the loss and corruption associated with rape here refers to a threat occurring almost exclusively between men. Rape is so often described as a danger not so much to a woman's physical (or psychological) well being, but to her virginity, her chastity, her masculine defined spiritual purity. For example, in Shirley's *St. Patrick For Ireland* Emeria is raped by the ignoble and violent prince Corybreus. While clearly seen as the physical theft of Emeria's virginity, the attack also causes Emeria to "lose mine honour" (IV, 411) and is described as that which "reward[s] virtue with shame" (IV, 406). The local and specific crime of rape is automatically generalized into a universal danger to and corrupter of that which is good and spiritual on earth, that which is the representative of the idealistic notion of an independent quality of noble innocence - feminine chastity.

In such situations where the focus is upon the moral and political elements of rape, it is not the individual woman who is assaulted so much as that which she symbolizes in the society. By sorting through various categories (both figurative and non) of the effects of rape, Ian Donaldson provides a list of examples of what both the attack upon the woman and the woman herself may symbolize:

rape signifies vast conflicts: between unnatural disorder and natural order; raw, polluting lust and its purification through chastity or celibacy; the dishonorable and the honorable exercise of power; "hot-burning will" and "frozen conscience" (*Lucrece*, line 247); and the sinful and righteous begetting of children.<sup>7</sup>

Because rape implies danger to a social and moral symbol (that is, feminine chastity), it is enough that the suggestion or threat of the act of rape command the same

weight of consequence as actual rape. In Shirley's *The Traitor* the power of rape is shown to be an all-consuming power when, under the mere threat of rape, all consequences that are usually associated with rape in Renaissance literature are realized. Shirley's play exists in a conscious absence of rape. The theme of rape pervades throughout the play, yet no rape actually occurs. Rape remains a threat, a potentiality always available to the characters' and audience's collective awareness. Rape is present symbolically and conceptually; however, the characters behave as though an act of rape really has occurred.

*The Traitor* is set in Florence. The noblewoman Amidea has caught the eye of the duke who intends to enjoy her sexually, with or without her consent. When Amidea's brother the noble gentleman Sciarrha hears of the duke's intention he becomes incensed.

A thousand Furies revel in my skull.  
Has he not sins enough in's court to damn him,  
But my roof must be guilty of new lusts . . .

(II, 111)

In the absence of a father, Sciarrha rightly occupies the position of household head. Sciarrha sees his family's potential state of moral downfall as inevitable; his roof, he says, *must* be guilty, and this guilt is contained within both the present and the future. The guilt and shame of the slur of lost virtue is experienced by Sciarrha in a moment prior to and independent of the wanton act itself. His sister Amidea also adopts the shame of one who has been dishonoured prior to the occurrence of the dishonourable act. It is from within a language of repentance that Amidea promises to commit suicide, itself an act that traditionally follows rather than precedes rape.

Before one factious thought  
Should lurk within me to betray my fame  
To such a blot, my hands shall mutiny,  
And boldly with a poniard teach my heart  
To weep out a repentance.

(II, 119)

It seems that Amidea must repent of that which stains her honour and chastity even before the event has occurred. The occurrence of the stain - that is, the rape - becomes superfluous and almost irrelevant.

According to the New Testament, to be guilty of adultery, and thus of any sexual offence, it is sufficient to have mentally committed the offence.

But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her  
hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.

(Matthew 5.28)

Thus, to be guilty in intention is as sinful as to be guilty in action. The suggestion is that the duke, guilty in intention only, may just as well be guilty of the physical rape of Amidea. Certainly, the moral judgement of his intended behaviour has been passed as if the duke had already committed the assault.

Amidea refers to the duke's thoughts as black and honour as lost. When Sciarrha is preparing his house for the duke's banquet he says of the duke, "The Tarquin shall be entertain'd" (II, 120), thus adopting the legend of Lucrece to indicate again the already guilty state of the duke. In Thomas Heywood's *The Rape of Lucrece* Sextus Tarquin, the rapist, is specifically presented to himself and to the audience as not guilty until he has actually raped Lucrece. Before the rape, Tarquin spends his time in contemplation of the offence he intends to commit.

I am bound  
Upon a black adventure, on a deed  
That must wound virtue, and make beauty bleed.  
Pause, Sextus, and before thou run'st thyself  
Into this violent danger, weigh thy sin:  
Thou art yet free . . .<sup>8</sup>

Tarquin recognizes himself as "yet free" even though he has already decided with certainty that he will commit the sin and rape Lucrece. In *The Traitor*, the duke is condemned before he has even approached Amidea. One reason for this is that in Shirley's play the duke's lecherous intentions have been made known. Heywood's Tarquin is, as yet, "Of great opinion and undoubted hope" (Heywood IV.iv), whereas the duke has publicly exposed "his hot / And valiant luxury" (II, 111). Reputation becomes of vital importance in the moral condemnation of the rapist.

Once Tarquin has raped Lucrece he seeks to maintain his state of publicly

recognized virtue; he seeks to save both his own reputation and hers by urging Lucrece to remain silent about the rape. Tarquin seeks to avoid the political consequences of rape by concealing the physical facts:

what hath past  
Is hid from the world's eye, and only private  
'Twixt us; fair Lucrece! pull not on my head  
The wrath of Rome; if I have done thee wrong,  
Love was the cause; thy fame is without blot,  
And thou in Sextus hast a true friend got.

(Heywood IV.vi)

But before this point Lucrece has already gone to great lengths to make her position clear to Tarquin, explaining that "once defil'd, / Not all the ocean waves can purify / Or wash my stain away . . ." (Heywood IV.iv). For Lucrece, no amount of secrecy or self-denial can undo the assault and regain her personal virtue. A woman's lost chastity becomes "That which the radiant splendor of the sun / Cannot make bright again" (Heywood IV.iv). This irrevocability is an essential component of the woman's experience of her own corruption, for, although socially recognized as corruption, the woman's experience of her own corruption (unlike, perhaps, the man's sense of his own guilt) is independent of all public exposure. The ideology of corruption, a patriarchal ideology, is internalized by the woman. Lucrece's path of action is fixed, is determined by the rape. She cannot act in secrecy; she must make known the events that lead her to suicide so as to maintain her innocent reputation. It is in the permanence and irreversibility of death that Lucrece will be able to transcend the temporarily victorious state that, through the violation and corruption of her body, rape has assumed. Thus in *The Humorous Courtier* the young lord Contarini explains Lucrece's suicide.

Lucrece,  
To purchase life unto her memory,  
Noise at her funeral, such as might clear  
Her fame, pierced her dear heart, and died.

(IV, 545)

Throughout *The Traitor* the characters refer frequently to the legend of Lucrece, using the story as a model for appropriate behaviour in a rape situation. When Lorenzo,

the conniving favourite of the duke, encourages the duke in his lustful pursuit of Amidea, it is by using comparisons with Lucrece's rape that he devises his most convincing arguments. In a scheme designed to further his own political interests, Lorenzo recasts the legend of Lucrece, and particularly the details of Lucrece's suicide, in order to encourage the duke to rekindle his somewhat diminished intention to rape.

How the world  
Was cozen'd in her? she knew of Tarquin first,  
And then suspecting she should never meet  
Again the active gentleman, [and] having  
Determined of his death, with well dissembled  
Sorrow did stab herself, in hope to meet  
The gamester in Elyzium.

(II, 160)

Lorenzo defines Lucrece in terms of the innately sinful woman, the seductress figure. In his explanation of her suicide, in his redefinition of the consequences of rape, Lorenzo does not seek to alter the existence of those consequences. That the raped woman must die after the event remains inherent to the structure of the rape-revenge process.

Death is presented, throughout Renaissance literature, as the ideal response for a woman who has been raped. Although in Shirley's *The Gentleman of Venice* Claudiana manages to avoid death, she recognizes the role death - in this case her own suicide - must play when a woman faces threat of rape:

rather  
Than yield myself a shameful spoil to lust,  
By my own death to quit my name from scandal . . .

(V, 77)

Through martyrdom is her honour, in the minds and tongues of *men*, preserved.<sup>9</sup>

The raped Emeria in *St. Patrick For Ireland* also recognizes the need for her own death.

I have provided how  
To finish all disgraces, by my death.  
Come, cure of my dishonour, and with blood  
Wash off my stain.

(IV, 412)

Emeria's speech of self-sacrifice, with its use of the image of cleansing, purifying blood,

strongly connects her intention to suicide with the Christian sense of sacrifice. Donaldson neatly summarizes this point:

Christianity [implies] belief in the transforming power of death, and in the importance of dying well. The central fact and symbol of Christianity is the crucifixion, a death forcibly imposed yet voluntarily undertaken. . . .

(Donaldson 166-67)

The innocent Christ sacrificed on the cross endures guilt and shame for the sins of others, just as Emerica must bear the weight of disgrace and dishonour that is incurred when Corymbus rapes her, when Corymbus sins.

In *The Rape of Lucrece*, Lucrece, along with her male sympathizers, constantly promotes her innocence, yet this does not allow her to extricate herself from the tradition of the rape process that demands she forfeit her life.

And though I quit my soul of all such sin,  
I'll not debar my body punishment:  
Let all the world learn of a Roman dame,  
To prize her life less than her honor'd fame.

(Heywood V.i)

What is indicated is something more than the necessity for the raped woman to commit suicide in order to restate her innocence and to reinstate her honour and reputation. What is promoted is the role death must always play, before and after the act of rape, in the saving of a woman and, more importantly, in the saving of what that woman's chastity symbolizes for the masculine world. Death, suicide, sacrifice, seem equally valid whether the rape is actual or potential. The mystical, almost holy all-importance of the ideal of chastity is maintained and reasserted in Lucrece's suicide; through suicide the ideal of chastity is made legendary and eternal. It is not enough that Lucrece is *found* to be innocent, she must be *seen* to be innocent (Donaldson 34), for it is upon her innocence that the revenge killings are based.

Brutus: And let her innocent blood destroy  
The heads of all the Tarquins!

(Heywood V.vi)

Like Christ the martyr, Lucrece's suffering will carry little meaning if kept secret; she must

die both to publicize and to enable the final, triumphant victory over sin, the victory of death itself. Thus, it is not uniquely or even perhaps primarily the physical act of rape which calls for death to resolve the corruption and chaos and to reinstate the moral order; it is more the moral and political motivation for rape, that is, the masculine passion, the masculine lust, which threatens the very foundations of the patriarchy. Lucrece's death works to save not only Lucrece herself, but, symbolically, the entire patriarchy. Tarquin presents Lucrece with the choice between rape and thus honourable death, and murder with her death staged in dishonour.

If thou raise these cries, lodg'd in thy slaughter'd  
Arms some base groom dies.  
And Rome that hath admir'd thy name so long  
Shall blot thy death with scandal from my tongue.

(Heywood IV.iv)

It is in order to defend the patriarchy against Tarquin's immorality that Lucrece must allow herself to be violated rather than to risk apparent dishonour in death. It is upon the socially and morally transcendental unavoidability of death that final reputation hangs, and Lucrece, as sacrifice, must be recognized throughout history to have been innocent, rather than save herself the horror of attack. As Mercedes Maroto Camino observes:

Only by showing that she cared less about life than about her chastity would [Lucrece's] contemporaries understand that she had neither enjoyed her rape, nor consented to it willingly but to preserve the honour of her men.<sup>10</sup>

Accordingly in *The Royal Master* the Duke of Florence demonstrates the success of the Lucrece myth when he says, "Lucrece was chaste after the rape" (IV, 155).

In *The Traitor* Amidea, despite the Duke's lustful advances, manages to keep her virtue intact. In order to save her virginity altogether, for the Duke's threats continue, Amidea's brother Sciarrha kills her.

Cosmo: But who kill'd Amidea?  
Florio: The duke's lust:  
There was no other way to save her honour . . .

(II, 187)

The duke is unable to threaten Amidea with a dishonourable death because he does not

enjoy the advantage of secrecy, and so Amidea, unlike Lucrece, does not have to confront the choice between rape and death. Indeed, the situation is exactly reversed; Amidea threatens the duke with her own death, with the dishonour of having caused her death without having even spoiled her chastity. She earns credibility for her suicide threat by wounding herself in the duke's presence, and thus convinces him to repent of his intentions. However, realizing the temporary nature of the duke's repentance, Sciarrha refuses to allow the corruption of his sister's body to occur. He makes the accusation that in such a situation, were it to occur, Amidea's guilt would be as certain and unquestionable as the duke's:

if she do yield  
To the hot encounter, ha! 'twill [then] be just,  
That both their hearts weep blood, to purge their lust.

(II, 139)

Sciarrha's fallacious view of the victim having control over the rape to the extent of *allowing* it to occur becomes ironic when it is recalled that rape was proffered to Lucrece as an indisputably avoidable option. Lucrece chooses rape over murder but, in so doing, does not forfeit her status as victim, specifically as rape victim. Sciarrha accuses Amidea of (potentially) choosing to be ravished; the implied insistence is that, however repressed or seemingly conquered, the presence of the corrupt seductress figure is fundamental to Amidea's feminine nature. In allowing the rape, Lucrece chooses the assault on a social level because morally she knows her death will cancel the stain, and because politically she must ensure that her already publicly acclaimed chastity remains free from accusations or compromise.

Section XXV of *The Lawes Resolutions of Womens Rights* describes the legitimacy of Lucrece's decision.

And note, if she which is ravished, assent for feare of death at the time of the ravishment, it is a rape against her will, notwithstanding such consent; for assent must be voluntarie. . . .

(T.E. 395-96)

Threatened with rape or dishonourable death, Lucrece submits to the rape and never,

subsequently, is her innocence challenged or questioned.

Where Lucrece has forfeited her body's purity to maintain the innocence of her soul and her reputation, Sciarrha's presence usurps this choice from Amidea. He sacrifices her body *before* the act of rape, thus fulfilling the need for sacrifice as well as saving Amidea's body from impurity. Sciarrha himself also dies as a result of the (non) rape. He enforces the punishments (Amidea's death carries with it the implication of, and means for, the duke's downfall) prior to the crime of rape being committed and thus excludes himself from occupying the position of revenger. By realizing his revenge too early, Sciarrha denies himself and his acts any moral justification. That he recognizes the guilt of his position is made evident when he seeks to protect the innocence of his brother Florio by disallowing him any active participation in the events.

Thy hands are white,  
Preserve them, Florio, and unless my arm  
Grow feeble, do not interpose thy sword,  
I charge thee.

(II, 186)

It is perhaps ironic that through acting out his revenge before the rape has been committed, Sciarrha actually succeeds, in some sense, in *creating* the rape. The dead body of Amidea is carefully arranged on a bed to await the duke, who expects a lustful rendezvous. The duke arrives and it is not until he kisses Amidea that he realizes the ghastly truth: "I have / Drunk ice, and feel a numbness spread through [all] / My blood at once . . ." (II, 182). It is at this moment that the duke predicts his own impending death: he will die at the hand of his traitorous companion Lorenzo. Sciarrha's final act in the construction of the rape is the destruction of the rapist. The kiss is the beginning of the end.

Earlier in the play, while trying her virtue, Sciarrha has attempted to convince Amidea of the pleasures and advantages of becoming the duke's mistress.

The duke himself shall call thee his, and single  
From the fair troop thy person forth, to exchange  
Embraces with, lay siege to these soft lips,

And not remove, till he hath suck'd thy heart,  
 Which soon dissolv'd with thy sweet breath, shall be  
 Made part of his, at the same instant he  
 Conveying a new soul into thy breast  
 With a creating kiss.

(II, 117)

Sciarrha's account of bliss and spiritual satisfaction is undermined by the metaphors of war which identify Sciarrha's vision as a vision of death. Again the kiss signals destruction, for although it is a "creating kiss," what it creates is death rather than life. Sciarrha warns Amidea of the devastation of her purity and the new life of corruption she must endure if the duke is allowed to consummate his lust. Amidea withstands Sciarrha's test and all corrupting influences throughout the play, finally losing her life in the name of chastity. However, Sciarrha's vision works as if an omen, destined to be enacted; rather than Amidea, it is the duke who undergoes spiritual (and later, physical) annihilation at the kiss.

The symbol of the creating/annihilating kiss is of course to be found elsewhere in Renaissance literature.

Sweet Helen, make me immortal with a kiss.  
 Her lips suck forth my soul: see where it flies.  
 Come, Helen, come, give me my soul again.<sup>11</sup>

The necrophilic nature of the duke's symbolic rape of Amidea echoes Christopher Marlowe's *The Tragical History of Doctor Faustus* (1588-92). Although rape is not involved there is clearly the intention to *ravish*, for Faustus, like the duke, seeks to satisfy his carnal passions. Although Amidea is like Helen in that, being dead, she is not of the mortal world, Helen is a succubus, an evil spirit whose specific role is to corrupt and kill men. Amidea is not evil, yet her virtue is not enough to save the duke from corruption and death. Like Faustus, the duke forfeits his soul to the object of his passion. The immortality of the creating kiss is the immortality of death.

Amidea is dead, the duke is dead and now both Sciarrha and Lorenzo also die for their own acts of murder and corruption. However, this is not enough to destroy the myth of Amidea's rape. As the final tragedies are discovered by the other members of the court,

Florio, brother to Sciarrha and Amidea, is asked to explain who killed Amidea. His answer, "The duke's lust" (II, 187) is not a reference to literal rape; nevertheless, the implication of masculine lust causing feminine death remains sufficient to define all characters' parts as those in a tragedy of rape.

