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An Analysis of the Treatment of Platonic Love in Ford's Nondramatic Works and Independent Tragedies

Kathryn M. Jackson
Eastern Illinois University

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An Analysis of the Treatment of Platonic Love in Ford's Nondramatic Works and Independent Tragedies

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BY

Kathryn M. Jackson

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For many years John Ford has been classified as a decadent playwright whose plays contain themes glorifying incest, adultery, and murder. In the last two decades critics have taken a closer look at Ford's plays in an attempt to determine whether or not Ford actually does promote licentious conduct as normal and moral behavior. Nearly all of Ford's plays deal with various types of love relationships that are clearly influenced by the principles of the Platonic code which was popular in the Carolinean era. Studies have been conducted to determine the attitude which Ford displays toward this code, and the results of these studies show that the critics are generally divided into two factions. One group states that Ford supports the Platonic principles and does display adultery, incest, and murder as attractive and morally justified actions. The other group claims that Ford criticizes misuse of the code, but does show sympathy with situations that arise as a result of this misuse. This second group generally avoids answering the question of whether or not Ford's plays do express his belief in traditional standards of morality. It is my intention to disprove the theory of those critics who believe that Ford supports the Platonic code. This essay attempts to show that Ford actually criticizes the philosophy of the code, and that he does not sympathize with any situations resulting from reliance

upon its principles. It is also my intention to show that Ford does exhibit belief in conventional standards of morality. In order to prove these theories, it is necessary to trace Ford's attitude toward Platonic love and courtly life in general. This essay will examine Ford's attitudes in his early nondramatic works through his independent tragedies. Before this search is conducted, however, it will be helpful to provide some general information about the political environment in which Ford wrote, in order to better understand how the Platonic code developed and what factors influenced the development of Ford's critical opinion of the code.

During the years 1606-1625 Ford produced his nondramatic works and his works in collaboration. James I ruled England during this period. He is described in historical accounts as a licentious and continuously inebriated man who cared more about his liqueur than the welfare of his people.[1] Since the king was known to set the standards for his court, James's courtiers behaved in the same loose style as their sovereign. Many stories have been recorded about the lavish feasts at which drunken courtiers collapsed at the feet of the equally inebriated ladies-in-waiting.[2]

When Charles I succeeded to the throne, the court had degenerated to such a degree that Charles's French bride Henrietta Maria took up the task of reforming the behavior of

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[1]D. Willson Harris, King James VI and I (New York: Henry Holt & Co., 1956), p. 428.

[2]Christopher Hibbert, Charles I (Great Britain: Weidenfeld & Nicholson, 1968), p. 111.

the corrupt court. Henrietta had undoubtedly grown up to sympathize with the tenets of the Hôtel de Rambouillet because her mother conducted an affair with one of the Hôtel's poets.[3] The Hôtel was responsible for the revival of Platonism in France; it was devoted to the practice of polished speech and courtly manners. The Hotel used for its code D'Urfe's novel Astree, a pastoral romance containing:

> "the ever submissive, ever faithful lover, bowing to adverse fate and to his lady's interpretation of properties, the long train of heroic adventure, the psychological analysis, the surfeit of polite manners and courtly conversation, the frequent device of disguises, the employment of subsidiary pairs of lovers, the intervention of oracles, the extravagance of an over-ripe rhetoric, [and] the tendency to present contemporary people as characters in the story."[4]

The principles of D'Urfe's novel were brought to England by Henrietta. These ideas were also influenced by the Platonism that was proposed earlier by the Italian Ficino. Ficino states that there are two types of love: vulgar and Platonic. Vulgar love is inferior to Platonic love because it consists of desire for the physical body and terminates in physical intercourse. This type of love is characterized by instability. Platonic love, on the other hand, is superior to vulgar love because it consists of a contemplation of the inner beauty of the soul. The soul receives its beauty from its union with God, the Divine

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[3]Alfred H. Upham, The French Influence in English Literature (New York: Octagon Books, Inc., 1965), p. 319.

[4]Ibid., p. 310.

Beauty. Ficino states that the body receives its beauty from the energy of the soul, and that the body should be worshipped only as an altar enshrining the divine soul within.[5] The end of Platonic love is the conjoining of two souls and an ultimate union with God.

Ficino's Platonic theory influenced the Hôtel de Rambouillet and, in turn, Henrietta Maria. The basic beliefs of Henrietta's cult were somewhat altered into a courtly love code whose principles may be briefly paraphrased. The first doctrine in the Platonic code is that all lovers are ruled by fate. This idea is based upon the belief that all true relationships are predestined by a divine power which cannot be challenged. The second doctrine states that virtue is equal to one's beauty. This idea is based on the belief that the virtue of the soul is reflected by the beauty of the body. The third principle is a corollary to the preceding statement; it states that beautiful women are saints to be worshipped. This idea comes from the reasoning that if a beautiful body indicates a virtuous soul, a beautiful woman should be worshipped because of her close association with God. The fourth principle states that true love consists of worship of the souls and spiritual union, as opposed to vulgar love which advocates worship of the body and physical union. The fifth doctrine states that true love is all-important and omnipotent. This principle is based on two ideas: that one must follow his fate, and that true love

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[5]John Smith Harrison, Platonism in English Poetry (London: Columbia University Press, 1903), p. 112.

guides one to spiritual union with God. The sixth principle is a corollary to the preceding doctrine; it states that true love is more important than marriage. The seventh principle claims that true love is the sole guide to virtue. This idea is taken from the belief that love of beauty is the same as love of virtue, since beauty and goodness are also equal. The last doctrine of the Platonic code states that true love allows any liberty of thought and action. This principle establishes the code as the sole basis of determining the standards of moral and immoral behavior. Since the code leads one to virtue, obedience to its doctrines constitutes moral behavior; any infractions of its rules constitutes immoral behavior.[6]

Although the code was intended to be used as an aid for reforming the loose morals of the court, its beliefs were gradually twisted to serve as a mask for promiscuity. The members of the court rationalized that any and all types of relationships were justified under the code, providing the beloved was physically beautiful. "True love" was not expected to last forever. Since one was expected to pursue beauty (as love of virtue), a courtier deemed it his duty to leave one woman in order to pursue a second more beautiful and thus more virtuous lover. Marriage, consequently, was

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[6]G. F. Sensabaugh, The Tragic Muse of John Ford (California: Stanford University Press, 1944), pp. 109-131 passim.

discouraged because it confined a man to remaining true to one woman. Marriage was looked at as inhibiting each other's pursuit of "spiritual" union with a person who was more beautiful and more virtuous than his mate. The court itself seemed to have suffered from this "unbridled individualism".[7] The Queen had midnight rendezvous with strangers. The Queen's favorite courtier Henry Jermyn impregnated a lady-in-waiting, but neither lover received any admonition; on the contrary, the both retained positions of favor.[8] The members of the court were using the Platonic tenets to justify illicit affairs. They conveniently ignored the foremost belief of the code, that true love consists of spiritual rather than physical union.