The final victory, in death, of chastity, virtue and social, masculine honour indicates that, in order to erase the turmoil of rape, all rape victims must die. Death is necessary for Amidea, even though she is never actually victim to the act of rape. The marriage of the raped Lucibel to the rapist Marwood in *The Wedding* remains an inadequate resolution to the rape,<sup>12</sup> and, despite the evidence contained within the play of the insufficiency of marriage, if moral order is to be restored, Lucibel, like Amidea, must die.

Lucibel does experience a symbolic death. Having been raped before the play begins, she enters and remains, throughout the play, disguised as the young manservant Milliscent. As Cardona, her mother, reports, Lucibel is, to all intents and purposes, dead.

She, with the fear (as I conceive) of her  
Dishonour, taking a few jewels with her,  
Went from me, I know not whither, by this time  
Dead, if not more unhappy in her fortune.

(I, 447)

It is through this symbolic death that Lucibel is able to return order to the chaos - social, moral and physical - that has issued from the act of rape. As the young man Milliscent, Lucibel is not only able to move freely within the society of the play, she is also given a voice. Lucibel-Milliscent uses this voice to urge other characters to speak and to reveal what information they may have that will lead, finally, to the discovery of the truth. Thus it is through this symbolic death that Lucibel gains victory over the corruption of rape.

In resolving the disorder that has been created initially by the corrupt act of rape and then maintained by the ensuing state of misinformation, Lucibel-Milliscent occupies a position outside the society of the play, for she remains the one character throughout the play who is in possession of the unfragmented truth. Beauford, overjoyed by the now substantiated innocence of Gratiana, cries in reference to Milliscent, "Gone? sure it was

some angel, was he not" (I, 434). Beauford sees Milliscent as other-worldly and, although he is unaware of the fact, this is an accurate description of the rape victim's position as outside of society.<sup>13</sup> As a survivor of rape, Lucibel has no place in society. It is ironic that, in placing Milliscent on a spiritual plane, Beauford chooses the angelic rather than the demonic, for Lucibel's enforced state of cross-dressing represents a punishment. Although an innocent victim of sexual assault, she is condemned to bear the social weight of rape. She must disappear from the town in which the rape occurred. She must disguise herself in order to re-enter that society. To resolve the shame, she must deny her own sexuality (and, in a sense, her own existence<sup>14</sup>) in the act of cross-dressing as though to be a woman were something impure and tainted, intrinsically shameful. And, to rectify the spiritual impurity of rape, she must be responsible for returning order to the chaos created by the ignoble and corrupt behaviour of others.

Lucibel's many forms of punishment serve as evidence for the doubt which, both in the mind of the rape victim and in the minds of others, characterizes the moral position of the rape victim. Because ravishment, with its positive and negative components, relates primarily and symbolically to the seductress figure inherent in the feminine nature, the innocence of the rape victim is often called into question. Whatever the circumstances, sexual intimacy necessarily carries with it the implication of enjoyment for the essentially inferior and easily tempted woman. It is perhaps for this reason that so many rape victims of the Caroline period had such difficulty in obtaining social justice for the crime committed against them.<sup>15</sup> Some enjoyment is implied by the term ravishment and although this is primarily the sexual or power-based gratification experienced by the male rapist, some potential remains to benefit the woman.

In Andreas Capellanus' *De Amore* the innocence of the rape victim is confirmed.

Perhaps . . . you will ask whether a woman is to be rejected if she has been compelled by force to satisfy the pleasure of another man. I say that none can be justly censured for an action done under forcible constraint, unless they later consent to the act by repeating it.

(Capellanus 247)

Not all Renaissance authorities agree upon the innocence of the rape victim, however. Deuteronomy places as much blame upon Lucibel, who did not call for help, as it does upon Marwood, the attacker.

If a damsel that is a virgin be betrothed unto an husband, and a man find her in the city, and lie with her;  
Then ye shall bring them both out unto the gate of that city, and ye shall stone them with stones that they die; the damsel, because she cried not being in the city; and the man, because he hath humbled his neighbour's wife: so thou shalt put away evil from among you.

(Deuteronomy 22.23-24)

The problem raised in Deuteronomy is not easily dismissed, for it appeals to the view of the woman as innately sinful and lustful, the seductress. The attitude is not far removed from the belief that, in every act of adultery, women bear the greater guilt.<sup>16</sup> Implied by the opinion that the female rape victim may be just as much to blame as the male rapist is the conclusion that it is logically impossible to rape a woman, for no woman will ever resist sexual advances.<sup>17</sup>

Marwood himself professes this belief throughout *The Wedding*, blaming the woman for the sexual encounter and using this perception of her unremitting whoredom as justification for his own actions. However, in admitting his own responsibility, Marwood can be seen ironically as inverting the idea of the innately lustful woman into its contrary idea, the innately lustful man. "I have enjoy'd her," says Marwood, admitting his own liability to the act, yet immediately following this he reviles her as "A lasting shipwreck" (I, 38) from whose rotten influence Beauford must be protected. Ironically, from the inconsistency of his testimonies, Marwood can be seen as himself embodying evidence for the idea suggested in Section XX of *The Lawes Resolutions of Womens Rights*:

So drunken are men with their owne lusts. . . . That if the rampier of Lawes were not betwixt women and their harmes, I verily thinke none of them, being above twelve yeares of age, and under an hundred, being either faire or rich, should be able to escape ravishing.

(T.E. 376-77)

Eubella, in *Love's Cruelty*, expresses despair at the plight of women faced with the lustful nature of men in general.<sup>18</sup>

Whither will these libidinous flames of men  
Pursue poor virgins? Does a general fever  
Possess their blood? Who shall protect the chaste?

(II, 211)

Shirley also provides recognition of this uncontrolled passionate (that is, corrupt) nature in men through the goddess Pallas in *The Triumph of Beauty* (printed 1646). Pallas recognizes the existence of man's "intellectual beauties," but also identifies his darker side:

The train of lust[s] and lethargies that hang  
Upon a masculine soul . . .

(VI, 334)

Nevertheless, faced with men who often seek to condemn her as much as pity her, and faced with a tradition insistent upon suicide as the only appropriate course of action, it is hardly surprising that the raped woman may begin to doubt her own innocence. The rape victim ceases to be pitied for rape so much as accused of it.

For most of *The Wedding*, it is Gratiana who is accused of being the woman illicitly enjoyed by Marwood. Cardona, Gratiana's maid and Lucibel's mother, later admits to Marwood that she was responsible for protecting Gratiana's virtue by compelling Lucibel to usurp her place:

won with your promises,  
I did, in hope to make myself a fortune,  
And get a husband for my child, with much  
Black oratory, woo my daughter to  
Supply Gratiana's bed, whom, with that  
Circumstance, you enjoy'd, that you believed  
It was the virgin you desired.

(I, 447)

Thus as the, albeit incorrectly identified, rape victim, it is at Gratiana that all accusations of lust and immorality are flung. Marwood, the rapist, seeks to protect his friend Beauford from marriage with the sinning Gratiana.

Marwood: I have enjoy'd her.  
Beauford: Whom?  
Marwood: Gratiana, sinfully; before your love  
Made her and you acquainted.

(I, 380)

In Marwood's own words, it is he who enjoyed Gratiana. This is an indication, perhaps

even an admission, of rape. Elsewhere in the play Beauford refers to Marwood's act as a "crime" (I, 385), and both Beauford and Marwood agree on the sinful nature of Marwood's act:

Beauford: Hast thou not wrong'd Gratiana?

Marwood: Yes, in my lust . . .

(I, 387)

However, because of her very victimization, Marwood's advice to Beauford is to stay away from the fallen Gratiana: "She that will part / With virgin honour, ne'er should wed the heart" (I, 380). Later, Marwood again accuses Gratiana of moral responsibility for the rape. When Beauford tries to convince Marwood that he should marry Gratiana to atone for his lustful act, Marwood retorts: "Should I marry a whore?" (I, 386). Soon Beauford, too, is convinced of Gratiana's sinful behaviour. "Thou hast undone me" (I, 402) he cries, highlighting the dependence of masculine honour on feminine virtue. Beauford is convinced that Gratiana's "own sin made her" (I, 415) a whore.

Like Lucibel, Gratiana is innocent; unlike Lucibel, she is innocent even of being raped. However, she is faced with the retrospective threat of rape and, like Amidea in *The Traitor* who is also threatened with rape, Gratiana must fulfil the consequences of rape. She must die. Gratiana sends a letter to her once-betrothed, now-accuser Beauford informing him of her suicide. Soon after, Beauford acquires definite proof of Gratiana's innocence, but it is of course too late for any wedding to occur. However, Gratiana's letter was a ruse; Gratiana is not dead. Like Lucibel's, Gratiana's death is symbolic, but it serves to fulfil all requirements of her (non) rape. Gratiana's "death" serves as a sacrifice, cleansing Beauford of the sin of doubting her chastity. A coffin is presented to the now-repentant Beauford and, on opening the box, Beauford discovers not a body but the living Gratiana. As with Milliscent, Beauford now sees Gratiana as angelic and other-worldly: "I know thou art immortal" (I, 434). This cements Gratiana's role as symbolic rape victim, emphasizing the similarity between her experience and Lucibel's. The relationship between being raped in body and raped in reputation is made clear, while at the same time the

distinction between the two aspects of rape is stressed: the physical and the moral or spiritual.

Further evidence for this dual nature of rape is found in the shame of rape that intrudes upon the raped woman, making the experience morally and spiritually threatening as well as physically threatening. The Cardinal, in Shirley's 1641 play of the same name, realises this when he is plotting his revenge against the Duchess Rosaura:

'tis too cheap  
A satisfaction for Columbo's death,  
Only to kill her by soft charm or force.  
I'll rifle first her darling chastity;  
It will be after time enough to poison her . . .

(V, 335)

Rape is double murder: the rapist murders the soul, leaving the victim in the position of having to murder her own body.<sup>19</sup>

Rape, with its strong political associations, has already been identified as a threat or attack between men, but the physicality of rape is also a danger to men. The rapist is like the husband or father who seeks to prostitute his virtuous female relative. The physical ravishment is a danger to the patriarchy, for, in the destruction of feminine chastity, the moral foundation of the masculine order is threatened. However, although her loss of life is Lucrece's punishment for her role as rape victim, this act of suicide is also Lucrece's opportunity to cleanse her blackened soul. Tarquin, on the other hand, is given no such opportunity to free himself from the sin of rape. As Donaldson points out, and his comment applies equally to Shirley's rapists:

it is almost as though, in a spiritual sense, Tarquin had *raped himself*. Rape is seen not merely as a destructive, but also as a self-destructive, act.

(Donaldson 52)

Suicide remains an unacceptable option for the man; there is no path of action available to the rapist that will allow him to, in some way, right his wrong. Like the victim of rape, the rapist also finds himself with no position in society. His death is assured, but it must be an enforced and usually violent death; it must be at the hand of another. Both the duke

in *The Traitor* and Corybreus in *St. Patrick for Ireland* lose their lives and their honour as a direct result of adopting the role of rapist. Marwood, the rapist in *The Wedding*, survives the rape and marries his victim Lucibel. However, like Lucibel, Marwood undergoes a symbolic death, thus fulfilling the necessary consequences of rape.<sup>20</sup> Again, rather than the marriage between rapist Marwood and raped Lucibel, it is Marwood's (apparent) death at the hand of the avenging Beauford which works to resolve the act of rape. Death, once again, is shown by Shirley to be the only solution to the "cureless crime"<sup>21</sup> of rape.

## CHAPTER SEVEN

### 'We will have tilting': Honour, Chivalry and the Duel

Seen historically as in opposition to the church, chivalry presented itself in the middle ages as its own religion (Keen 14), with its own rites, rituals and moral code. Caxton's translation, *The Book of the Ordre of Chyualry*, is not an exposition of the history of chivalry; it is a guide to the ideals of chivalry. It presents chivalry as an essentially Christian tradition: "The offyce of a knyght is to mayntene and deffende the holy feyth catholyque" (Caxton 24). In assimilating Catholicism and chivalry, the text ignores the difficulties that occurred between the chivalric knights and the church representatives, particularly, as Curtis Brown Watson notes, in regard to individual combat:

the Church instituted the truce of God, set periods in which trial by combat was prohibited. If it could not completely suppress the aristocratic love of combat, it hoped at least to exercise a partial, restraining influence. Indeed, the Council of Clermont in 1130 prohibited tournaments altogether.<sup>1</sup>

The result in *The Ordre* is an order of chivalry wherein all followers are soundly motivated, God-fearing and honourable. This obvious idealization of medieval chivalry remains a useful standard from which to approach Shirley's plays. Regardless of the corrupted realities characterizing the actual history of chivalry, what remains essential is the way the chivalric ideal was viewed in the Caroline period: as a tangible facet of a glorious, lost past. It is upon this understanding of the literary and historical ideal of medieval chivalry that the moral and ideological structure of Shirley's plays can be seen to be founded. Furthermore, it is through this romanticizing of chivalric tradition that Shirley's male characters fashion for themselves socially inappropriate ideals of masculine

honour based upon displays of valour and daring and, more specifically, feats of individual combat.

The medieval, chivalric tradition of battle between individuals provided the opportunity for each knight to define and defend his own personal honour. Consequently, many of Shirley's masculine characters construct combat and duelling situations for themselves so that they may attain a similar level of masculine honour. In *The Wedding* duels occur between Marwood and Beauford and between Beauford and Belfare. Antonio and Sebastiano duel in *The Maid's Revenge* and in *The Example* a duel occurs between Fitzavarice and Peregrine. However, none of these examples of duelling result in the gaining of honour or the verification of a point of moral dispute: the distance between Caroline social attitudes and traditional idealistic attitudes towards the duel is too great.

Events in *The Wedding* provide an accurate example of the attitude of Caroline society towards the practice of duelling: Beauford is betrothed to Gratiana. His cousin Marwood opposes the marriage because Gratiana's innocence is under question. "I have enjoyed her," (I, 380) admits Marwood. He assures Beauford of Gratiana's "black soul" (I, 379), and Beauford, unwilling to believe Marwood, arranges to meet him in a duel. At this meeting Beauford tries to persuade Marwood to right his wrongs by marrying Gratiana. Marwood refuses, exclaiming, "Should I marry a whore?" (I, 386). The sexual misdemeanour was Gratiana's fault entirely, according to Marwood, and he refuses to compromise his honour and reputation by marrying a fallen woman, albeit a woman fallen by his own hand. Beauford is angered, the men fight and Marwood is seriously wounded and thought by both men to be dying. Beauford flees the scene and Marwood is rescued by a park keeper. Although Marwood's wound is not fatal he does symbolically die and he is thereby punished for his wrongdoing against Lucibel. Beauford's surgeon, witness to the duel, reports Marwood's death, as does the park keeper himself. Marwood, it is revealed, did not bed Gratiana but Lucibel, the daughter of Gratiana's waiting woman. Hence Gratiana's reputation is cleared, but only in time for Beauford to be arrested for

causing the death of Marwood in a duel.

Beauford's arrest is consistent with early seventeenth-century legal attitudes to duelling. In 1613 James I condemned the practice in his *Proclamation against Private Challenges and Combats*, issuing a second proclamation in February of the following year.<sup>1</sup> Also in 1613 Sir Francis Bacon, in his capacity as Attorney General, made an appeal before the Star Chamber to have the laws regarding private duelling properly enforced. He argued that "the mischief" encouraged private men "to presume to give law to themselves," and that duelling was motivated by "a false and erroneous imagination of honour and credit":

it is a miserable effect, when young men full of towardness and hope, such as the poets call *auroraæ filii*, sons of the morning, in whom the expectation and comfort of their friends consisteth, shall be cast away and destroyed in such a vain manner; but much more it is to be deplored when so much noble and gentle blood shall be spilt upon such follies, as, if it were adventured in the field in service of the King and realm, were able to make the fortune of a day, and to change the fortune of a kingdom. So as your Lordships see what a desperate evil this is; it troubleth peace, it disfurnisheth war, it bringeth calamity upon private men, peril upon the State, and contempt upon the law.<sup>2</sup>

Protected by the apparently justifying rank of chivalric action, the duel had become an oft-used alternative in situations of disagreement or where a perceived dishonour had been incurred. Traditionally, victory in individual combat was equated with moral rightness, and so chivalric battle not only fulfilled an ethical function, it provided a complete ethical system based on the tradition of the judicial duel or trial by combat. It was not until the reign of Henry II that the judicial alternative of the grand assizes or trial by jury was instituted, and even then judicial duels continued to be fought.<sup>3</sup> The last judicial duel sanctioned to be fought on English soil occurred in 1571, and even then Elizabeth I intervened in the final hour to avoid the bloodshed that was to result from the Court of Common Pleas' decision to allow trial by combat (Baldick 18-19). This, however, did not imply the disappearance of the private duel which, due to its association with the fashionable and romanticized notion of chivalric battle, remained popular amongst the

Renaissance nobility as a means of defending personal honour. However, these later duels commanded no legitimate authority, either legally or ethically. "[T]he town swashbucklers / Practise these feats" (III, 330), asserts a pageboy in *The Example*. As the Star Chamber indicated in its response to Bacon's 1613 appeal for the enforcement of anti-duelling laws, such duels were not only non-chivalric, they were anti-chivalric in that they flouted one of the fundamental rules of chivalry - the gaining of the king's (or state's) blessing:

the very practice of Chivalry in Justs and Tourneys, which are but images of martial actions, appear by ancient precedents not to be lawful without the King's licence obtained. The Court also noted, that these private *Duels* or combats were of another nature from the combats which have been allowed by the law as well of this land as of other nations for the trial of rights or appeals. For that those combats receive direction and authority from the law; whereas these contrariwise spring only from the unbridled humours of private men.<sup>4</sup>

The duel, although perhaps a useful method of protecting a man's reputation and the social appearance of his character and honour, denoted in Caroline society none of the spiritual or higher ethical authority that it had signified in medieval chivalric tradition. Hortensio sums this up in his description of the duel in *The Imposture*:

he that fights a duel,  
Like a blind man that falls, but cares to keep  
His staff, provides with art to save his honour,  
But trusts his soul to chance: 'tis an ill fashion.