The public reaction to the cult varied, with some aristocracy in sympathy with the court, while the majority of the kingdom observed tradition and recognized the hypocrisy of the court. The greatest rebellion was led by the Puritan faction, which argued the superiority of man over woman. They denied that women should be worshipped as objects of beauty. The Puritans also condemned the use of the code to mask adultery, and upheld the convention of marriage vows as sacred.[9]

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[7] Ibid., p. 94.

[8] G. F. Sensabaugh, "Platonic Love and the Puritan Rebellion," Studies in Philology, XXXVIII, 1940, p. 460.

[9] William and Malleville Haller, "The Puritan Art of Love," Huntington Library Quarterly, V, 1941, pp. 247 and 261.

With Platonic love being supported by the court and ignored or condemned by the majority of the kingdom, the playwrights were forced to choose which side of the issue to present in their plays. It would seem natural that the courtier playwrights would lend support to the Queen's cult, simply to gain financial patronage. The cavalier playwrights who supported the Queen write about the beauty of Platonic relationships. Rutter in The Shepherd's Holiday and Montague in The Shepherd's Paradise describe pure or ideal Platonism, which actually did not exist in the court. A second group of playwrights satirize the tenets of the cult; these writers include Marmyon in A Fine Companion and Massinger in The Guardian. A typical example of such satire can be seen in Warehouse's The City Match:

> "I conceiue what is Platonick Love,
> Tis to haue men like pictures brought disguised,
> To Cuckhold us with vertue."[10]

Since there are two primary factions of Carolinean playwrights who are divided by their stand on the Platonic cult, it would seem a relatively simple task to assign John Ford to either one group or the other. There are, as mentioned earlier, two critical schools which are divided in opinion as to which group Ford belongs. The critics who see Ford as a sympathizer or supporter of the cult belong to the Hazlitt school comprised of Gifford, Hartley Coleridge, Saintsbury, Thorndike, Neilson, Brooke, Schelling, and Lowell. These critics are most likely

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[10]Warehouse, The City Match, quoted in Sensabaugh, "Platonic Love and the Puritan Rebellion," p. 463.

blinded to Ford's irony and satire by the fact that Ford assigns his most eloquent speeches to the very characters who promote illicit behavior. These critics fail to see that this eloquence is used by the Platonic lovers to mask their hidden base motives. Those critics who believe that Ford is critical of the cult are in the Lamb school consisting of Swinburne and Havelock Ellis.[11] The more recent critics are also divided as to Ford's attitude, but they are often not as one-sided in their opinion as those critics who were just mentioned. Sensabaugh is the most outspoken critic who states that Ford supports the Platonic code:

> "The whole meaning of Ford's plays, in fact, rests on the supremacy of love over all, on the belief that beauty and love should command more respect than convention and law; he could not brook custom that might judge against beauty, or conceive any crisis of unsatisfied passion, adultery, or incest where love should not conquer. . .
> . . . . . .
> . . .Thus, in the then current debate over matters of marriage and love, Ford seems to have joined hands with the court; at any rate, through flesh and blood drama he belittled marital ties and argued convincingly for individual rights."[12]

Bacon is not as adamant as Sensabaugh, but he does state that Ford is guilty of "moral confusion"[13] and that he does cater to the cult. Ornstein and Leech acknowledge the fact that Ford's plays show a respect for love and marital fidelity.[14]

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[11]Mark Stavig, John Ford and the Traditional Moral Order (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1968), p. xv.

[12]Sensabaugh, The Tragic Muse of John Ford, pp. 165-172.

[13]Wallace A. Bacon, "The Literary Reputation of John Ford," Huntington Library Quarterly, XI (Feb., 1948), p. 193.

[14]Robert Ornstein, The Moral Vision of Jacobean Tragedy (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1965), pp. 210-211; Clifford Leech, John Ford and the Drama of His Time (London: Chatto &.Windus, 1957), p. 123.

Ellis-Fermor takes a rather unusual stand by stating that Ford denies the existence of evil in his plays:

> "He destroys evil, not by showing us in triumph the partial survival of good, as does Webster, but by an illumination, shared in a very different way by Shakespeare, that convinces us that evil never was. . .
> . . . . . .
> For Ford there is neither crime nor expiation, the artificial divisions of good and evil are down."[15]

Stavig concludes that Ford is basically an orthodox Christian who upholds tradition. Stavig, however, reduces most of his criticism of Ford's plays into terminology of Christian morality.[16]

Critics in the twentieth century are rather hesitant in dealing decisively with Ford's attitude toward the tenets of the Platonic cult. When a close study has been made of Ford's attitude in his early nondramatic works and his independent tragedies, an accurate conclusion should be drawn that Ford not only fails to sympathize with the cult, but also ridicules its tenets by showing the impossibility of any successful relationship that is guided by the principles of the Platonic code.

An idea of Ford's early treatment of Platonism can be derived from his first known work, Fame's Memorial.[17] In this work and in his other nondramatic works, Ford writes about

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[15]Una Ellis-Fermor, The Jacobean Drama, Vintage Books (4th ed.; New York: Random House, 1964), p. 245.

[16]Stavig, John Ford and the Moral Order, pp. 55-93 passim.

[17]All dates given for Ford's works are taken from Gerald E. Bentley, Plays and Playwrights, Vol. III: The Jacobean and Caroline Stage (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1956), pp. 435-462 passim.

the type of courtly love that precedes the Platonic code. Much that Ford ridicules about Platonism has its roots in the courtly love practices during James's reign. In studying Fame's Memorial, some critics, such as Parrott, Ball, and Anderson,[18] claim that this poem praises the Platonic code by glorifying Lord Mountjoy's adulterous affair with Lady Penelope Rich. A closer study of this poem will reveal that Ford actually commemorates the marriage of the two lovers instead of their affair. Although divorce was rarely granted in the seventeenth century, Penelope received a divorce from her husband in order to marry Lord Mountjoy. The lovers chose to marry rather than to continue to conduct their adulterous affair any longer. The curious part of this incident is that while the two lovers were conducting an illicit affair, they were both highly favored in the court; however, when they married each other, all favoritism stopped. Mountjoy suffered severe depression and died shortly thereafter. Keeping in accordance with the Platonic ideals, the court condoned and even admired their adultery, yet scorned their marriage.

In this poem Ford describes Mountjoy as honorable and virtuous, and he differentiates him from the usual courtier by saying that he is "nor void of love's sense, nor yok'd

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[18] Thomas M. Parrott and Robert H. Ball, eds., A Short View of Elizabethan Drama (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1943), p. 239; Donald K. Anderson, Jr., John Ford (New York: Twayne Publishers, Inc., 1972), p. 21.

in subjection/ Of servile passion . . ." (Vol. III, p. 291)[19] Mountjoy is not devoid of love, but he is not a slave to passion, either. The idea that man must be able to control his passions is used as a recurring theme in Ford's later tragedies. The Platonic code encourages man to submit to his passions because of the belief that love is all-important and omnipotent. Ford further describes Mountjoy in the setting of James's court:

> Nor did the pleasure of these courtly sports
> Endear him to the softness of such ease;
> His ever-mounting thought far more imports,
> The thirst of fame such form'd ideas please,
> The resty delicates of sweet disease:
> . . . . . .
>
> Let smooth-chinn'd amorists be cloy'd in play,
> And surfeit on the bane of hateful leisure,
> Let idle hour's follies youth betray
> Unto the idle shame of boundless pleasure;
> Such petty apes of silk want reason's measure:
> Great Mountjoy saw such looseness of the witty,
> Which seeing did not more disdain than pity.
>
> No, his deep-reaching spirit could not brook
> The fond addiction to such vanity;
> Regardful of his honour he forsook
> The smicker use of court-humanity,
> Of rural clownage or urbanity;
> He lov'd the worthy, and endeavouring prov'd
> How of the worthy he might be belov'd. (Vol. III, p. 292)

These three stanzas boldly ridicule the idleness and "hateful leisure" of the court. This idleness undoubtedly bred the immorality for which James's court was notorious. Ford derides the courtiers by mocking the vanity of the "smooth-chinn'd amorists". In a later stanza Ford further describes

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[19]This quotation and all subsequent quotations, except those for Christes Bloody Sweat, are from William Gifford, Esq., ed., The Works of John Ford, with a new edition revised by Rev. Alexander Dyce (2nd ed., 3 vols.; New York: Russell & Russell, Inc., 1965)

these men in even harsher terms:

> Double tongue-oiled courtiers, whose neat phrases
> Do model forth your wits' maturity
> In honey'd speeches and sick thoughted graces,
> Cloaking your souls in sin's obscurity,
> Yet fan your lightness in security,
> Weep on his reverend corse; for such as he
> Now is, not as he was, yourselves shall be. (Vol. III, p.

In this stanza Ford openly criticizes those who use courtly language. This criticism establishes a precedent for his attitude in his tragedies toward Platonic lovers who use this same kind of "honey'd speeches" which he ridicules here. The lines "Cloaking your souls in sin's obscurity, / Yet fan your lightness in security, . . ." refer to the courtiers' practice of disguising their lust beneath the halo of Platonic "true love".

These examples clearly illustrate that Ford's attitude toward the court and courtly affectations is derogatory. The fact that he shows no fear of defying the court in Fame's Memorial disproves the theory that Ford would not speak against the Queen's Platonic cult for fear of jeopardizing the Queen's favor and his patronage from the court.

Ford's next work, Honour Triumphant: or the Peeres Challenge (1606), presents a mock defense of four doctrines that deal with courtly love beliefs. The prose pamphlet was written after four earls arranged a chivalric tournament to entertain the Kind of Denmark during his visit to England.[20] The pamphlet deals with the following four statements: "Knights

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[20]Stavig, The Moral Order of John Ford, pp. 7-8.

in ladies' service have no free will", "Beauty is the maintainer of valour", "Fair lady was never false", and "Perfect lovers are only wise" (Vol. III, p. 337). Once again, Ford's satirical wit has been misconstrued for serious praise by most critics, but an examination of the style of Ford's writing and his illogical arguments will reveal his satire.

The first section of the pamphlet defends the belief that a knight must live only to serve fair ladies, and that his will must be subservient to the wishes of his mistress. Ford's humorously elevated style can be seen in this example:

> Then what man of reason is he, who would be so unreasonable in his own desires to wish himself obstinately foolish, or think himself foolishly wise, by containing his own dissolute enfranchisement in the boundless limits of his own frantic wilfulness? Such and of such nature are they who, in the rancorous spleens of an unprevailing rancour, durst not only in the malice of their tongues to speak, but in the venom of their hearts to copy out whole pamphlets against the dignity of the female sex; either without respect that they themselves came from a woman, or without regard that a woman wrought the peace for their weak-ballast souls. O but, say such, had not a woman been the tempter and efficient of our fall, we had not needed a redemption. Alas, silly betrayers of your own folly, wretched blasphemers against the perfection of nature, can ye not, or will ye not understand that the blessing of this fall is salvation, assurance of heaven, certainty of joys? (Vol. III, pp. 345-346)

Here Ford exhibits an elevated style of writing which mocks the trivial subject matter. When he "visciously" scolds those writers who compose pamphlets against women, the result is ironically humorous since the reader knows that Ford, himself, is one of those "rancorous" writers who dares to blaspheme the fair sex by disregarding that he "came from a woman".

The argument which attempts to show that women should

not be condemned for causing the fall of man is purposefully weak and lacking in sense. The defense that "the blessing of this fall is salvation" fails to convince the reader when he realizes that paradise was a guaranteed certainty before the fall, whereas man now has to work for his heavenly reward. Man may very well thank the weakness of a tempted woman for this unnecessary predicament.