(V, 259)

The illegality of duelling, such as was earlier enforced by Bacon, is frequently asserted in Shirley's city plays and works as a social parallel to duelling's status as idealistically illegitimate. In *Love Tricks* the vain and bombastic Bubulcus boasts of a fictitious duel in which he slew his rival:

Well, not to weary you with the narration of the innumerable wounds I gave him, I cut off every joint from his toe upwards, to his middle; by these hilts, no, you may believe me; there ended Antonio, my rival. Judge, judge now, whether Bubulcus be valiant or not. . . .

(I, 75)

Immediately following his grandiloquent crowing, Bubulcus is arrested for murder, for it has been Antonio himself - the victim of the supposed duel, disguised as his own sister Selina -

to whom Bubulcus has been boasting: "I charge you, lay hands upon that murderer; he hath slain my brother Antonio" (I, 76), cries the cross-dressed Antonio. The duel is no longer a judicial technique but has become, simply, a ritualized excuse for murder.

The Tutor in *The Witty Fair One* has been kicked and beaten by Brains, a mere servant, and has thus sustained a loss of honour and reputation. Although determined to have his revenge, the Tutor uses the illegality of duelling as a convenient excuse for not choosing combat as the course of action through which to reinstate his honour.

He has made an ass of me; next him do I hate the law most  
abominably, for if I might kill and not be hang'd for him,  
'twould never trouble me.

(I, 344)

In *The Lady of Pleasure* Scentlove uses a similar excuse when he refuses to fight with the angry Haircut.

'Tis no fear of your sword, but that I would not  
Break the good laws establish'd against duels.

(IV, 97)

However, the laws against duelling were, amongst other things, created for reasons of safety, and the attitudes of both the Tutor and Scentlove expose the men as cowards rather than as having any true respect for the law.

For reneging on the marriage agreement with his daughter Gratiana in *The Wedding*, Beauford is challenged by Belfare: "As thou art / A gentleman, I dare thee to the combat" (I, 415). Although purporting to protect his daughter, it is really the damage to his own reputation caused by Beauford's "uncharitable slander" (I, 415) that concerns Belfare. Individual combat, once used as a measure of personal honour and as a means of protection for the weak and innocent, is exposed in Shirley's city plays as duelling, a vacuous manifestation of the ancient, now misunderstood, ideal of honour. In emphasizing and criticizing the danger, futility and ignobility associated with duelling, Shirley's city plays still recognize the ideal of honour from which the practice originally stemmed, ironically using this ideal as a contrast to duelling and as a measure by which the extent of corruption

inherent in duelling may be revealed.

Clearly any battle that takes place in *The Wedding* between Beauford and Belfare will not restore the damaged reputation of the jilted Gratiana. It was not restored during the earlier battle between Beauford and her accuser Marwood, for Marwood lost the battle without the rumour of Gratiana's unchastity, later proven as false, being dispelled. This lack of association between moral rightness and battle victory, an essential association for any chivalric battle, is actually acknowledged by Beauford. Musing over the possible outcomes of the duel he is to fight with Marwood, Beauford recognizes that it is mere a-moral chance that will dictate the victor.

His sword shall either make [me] past the sense  
Of this affliction, or mine enforce  
A truth from him; if thou be'st wrong'd, Gratiana,  
I'll die thy martyr; but if false, in this  
I gain to die, not live a sacrifice.

(I, 382)

Later, as a final resort to avoid the duel, Beauford reiterates this belief to Marwood:

Why should we fight? our letting blood will not  
Cure her, and make her honour white again . . .

(I, 385)

As a motivation, the ideal of defending a woman's virtue in battle is not questioned, but the mere fact of not questioning this motivation while remaining assured that no battle will resolve the question of her chastity is enough to expose the inconsistency fundamental to the Caroline duel. The defence of women becomes a convenient justification for a physical violence which addresses little other than personal vanities and private ideas of status - what Bellamente in *Love's Cruelty* labels "gay honour":

every daring fellow in the street  
Can draw a sword, and will for his gay honour,  
Which sways him more than his religion . . .

(II, 195)

Women are inextricably linked to the practice of duelling in Shirley's plays, and this is a direct consequence of the chivalric tradition of championing. "How zealous I am in a virgin's honour, / As all true knights should be" (II, 484), declares Lord Bonville in *Hyde*

*Park.* One of the fundamental chivalric duties of a knight was always "to mayntene and deffende wymmen" (Caxton 38). Some of Shirley's female characters actually do look to be championed, and they certainly appreciate the offers of protection for their chastity that they receive. In *The Royal Master*, for example, the young and inexperienced Domitilla is under the mistaken belief that the king intends to marry her. To cure her of her passion without hurting her feelings, the king demands Domitilla be his mistress, attacking her virtue vehemently. She pleads for assistance: "Have I contracted such a leprous form, / That I have lost all men's defence and charity?" (IV, 185). Octavio, a young courtier, responds to her call.

Madam, your innocence doth raise in me,  
Though young, a willing champion; and with  
My safe obedience to the king, I dare,  
Arm'd with the witness of her cause, defy  
The greatest soldier in the world.

(IV, 185)

No combat takes place, but Octavio's mere act of volunteering is enough to induce the (pretended) wrath of the king and to put the youth's life at risk. It is as if chivalric combat were taking place, for - in accordance with the traditional chivalric pattern where the defender of innocence necessarily must win - Domitilla's innocence works to protect and save Octavio: "What a brave armour is / An innocent soul!" (IV, 181). The king grudgingly suggests a marriage between the successfully defended Domitilla and her champion Octavio, thus ending the conflict in the true chivalric style with the woman as prize to the victor. Through Domitilla's reply, Shirley adds to this chivalric solution the necessary Caroline consideration of a love contract, and so the resolution is true to both the traditions of chivalric order and the Caroline system of love-marriage:

My lord, you now deserve I should  
Be your's, whom, with the hazard of the king's  
Anger, and your own life, you have defended.  
There is a spring of honour here, and to it,  
In the presence of the king, his court, and heaven,  
I dare now give my heart . . .

(IV, 185-86)

Never is a sword drawn, and yet the requirements of chivalry are completely fulfilled in this display of honour, virtue and nobility.

In the chivalric system where victory in battle is a moral indicator, the honour gained from victory is necessarily distinguished from the honour gained from noble and honest participation in battle. Vittori in *The Young Admiral* claims "all is but / The die of war, which valour must obey" (III, 126), thus implying that a man's virtue is displayed specifically in his honourable response to the call of battle,<sup>5</sup> while introducing the new belief that victory is a matter of luck decided by the roll of a die. In *The Ball* Bostock shares Vittori's belief in the role of chance in war.

I know 'tis a base thing to be a coward,  
But every man's not born to be a Hercules;  
Some must be beat, that others may be valiant.

(III, 64)

To be valiant is, by definition, to be bold, brave, courageous, stout-hearted (*OED* *a.* 2.) but it is not necessarily to be victorious as Bostock seems to imply. Bostock's mistaken understanding of the nature of victory - or, perhaps more significantly, of defeat - arises from the need to justify his own cowardice, yet his lack of any consciously appreciated relationship between victory and moral truth is a reflection not of Bostock's personal position, but rather of the society in which he exists where trial by combat is no longer recognized as the normative judicial process. Bostock's insistence on the luck-value of war outcomes is not only an attempt to conceal or justify his cowardice, however. His suggestion that one must be born a Hercules indicates his belief, a chivalric belief, in the nobility and power of lineage. For the weak and cowardly Bostock the valiant, and therefore victorious, are born not made.

A further aspect essential to masculine honour is friendship between males. In *The Maid's Revenge* Antonio privileges his friendship with Sebastiano, according to it a level of importance that exceeds all blood ties.

Indulgent parents, brethren, kindred, tied  
By the natural flow of blood, alliances,  
And what you can imagine, is too light  
To weigh with th' name of friend: they execute,

At best, but what [their] nature prompts them to,  
Are often less than friends, when they remain  
Our kinsmen still; but friend is never lost.

(I, 104)

Friendship between males seeks to find a union in spirit that is then reinforced either by an already existing blood relation, or by some manufactured relation. The relationship between Antonio and Sebastiano is similar to that between the cousins Palamon and Arcite in *The Two Noble Kinsmen*. Like Antonio and Sebastiano, Palamon and Arcite share a spiritual, chivalric love-friendship, but with the added endorsement of kinship. The strength of their friendship is independent of their kinship, however, because they hold each other "dearer in love than blood" (Shakespeare and Fletcher I.ii.1). Their uncle, King Creon of Thebes, is ignoble and corrupt and they refuse to be tied to him as his kinsmen simply on the basis of the blood relationship; Palamon and Arcite are "not his kinsmen / In blood unless in quality" (Shakespeare and Fletcher I.ii.78-79) and so not his kinsmen at all. The implication here that, despite the unavoidable tie of blood, chivalric male friendship is an ideal that can transcend such obligations as may be suggested by physiological or family connections, is supported by *The Maid's Revenge*.

Chivalric male friendship,<sup>6</sup> while an ideal relationship in itself, is also reflective of the individuals involved. In order to have an ideal friendship, men must attain certain ideals themselves. They must embody the ideals of honesty, chastity, nobility and valour that are demanded by the chivalric code, and if these qualities are lost or corrupted then not only is the friendship lost, but usually also the lives of either one or both of the friends. Despite Antonio's downgrading of kinship, both Antonio and Sebastiano seek to add this tangible dimension to their friendship. Sebastiano makes the first attempt to create a family tie.

I would be friend and brother; thus our friendship  
Shall, like a diamond set in gold, not lose  
His sparkling, but shew fairer. I have a pair  
Of sisters, which I would commend . . .

(I, 104)

Through the marriage of Antonio to one of his sisters, Sebastiano seeks to unite himself and

his friend as brothers in society, family and law as well as in spirit. Sharing his 'brother's' intention, Antonio prepares his own sister to receive the attentions of Sebastiano.

Hark you, sister,  
I have been bold, upon thy virtue, to  
Invite him to you; if your heart be free,  
Let it be empty ever, if he do not  
Fill it with noblest love; to make relation,  
What seal he gave of a [most] worthy nature . . .

(I, 129)

In seeking a blood tie with each other, the men turn to the women for assistance. However, their potential marriages and proposed family association are doomed to failure. While the women are happy to fulfil their roles of family creators and unifiers, it is Sebastiano's father, Vilarezo, who is the agent of destruction. One of Sebastiano's sisters, Berinthia, is loved by Antonio and when she disappears one night the assumption is made that she has been kidnapped by Antonio and his men. Vilarezo immediately commands his son Sebastiano to rescue Berinthia, with whatever force necessary, from Antonio's castle:

Boy, up before the day;  
Upon my blessing I command thee post  
To Elvas castle; summon that false man  
To quit his shameful action; bid him return  
Thy sister back, whose honour will be lost  
For ever in't. If he shall dare deny her,  
Double thy father's spirit, call him to  
A strict account, and with thy sword enforce him.  
Oh, I could leap out of my age, methinks,  
And combat him myself: be thine the glory. -  
This stain will ne'er wash off; I feel it settle  
On all our blood.

(I, 156)

Vilarezo's motives are honourable and chivalric for he seeks to protect and preserve the honour of his daughter and his family. However, as Sebastiano discovers when he talks to his sister and Antonio, Antonio did not kidnap Berinthia but, in fact, saved her from a murder plot instigated by her own sister Catalina. Sebastiano is convinced by his friend's explanation - "I cannot but believe it" (I, 163), he says - and thus dispatches a messenger back to his father Vilarezo with the news. Vilarezo, however, intent on blood, refuses to consider Sebastiano's message and returns a message of his own, insisting that Sebastiano carry out

the original orders, "Or else my curse" (I, 170). Vilarezo forsakes all masculine honour and chivalric morality as his actions now become degraded into a desire for the combat glory his son (and therefore he) will gain through unquestioning and bloody revenge.<sup>7</sup>

Sebastiano finds himself at an impasse; he is convinced of his friend Antonio's honour and innocence and yet he does not dare disobey the instructions of his father. In the face of the threatened loss of family through disinheritance resulting from a paternal curse, the chivalric friendship ideal is now made to take second place to family responsibility. Sebastiano obeys his father and so the two men fight. Antonio is slain, and Sebastiano, overwhelmed with feelings of guilt and his own dishonour, returns his sister to his father.

My friend, my noble friend, that had deserv'd  
Most honourably from me, by this hand  
Divorced from life, and yet I have the use on't!  
Hapless Sebastiano! Oh, Berinthia!  
Let me for ever lose the name of brother.  
Wilt thou not curse my memory? give me up  
To thy just hate, a murderer?

(I, 174)

Sebastiano is racked with guilt but it is not only he who suffers. All along it has been the women - Berinthia (Sebastiano's sister and Antonio's lover) and Castabella (Antonio's sister and Sebastiano's lover) - whose suffering not only parallels but, due to their lack of active role, exceeds that of the men. Berinthia, having lost Antonio, the man she loves, at the hands of the only other man she loves, her brother Sebastiano, perceives herself

As the poor deer that being pursued, for safety  
Gets up a rock that overhangs the sea,  
Where all that she can see, is her destruction;  
Before, the waves, behind, her enemies  
Promise her certain ruin.

(I, 158)

Her recognition of "certain ruin" is a foreshadowing of the unresolvable dilemma in which Sebastiano finds himself. As a woman, Berinthia is unable to counteract the murderous demands of her father. Her position in the arena of combat and sword play is one of spectator only, and yet that her destiny as a woman is wholly dependent upon the outcome of the duel between Sebastiano and Antonio is made clear when both she and Castabella

suffer physically during the duel. It is not the men who recoil at the blows received during the combat, but the women. Berinthia and Castabella appeal to their respective brothers on behalf of their lovers to cease the combat and then, this failing, each woman appeals to her lover on behalf of her brother. The women, however, have no active position within the combat sphere. They remain not only physically separated from the fighting but, as in the stage directions, on the battlements above the fighting. Physically, spiritually and symbolically raised above the base and corrupt motivations for battle and the battle itself, the women look down upon their brothers and lovers.

It is not merely the women's elevation that causes the separation however, for the honour of the men is diminished and debased through their lowly behaviour. However, it is the men who continue to wield power and maintain control over the women. Spiritually innocent, the women remain victims to the social pressure of the patriarchy and when this masculine power is abused it is the women who must suffer. Despite their more sophisticated insight and spirituality, they remain victims.

Castabella: Antonio, hold! Berinthia dies.  
 Berinthia: Sebastian! Castabella sinks for sorrow. -  
 Murder! help!

(I, 173)

The swooning women are symbolically murdered by the men's fight, and these symbolic deaths of the women foreshadow the actual deaths of the men. As Mistress Bonavent asserts in *Hyde Park*, a women's spiritual health and position are dictated by those of her husband or lover: "Could any shame be fastened upon him, / Wherein I have no share?" she asks (II, 521). The experiences of Berinthia and Castabella are related to the sentiments expressed by Mistress Bonavent, but they transcend her female subjection and wifely loyalty, for Berinthia and Castabella suffer doubly: first, in empathy for the suffering of their brothers and lovers, and second, for the destruction to the ideal of honour that occurs at the hands of the vain and misdirected Vilarezo, Sebastiano and Berinthia's father. The women, so important as the marital partners enabling the establishment of a kinship tie between the men, are sacrificed

by the men's insistence on dishonourable or inappropriate combat. With the women (symbolically) dead, the tie between Sebastiano and Antonio is severed. Antonio dies immediately as a direct result of the duel, and Sebastiano dies later, an almost willing victim to the avenging hand of his sister.

With the loss of the women comes the breakdown of all family ties and social relationships and, in this way, the women can be seen as symbolizing the power and constancy of the love-honour ideal(s). They also enact the ideal(s). Following the death of her brother Antonio, Castabella, disguised as a page boy, arrives at the house of Vilarezo. She presents herself to Sebastiano, explaining that her presence is a posthumous gift from her previous master, Antonio:

while Antonio liv'd  
I was his boy, but never did boy lose  
So kind a master; in his life he promised  
He would bestow me (so much was his love  
To my poor merit,) on his dearest friend,  
And nam'd you, sir, if heaven should point [you] out  
To overlive him . . .