In the second section which deals with the belief that beauty is the maintainer of valor, Ford again employs ridiculous arguments for his defense. These arguments actually prove the proposition to be false. For examples of beauty inspiring valor, Ford chooses the violent rape of the beautiful Sabine women:

> . . .the Romans violently seized upon the Sabines' ladies: by violence they won them, by valour they justified their winning; insomuch as ever after betwixt these warlike nations began both increase of hatred and defiance of hostilities. (Vol. III, p. 351)

Beauty, in this case, is the cause of violence, rape, and continued hostility. Beauty is later used as a source of inspiration for the cruelty of the Turks:

> It is said of the Turks they train their youth in discipline of war with intent of cruelty; believe it, I cannot be persuaded that being so absolute warriors, they should so wholly be murderous tyrants except to return with triumph in the sight of their ladies. (Vol. III, p. 356)

Ford can barely expect to win support to this principle by showing how beauty causes acts of violence and cruelty. In this second defense Ford again mentions those who write against this principle. He refers to such writers as "inex-

perienced plodders". A pattern has been established, then, to disprove each principle by using argumentative examples that actually destroy the validity of the principle. Those people who support the doctrines are ridiculed by Ford's mock ironic blast at writers who contest the principles.

The third belief states that fair ladies are never false. The arguments contained within the third section are most likely the weakest and least convincing in the entire pamphlet. This section is weighted more by examples of women who are fickle and untrue than by examples of women who are true. Ford exposes the infidelity of Helen of Troy, Venus, and Cressida, but then he discounts these examples because these women are just fictional creations of poets. Yet, for an example of fidelity, Ford chooses Diana, who should be rendered an invalid example since she is just as fictional as Venus. Diana is an especially weak choice for an example of fidelity because she is the goddess of virginity and is unwilling to love any man. In the conclusion of this section, Ford presents as defense two equally opposing poems: one is adverse to the principle, and the other is favorable to it. The poem offered as supportive evidence abounds with courtly phrases, such as women being "fixed lamps of heaven", "shining bright lustre", and "firm diamonds" (Vol. III, p. 365). Usage of such courtly language should signal Ford's disapproval of the subject, since this disapproval has been found in his statements about such language in Fame's Memorial. Presenting

a juxtaposing poem that opposes the principle tends to greatly weaken the validity of the principle, also. In his concluding statement, Ford casts aside any doubt that the reader may have about Ford's sincerity:

> Every fair lady is lovely, but every lovely lady is not fair: so then the lovely may be fickle, but the fair cannot be inconstant. What should I more say? and yet what have I said that is enough? what that can be too much, and yet what is not too much?
> (Vol. III, p. 366)

The fact that Ford questions what he has said and what he possibly could say to defend the proposition is final proof that his arguments are not to be taken seriously.

The fourth and last section deals with the principle that perfect lovers are wise. This section contains the same type of satiric defenses as the earlier sections of the pamphlet. The ambiguity of Ford's arguments is exemplified by the statement, "A perfect lover is never less idle than when he is idle; never more busied than when least seriously employed." (Vol. III, p. 367) This argument really has nothing to do with support of the principle. Ford again defeats his arguments by questioning his evidence:

> It is infallibly certain, certainly infallible, perfect lovers are only wise. Now it may be cavilled that that cannot be; for how can lovers be wise when love itself is both vain, idle, and foolish, a toy, a mere conceit of fancy? But how vain, foolish, idle, and fantastical are they that so conceive!"
> (Vol. III, p. 370)

Once again Ford contradicts his basic supportive evidence. The result of this contradiction is that the reader cannot take seriously anything that is proposed.

The real value of <u>Honour Triumphant</u> lies in the evidence

it provides for Ford's later attitude toward Platonism. In this early work he ridicules the tenets that later appear in the cult. Ford shows that he does not support the belief that beauty and virtue are one. He also exhibits the shallowness of courtly language; moreover, he explains what blind obedience to beauty can produce: lust and violence. All of these themes provide Ford with substance for the plots of his tragedies.

Ford's third work, Christes Bloody Sweat (1613), may also be used to further illustrate Ford's attitude toward Platonic love. Within the poem Ford attacks false courtiers, just as he did in Fame's Memorial:

> Others there are, who smooth the front of sin,
> And maske his ugly fore-head with the coulour
> Of lust, ingendred novelties; to win
> Grace to their acts by making art seeme fuller:
> And they their foolish wits with pride to prove,
> Will strive forsooth to make a God of love.
>
> They are the divels secretaries right,
> Whose rules have drawne whole troopes of soules to hell
> That might have else bene sav'd; they day and night
> Toyles out their braines, that mischiefe might excell,
> They feele the whips whiles as they kisse the rod,
> By making lust the divell, and the god. (pp. 25-26)[21]

In these stanzas Ford describes those people who deify love and make an idol of their lust. People who worship love in this way, according to Ford, are doomed to hell. The poem itself is written strictly in Christian terminology, and often times in allegorical style. Ford's message is very

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[21]All quotations for Christes Bloody Sweat are from Stavig, The Moral Order of John Ford.

clear, that those who disguise or rationalize their lust in the cloak of "love" are wrong; furthermore, such people are bound to cause the moral corruption of those whom they covet.

Ford further condemns uncontrolled passion and lust. He then offers an alternative type of love:

> Love is no god, as some of wicked times
> (Led with the dreaming dotage of their folly)
> Have set him foorth in their lascivious rimes,
> Bewitch'd with errors, and conceits unholy:
> It is a raging blood, affections blind,
> Which boiles both in the body and the mind.
> . . . . . .
>
> But such whose lawfull thoughts, and honest heat,
> Doth temperately move with chast desires,
> To choose an equall partner, and beget
> Like comforts by a like inkindled fires:
> Such find no doubt in union made so even,
> Sweet fruits of succors, and on earth a heaven. (p. 26)

In these two stanzas Ford draws a comparison between the unbridled passion of "raging blood" and "affections blind", and the moderate, controlled passion governed by "lawfull thoughts". Ford describes this type of "chast" desire as "honest heat" that moves "temperately". The goal of such desire is to unite with someone of equal temperament in a lawful union, or marriage, that is blessed by heaven.

Christes Bloody Sweat reveals Ford's traditional belief in the institution of marriage. This belief is important in showing that Ford does not sympathize later in his tragedies with the Platonic tenet that love is more important than marriage. The poem further develops Ford's consistent criticism of courtly hypocrisy.