(I, 176)

Through her act not only does Castabella display her own virtue and nobility, she keeps alive that ideal spirit of honour (the supposedly masculine realm of chivalry) that has characterized the friendship between Sebastiano and Antonio:

had he liv'd to have made his will, I know  
He had bequeath'd me as a legacy  
To be your boy. Alas! I am willing, sir,  
To obey him in it: had he laid on me  
Command, to have mingled with his sacred dust  
My unprofitable blood, it should have been  
A most glad sacrifice, and 't had been honour  
To have done him such a duty, sir. I know  
You did not kill him with a heart of malice,  
But in contention with your very soul  
To part with him.

(I, 176)

It is not until Sebastiano dies that Castabella reveals her identity and the reason for her disguise, remaining, to the last, true to her ideal.

I'll tell you now, I am no boy,

But hapless Castabella, sister to  
 The slain Antonio; I had hop'd to have  
 Some recompense by Sebastiano's love,  
 For whose sake, in disguise, I thus adventur'd  
 To purchase it; but death hath ravish'd us,  
 And here I bury all my joys on earth.

(I, 184)

Through masculine pride, ignobility and confusion, the chivalric ideal is forfeited, never to be realized in the events of the play. Only the love ideal remains. Symbolically, the love ideal suffers when the women "die" due to the duel, but, because of the love ideal, the unfailing faith of the women, and of Castabella in particular is not destroyed.

Once Antonio is dead Berinthia, unlike Castabella, is unable to find comfort in the fact that Sebastiano, at least, is still alive. Antonio is killed unnecessarily, and, in accordance with Mistress Bonavent's perception of the linkage between the physical and spiritual health of a man and his lover, Berinthia sustains a like amount of spiritual damage. Unable to live with this damage, this shame, she stabs her brother Sebastiano and then murders herself, explaining her actions to her father Vilarezo thus:

Hear me, sir:  
 Antonio's death, and my dishonours now  
 Have just revenge . . .

(I, 184)

It is not for her dishonour but her dishonours that Berinthia seeks revenge. In murdering her brother she avenges the death of her lover. She also avenges the loss of the honour ideal that was caused through the dishonourable duel. Although now guilty of murder - albeit a revenge murder, a murder of necessity performed to overcome greater evils - Berinthia's final act of suicide leaves her being true to her subjective position, that is, true to herself as an embodiment of honour and chastity. Berinthia no longer represents an ideal, but her suicide indicates and supports the honourable intentions with which she has acted. Sciarrha, in *The Traitor*, kills the lustful duke to preserve (but not avenge) the as yet untouched chastity of his sister, and he then recognizes the guilt of his position. Berinthia, too, motivated by reasons as noble as Sciarrha's, also recognizes that she has compromised her virtue and so

she must die. A confusion remains in her mind, however. Aware of the baseness of her actions but the nobleness of her intentions, Berinthia remains uncertain as to the destiny of her soul: "My soul is reeling forth, I know not whither" (I, 184), but Sebastiano has forgiven her act of murder with his dying breath and the implication is that Berinthia will meet her beloved Antonio in Heaven.

Berinthia must die because her actions take her outside the realm of acceptable feminine behaviour. Throughout the play, Castabella represents and fulfils the innocent, dependent damsel role, and thus is able to go on existing within the patriarchy. Catalina, Berinthia's elder sister, also fulfils a patriarchally defined role, that of the sinful seductress. She must die for this role, but this is a fulfilment of the stereotype which she embodies and thus, perversely, Catalina's death works as a strengthening of that particular role within the patriarchy. Berinthia, however, in independently seeking and achieving blood revenge, enters a domain of behaviour that is masculine. Berinthia's motivations indicate that she is acting for honourable reasons, but her actions, leading to murder, are more in keeping with the sinful, fallen woman figure, a type of which she is definitely not representative. Berinthia cannot be allowed to exist within the patriarchy because she has transcended all patriarchally defined feminine roles, and thus threatened the patriarchy. She cannot be brought to trial for her acts of murder because they are in keeping with the ethical and legal patterns of the play that were established when Sebastiano's killing of Antonio resulted only in praise from his father, the play's figure of highest social authority. For the guaranteed safety of the patriarchy, Berinthia therefore must commit suicide, and this she does due to the patriarchal doctrine on the ideal of feminine chastity, a doctrine which, clearly, remains vital to the continuing dominance of the patriarchal social structure.

Not all women in Shirley's plays enact the chivalric ideal. Some display their disrespect for the championing of their sex by manipulating the elements of chivalry, often romantically, to their own advantage. In an attempt to dispose of the lovesick Montenegro, Catalina in *The Maid's Revenge* uses the chivalric grounds of honour and valour from which

to appeal to him to accompany her brother on what she hopes will be the very dangerous mission of rescuing Berinthia from Antonio's castle.

Catalina: I have a trick to be rid of this fool. [*aside*]  
 - My lord,  
 Do you accompany my brother; you,  
 I know, are valiant.

Montenegro: Any wither; I'll make me ready presently.

(I, 156)

Despite this potential ability to control and manipulate men's behaviour, most often women seem not to benefit but to suffer from duels. It is most often the female characters who object to the duels that take place, and this objection is accompanied by a general dislike of being treated as the motivation for duelling. Amidea, in *The Traitor*, has been rejected by her lover Pisano, yet she continues to love him and bears no grudge towards him. Amidea's brother Sciarrha, however, is angered at the damage done to his family's and sister's reputation, and seeks vengeance in combat. Although Pisano dies at Sciarrha's hand, it is Amidea who experiences most of the pain for it was Amidea, alone, who tried to stop the inevitable attack by warning Pisano that Sciarrha,

Transported with  
 The fury of revenge for my dishonour,  
 As he conceives, for 'tis against my will,  
 Hath vow'd to kill you . . .

(II, 163)

Florelia in *The Imposture* is another woman who warns potential combatants against duelling.

What woman,  
 Consider'd in her best, is worth this difference?  
 She is cruel cannot find a better way  
 To reconcile you, than by letting blood.

(V, 235)

It is over Florelia herself that Volterino and Hortensio are fighting, but the duel is a sham, an attempt to encourage Florelia to indicate which man she prefers. Florelia, seeking neither man, is aware of the ploy, and so the fact that she blames a woman for the duel is ironic. However, her comment is also pertinent, being an indication of the unwarranted blame that can be put on women for the loss of the chivalric ideals which is a male downfall.

Despite this unreasonable blame placed on women for the corruption of chivalry, it is often the woman's responsibility to protect the masculine, chivalric ideal. Bellaura, the duke's niece in *The Gentleman of Venice*, refuses to marry Giovanni on the grounds that he is not of noble blood.

How have I lost myself, since I became  
Your charge, a legacy bequeath'd your care  
By my dead father, the late duke of Venice?  
That you should think I can descend with such  
Forgetfulness of myself, my birth, or fortunes,  
To place my love on one so poorly born!

(V, 65)

This rejection is despite the fact that the gardener's son Giovanni has earned himself great status and honour in the duke's army and that this has been recognized by the duke himself.

We thank thee, Giovanni, and will spare  
Your trouble to relate what we have gain'd  
I' the war. Our general writes how much our Venice  
Doth owe to you, whose maiden, yet bold valour  
Hath wrought our safety, and suppress'd the late  
Insolent Genoese.

(V, 61)

The duke even goes so far as to suggest that "We look not at thy root, but at thy blossom" (V, 63), but this is not enough to convince Bellaura that she should forfeit her birthright and marry beneath her station. Indeed, even the duke's indulgence concerning Giovanni's low status serves to emphasize it: Giovanni is forgiven for his peasant lineage but it cannot be forgotten. Finally it is revealed that Giovanni is not of lowly birth but is, in actuality, the natural son of the duke. Bellaura - charged with the responsibility of preserving the traditional, chivalric social structure - was never blamed or condemned for her earlier refusal, and thus she is now free to marry Giovanni whom she loves. The chivalric order is retained intact and the potentially chaotic significance of Giovanni's military success is dissolved, for the implication is that Giovanni's honourable deeds, like his impending marriage to Bellaura, could have only come about because of his noble blood. As the courtier Marino points out to the duke, one cannot escape the fate of one's lineage.

I shall believe your nobleness liv'd there

In Giovanni, not suppress'd in poverty . . .

(V, 84)

Shirley's plays constantly investigate the implications of masculine lineage, comparing and contrasting the relative merits of inherited honour and virtue with those of honour and virtue as qualities to be earned. Inherited honour is clearly privileged in *The Gentleman of Venice*, with honour, when bestowed as a mere reward, defined as socially limited. Conversely, in *The Gamester* Old Barnacle advises that honourable "rewards are due to virtues" (III, 198). However, the tendency for noble lineage to be fulfilled despite all disguises, cases of mistaken identity and other obstacles is evidence for the unavoidably deterministic and idealistic nature of chivalry, chivalric honour and chivalric morality within the ideological structure of Shirley's plays.

Although honours and rewards are common in chivalry, it is not the role of the knight to seek glory. "[H]e is valiant truly / That dares forget to be rewarded" (III, 105), proclaims Vittori, the hero of *The Young Admiral*. As Giovanni explains when, in *The Gentleman of Venice* he is offered money as a reward for coming to the aid of an innocent man under attack, virtuous acts are their own rewards.

'Tis but what I owe  
To justice, with the expense of blood and life,  
To prevent treachery; reward I have  
Receiv'd i' the act, if I have done you service.

(V, 30)

Caxton, in advising knights on how to train squires, emphasizes the point that a squire who seeks knighthood for glory and personal advantage is not worthy to be made a knight.

Thou knyght that hast thoffyce to examyne a squyer that wil entre in to thordre  
of chyualrye / thou oughtest to knowe / for what entencion thesquyer hath wil  
for to sojourne or for to be honoured / without that he do honour to chyualrye  
/ and to them that honoure hit / And yf hit appiere to the / that for that cause  
he pretendeth to be a knyght knowe that he is not worthy to be maade knyght

. . .

(Caxton 61)

True virtue is its own honour and reward, yet Old Barnacle cannot be satisfied with such an adage. He hires the well-reputed fighter Hazard to help his nephew earn an honourable

reputation. Hazard responds:

all you desire, if I  
Mistake not, is to get your nephew credit,  
That, being flesh'd, he may walk securely, and be held  
Valiant, by gaining honour upon me.

(III, 203)

Old Barnacle is clearly working from the premise that honour is something one may buy, sell and manufacture, an idea not uncommon in Caroline culture, as V.G. Kiernan explains:

Writing in 1617 Fynes Moryson . . . lamented that 'corrupt custom' still made it hard for a youth to win esteem until he had fought a duel, even though it was both a capital crime and a breach of divine law. Any tavern dispute was enough to rouse the 'Martiall *Duellists*', Brathwait wrote in 1630. Some egged young men to fight; others got money out of nervous youths by pretending to help them to avoid a fight.<sup>8</sup>

Old Barnacle is not concerned with the chivalric ideal of honour; instead, his brand of honour is intended to work as a device to assist his nephew in social climbing. In the words of Francis Bacon, Barnacle's interest is with the "fond and false disguise or puppetry of honour" (Bacon, "The Charge" 408). Disregarding entirely the question of lineage, Barnacle's concern is not with virtue or actual performance but with reputation and appearance.

Shirley's plays frequently emphasize the base motivations underlying the Caroline fashion of duelling. That duelling has become a habit whose sole purpose is for maintaining the appearance of honour is clear to Fitzavarice and Peregrine in *The Example*; they find themselves in the position of having settled their differences privately while still being required to duel for the satisfaction of their respective public honours.

Peregrine: I will proclaim you  
Noble to all the world, and my preserver.  
Fitzavarice: There's nothing but your sword can do me right . . .

(III, 349)

As Peregrine so aptly puts it, "That man is miserably compell'd that must, / To save his fame, be to himself unjust" (III, 349), and yet there seems no other course of action available to the men. Despite the friendship and respect they overtly advertise to one another, the situation between Peregrine and Fitzavarice is not resolved until they have fought and each drawn blood. The duel between the two men is no more than an empty farce for, as Fitzavarice

admits:

I have no thought so black  
As murder, or revenge; but to preserve  
My honour, which no balm can cure, if once  
But the suspect of coward fall upon it.

(III, 357)

"You do not mean / This rashness? hide your swords" (III, 196), commands Hazard in *The Gamester*, and his words are equally applicable to the behaviour of Peregrine and Fitzavarice as to his own context. Hazard directs his speech to three gamesters, Acreless, Littlestock and Sellaway, who, having heard of the arrest of a friend for his part in a duel, decide to break him out of prison. Although Hazard tactfully acknowledges the valour of the three gamesters' intention, he also recognizes that it is inappropriate; such behaviour is a direct flaunting of the judicial system and thus promises like fates for the three gamesters. Hazard emphasizes the misplaced nature of their valour:

Come, be yourselves; these are not acts of  
gentlemen,  
Where shame, not honour, must reward your daring . . .

(III, 197)

Again it is honour that is emphasized as the quality by which masculine acts are not only measured but defined absolutely.

Although restricted to cases of treason or murder, the right to trial by combat remained a point of English law up until the nineteenth century. As Robert Baldick relates, in 1817 one Abraham Thornton, charged with the murder of Mary Ashford, claimed the right to "wage his battel":

The murdered girl's brother was too young to fight, and no one could be found to 'wage battel' on his behalf, so that after the usual formalities Thornton was discharged. Parliament, however, lost no time in closing this legal loophole, and on March 22, 1819, the right to appeal to the Judgement of God in single combat was finally abolished.

(Baldick 20)

Weapon justice is promoted in Shirley's first court play *The Grateful Servant* with Foscari proclaiming that even the corruption of kings cannot sway the curative power of the virtuous sword:

it is not breath  
 Can fright a noble truth; nor is there magic  
 In the person of a king that plays the tyrant,  
 But a good sword can easily uncharm it.

(II, 68)

In *The Traitor* Florio draws his sword against his own brother Sciarrha, exclaiming:

I do not fear your sword,  
 This, with my youth and innocence, is more  
 Defence than all thy armory . . .

(II, 119)

Florio, believing innocence and thus moral justification to be housed in his weapon, does not fear the more experienced sword of his brother. William Caxton unites battle victory with nobility of cause: "For with strength a noble hert may vaynquysshē al vyces" (Caxton 101), and in true chivalric tradition, both Florio and Foscari believe that the virtue and honour of a cause are enough to guarantee protection of and victory for its agents.

With James I's initiating the sale of knighthoods and other aristocratic titles for the purpose of relieving his own financial burdens, an activity continued by Charles I,<sup>9</sup> the order of the nobility and, in fact, of all social classes changed dramatically in the early seventeenth century. Caroline Bingham, in her biography of James, describes how the creation of the Order of Baronetage as the lowest hereditary titled order earned James £120,000 when first introduced.

Baronetcies were originally based on the fiction that each baronet should maintain thirty foot soldiers for service in Ireland. The soldiers were supposed to be paid eightpence a day for three years - thus £36.10s. This sum made up the price for which the first baronetcies were sold - £1,095. The original creation brought in £120,000. So successful an expedient was tried again in later years. 1619 saw the creation of a new order of baronets, those of the Kingdom of Ireland. In the last year of the reign followed the baronets of Nova Scotia.<sup>10</sup>

From 1603 on, all subjects with a minimum annual income of £40 secured from land could claim the right of knighthood, for a fee of £30 (Bingham 97). Peerages also provided a source of income for James, with Sir John Rober paying £10,000 to become Lord Teynham in 1616 (Bingham 98). No longer were centuries of established bloodline and family tradition, or at least displays of extreme valour in battle, a necessary requirement for entry

into the noble classes. James, trading in titles and honours, made it possible to purchase the unpurchaseable. In *Changes, or Love in a Maze* Sir Gervase Simple is described as one who has "crept / Into a knighthood, which he paid for heartily" (II, 277).

Traditionally, *The Gamester's* Old Barnacle could have done little towards gaining social advancement for his nephew beyond providing a good education, clothing and perhaps establishing introductions into a higher level of society. In Stuart society, however, he can achieve whatever his finances allow. Old Barnacle's behaviour is an indication of how the ideals of chivalry, of noble virtue and of honour underwent enforced adaptations due to the new monetary rulings, culminating in the final loss of the ideals. The *ideal* of masculine honour was replaced by an *idea* of masculine honour that was in keeping with the new emphasis on social climbing and financial success, and this is reflected in Shirley's plays.

Lady Peregrine in *The Example* expounds the new philosophy of honour which was intended to attract and include the contemporary breed of purchased noblemen:

Oh, think upon yourself, my lord, and make  
Your title good, and justify, that honour,  
By ourselves acquir'd, is richer, than what blood  
And birth can throw upon us . . .

(III, 296)

While the new breed of honour begins to carry more apparent weight or importance because it is more dependent on the actions of men rather than on the somewhat intangible myths, rites, rules and family traditions of the chivalric past, the ideal of honour becomes debased. No longer is honour an hereditary symbol of social, financial and spiritual distinction. "We inherit nothing truly / But what our actions make us worthy of" (III, 63), claims Lord Rainbow in *The Ball*. With honour potentially accessible to all members of society, honour as an ideal ceases to exist. What remains is an "illusion and apparition of honour" (Bacon, "The Charge" 401), temporary and ever-changing, relevant only to the maintenance of social reputation within a changing and unsettled social order.

In *Hyde Park* the petty vanity and empty 'chivalry' of the new honour is exposed to the fullest with the act of duelling being substituted with and symbolized by dancing. Dance

is a necessary social grace, a skill as vital to the knight as to the gentleman or courtier. However, perhaps due to its functioning as courtly spectacle, dance is presented by Shirley as a theatrical and frivolous indulgence. Shirley's Monsieur Le Frisk, the dancing master in *The Ball*, is effeminate, facile and comic, and dancing is promoted as a paramourly feminine (or female-induced) activity - lighthearted, entertaining and harmless: "and all de world is but frisk" (III, 67). In *Hyde Park* the role of the dance is inverted into a representation of patriarchal power play. The disguised Bonavent arrives at his own house after a seven-year absence, during which he has been presumed lost at sea, only to discover a celebration of dancing and revelry in honour of his own wife's (second) marriage. Bonavent, unrecognized, is invited to join the revels by his wife's new husband Lacy. The unthinking and overconfident Lacy crosses the bounds of courtesy by insisting that the unwilling stranger participate in a dance.

Lacy: Take me no takes;

Come, choose your firk, for dance you shall.

Bonavent: I cannot;

You'll not compel me?

Lacy: I have sworn.

Bonavent: 'Tis an affront; as I am a gentleman,  
I know not how to foot your chamber jigs.

(II, 478)

The episode is exposed as an unfair and unwarranted challenge on the part of Lacy, who orders that Bonavent's cloak and sword be taken from him. During the latter half of the sixteenth century control of dress was not only seen as an indication of but also as a control of social power and status. As well as limiting cloth colours and types to certain high levels of social class, legislation of 1597 also limited the wearing of spurs, swords, rapiers and daggers to:

Barons' sons and all above that rank. Gentlemen attending upon the queen in house or chamber. Those who have been employed in embassies. Those with net income of 500 marks per year for life. Knights (as regards daggers, spurs, etc.); Captains.

(cited in Jardine 142)

By removing Bonavent's sword and thus leaving him without that symbol of social privilege

and personal status, Lacy renders him symbolically helpless to his challenge. Immediately following the dance-duel Bonavent calls for his sword: "Where's my sword, sir? I have been your hobby-horse" (II, 479). The hobby-horse was originally a wickerwork horse costume worn during the morris-dance, and it is to this association with ridicule and dance that Bonavent refers. However, recalling the importance of a horse to its knight-owner, the remark works on the chivalric level also.

And by cause that emog alle the beestes the man chaas the hors / & gaf hym  
to this same man that was soo chosen amonge a thowsand men / For after the  
hors whiche is called Chyual in Frensshe is that man named Chyualler which  
is a knyght in Englyssh / Thus to the moost noble man / was gyuen the moost  
noble beest . . .

(Caxton 15-16)

The horse, according to the mythology of the beginnings of chivalry, was chosen on the grounds of nobility over all other animals to serve the chivalrous knight. In Shirley's city society this honoured beast has become a mere plaything and convenience of the upper class, an opportunity for ridicule. Shirley uses this brief confrontation in the dance arena, with its elements of male combatants, female spectators, swords and horses, to summarize and epitomize the debased and perverted status held by what is now termed "chivalry."

Later, when Bonavent and Lacy again meet, Bonavent challenges Lacy to individual combat in an attempt to regain the honour and dignity he lost at the hands of Lacy and the dance.

You do owe me a dance, if you remember,  
And I will have it now; no dispute - Draw!

(II, 521)

By prior arrangement a bagpiper begins to play and Lacy, although drawing his sword, is compelled by the point of Bonavent's own sword not to fight but to dance. "So; now we are on equal terms" (II, 521) concludes Bonavent, and the matter is allowed to rest. What Bonavent has done has been to regain successfully the loss he sustained at his earlier humiliation while at the same time to lampoon not only the nature of the loss that he sustained in being embarrassed (the vacuousness of "old honour"<sup>11</sup>), but also the means by

which the loss is usually defended - the duel. The image of Lacy, sword in hand, dancing, works to reduce the status of the duel to an empty nothingness,<sup>12</sup> simultaneously exposing the devalued worth of Lacy's personal honour, an honour he is supposedly able to protect with a mere dancing rapier.<sup>13</sup>

As well as a recognition of the ignobility of those who wear a dress sword with the intention of wielding it, there appears an implication of the impotence of such men. It is the coward and the believer in a corrupted honour who insists on entering all situations with sword drawn. Honour, therefore, is not only measured by one's answering the call of battle, it is also gained by ignoring rash and petty causes. Shirley ridicules the duel through the character Lacy, whilst still promoting the ideal of honour and nobility of motive through the wit and cleverness of Bonavent and through his refusal to participate in a duel. Lacy's (mis)understanding of honour indicates the debased position of honour as merely a plaything of the social elite. Like the dress-sword, functionless as a military weapon and a mere relic of a chivalric past, masculine honour has become an empty accessory for certain class levels within the new, economically-defined social order. Honour, it seems, has been purchased out of existence.

Money, however, has always occupied an important position in the chivalric scheme. Caxton explains that all knights and prospective knights, squires, must have the financial ability to support their rank without having to turn to thieving.

Chyualry may not be mayntened withoute harnoys whiche apperteyneth to a knyght / nor withoute thonourable costes and dispences whiche apperteyne to chyualrye / By cause a squyer beyng withoute harnoys / And that hath no rychesse for to make his dispences / yf he be made knyght / hym shold peraunture happe for nede to be a robbour / a thief / traitre lyar or begylour / or haue some other vyces whiche ben contrary to Chyualry . . .

(Caxton 62-63)

Nevertheless, this emphasis on money was always preceded by an emphasis on lineage and the dangers involved if one did not adhere to the requirement of noble blood:

shold a squyer be adoubed knyght of vylayns / and of peple of lytyl lygnage lowe and vyle mayst thou make knyghtes / And yf thou madest them / thy lygnage thou sholdest dishonoure . . .

In a satirical speech in *The Gamester* Old Barnacle exposes the ridiculous, almost futile results of the current social upheaval:

we that had  
Our breeding from a trade, cits, as you call us,  
Though we hate gentlemen ourselves, yet are  
Ambitious to make all our children gentlemen:  
In three generations they return again.  
We for our children purchase land; they brave it  
I' the country; beget children, and they sell,  
Grow poor, and send their sons up to be prentices.  
There is a whirl in fate: the courtiers make  
Us cuckolds; mark! we wriggle into their  
Estates; poverty makes their children citizens;  
Our sons cuckold them; a circular justice!

(III, 201)

The new breed of honour is apparently as transient as the social positions upon which it is dependent. Old Barnacle recognizes the advantage of being a gentleman over a citizen, and so the sense of elitism traditionally connected with honour may be retained, but the actuality is certainly lost as caste structures break down and lineages become impure. Old Barnacle calls this breakdown cuckoldry but it is not merely noblemen's beds and their women which are stolen and corrupted, but their historical and essential social position as well.

Despite acknowledging the corrupt and debased form of this new understanding of honour, Shirley maintains the chivalric ideal of honour, albeit residual, as a foundation for his plays. It is not the knight or the courtier only to whom honour is relevant, but also the gentleman: "Nothing more dear to gentlemen, than honour" (III, 221), explains Sir Richard Hurry to his daughter in *The Gamester*. It is to the chivalric and literary ideal of honour that Shirley's gentlemen aspire. Notably, in most of Shirley's plays, honour remains the prerogative of those with noble blood, but it is not only in his city plays that the new, debased breed of honour is introduced. His later court plays also include instances of the corruption of honour. In *The Opportunity* the virtue of the noble gentleman Borgia is not questioned, yet the fact that he killed a man in a duel is enough to cause his banishment from the court. Borgia is said to have killed him "fairly," and thus, in the traditional sense, has

brought about no dishonour to himself. Yet clearly "'Twas his misfortune" that resulted in Borgia's being "provok'd, to kill" (III, 378). This indicates the now unacceptable status of individual combat as a form of realizing justice, while promoting the a-social ideal as a still-representative, although distant, tradition.

One of Shirley's last court plays, *The Court Secret*, reveals the perversity of those who insist on retaining the traditions of trial by combat despite its archaic status. Manuel prefers to swear allegiance to Carlo, the prince, rather than to fight him over their rivalling loves for the gentlewoman Clara. Prince Carlo, insisting that honour must be met in a duel, disguises himself as a Moor who is said to have murdered the prince, that is, Carlo himself. Manuel, in duty to Carlo, attacks and wounds the Moor, only then, much to his dismay, to discover Carlo in disguise. Carlo however, although wounded, remains triumphant that his disguise has led to the demands of chivalry being met in individual combat: "I knew thou would'st not fight against me knowingly" (V, 488). Although Prince Carlo remains loyal to the demands of honour and recognizes that, as victor, Manuel retains sole right to court Clara, Shirley uses the situation to introduce into the courtly environment the notion of unnecessary duelling. The prince has waived the chivalric requirements that insist upon a formal challenge and a formal acceptance, and thus his understanding of honour is completely misplaced and, in terms of chivalry, totally without foundation. Carlo recognizes the existence of a chivalric tradition, but he displays no understanding of its idealistic essence. His (mis)use of chivalric ritual works entirely to damage and corrupt the chivalric code. *The Court Secret* is typical of Shirley's court plays in that, when dealing with the changing nature of chivalry and chivalric combat in particular, it exposes the changes as negative and corrupt.

Shirley's plays favour the chivalric ideal, which may be difficult to attain but, for those who approach it, provides men with total social and spiritual fulfilment. This, perhaps, is the only means of success open to Shirley's male characters; all other behaviour is seen in terms of corruption of chivalry where chivalry is the central point around which all else revolves. The shortcomings of honour are revealed as social or individual deficiencies in

perspective and definition of honour rather than in the chivalric ideal of honour itself. No longer, in either Shirley's plays or contemporary Caroline society, are the defenders of virtue knights within a feudal system; they are gentlemen of the city or court. The social behaviour of knights - individual combat, questing, for instance - is not appropriate for the gentleman who must function within a legalistic system. Even more than the court plays, Shirley's city plays, frequently set in contemporary Caroline London, rely upon the base practice of duelling to throw into relief the hazardous and corrupting influence of the contemporary (mis)understanding of chivalry.

In the conclusion to his book on chivalry, Maurice Keen argues of the newly fashioned Renaissance chivalry:

It might parade in new dress, Castiglione's courtier might be expected to know more about the classics and less about such romantic rituals as the swearing of oaths upon a peacock than little Jehan de Saintr  had; but what this denoted was a change of the chivalric courtier's wardrobe rather than a change of heart. That is why . . . the conclusion to this survey of chivalry has to be written in terms of change, not of decline.

(Keen 249)

Shirley's plays do display a construction of chivalry that has changed from its traditional roots. However, the plays also contain evidence for the decline of chivalry. In a rapidly-evolving society where class distinctions, trade distinctions and gender distinctions are being broken down and redefined, the experiences of individuals and the constructs of society as a whole appear to be looking increasingly away from a chivalric tradition to a new, more cosmopolitan way of life.

## CONCLUSION

This study identifies and interprets some of the themes, structures and multiple ideologies underlying Shirleyian drama. In order to pinpoint certain of these ideologies, various feminine roles recognizable within Renaissance culture and literature have been singled out and used as foundations for examination of the shifting grounds of discourse contained in the plays.

Shirley's representations of the feminine role of wife are explored in Chapter 1, with the finding that the wives in Shirley's plays enjoy an independence in love and the love-based marital relationship that challenges the previously dominant chivalric ideology of enforced marriage. The investigation of bawds and whores in the second chapter finds how Shirley's female characters experience a basic contradiction in their masculine-defined identities. In an effort to perpetuate the idea of women as weak and corrupt sexual creatures, Shirley's men try to force virtuous women into these immoral roles. The fact that these attempts are unsuccessful reveals a strengthening feminine definition of women that is in contrast to traditional masculine definitions. The discussion of the feminine role of witch in Chapter 3 shows how the attitude towards witches in Shirley's drama supports this development of an independent feminine self-definition: the masculine definition of witches as a threat to the patriarchy is replaced by the suggestion that witches are socially disadvantaged women who are unable to defend themselves against masculine containment and who are thus nothing more than helpless victims of the patriarchy. Remaining problematic to the possibility of a feminine self-definition are the male and female roles of cross-dresser which are contrasted

and compared in Chapter 4. While both roles are found to threaten the patriarchal structure, neither is seen to work towards the emancipation of one or both genders; rather, cross-dressers remain outside the ethical foundation of the society of Shirley's plays and thus only ever exist as representations of a chaotic and transitionaal state. Both the Amazon and warrior woman roles, examined in Chapter 5, are also found to be transitional states. Again, however, through Shirley's representation of these roles, the emerging definition of women as morally independent is evident. Through investigating the roles of rapist and rape victim, Chapter 6 uncovers a suggestion of interdependence between masculine and feminine morality which remains irreconcilable with Shirley's emerging definition of the independent feminine identity. Rapists, like the male whoremakers in Chapter 2, are dependent upon their victims for their moral salvation. However, Shirley's rape victims must die in order to redeem themselves from the corruption of rape, which is an indication of these women's unavoidable dependence upon masculine definitions of purity. Lastly, Shirley's representations of positions of masculine honour are found, in Chapter 7, to support an emerging definition of men that is similar to the definition of women emergent in Shirley's plays in that it liberates men from dominant and traditional chivalric roles, fashioning for them a newer, cosmopolitan role which appears far more suited to contemporary Caroline living.

In its enquiry into specific gender relationships and men's and women's roles, this thesis remains a preliminary study of Shirleian drama and is by no means exhaustive. Arising from the investigation of witches, in particular the investigation of the midwife role, is an area of research largely untouched by this study: the importance of maternal figures in Shirley's plays. Walter Prinic makes the following observation regarding the mothers in Shirley's plays:

In general, mothers or motherly figures are conspicuous by their absence, and the love of those who do appear is, at best, equivocal. Indeed, the mothers who do not appear are perhaps more important dramatically than those who do. In *The Maid's Revenge*, for instance, the absence of a mother on either the Avero or Elvas estates doubles, at least, the powerful presence of Vilarezo.

(Prinic 65-66)

Frequently Shirley's mothers, for example Morosa in *The Traitor* and Marpisa in *The Politician* (1639(?)), appear to be over-protective in ways that are distinct from paternal influence and authority, over-demanding of their children in courtship matters, and the cause, directly or indirectly, of the death or eternal despair of their children. Shirley's mothers occupy a unique position with regard to the father figures - uncles, kings, dukes - in the plays. The investigation of these relationships, which operate outside Shirley's ideal structure of marriage, would advance the understanding of the position of women in Shirley's plays that has been established here.

Ruth Zimmer suggests that many of Shirley's women

reveal and illustrate an understanding superior to the men's of the moral and social obligations of true loyalty in love.

(Zimmer, *Heroines* 164)

With the contemporary interest in and on-going growth of studies in gender issues, Shirley's plays, in their advocacy of (restricted) sexual equality, are a prime subject for further research.

Tests of feminine chastity, as Robert Reed notes, frequently occur in Shirley's work.

Shirley . . . was unusually careful of the chastity of his women characters, a chastity that not only leads to the reform of a number of male reprobates, but also, supplemented by examples of filial piety, usually motivates the central plot.<sup>1</sup>

The present study has found that it is this ability of Shirley's women to realize their own sexual continence that characterizes their independence from (total) masculine definition. Examination of the love trials forced upon Shirley's women by their lovers and husbands would contribute to the understanding of ideal feminine chastity and masculine honour defined in this study as well as furthering its investigation of the relationships inherent in the courtship-marriage process.

Also following directly from issues raised in this study, but not dealing specifically with gender-based relationships, would be an investigation of the role of tailors in Shirley's plays. In their capacity as constructors of appearance, tailors may be seen as creators of individuals, fashioning personality traits for characters while simultaneously fashioning their

garments. Shirley's tailors enjoy considerable social power and, as such, are seen as threats to feminine chastity,<sup>2</sup> masculine honour<sup>3</sup> and individual identity.<sup>4</sup> Their increasing wealth also identifies tailors as threats to the personal economic survival of the gentry and other, lower ranked members of court society,<sup>5</sup> and thus tailors constitute a major challenge to traditional socio-economic hierarchies and ideologies of nobility. Shirley's characters also associate tailors with the devil<sup>6</sup> and an investigation of this theme would add to, perhaps even supersede, the present study's findings regarding men's magic.

Although continued research into Shirley's plays is required before scholars can feel entirely secure in making ideological and thematic comparisons between Shirleian drama and the works of his contemporaries, this study does introduce the opportunity for a limited number of areas of informed comparative investigation. One such area is that of chivalric honour and courtesy. In his investigation of the shifting nature of honour in Shakespeare's *Henry IV Part 1* (1596-98), G.M. Pinciss compares Hotspur's traditional, medieval ideologies of honour with those emergent ideologies embodied by Hal.