Ford's last nondramatic work, A Line of Life (1620), is recognized as a statement of Ford's personal philosophy. In his satirical works Ford usually addresses himself to a limited audience and patronage, such as the Countess of Devonshire in Fame's Memorial, and the Countesses of Pembroke and Montgomery in Honour Triumphant; however, in A Line of Life he addresses himself to "every reader for my patron" (Vol. III, p. 384). Ford expresses his intention of giving a sincere message for a universal audience, rather than a satirical message for a limited group. The essay itself deals with the importance of practicing the golden mean, or of living one's life in moderation. This philosophy criticizes the life that is ruled by love and passion, or the type of life that is advocated by the Platonic code. Early in the essay Ford proposes that it is the duty of men to follow the example of Christ and to take on the "image of our Maker." (Vol. III, p. 390) The entire essay is written from a Christian viewpoint.

Ford further disputes the Platonic belief that beauty and goodness are one. He refers to the words of Socrates in pointing out that if a person is blessed with beauty as a gift from God, then he is more bound "to match those blessings of nature with the accomplishment of more noble qualities than others of a coarser mould." (Vol. III, p. 393) Unlike the Platonists who believe that ugly or deformed people are evil, or certainly less virtuous than beautiful people, Ford

believes that beauty springs from the nature of the person, primarily by his deeds and inner qualities. He again quotes Socrates to explain his beliefs:

> If on the other side, thou perceive thy face deformed, thy body crooked, thy outward constitution unsightly or misshapen, by so much the more hast thou reason to live a good life, that thereby concord of virtuous conditions may supply the defects of nature, and make thee more beautiful inwardly to the eye of judgment than outwardly thou couldest have been to the eyes of popular delight. (Vol. III, p. 393)

Ford does not believe that physical beauty guarantees virtue; instead, he believes that each man, regardless of his physical attributes, is responsible for conducting himself wisely in order to make himself virtuous. This belief is used later in the tragedies when Ford exhibits how blindly people can be misled by equating outward beauty with goodness. This belief also disagrees with the Platonic tenet that all men are ruled by fate. In A Line of Life each man is responsible for determining his own destiny, rather than excusing his faults as predestined by fate.

Later in this essay Ford attacks the evils of court life, such as folly, idleness, and lustful pursuit of pleasure. He clearly describes the responsibilities of every man:

> In like manner every man, in his particular to distinguish his actions, is in his knowledge guilty and conscious of what he doth or should do. We were not born to feed, sleep, and spin out the web of life in the delicate softness of vanity or sloth; we were not born to traffic in follies, and to make merchandise of our sensualities; we were not born to

> revel in the apishness of ridiculous expense of time; we were not born to be panders to that great whore of a declining reason, bewitching pleasure; . . . We must learn to rejoice in true goodness, not vain delights . . ." (Vol. III, pp. 394-395)

In the above passage Ford criticizes the soft life of the court. This life is conducive to pursuit of pleasure and "vain delights". By stating that man is responsible for his own actions, Ford again shows his disbelief in the Platonic tenet that man is governed by fate.

Ford also warns that life in court offers man great temptations, such as desire for physical pleasure, honor, wealth, and idleness; however, all of these tempting pleasures lead to corruption of resolution and only serve to rob man of his just reward, which is true virtue and, ultimately, salvation.

Later in the essay, Ford condemns people who hypocritically flatter those who are in power. He is referring, of course, to courtiers and the cavalier playwrights who thrive on the court's patronage as a resulting reward for their gross flattery. Ford describes such people in the following passage:

> Even so, those patrons and minions of false pleasures, the flatterers, that they may prey upon the credulity of the abused great ones, imitate the panthers, extenuating, and as much as in them lies the grossness, the ugliness, the deformity of those follies they persuade unto, and with a false gloss varnishing and setting out the paradise of uncontrolled pleasures, to the ruin ofttimes of the informed, and glory of their own piety.
>
> Is such a mighty man enticed to overrule his reason, nay, overbear it, by giving scope to his licentious eye, first to see, then to delight in, lastly to covet, a chaste beauty? Alas, how

> many swarms of dependents, being creatures to his greatness, will not only tell him, mock him, and harden him in a ready and pregnant deceit, that love is courtly, and women were in their creation to be wooed and won . . ." (Vol. III, pp. 403-404)

Surely there can be no doubt about Ford's opinion of court flatterers and hypocrits who pamper and praise the king and queen in their pursuit of pleasure. This passage is most important in proving that Ford would not lower himself to join the ranks of those playwrights who support Platonic love simply because the Queen favors it. In this essay Ford proves himself to be a rebellious individual who refuses to sacrifice his personal values just to gain fame and honor in the court. In his tragedies, then, Ford may be expected to carry out these same ideas as expressed in A Line of Life and in his other nondramatic works. All of the points that have been made about Ford's early expressed attitude will be used to determine his attitude in his tragedies toward the Platonic love code.

The debate over Platonic love in The Broken Heart (1627-31) is often overshadowed by the debate over the legality of Penthea's marriage to Bassanes and her subsequent broken vows of betrothal to Orgilus. Before Ford's attitude toward Platonism can be clearly understood in this play, the issue concerning Penthea's marriage must be settled. Many critics, such as Morris, state that the betrothal arranged by the fathers of the lovers rendered Penthea's marriage invalid and made Penthea an adulterous whore.[22] These

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[22]Brian Morris, ed., The Broken Heart (New York: Hill and Wang, 1966), p. xxi.

critics are mistaken, however, since the issue involves a technicality that enabled the contract to be invalidated: Penthea's father died, leaving her under guardianship of her brother Ithocles; Ithocles refused to honor the former contract and arranged for her marriage to Bassanes. The fact that Ithocles had the power to arrange this marriage is supported in the play by Orgilus himself when he forbids his own sister to marry until she has received his consent. Thus, Ithocles's legal power to arrange Penthea's marriage is established within the play. The binding force of the arranged contract can be established through historical evidence. In his book The Elizabethan Woman, Camden discusses the importance of the parents' choice in a marriage contract:

> One author answers the question of whether the election of the parents is to be considered superior to the affection between the two children, by saying that the parents must be obeyed, . . . Bullinger quotes Moses in his argument that a father has complete control over his daughter's marriage; and we learn further that it is the obvious duty of the father to provide marriages for his children. Children who marry without their parents' consent 'offēd greuously.' If a virgin proceeds to espouse herself without her father's consent, she is 'vnhonestly espoused,' but she is lawfully espoused just the same. [23]

From this passage, it is clear that Penthea had two choices: to obey the contract arranged by her brother, or to choose her own husband. Both of these choices would result in a legal and binding marriage. Penthea could have married

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[23] Carrol Camden, The Elizabethan Woman (Houston, Texas: The Elsevier Press, 1952), pp. 84-85.