Hotspur's chief virtue - and he is called the 'king of honour' by the Douglas - is defined by a code of manners that is obsolete; he represents an age that is past or passing. Prince Hal on the other hand embodies the new virtues: even before he inherits the kingdom from his father he is dubbed the 'king of courtesy.'

(Pinciss 88)

In the same way that Pinciss carries out his internal comparison, the opportunity exists for comparison between discourses of masculine honour in this, or any of Shakespeare's history plays, and those ideals of honour presented in Shirley's plays. Clearly, expansion of this type of research to include other discourses and the works of other playwrights would also be productive.

The comparisons typifying traditional Shirleian criticism have done little to encourage understanding of the ideological complexities contained within Shirley's work. This study has aimed to rescue Shirley from relative critical obscurity by identifying and examining specific thematic trends and ideological structures inherent in his plays. An investigation

which develops and incorporates the issues raised in each chapter of this thesis into a unified analysis would be desirable in order to approach a comprehensive understanding of Shirleian drama. If made in the light of studies such as these, critical comparisons between Shirley's plays and those of his contemporaries will then prove vital to the realization and consolidation of Shirley's considerable social, historical and literary significance.

## NOTES

## Introduction

<sup>1</sup>Arthur Huntington Nason, *James Shirley, Dramatist: A Biographical and Critical Study* (New York: Arthur H. Nason, 1915).

<sup>2</sup>See James Shirley, *The Poems of James Shirley* ed. Ray Livingstone Armstrong (New York: King's Crown Press, 1941); George Bas, "Two Misrepresented Biographical Documents Concerning James Shirley," *Review of English Studies* n.s. 27 (1976): 303-10; Arthur C. Baugh, "Some New Facts About Shirley," *Modern Language Review* 17 (1922): 228-35, and "Further Facts About James Shirley," *Review of English Studies* 7 (1931): 62-66; Marvin Morillo, "Shirley's 'preferment' and the court of Charles I," *Studies in English Literature 1500-1900* 1 (1961): 101-17; James Shirley, *James Shirley's The Humorous Courtier*, ed. Marvin Morillo, Renaissance Drama (New York & London: Garland, 1979); Allan H. Stevenson, "James Shirley and the Actors of the First Irish Theater," *Modern Philology* 40 (1942): 147-60, and "Shirley's Years in Ireland," *Review of English Studies* 20 (1944): 19-28.

<sup>3</sup>James Shirley, *A Critical Edition of James Shirley's The Lady of Pleasure*, ed. Marilyn J. Thorssen, Renaissance Drama (New York & London: Garland, 1980) 21-36.

<sup>4</sup>Sandra A. Burner, *James Shirley: A Study of Literary Coteries and Patronage in Seventeenth-Century England* (Lanham: University Press of America, 1988).

<sup>5</sup>In his seventeenth-century biography of Shirley, Anthony à Wood describes how Shirley had intended taking holy orders at Oxford but had been dissuaded from doing so by William Laud who felt that a conspicuous mole on Shirley's left cheek was an unacceptable disfigurement. Despite the lack of any evidence to confirm this story, it continues to appear in biographies of Shirley (Thorssen, ed., *Lady of Pleasure* 22).

<sup>6</sup>Much space has been dedicated to the possibility that Shirley converted to Roman Catholicism after this time, but no evidence has been found to substantiate this. See Stephen J. Radtke, *James Shirley: His Catholic Philosophy of Life* (Washington: Catholic University of America, 1929). Aline Taylor provides an intriguing but still inconclusive argument regarding Shirley's alleged Catholicism: Aline Mackenzie Taylor, "James Shirley and 'Mr. Vincent Cane,' The Franciscan," *Notes and Queries* 205 (1960): 31-33. Donald Lawless offers more information in favour of Shirley's alleged Catholicism but admits that all the evidence is circumstantial: Donald S. Lawless, "A Further Note on Shirley's

Religion," *Notes and Queries* 222. n.s. 24 (1977): 543. Sandra Burner notes that "despite Shirley's university experiences and later ordination, he maintains in his works almost a studied public indifference to religion. Though attempts have been made to find Catholic references in his plays and poems, little is to be found that is not open to dual interpretation" (Burner 17).

<sup>7</sup>The Cockpit Theatre had been renamed the Phoenix in 1617 after it was rebuilt following a Shrove Tuesday fire, although the old name continued in use.

<sup>8</sup>Prynne's attack upon women actors, his identification of them as "notorious whores," was unfortunate given Queen Henrietta Maria's enjoyment of and participation in court masques and theatrics. For an investigation of the events surrounding Prynne's imprisonment and of the relationship between Shirley and Prynne see James Shirley, *James Shirley's The Bird in a Cage: A Critical Edition*, ed. Frances Frazier Senescu, Renaissance Drama (New York & London: Garland, 1980) lv-lxviii. Quentin Bone notes that Prynne had the misfortune to issue his work on January 11, 1633, one day after the queen had appeared in Sir Walter Montague's pastoral *The Shepherd's Paradise*. Quentin Bone, *Henrietta Maria: Queen of the Cavaliers* (London: Peter Owen, 1973) 83.

<sup>9</sup>The music was written by Henry Lawes, Inigo Jones designed the scenery, and the entire production was reported to have cost the Inns of Court twenty thousand pounds (Nason 5).

<sup>10</sup>See Chapter 1.

<sup>11</sup>Allan H. Stevenson, "Shirley's Publishers: The Partnership of Crooke and Cooke," *The Library* 4th Series 25 (1944-45): 143-44.

<sup>12</sup>James Shirley, *Hyde Park Commentary* Simon Trussler, Swan Theatre Plays (London: Methuen, 1987) xvi.

<sup>13</sup>This theatre was established by John Ogilby, who was made Master of the Revels for Ireland on February 28, 1636/37.

<sup>14</sup>See Stevenson, "Shirley's Publishers" 140-61.

<sup>15</sup>This is according to Anthony à Wood's seventeenth-century biography of Shirley.

<sup>16</sup>*Via Ad Latinam Linguam Complanata* (1649) and *Rudiments of Grammar, The Rules Composed in English Verse* (1656).

<sup>17</sup>Shirley's teaching position was probably at Whitefriars; his will, dated July 1666, records his address as "White Fryers, London" (Nason 158).

<sup>18</sup>See Burner 183.

<sup>19</sup>See James Shirley, *The Dramatic Works and Poems of James Shirley*, ed. William Gifford and Alexander Dyce (London: John Murray, 1833; rpt. New York: Russell and Russell, 1966).

<sup>20</sup>James Shirley, *A Critical Edition of James Shirley's St. Patrick for Ireland*, ed. John P. Turner, Jr., Renaissance Drama (New York & London: Garland, 1979) 22.

<sup>21</sup>James Shirley, *James Shirley*, ed. Edmund Gosse, Mermaid Series (London: Vizetelly, 1888). The five plays are: *The Witty Fair One*, *The Traitor*, *Hyde Park*, *The Lady of Pleasure* and *The Cardinal*, and the masque is *The Triumph of Peace*.

<sup>22</sup>Ruth Kachel Zimmer, *James Shirley: A Reference Guide* (Boston: G.K. Hall, 1980).

<sup>23</sup>James Shirley, *The Traitor*, ed. John Stewart Carter, Regents Renaissance Drama Series (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1965).

<sup>24</sup>1979: *St. Patrick for Ireland*, *The Young Admiral*, *The Humorous Courtier*; 1980: *The Bird in a Cage*, *The Lady of Pleasure*, *Love's Cruelty*, *The Politician*, *The Maid's Revenge*, *The Wedding*.

<sup>25</sup>*The Lady of Pleasure* and *The Cardinal*.

<sup>26</sup>James Shirley, *James Shirley, The Duke's Mistris: An Old-Spelling Edition*, ed. Kim Walker (New York & London: Garland, 1988).

<sup>27</sup>See Ruth Zimmer for a comprehensive bibliography of critical writings on Shirley including books, articles, theses and dissertations, and commentaries on Shirley within larger works dating from 1708 to 1979 (note: the six plays published in 1980 in the Renaissance Drama Series are therein catalogued as theses and dissertations) (Zimmer, *Reference* 61-119). Also, Edgar Chapman contains a careful and extensive survey of Shirley criticism and provides numerous quotations from general reference works, mostly examples of the glib, condemnatory criticism that has plagued Shirley since the late seventeenth century. Edgar Leon Chapman, "The Comic Art of James Shirley: A Modern Evaluation of His Comedies," Diss. Brown University, 1964, 1-27.

<sup>28</sup>Forrest Edward Black, Jr., "The Nature of Evil in the Tragedies of James Shirley," Diss. Bowling Green State University, 1975, 6.

<sup>29</sup>The 1970 production was performed at Farnhams Castle Theatre, New York, and the 1979 production, updated and renamed "The Red Snake", was performed at the Magic Theatre, San Francisco. James Shirley, *The Cardinal*, ed. E.M. Yearling, Revels Plays (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1986) 28-29.

<sup>30</sup>Performed at the University of Toronto (Walker, ed., *Duke's Mistris* 7, n.13).

<sup>31</sup>Performed at the new Swan Theatre, Stratford-upon-Avon.

<sup>32</sup>Kim Walker incorrectly nominates 1830 as the year of Gifford's death (Walker, ed., *Duke's Mistris* 181).

<sup>33</sup>James Shirley, *A Critical Edition of The Politician by James Shirley*, ed. Robert J. Fehrenbach, Renaissance Drama (New York & London: Garland, 1980) xxv.

<sup>34</sup>John Genest, *Some Account of the English Stage* (Bath: Carrington, 1832) vol. 9, 543.

<sup>35</sup>"The Dramatic Works and Poems of James Shirley . . ." *The Quarterly Review* 49 (1833): 1.

<sup>36</sup>"No one . . . who has not attempted to acquaint himself with the beauties of Shirley's drama, through the old quartos, can appreciate the luxury of reading them in the clearer letter and more genuine text of the present edition" (Ibid. 29).

<sup>37</sup>"Many passages of poetry, which had been crowded into halt and disjointed prose, have been brought back, as near as possible, to their original harmonious flow. . . ." (Ibid.).

<sup>38</sup>Shirley scholars have already devoted much space to this activity, with continuing disagreement over classification.

<sup>39</sup>See Morillo, ed., *Humorous Courtier* 1-16. For an encyclopedic account of Shirley's sources see Robert Stanley Forsythe, *The Relations of Shirley's Plays to the Elizabethan Drama* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1914).

<sup>40</sup>James Shirley, *A Critical Old-Spelling Edition of The Young Admiral by James Shirley*, ed. Kenneth J. Ericksen, Renaissance Drama (New York & London: Garland, 1979) xxvii-xxviii.

<sup>41</sup>See Andrew Peter Riemer, "A Study of the Life and Works of James Shirley," Diss. University of London, 1963, 233; see also, Albert Wertheim, "The Dramatic Art of James Shirley," Diss. Yale University, 1966, 52.

<sup>42</sup>Both Kenneth Ericksen and Marvin Morillo locate elements of the comedy of manners in Shirley's work and use this as evidence of his stylistic proximity to Restoration comedy (Ericksen, ed., *Young Admiral* v; Morillo, ed., *Humorous Courtier* 7).

<sup>43</sup>Morillo describes *The Humorous Courtier* as "simply an unsuccessful attempt to infuse new life into Jonsonian comical satire" (Morillo, ed., *Humorous Courtier* 79).

<sup>44</sup>Kathryn McCambridge Cousins, "The Role of the Narrative in James Shirley's Tragicomedies," Diss. Fordham University, 1969, 30.

<sup>45</sup>Ruth Kachel Zimmer, "A Study of the Heroines in the Dramatic Pieces of James Shirley," Diss. University of Kentucky, 1971, 41.

<sup>46</sup>Simon Shepherd cites Edward Gosynhill as an early example of a male author who wrote both in attack and defence of women. Also, in 1640 John Taylor, who had written pamphlets attacking women, wrote *The Women's Sharpe Revenge* in order to take financial advantage of his readers' keen interest in anything dealing with the woman problem. Simon Shepherd, ed., *The Women's Sharp Revenge: Five Women's Pamphlets from the Renaissance* (London: Fourth Estate, 1985) 10, 160.

<sup>47</sup>Michael Neill, "'Wit's most accomplished Senate': The Audience of the Caroline Private Theaters," *Studies in English Literature* 18 (1978): 343.

<sup>48</sup>Martin Butler, *Theatre and Crisis 1632-1642* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1984) 112.

<sup>49</sup>Examples of such techniques include complex plots, disguises, instances of mistaken identity and unlikely resolutions.

<sup>50</sup>The prologue to *The Imposture* (1640) also dubs the audience "commissioners of wit" (V, 181).

<sup>51</sup>In *The Gentleman of Venice* (1639) the gardener Georgio amuses Bellaura, the duke's niece, with his lively account of the relationship between wit and flowers (V, 22-23).

<sup>52</sup>Much has been written about Shirley's deference to the tastes of his theatre audience, usually to the detriment of Shirley's artistic worth (see Morillo, ed., *Humorous Courtier* 14). Kim Walker states: "Shirley's tragicomedies as a group have less appeal to the modern reader or spectator looking for depth of character and philosophical content than to the contemporary audiences who admired intricate plotting, surprise and neat resolutions" (Walker, ed., *Duke's Mistress* 159). See Albert Wertheim for a discussion of how Shirley tailored *St. Patrick for Ireland* (1637-40) to cater to the specific theatrical needs of his Irish audience (Wertheim 130-52).

<sup>53</sup>Any references to Caroline society occurring hereafter are therefore confined to signifying the upper classes unless otherwise specified.

<sup>54</sup>Maurice Keen, *Chivalry* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1984) 249.

<sup>55</sup>Carolyn Ruth Swift, "Feminine Identity in Lady Mary Wroth's Romance *Urania*," *English Literary Renaissance* 14 (1984): 331.

<sup>56</sup>James Shirley, *James Shirley's Love's Cruelty: A Critical Edition*, ed. John Frederick Nims, Renaissance Drama (New York & London: Garland, 1980) lxiii. See Forrest Black for a discussion of how all forces of fate in Shirley's plays occur as indications of weak characters attempting to escape moral responsibility for their actions (Black 160-85). I disagree with Black's argument and believe his error lies in his assumption that a belief in fate implies absence of free will.

<sup>57</sup>G.F. Sensabaugh, "Love Ethics in Platonic Court Drama 1625-1642," *Huntington Library Quarterly* 1 (1937-38): 282.

<sup>58</sup>Elaine Bush Kalmar, "Misery of Birth and State: Essays on the Tragedies of James Shirley," Diss. University of New Mexico, 1971, 94.

<sup>59</sup>For further explanation of the terms 'dominant,' 'emergent' and 'residual' see Valerie Wayne, "Historical Differences: Misogyny and *Othello*," *The Matter of Difference*, ed. Valerie Wayne (New York: Cornell University Press, 1991) 153-79.

<sup>60</sup>See, for example, Chapter 5 for discussion of Mistress Bonavent in *Hyde Park* (1632).

<sup>61</sup>As concluded by Zimmer, *Heroines*.

## Chapter 1

<sup>1</sup>Ambroise Paré, *The Workes of that famous Chirurgion Ambrose Parey Translated out of the Latine and compared with the French*, trans. Thomas Johnson (1634; New York: Milford House, 1968) 888.

<sup>2</sup>*Certain Sermons or Homilies*, ed. John Griffiths (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1914) 537.

<sup>3</sup>In *Twelfth Night* (1600-02), Viola, disguised as the male Cesario, is highly favoured by Duke Orsino but it is not until Viola's 'true' gender is revealed that Orsino grants her a status akin to his own.

Your master quits you; and, for your service done him,  
So much against the mettle of your sex,  
So far beneath your soft and tender breeding,

And since you call'd me master for so long,  
Here is my hand: you shall from this time be  
Your master's mistress.

William Shakespeare, *Twelfth Night*, ed. J.M. Lothian and T.W. Craik (London: Methuen, 1975) V.i.320-25.

<sup>4</sup>Women receive verbal attack from all types of men in Shirley's plays, being variously described as: malicious (II, 462); hideous (III, 22); lustful (III, 163); degenerate (III, 174); lewd (III, 195); audacious (IV, 216); impious (V, 162); incorrigible (V, 368); proud (V, 376); arrogant (V, 376). Men also attack women through the use of undesirable labelling, including: baggage (I, 12; I, 166; V, 501); hell-cat (I, 431; III, 42); lady lechery (II, 239); devil (II, 264; III, 42); whimsy lady (II, 479); gipsy (II, 486; V, 169); wasp (V, 27); serpent (V, 163); dragon (V, 163); cockatrice (V, 169); white devil (V, 256).

<sup>5</sup>Infortunio also elevates his mistress Selina to the level of the immortals when he describes her as having a "goddess' face" (I, 67).

<sup>6</sup>William Monter, "The Pedestal and the Stake: Courtly Love and Witchcraft," *Becoming Visible: Women in European History*, ed. Renata Bridenthal and Claudia Koonz (Boston: Houghton-Mifflin, 1977) 123.

<sup>7</sup>Richard Barber, *The Knight and Chivalry* (Ipswich: Boydell Press, 1974) 88.

<sup>8</sup>Andreas Cappellanus, "De Amore," *Andreas Capellanus on Love*, ed. and trans. P.G. Walsh (London: Duckworth, 1982) 39.