Orgilus against her brother's will, and her marriage would still have been binding. She chose instead to marry Bassanes, with Ithocles's blessing, and this marriage is legal and binding. Since Penthea is accepted as the legal wife of Bassanes, Orgilus's relationship with Penthea after her marriage can be studied in terms of a Platonic love relationship. All marital rites which Orgilus demands as Penthea's actual husband are invalid since Penthea is legally married to Bassanes.

Orgilus, disguised as a student, encounters Penthea in a garden, and he speaks to her with courtly language:

> Speak on, fair nymph; our souls'
> Can dance as well to music of the spheres
> As any's who have feasted with the gods.
> . . . . . .
> What heaven
> Refines mortality from dross of earth
> But such as uncompounded beauty hallows
> With glorified perfection? (Vol. I, p. 249)

In this passage Orgilus talks about union of the souls and glorified perfection of beauty; he first uses Platonic arguments to sway Penthea, but he quickly switches to thoughts of physical consummation, as seen in the following passage:

> All pleasures are but mere imagination,
> Feeding the hungry appetite with steam
> And sight of banquet, whilst the body pines,
> Not relishing the real taste of food:
> Such is the leanness of a heart divided
> From intercourse of troth-contracted loves; . . .
> (Vol. I, p. 250)

Orgilus is both demanding his rights as a husband and trying to convince Penthea that she owes him a husband's physical privileges. At this point in the play, Penthea professes belief in the legality of her marriage to Orgilus

and she states her intention to remain true to her marriage vows:

> Rash man! thou layst
> A blemish on mine honour, with the hazard
> Of thy too-desperate life: yet I profess,
> By all the laws of ceremonious wedlock,
> I have not given admittance to one thought
> Of female change since cruelty enforc'd
> Divorce betwixt my body and my heart.
> Why would you fall from goodness thus? (Vol. I, p. 250)

In this speech Penthea clearly establishes both her position as legal wife of Bassanes and her intention to keep her honor intact. She wonders at Orgilus's audacity to think that she would yield to his demands. When Orgilus continues his supplication, she labels his pleas as words inspired by lust rather than love. She breaks all former contacts with him and orders him to leave her sight:

> Uncivil sir, forbear!
> Or I can turn affection into vengeance;
> Your reputation, if you value any,
> Lies bleeding at my feet. Unworthy man,
> If ever henceforth thou appear in language,
> Message, or letter, to betray my frailty,
> I'll call thy former protestations lust,
> And curse my stars for forfeit of my judgment.
> . . . . . .
> . . . My good Genius guide me,
> That I may never see thee more! -- Go from me!
> (Vol. I, p. 253)

The relationship between Penthea and Orgilus terminates on this command, but Orgilus continues to feel that he is justified by the Platonic code in believing that his "true love" is more important than the marriage and reputation of Penthea. He grows obsessed with his lust and executes the murder of Ithocles, whom he blames for his misery. Orgilus is also largely responsible for Penthea's suicide. Penthea starves

herself to death because of severe depression incited by the unjust and cruel demands of Orgilus. A tragic ending also befalls Orgilus. He is bled to death as his just punishment for murdering Ithocles.

Bassanes, Penthea's husband, is just as guilty as Orgilus in living by the Platonic code. To Bassanes, Penthea is an idol or saint to be worshipped. His deification of Penthea's beauty reflects the Platonic beliefs that beauty and goodness are one, and that beautiful women are saints to be worshipped. Bassanes is very courtly in his praise of Penthea's beauty:

> She comes, she comes! so shoots the morning forth,
> Spangled with pearls of transparent dew . . .
> . . . . . .
> We will to court, where, if it be thy pleasure,
> Thou shalt appear in such a ravishing lustre
> Of jewels above value, that the dames
> Who brave it there, in rage to be outshin'd,
> Shall hide them in their closets, and unseen
> Fret in their tears; while every wondering eye
> Shall crave none other brightness but thy presence.
> Choose thy own recreations; be a queen
> Of what delights thou fanciest best, what company,
> What place, what times; do anything, do all things,
> Youth can command, so thou wilt chase these clouds
> From the pure firmament of thy fair looks. (Vol. I, pp. 238-

In this passage Bassanes grants Penthea absolute freedom; in reality, however, the jealous husband keeps his wife a prisoner in her own home. The window facing the street is to be boarded up in order to prevent "the deformed bear-whelp, / Adultery," from being "lick'd into the act" (Vol. I, p. 236). Bassanes tries to imitate a Platonic lover, yet he denies his wife the liberty which the code provides. Like so many of Ford's characters, Bassanes uses the tenets of the code when they are to his advantage, but he just as easily ignores or

abuses the other tenets by misuse when they are to his disadvantage.

When Bassanes brings Penthea to court to see her brother, he suspects her of committing incest with Ithocles. While Penthea and Ithocles discuss each other's happiness, Bassanes stands outside the bedchamber door and listens for any creaking of the bed. Unable to bear his suspicion any longer, he rushes into the room and accuses the two of incest. When confronted by Penthea's protestations that she has never given Bassanes cause for such accusations, he repents and quickly reverts to his idolatrous worship of Penthea's beauty:

> Light of beauty,
> Deal not ungently with a desperate wound!
> No breach of reason dares make war with her
> Whose looks are sovereignty, whose breath is balm:
> O, that I could preserve thee in fruition
> As in devotion!
> . . . . . .
> . . . Good, be not a hindrance
> To peace and praise of virtue. -- O my senses
> Are charm'd with sounds celestial!--On, dear, on:
> I never gave you one ill word; say, did I?
> Indeed I did not.
> . . . . . .
> A goddess! let me kneel. (Vol. I, pp. 265-26

Bassanes quickly forgets that he has just openly accused Penthea of being an incestuous harlot. He denies having made the accusation, and falls on his knees in adoration of the "goddess". A marriage based on this type of irrationality can never succeed, as the play proves when Bassanes is ordered by Ithocles to leave Penthea until he can prove himself worthy of her love. The marriage never does mend itself because of Penthea's death. It seems that both Orgilus and

Bassanes are not worthy of receiving the love of Penthea because they base their "love" solely on their attraction for Penthea's physical attributes. By showing the inevitable failure of such a physically-based relationship, Ford voices his disapproval of the impracticality of the Platonic code which so closely links love of virtue with love of physical beauty.