<sup>9</sup>Eleanor Commo McLaughlin, "Equality of Souls, Inequality of Sexes: Woman in Medieval Theology," *Religion and Sexism: Images of Women in the Jewish and Christian Traditions*, ed. Rosemary Radford Ruether (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1974) 245.

<sup>10</sup>Eileen Power, *Medieval Women*, ed. M.M. Postan (London: Cambridge University Press, 1975) 23-24.

<sup>11</sup>F.J.C. Hearnshaw, "Chivalry and its Place in History," *Chivalry: A Series of Studies to Illustrate Its Historical Significance and Civilizing Influence*, ed. Edgar Prestage (London: Kegan Paul, 1928) 17-18.

<sup>12</sup>G.F. Sensabaugh notes that Henrietta Maria's interest in Platonic Love may have been encouraged by her probable familiarity with Honoré D'Urfé's novel *Astrée* (1607-28), the sources of which "might even go back to the 'days of medieval chivalry'" (Sensabaugh 278).

<sup>13</sup>The Puritans also encouraged the spiritual ennoblement of women for "woman and the love of woman were associated in Puritan imagination with God and the love of God." William Haller and Malleville Haller, "The Puritan Art of Love," *Huntington Library Quarterly* 2 (January 1942): 256.

<sup>14</sup>William Gouge, *Of Domesticall Duties* (1622), *The English Experience* 803 (Amsterdam: Theatrum Orbis Terrarum, 1976) 197.

<sup>15</sup>William Whately, *A Care-Cloth, A Treatise of Marriage* (1624), *The English Experience* 835 (Amsterdam: Theatrum Orbis Terrarum, 1976) 78-79.

<sup>16</sup>J.B. Fletcher, *The Religion of Beauty in Woman* (New York: Haskell House, 1966) 175-77; Graham Parry, *The Golden Age Restor'd: The Culture of the Stuart Court, 1603-42* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1981) 190.

<sup>17</sup>See Armstrong, ed., *Poems* for examples of Shirley's Platonic Love poetry. Lucow provides a list by title and theme of these poems. Ben Lucow, *James Shirley* (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1981) 49-50.

<sup>18</sup>Graham Parry, *The Intellectual and Cultural Context of English Literature 1603-1700* (London: Longman, 1989) 34. G.F. Sensabaugh points out that marital status did not deter writers of this kind of literature; Sacharissa, for example, was the wife of Lord Spencer (Sensabaugh 280).

<sup>19</sup>Compare with the epilogue to *The Platonic Lovers* (1635):

But these soft Ladies, in whose gentle eyes  
The richest Blessings of his Fortune lyes,  
With such obsequious homage hee doth greet,  
As hee would lay his Laurell at your feet . . .

William Davenant, *An Old-Spelling Critical Edition of William Davenant's The Platonic Lovers*, ed. Wendell W. Broom, *The Renaissance Imagination* (New York: Garland Publishing, 1987) vol. 23, epilogue.7-10.

<sup>20</sup>Erica Veevers, *Images of Love and Religion: Queen Henrietta Maria and Court Entertainments* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989) 17.

<sup>21</sup>D.R. Watson, *The Life and Times of Charles I* (London: Book Club, 1972) 200.

<sup>22</sup>See also Morillo, ed., *Humorous Courtier* 73-78.

<sup>23</sup>"The well-run marriage was an image for a well-run society" (Shepherd, ed. 21).

<sup>24</sup>Sir Robert Filmer, *Patriarcha and Other Political Works of Sir Robert Filmer*, ed. Peter Laslett (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1949) 63.

<sup>25</sup>Arthur B. Ferguson, *The Indian Summer of English Chivalry* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1960) 13.

<sup>26</sup>Nicholas Breton, *The Goode and The Badde* (1616), *The English Experience* 853 (Amsterdam: Theatrum Orbis Terrarum, 1977) 30.

<sup>27</sup>Linda Woodbridge, *Women and the English Renaissance: Literature and the Nature of Womankind, 1540-1620* (Brighton: Harvester Press, 1984) 184.

<sup>28</sup>For further references to the holy or sacred state of marriage, see: I, 386; IV, 545; V, 170.

<sup>29</sup>T. E., *The Lawes Resolutions of Womens Rights* (1632), *The English Experience* 922 (Amsterdam: Theatrum Orbis Terrarum, 1979) 63.

<sup>30</sup>In *The Platonic Lovers* Duke Theander exclaims,  
How! marrie her! Your soules are wedded Sir.  
I'm sure you would not marrie bodies too.  
That were a needlesse charge.

(Davenant II.v.40-43)

<sup>31</sup>In *The Platonic Lovers* spiritual union is shown to leave no opportunity for reproduction but only, as Sciolto points out, the immanent extinction of the human race: "And as for *Plato's* Love-lawes they may entaile, / Lands on Ghosts for ought I know" (Davenant I.i.352-53).

<sup>32</sup>For a brief discussion of Shirley's satirizing of the Platonic Love Cult in this play see Peter Ure, "The 'Deformed Mistress' Theme and the Platonic Love Convention," *Notes and Queries* 193 (1948): 269-70.

<sup>33</sup>Baldesar Castiglione, *The Book of the Courtier*, trans. George Bull (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1988) 326.

<sup>34</sup>Pentheia, in *The Broken Heart* (1633), has exchanged love vows with Orgilus but is forced to marry Bassanes. Penthea describes the situation as "A rape done on my truth." Having previously promised herself to Orgilus, Penthea also experiences physical rape in the marital coupling with Bassanes: "The virgin dowry which my birth bestow'd / Is ravish'd by another." John Ford, *The Broken Heart*, ed. Donald K. Anderson (London: Edward Arnold, 1968) II.iii.79, II.iii.99-100.

<sup>35</sup>In *The Gamester* (1633) Beauford is appalled by Sir Richard Hurry's suggestion that he marry his daughter Leonora, for Leonora has already exchanged love vows with Delamore; he says: "I marry Leonora! can her soul / Think on so foul a rape? she cannot, sure" (III, 255).

<sup>36</sup>See Chapter 6.

<sup>37</sup>Suzanne Gossett, "'Best Men are Molded out of Faults': Marrying the Rapist in Jacobean Drama," *English Literary Renaissance* 14 (1984): 305-27.

<sup>38</sup>George Puttenham, *Arte of English Poesie*, 42. Cited in Dale B.J. Randall, "Some Observations on the Theme of Chastity in *The Changeling*," *English Literary Renaissance* 14 (1984): 347-66.

<sup>39</sup>Orgilus, in *The Broken Heart*, refers to the woman's experience as "the riddle of her gain in losing" (Ford IV.iii.61); the woman's loss of virginity is countered by her gaining in sexual knowledge.

<sup>40</sup>In *The Maid's Tragedy* (1608-11), the newly wed Evadne is at the mercy of any man who chooses to taunt her.

Diphilus: Oh, sister, what have you done?

Evadne: I done! why, what have I done?

Strata: My lord Amintor swears you are no maid now.

Evadne: Pish!

Strata: I'faith, he does.

Evadne: I knew I should be mock'd.

Francis Beaumont and John Fletcher, *The Maid's Tragedy*, *Beaumont & Fletcher: Select Plays*, ed. M.C. Bradbrook (London: Dent, 1970) III.i.

<sup>41</sup>Being undone is the occupation of prostitutes. See Chapter 2.

## Chapter 2

<sup>1</sup>It is not only Shirley's female characters who define womanhood as a quality inextricably linked with virtue, honesty and honour. In *Pericles* (1606-08) for example, the virtuous Marina demands of the Bawd that she be "an honest woman, or not a woman." William Shakespeare, *Pericles*, ed. F.D. Hoeniger (London: Methuen, 1963) IV.ii.81.

<sup>1</sup>Cited in Keith Thomas, "The Double Standard," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 20 (April 1959): 197.

<sup>2</sup>In *The Humorous Courtier* Depazzi exclaims,

do not mar  
Your face 'cause I condemn it; it may serve  
Some hungry signior, or some city heir,  
That would be dabbled in nobility,  
And pay for his cornuting . . .

(IV, 577)

<sup>3</sup>In Thomas Heywood's *The Rape of Lucrece* (1606-08) Lucrece's husband is honoured above the other men because of the virtuous behaviour displayed by Lucrece.

<sup>4</sup>In *The Revenger's Tragedy* (1608), Vindice tests the morality of his mother Gratiana and sister Castiza. Failing to tempt the virtuous Castiza, he turns to Gratiana who readily agrees to act as bawd to her daughter. Cyril Tourneur, *The Revenger's Tragedy*, ed. Brian Gibbons (London: Ernest Benn, 1967) II.i. The similarities between this scene and the events in *The Gentleman of Venice* are strong evidence for Shirley's knowledge of Tourneur's play.

<sup>5</sup>G.R. Quaife, *Wanton Wenches and Wayward Wives: Peasants and Illicit Sex in Early Seventeenth Century England* (London: Croom Helm, 1979) 200.

<sup>6</sup>Martin Ingram, *Church Courts, Sex and Marriage in England, 1570-1640* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987) 163-64.

<sup>7</sup>Messer Nicia, in *Mandragola* (1512-20), is faced with the prospect of probable death if he is the first man to sleep with his wife after she has taken the mandragola fertility potion. "I don't want to make my wife a whore and myself a cuckold," he says. Where Cornari refuses to acknowledge it, Nicia immediately and correctly identifies the situation as one of prostitution within the family. Ironically, despite his concern, Nicia's fears are destined to be realized. He does become a cuckold although he never becomes aware of this. Niccolò Machiavelli, *Mandragola, The Literary Works of Machiavelli*. ed. and trans. J.R. Hale (London: Oxford University Press, 1961) II.

<sup>8</sup>Robert Burton, *The Anatomy of Melancholy*, introd. Holbrook Jackson (London: Dent, 1961) vol. 3, 55.

<sup>9</sup>The potential for the woman to choose a course outside the realm of virtue is precisely what constitutes the threat underlying the transitional moment of the wedding night.

<sup>10</sup>The exchange between Hippolito and Clariana is almost identical to that which takes place between the shameless Duchess and her husband's bastard son Spurio in *The Revenger's Tragedy*.

|          |                                                    |
|----------|----------------------------------------------------|
| Spurio:  | Had not that kiss a taste of sin 'twere<br>sweet.  |
| Duchess: | Why there's no pleasure sweet but it is<br>sinful. |

<sup>11</sup>Ruth Kelso, *Doctrine for the Lady of the Renaissance* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1956; Michigan: Xerox University Microfilms, 1975) 81-82. See also Ure 269-70.

<sup>12</sup>Antonia Fraser, *The Weaker Vessel* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1984) 233.

<sup>13</sup>Aretina's namesake is Pietro Aretino, also known as 'the Aretine,' an Italian poet and playwright of the first half of the sixteenth century who was notorious for writing scandalous and licentious poetry. Shirley refers directly to him in *The Politician* (V, 99).

### Chapter 3

<sup>1</sup>Kevin Sharpe, *Criticism and Compliment: The Politics of Literature in the England of Charles I* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987) 274.

<sup>2</sup>The view is also expressed in *'Tis Pity She's a Whore* (1629(?)-33) when the incestuous Giovanni confronts the learned friar:

It is a principle (which you have taught  
When I was yet your scholar), that the frame  
And composition of the mind doth follow  
The frame and composition of the body:  
So where the body's furniture is beauty,  
The mind's must needs be virtue . . .

John Ford, *'Tis Pity She's a Whore*, ed. Brian Morris (London: Ernest Benn, 1978) II.v.14-19.

<sup>3</sup>The relationship between ugliness and evil is not confined to women, as the duke indicates in *The Traitor* when he refers to his own sin as his "deformity" (II, 144).

<sup>4</sup>See Black for a discussion of the devil and satanic evil in five of Shirley's plays.

<sup>5</sup>The long-standing, traditional nature of this perception of women is evidenced in *The Wife of Bath's Tale* (c.1387) when the knight is horrified at the thought of having to marry the ugly, old woman who has provided him with the information he required. Geoffrey Chaucer, "The Wife of Bath's Tale," *The Works of Geoffrey Chaucer*, ed. F.N. Robinson, 2nd. ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1957) ll.1058-1103.

<sup>6</sup>Persecuted for her own aged state, Mother Sawyer in Dekker, Ford and Rowley's *The Witch of Edmonton* (1621) denies vehemently her status as a witch, yet remarks that old women perhaps need to adopt the arts of witchcraft simply to survive:

if every poor old woman  
Be trod on thus by slaves, reviled, kicked, beaten,  
As I am daily, she to be revenged  
Had need turn witch.

Thomas Dekker, *The Witch of Edmonton*, ed. Ernest Rhys, Mermaid Series (London: Unwin, n.d.) IV.i.

<sup>7</sup>No witches were actually burnt in England (they were hanged or otherwise punished), but such practices did occur elsewhere in Europe and as Shirley's play is set in Spain Luys' comment regarding fuel is quite appropriate.

<sup>8</sup>See Alan G.R. Smith, *The Emergence of a Nation State: The Commonwealth of England 1529-1660* (London: Longman, 1984) 208.

<sup>9</sup>Angela Jennifer Clare Ingram, "Changing Attitudes to 'Bad' Women in Elizabethan and Jacobean Drama," Diss. University of Cambridge, 1977, 7.

<sup>10</sup>Henricus Institoris and Jacobus Sprenger, *Malleus Maleficarum*, trans. Montague Summers (London: Pushkin Press, 1951) 48.

<sup>11</sup>Stanislav Andreski, *Syphilis, Puritanism and Witch Hunts* (London: Macmillan, 1989) 43.

<sup>12</sup>Notably these are the type of characteristics so feared by Aretina in *The Lady of Pleasure* that she repents her uncharacteristic disobedient acts.

<sup>13</sup>Similarly, as Piperollo's description in *The Sisters* indicates, tests for proving one's status as a witch ensured that the accused remained a helpless victim:

If you have bound her hands and feet, you may try whether  
she be a witch or no; there's a pond in the backside: if she  
swim, so!

(V, 369)

<sup>14</sup>Mother Sawyer in *The Witch of Edmonton* resents the power of the language that is used against her to arouse suspicion and to fashion independently an identity for her. She seeks to become the witch that others already believe she is for, as she accurately observes, "'Tis all one / To be a witch as to be counted one" (Dekker II.i).

<sup>15</sup>See Chapter 7.

<sup>16</sup>In *Macbeth* (1606-11) Macduff does not tell Lady Macbeth of Duncan's murder, ironically seeking rather to protect her from the negative power contained in the language that conveys bad news:

O gentle lady,  
'Tis not for you to hear what I can speak:  
The repetition, in a woman's ear,  
Would murder as it fell.

William Shakespeare, *Macbeth*, ed. Kenneth Muir (London: Methuen, 1984) II.iii.81-84.

<sup>17</sup>The other two things in nature are "an Ecclesiastic, and a Woman."

<sup>18</sup>Margaret Hallissy, *Venomous Woman: Fear of the Female in Literature* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood, 1987) 61-62.

<sup>19</sup>Edmund Spenser, *The Faerie Queene*, ed. Thomas P. Roche (London, Penguin, 1979) book III.canto V.verse 27.

<sup>20</sup>Some men do possess herbal knowledge, but this is due to their individual occupation rather than a universal expectation of their gender. See, for example, Friar Lawrence in *Romeo and Juliet* (1591-97). William Shakespeare, *Romeo and Juliet*, ed. Brian Gibbons (London: Methuen, 1980) II.iii.1-26.

<sup>21</sup>See Chapter 1.

<sup>22</sup>Sydney Anglo, ed., *The Damned Art* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1977) 4.

<sup>23</sup>See Chapter 2.

<sup>24</sup>Phillip Stubbes, *The Anatomie of Abuses* (1583), *The English Experience* 489 (Amsterdam: Theatrum Orbis Terrarum, 1972) sig. F2<sup>r</sup>.

<sup>25</sup>Leah Marcus finds evidence for the defeminization and then gradual masculinization of Queen Elizabeth's epithets in the formulaic openings to her proclamations, which develop from "The Queen our sovereign Lady" through to "Monarch and prince sovereign." Leah S. Marcus, *Puzzling Shakespeare: Local Reading and its Discontents* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988) 56-57.

<sup>26</sup>Christopher Haigh, *Elizabeth I* (London: Longman, 1988) 148.

<sup>27</sup>In 1561, in an attempt to overcome this problem, the queen was legally endowed with two bodies: a "body natural," subject to infancy, infirmity and old age, and a "body politic," which was unerring and immortal. See Marie Axton, *The Queen's Two Bodies* (London: Royal Historical Society, 1977) esp. 11-25.

<sup>28</sup>You are "malicious as a witch" (III, 50), exclaims Bostock to Lucina in *The Ball*.

<sup>29</sup>Brian P. Levack, *The Witch-Hunt in Early Modern Europe* (London: Longman, 1987) 10.

<sup>30</sup>Carl Bridenbaugh, *Vexed and Troubled Englishmen 1590-1642* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1976) 109.

<sup>31</sup>Louis Adrian Montrose, "'Shaping Fantasies': Figurations of Gender and Power in Elizabethan Culture," *Representing the English Renaissance*, ed. Stephen Greenblatt (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988) 42.