Another example of a man who tries to be a Platonic lover can be found in the prince Nearchus. The prince courts the princess Calantha by flattering her with courtly language:

> Report of great Calantha's beauty, virtue,
> Sweetness, and singular perfections, courted
> All ears to credit what I find was publish'd
> By constant truth; from which, if any service
> Of my desert can purchase fair construction,
> This lady must command it.
> . . . . . .
> Cal. A prince a subject?
> Near. Yes, to beauty's sceptre;
> As all hearts kneel, so mine.
> Cal. You are too courtly.
> (Vol. I, pp. 268-269)

Calantha warns Nearchus that he is too much like the false and flattering courtiers for her liking, yet he persists in his flattery and fails to win her favor. Calantha gives her heart to Ithocles, instead. Ithocles's love for her is based on a materialistic desire to advance himself to power and wealth. Their marriage never materializes, of course, because of Ithocles's murder. In this play begins a pattern which Ford uses again in his other tragedies: happiness is never achieved by those who are motivated by base or shallow

ideas.

The Broken Heart also introduces a second pattern which involves a comic character who parallels, usually by satire, the actions of a figure of primary importance. In this case, Ford presents Groneas and Hemophil[24] as insincere courtiers who have just returned with Ithocles from battle. They are good examples of the miles gloriosus type since they brag about imaginary deeds of heroism to Christalla and Philema, who are Calantha's maids of honor:

> Hem. Sweet lady,
> Soldiers are blunt, -- your lip.)Kisses her
> Chris. Fie, this is rudeness:
> You went not such creatures.
> Gron. Spirit of valour
> Is of a mounting nature.
> Phil. It appears so. --
> In earnest, pray, how many men apiece
> Have you two been the death of?
> Gron. 'Faith, not many;
> We were compos'd of mercy.
> . . . . . .
> Sweet Philema,
> When I was in the thickest of mine enemies,
> Slashing off one man's head, another's nose,
> Another's arms and legs, --
> Phil. And all together.
> Gron. Then would I with a sigh remember thee,
> And cry, "Dear Philema, 'tis for thy sake
> I do these deeds of wonder!" --dost not love me
> With all thy heart now? (Vol. I, pp. 226-227)

This passage relates a message that is very similar to the type of message contained in Ford's earlier work, Honour Triumphant, in which the principle that beauty is the maintainer of valor is ridiculed. This same Platonic belief is criticized in The Broken Heart when Groneas boasts of

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[24]Hemophil is listed as Lemophil in some editions and critical studies.

literally slicing men apart because of the inspiration of Philema's beauty.

With so much expressed negativism in this play, such as the failure in love by Orgilus, Nearchus, Ithocles, and Bassanes, Ford may seem at first to offer no positive solution to counteract these pessimistic studies of love; however, the courtship and subsequent marriage of Orgilus's sister Euphranea to Ithocles's friend Proteus does supply the sole example of a successful relationship. Euphranea loves Proteus, but she postpones their marriage until she receives the blessing of Orgilus. She obeys Orgilus's command to obtain his consent before she marries. Their courtship is sincere and noticeably lacking in courtly language. Proteus's courting is offered as a contrast to the shallow courting that was conducted by Nearchus for Calantha and Orgilus for Penthea.

Proteus declares to Euphranea that his love is honorable. He also states that his happiness will be complete when he has taken Penthea for his wife (Vol. I, p. 231). Euphranea, in reply, answers that she recognizes his love as worthy, but that she must also honor her brother's right to approve her choice:

> Know, Prophilus, I never undervalu'd
> From the first time you mention'd worthy love,
> Your merit, means, or person: it had been
> A fault of judgment in me, and a dulness
> In my affections, not to weigh and thank
> My better stars that offer'd me the grace
> Of so much blissfulness. For, to speak truth,

> The law of my desires kept equal pace
> With yours; nor have I left that resolution:
> But only, in a word, whatever choice
> Lives nearest my heart must first procure
> Consent both from my father and my brother,
> Ere he can own me his. (Vol. I, p. 231)

In this relationship there is a balance of passion, love, and respect for each other. The two lovers communicate simply and honestly by avoiding the trite courtly phrases that Platonic lovers so often rely on. Ford presents this relationship as the only one which succeeds. Since it is built on mutual trust and honesty, it may be assumed that Ford proposes these traits as an alternative to the shallow principles of the Platonic code. In this play Ford also extends his earlier themes of criticism of Platonic and courtly lovers by showing their failures and by satirizing some of their beliefs.

In Ford's second tragedy Loves Sacrifice (1632), there is this same expressed criticism of Platonic lovers as was found in The Broken Heart. Once again Ford's attitude toward the actions of his characters has been debated. Some critics feel that Ford sympathizes with the illicit love of Fernando and Bianca. Bowers takes this stand in the following statement:

> The main theme of the play--the love of Fernando and Bianca---is not the conventional lustful intrigue but a typical Ford conception where the lovers by remaining chaste are elevated in nobility above the bounds of loyalty or the marriage vow, and their fundamentally illicit relationship is viewed through such a rosy glow that the injured husband is morally on the defensive instead of justified in resenting his wife's essential infidelity. [25]

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[25]Fredson Thayer Bowers, Elizabethan Revenge Tragedy (Gloucester, Mass.: Princeton University Press, 1959), p. 215.

Bowers is noticeably vague in determining the question of the lovers' innocence or guilt, but he does state that Ford elevates their love above Bianca's wedding vows. By this comment Bowers implies that Ford sympathizes with the Platonic belief that true love is more important than marriage.