<sup>32</sup>Carolyn Merchant, *The Death of Nature: Women, Ecology and the Scientific Revolution* (New York: Harper & Row, 1990) 156-57.

<sup>33</sup>William Harvey, *Disputations Touching the Generation of Animals*, trans. Gweneth Whitteridge (Oxford: Blackwell Scientific Publications, 1981) 192.

<sup>34</sup>Katherine Briggs equates black witchcraft with "the magic of sterility." Katherine Mary Briggs, *Pale Hecate's Team* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1962) 80.

<sup>35</sup>Pazorello's magical armour occurs within a chivalric tradition of magical and protective articles of clothing, one example of which is Sir Gawain's magic girdle in *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, trans. Brian Stone (London: Penguin, 1974).

<sup>36</sup>Nicholas H. Clulee, *John Dee's Natural Philosophy: Between Science and Religion* (London: Routledge, 1988) 239-41.

<sup>37</sup>For a discussion of birth and motherhood as unavoidably responsible for men's corruption see Janet Adelman, *Suffocating Mothers* (New York: Routledge, Chapman & Hall, 1992) esp. ch.2.

## Chapter 4

<sup>1</sup>Wilfrid Hooper, "The Tudor Sumptuary Laws," *English Historical Review* 30 (1915): 433-49, esp. 449.

<sup>2</sup>See IV, 26; IV, 506; IV, 543; V, 400; VI, 187 for examples of Shirley's use of *shape* to indicate clothing.

<sup>3</sup>Katherine M. Rogers, *The Troublesome Helpmate: A History of Misogyny in Literature* (Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, 1966) 139.

<sup>4</sup>Stephen Orgel, "Nobody's Perfect: Or Why Did the English Stage Take Boys for Women?" *South Atlantic Quarterly* 88 (Winter 1989): 14.

<sup>5</sup>Lisa Jardine, *Still Harping on Daughters: Women and Drama in the Age of Shakespeare* (Brighton: Harvester Press, 1983) 156.

<sup>6</sup>The prologue to *The Roaring Girle* (1604-10) mentions, amongst others, "A civill City Roaring Girle, whose pride, / Feasting, and riding, shakes her husbands state . . ." Thomas Dekker, *The Roaring Girl, The Dramatic Works of Thomas Dekker* (London: John Pearson, 1873) vol. 3, prologue.22-23.

<sup>7</sup>See Chapter 2.

<sup>8</sup>For an account of the social impact of such customs see Martin Ingram, "Ridings, Rough Music and Mocking Rhymes in Early Modern England," *Popular Culture in Seventeenth-Century England*, ed. Barry Reay (London: Croom Helm, 1985) 166-97.

<sup>9</sup>"A woman has undone me" (I, 378), says the cross-dressed Lucibel. Dressed as Milliscent, the implication of this line is that 'he' has been in some way forsaken by a mistress. However, the comment has meaning for Lucibel also because it was her own mother who caused her downfall by facilitating the rape in the hope of forcing a favourable marriage for her daughter. Nowhere in the play is there any indication that Lucibel is a woman in disguise, for it is not until the last act when she reveals herself to the other characters that she also reveals herself to the audience. However, Lucibel's comment regarding her undoing, with its obvious reference to her past, suggests that a Caroline audience did perhaps know through some theatrical convention that Lucibel was a female character disguised as a male.

<sup>10</sup>Jean E. Howard, "Crossdressing, the Theatre, and Gender Struggle in Early Modern England," *Shakespeare Quarterly* 39. 4 (Winter 1988): 432.

<sup>11</sup>That Florelia's comment is primarily a sexual pun does not override entirely the underlying suggestion that wife-beating is an acceptable, even expected, marital habit. According to seventeenth-century pamphlets, however, the appropriateness of wife-beating was highly questionable. In 1623 William Whately wrote that a husband could only beat his wife "if she give just cause, after much bearing and forbearing, and trying all other ways, in case of utmose [sic] necessity," and William Gouge, in 1634, advised decidedly against this type of discipline altogether. William Whately, *A Bride-bush, or A Direction for Married Persons* (London, 1623) 106-07; William Gouge, *Of Domesticall Duties: Eight Treatises*, 3rd ed. (London, 1634) 394-397; both texts cited in S.D. Amussen, "Gender, Family and the Social Order, 1560-1725," *Order and Disorder in Early Modern England*, ed. Anthony Fletcher and John Stevenson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985) 201.

<sup>12</sup>The gender of Rosania was, of course, never that of the male actor playing the character on the Caroline stage.

<sup>13</sup>At the end of the play Ferdinand's right to the throne of Murcia is proven and recognized, Olivia marries the prince of Arragon, and Rosania is finally free to marry Ferdinand, the man she loves.

<sup>14</sup>Similarly in *Epicoene* (1609), Morose finds himself married to a scolding, ungovernable 'woman.' Ben Jonson, *Epicoene or The Silent Woman*, ed. R.V. Holdsworth (London: Ernest Benn, 1979) III.iv.24-52.

<sup>15</sup>Ambroise Paré, *On Monsters and Marvels*, trans. and introd. Janis L. Pallister (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982) 31-32.

<sup>16</sup>See Marie Delcourt, *Hermaphrodite: Myths and Rites of the Bisexual Figure in Classical Antiquity*, trans. Jennifer Nicholson (London: Studio Books, 1961) 44-46; see also Woodbridge 141.

<sup>17</sup>Winfried Schleiner, "Divina virago: Queen Elizabeth as an Amazon," *Studies in Philology* 75. 2 (1978): 172.

<sup>18</sup>Francis Bacon, "Pan, or Nature," *The Moral and Historical Works of Lord Bacon*, ed. Joseph Devey (London: George Bell and Sons, 1890) 215.

<sup>19</sup>Similarly in *The Doubtful Heir*, Rosania's cross-dressing is not enough to enable her to overcome the need to weep (IV, 319). As a typically feminine activity, weeping is not only correlated with weakness but with other traits commonly stereotyped as feminine, for example, deception or manipulation, as in Bellamente's attack on Clariana in *Love's Cruelty*:

You carry springs within your eyes, and can  
Outweep the crocodile, till our too much pity  
Betray us to your merciless devouring . . .

(II, 219)

<sup>20</sup>For a discussion of the concept of interior/exterior states of existence see Simon Shepherd, *Marlowe and the Politics of Elizabethan Theatre* (Brighton: Harvester Press, 1986) 1-39.

## Chapter 5

<sup>1</sup>Marina Warner, *Joan of Arc: The Image of Female Heroism* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1981) 207-08.

<sup>2</sup>Celeste Turner Wright, "The Amazons in Elizabethan Literature," *Studies in Philology* 37 (1940): 442-43.

<sup>3</sup>Stevie Davies, *The Idea of Woman in Renaissance Literature: The Feminine Reclaimed* (Brighton: Harvester Press, 1986) 13-16.

<sup>4</sup>Christine de Pizan, *The Book of the City of Ladies*, trans. Earl Jeffrey Richards (New York: Persea Books, 1982).

<sup>5</sup>The play does not actually state that Carol lives with Mistress Bonavent but as this is where her suitors come to visit her I feel it is safe to assume that this is Carol's permanent (city) residence.

<sup>6</sup>See Chapter 3.

<sup>7</sup>*Hyde Park* is generally classified as a comedy, but the comment remains relevant.

<sup>8</sup>Mary Beth Rose, *The Expense of Spirit: Love and Sexuality in English Renaissance Drama* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1988) 185.

<sup>9</sup>For a similar occurrence see Thomas Dekker, *Patient Grissil* (1600), *The Dramatic Works of Thomas Dekker*, ed. Fredson Bowers (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1953) vol. 1.

<sup>10</sup>William Shakespeare, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, ed. Harold F. Brooks (London: Methuen, 1979) I.i.15-19.

<sup>11</sup>The sexual implications of Bovaldo's desire to *wrestle* with a chambermaid seem to outweigh the fact that this may also be seen as a martial image, particularly if, as E.M. Yearling suggests, chambermaids are "conventionally lascivious" (Yearling, ed., *Cardinal* 93, n.55).

<sup>12</sup>Richard Stoneman disagrees with the idea of breast mutilation, attributing it to "breastless," a false etymology of "A-mazon." Richard Stoneman, *Greek Mythology* (London: Aquarian Press, 1991) 22. Robert Graves suggests "Amazon" is of Armenian origin, signifying "moon-women," but he continues to assert the breast-searing tradition. Robert Graves, *Greek Myths* (London: Cassell, 1969) vol. 1, 355. In 1575 William Painter also included breast mutilation as a fundamental aspect of Amazonian mythology. William Painter, *The Palace of Pleasure*, ed. Joseph Jacobs (London: David Nutt, 1890) vol. 2, 161.

<sup>13</sup>Roberts, Jeanne Addison. "Crisis of Male Self-Definition in *The Two Noble Kinsmen*," *Shakespeare, Fletcher and The Two Noble Kinsmen*, ed. Charles H. Frey (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1989) 136.

<sup>14</sup>Leslie A. Fiedler, *The Stranger in Shakespeare* (London: Croom Helm, 1972) 174.

<sup>15</sup>Alan Brissenden, *Shakespeare and the Dance* (London: Macmillan, 1981) 72.

<sup>16</sup>See Maureen Duffy, *The Erotic World of Faery* (London: Sphere Books, 1989) 138-54; see also Schleiner 163-80.

<sup>17</sup>Jeanne Roberts arrives at this same conclusion, but argues that it was rare for Elizabeth to be overtly identified with the Amazon, a premise with which I disagree (Roberts 133).

<sup>18</sup>René Malamud, "The Amazon Problem," trans. Murray Stein, *Facing the Gods*, ed. James Hillman (Irving, Tex.: Spring Publications, 1988) 48; Malamud suggests that such outfits roughly resemble "a modern ski-suit".

<sup>19</sup>William Caxton, *The Book of the Ordre of Chyualry*, translated and printed by William Caxton from a French version of Ramón Lull's 'Le Libre del Orde de Cauayleria,' ed. Alfred T.P. Byles (London: Oxford University Press, 1926) 57-58.

<sup>20</sup>Simon Shepherd, *Amazons and Warrior Women* (Brighton: Harvester Press, 1981) 5.

## Chapter 6

<sup>1</sup>Catharine R. Stimpson, "Shakespeare and the Soil of Rape," *The Woman's Part: Feminist Criticism of Shakespeare*, ed. Caroline Ruth Swift Lenz, Gayle Greene and Carol Thomas Neely (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1980) 56.

<sup>2</sup>For other instances of the enrapturing quality of ravishment see: I, 93; I, 182; I, 290; I, 343; II, 75; II, 444; II, 512. In *King Henry VIII* (1613) the king speaks of the love he once held for the Duke of Buckingham, and how he the king, "Almost with ravish'd list'ning, could not find / His hour of speech a minute . . ." William Shakespeare, *King Henry VIII*, ed. R.A. Foakes (London: Methuen, 1957) I.ii.120-21.

<sup>3</sup>Shirley again takes advantage of the double meaning in *The Lady of Pleasure*:

|            |                                                                                 |
|------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Bornwell:  | You have an excellent voice,                                                    |
|            | ...                                                                             |
|            | [With] which, join'd to the harmony of<br>your lute,<br>You ravish all mankind. |
| Celestina: | Ravish mankind?                                                                 |
| Bornwell:  | With their consent.                                                             |
| Celestina: | It were the stranger rape . . .                                                 |

(IV, 38)

<sup>4</sup>Forced to marry Bassanes in *The Broken Heart*, Penthea's "virgin dowry," her body, is ravished whereas her "truth," her moral well-being, is raped. The ravishment results in both Penthea's physical loss of virginity and Bassanes' physical gain of sexual gratification and possible impregnation. In contrast, the rape implies spiritual loss for both Penthea and Bassanes, for they cannot share the union of ideal love and must therefore endure an unhappy, unsuccessful marriage (Ford II.iii.99-100, II.iii.79).

<sup>5</sup>It is perhaps ironic, perhaps inevitable that this removal of rape, this secreting of the aspect of physical assault, works to bring sexual ravishment into the social sphere generally occupied by women and by female sexuality in particular: a sphere traditionally covert, domestic, out of the social, political and public realm of men.

<sup>6</sup>William Shakespeare, *King John*, ed. E.A.J. Honigmann (London: Methuen, 1954) II.i.91-98.

<sup>7</sup>Ian Donaldson, *The Rapes of Lucretia: A Myth and its Transformations* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1982) 57.

<sup>8</sup>Thomas Heywood, *The Rape of Lucrece* (London: Charles Baldwyn, 1824) IV.iv. Despite Heywood's play being over twenty years old, it is probable that Shirley saw a production of it in his own theatre, the Phoenix, a few years before writing *The Traitor*: William Markward reports, "On 6 August 1628, the Duke of Buckingham was in the Phoenix audience witnessing a performance of Heywood's old but still popular tragedy, *The Rape of Lucrece*." William B. Markward, "A Study of the Phoenix Theatre in Drury Lane 1617-1638," Diss. University of Birmingham, 1953, 156.



<sup>21</sup>William Shakespeare, "The Rape of Lucrece," *William Shakespeare: The Complete Works*, ed. Stanley Wells, Gary Taylor, John Jowett and William Montgomery (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986) 1.772.

## Chapter 7

<sup>1</sup>Curtis Brown Watson, *Shakespeare and the Renaissance Concept of Honor* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1960) 42-43.

<sup>1</sup>G.D. Squibb, *The High Court of Chivalry* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1959) 37.

<sup>2</sup>Sir Francis Bacon, "The Charge of Sir Francis Bacon, Knight, his Majesty's Attorney-General, Touching Duels; Upon an Information in the Star-Chamber against Priest and Wright," *The Works of Francis Bacon*, ed. James Spedding, Robert Leslie Ellis and Douglas Denon Heath (London: Longmans, Green, Reader and Dyer, 1868) vol. 11, 400-01.

<sup>3</sup>Robert Baldick, *The Duel: A History of Duelling* (London: Chapman & Hall, 1965) 18.

<sup>4</sup>Bacon, "The Decree of the Starchamber in the same cause," *Works* 414-15.

<sup>5</sup>Vittori's view is supported in *The Two Noble Kinsmen* (1613-16) when Theseus, although victorious over Palamon and Arcite, cannot help but admire the honour and virtue with which they have fought.

By th' helm of Mars I saw them in the war,  
Like to a pair of lions smeared with prey,  
Make lanes in troops aghast. I fixed my note  
Constantly on them, for they were a mark  
Worth a god's view.

William Shakespeare and John Fletcher, *The Two Noble Kinsmen*, *Complete Works* I.iv.17-21.

<sup>6</sup>See Walter Prinic for an examination of what Prinic calls "Platonic male friendship" in Shirley's tragedies (Prinic 53-61).

<sup>7</sup>Vilarezo's motivation stems from the belief that he, as father, has final and absolute authority over his children, whose duty it is to obey him unquestioningly. He is not a vindictive father but appears as such due to his failure to recognize the superior authority to which his children are bound: love (see Kalmar 90).

<sup>8</sup>V.G. Kiernan, *The Duel in European History* (London: Oxford University Press, 1988) 81.

<sup>9</sup>Carl Bridenbaugh reports that when Charles sought to raise money in 1630 by selling knighthoods, both king and commoners were satirized in ballads such as the following:

Come all you farmers out of the country,  
Carters, plowmen, hedgers, and all.  
Tom, Dick, and Bill, Ralph, Roger, and Humphrey,  
Leave off your gestures rusticall;  
Bidd all your home spunne fashions adew,  
And sute your selves in the fashions new.  
Honor invites you to delights,

Come to Court, and be all made Knights.

(Bridenbaugh 61)

<sup>10</sup>Caroline Bingham, *James I of England* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1981) 97.

<sup>11</sup>The term is from G.M. Pinciss, "The Old Honor and the New Courtesy: 'I Henry V,'" *Shakespeare Survey* 31 (1978): 85-91.

<sup>12</sup>The American Western movie tradition continues this image with the clichéd event of a gunslinger made to 'dance,' to jump and skip over the low-aimed bullets of his opponent. Again the result is a reflection of loss of chivalric honour in that it is a loss of dignity.

<sup>13</sup>Bertram, in *All's Well That Ends Well* (1601-04), uses this image, complaining that to remain at home away from the wars is to remain

Creaking my shoes on the plain masonry,  
Till honour be bought up, and no sword worn  
But one to dance with . . .

William Shakespeare, *All's Well That Ends Well*, ed. G.K. Hunter (London: Methuen, 1959) II.i.31-33.

## Conclusion

<sup>1</sup>Robert R. Reed, Jr., "James Shirley, and the Sentimental Comedy," *Anglia* 73 (1955): 152.

<sup>2</sup>See *The Wedding* (I, 382); *The Ball* (III, 62).

<sup>3</sup>See *The Lady of Pleasure* (IV, 56); *The Constant Maid* (IV, 438).

<sup>4</sup>See *The Bird in a Cage* (II, 392); *The Lady of Pleasure* (IV, 70-71); *The Royal Master* (IV, 145).

<sup>5</sup>See *The Maid's Revenge* (I, 128); *The Witty Fair One* (V, 254).

<sup>6</sup>See *The Witty Fair One* (I, 254); *The Constant Maid* (IV, 507).

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