Bianca is married to Caraffa, who is the Duke of Pavy, but she seeks an extramarital relationship. There must be some reason for the failure of their marriage if the pattern established in The Broken Heart really is a recurrent theme. Upon examining the marriage of Bianca and the Duke, the obvious flaw lies first with Caraffa's shallow love, which can easily be described in terms of the Platonic code. When the couple is introduced, Caraffa is seen to be flattering Bianca with courtly language:

> Come, my Bianca, revel in mine arms;
> Whiles I, wrapt in my admiration, view
> Lillies and roses growing in thy cheeks.--
> . . . . . .
> I am a monarch of felicity,
> Proud in a pair of jewels, rich and beautiful,--
> A perfect friend, a wife above compare. (Vol. II, p. 13)

Besides using trite and hollow words, Caraffa pronounces himself a "monarch of felicity". This phrase reveals his attitude toward his wife; he looks at Bianca as a precious possession of which he is the master. At this point already Caraffa is using the code to his own advantage by following the tenet that beautiful women are saints to be adored, and by ignoring the tenet that lovers are to have complete freedom of action and thought. Caraffa is very similar to Bassanes, for both men are very possessive of their wives.

Caraffa further reveals his subservience to beauty when he tells his friends that princes should not be forced to marry "some crooked or misshapen form" (Vol. II, p. 15) simply because she is wealthy. He believes, instead, that a prince should be able to choose the most beautiful woman in his kingdom since he commands "the storehouse of the earth's hid minerals . . ." (Vol. II, p. 15) He then congratulates himself on his own excellent choice of a wife. Caraffa also boasts about his generosity in raising Bianca from her low social standing to be the Duchess of Pavy.

Later when Caraffa begins to suspect Bianca of conducting an adulterous affair with his best friend Fernando, he tries to shame her with protestations of his love; at the same time he again reminds her of the debt she owes him for her new-found wealth:

> Troubled? yes, I have cause. -- O, Bianca!
> Here was my fate engraven in thy brow,
> This smooth, fair, polish'd table; in thy cheeks
> Nature summ'd up thy dower: 'twas not wealth,
> The miser's god, or royalty of blood,
> Advanc'd thee to my bed; but love, and hope
> Of virtue that might equal those sweet looks . . .
> (Vol. II, p. 84)

In this passage the Duke displays many of the traits of a Platonic lover, such as equating beauty with virtue, expressing a belief in the power of fate, and describing love in terms of physical beauty.

When Caraffa does discover Fernando in Bianca's bedchamber, he believes the reports of his secretary D'Avolos that the couple have committed adultery. The two lovers deny having consummated their love, but Caraffa does not

believe their denials. Encouraged by the accusations of his sister, he stabs Bianca to death. Fernando manages to convince the Duke that he was simply a Platonic lover, as opposed to an adulterous lover, since he never physically consummated his love. Caraffa suddenly cools his wrath and views his wife as a holy and innocent martyr because she never actually committed the act of physical intercourse.

At Bianca's funeral, the Duke is still praising the chastity of his wife. As he addresses his wife's spirit, he refers to Bianca as a saint to be worshipped:

> Peace and rest sleep here! Let not the touch
> Of this my impious hand profane the shrine
> Of fairest purity, which hovers yet
> About those blessed bones inhears'd within.
> If in the bosom of this sacred tomb,
> Bianca, thy disturbed ghost doth range,
> Behold, I offer up the sacrifice
> Of bleeding tears, shed from a faithful spring,
> Pouring oblations of a mourning heart
> To thee, offended spirit! I confess
> I am Caraffa, he, that wretched man,
> That butcher, who, in my enraged spleen,
> Slaughter'd the life of innocence and beauty.
> (Vol. II, p. 103)

The Duke elevates Bianca as an idol to be adored. As a sacrifice to this idol, Caraffa commits suicide by stabbing himself. These passages that have been examined reveal Caraffa as a man who attempted to live by the ideals of the Platonic code; instead, he actually followed them to his own death. His marriage could not succeed, according to Ford, because Caraffa's love was based on such a shallow foundation as the Platonic code.

With Caraffa exposed as an unworthy husband, it is no

surprise that Bianca seeks companionship elsewhere in the arms of Fernando. Having returned to Pavy after some lengthy absence, Fernando quickly inquires about the bride of his best friend. Ford reveals Fernando's inner thoughts behind the inquiry by the aside, "If ever now, / Good angel of my soul, protect my truth!" (Vol. II, p. 13) It is made known later that at this time Fernando had already secretly petitioned the love of Bianca, but he had been rejected. The fact that Fernando here prays for protection, and that he has to conduct his courtship secretly, shows that Fernando realizes this type of extramarital relationship is wrong; still, he persists in his attempts to woo the Duchess. In asides and soliloquies he expresses his desire for the "heart-wounding beauty" (Vol. II, p. 26), and reveals his worship of the beautiful woman:

> Thus bodies walk unsoul'd! mine eyes but follow
> My heart entomb'd in yonder goodly shrine.
> Life without her is but death's subtle snare,
> And I am but a coffin to my cares. (Vol II, p. 28)

His speech is reminiscent of speeches made by Bassanes in The Broken Heart and by the Duke within this play. All three men express the Platonic belief that the body is an altar for the soul within.

When Fernando confronts Bianca with his desires, he again employs courtly language by calling himself a "castaway in love" whose soul is "anchor'd down with cares in seas of woe . . ." (Vol. II, p. 34) His attempts are met with angry rejection, for Bianca threatens to inform her husband of

his best friend's treachery. She warns him "if you dare / To speak a fourth time, you shall rue your lust . . ." (Vol. II, p. 35) Bianca here describes Fernando's love as "lust" and shows that she realizes his advances are inspired by immoral motives, not true love. When Fernando receives this supposedly final rejection, he admits that he should "resolve to check this rage of blood, / And will . . ." (Vol. II, p. 35). This resolution shows that he realizes his feeling is an uncontrolled, raging passion. Shortly after vowing to control his lust, he again plots another plan to seduce Bianca. In the following passage, Fernando reveals a mental debate over his lust for the woman, and his knowledge that this lust can warrant him eternal damnation:

> So, now I am alone; now let me think.
> She is the duchess; say she be; a creature
> Sew'd-up in painted cloth might so be styl'd;
> That's but a name: she's married too; she is,
> And therefore might better distinguish love:
> She's young and fair; why, madam, that's the bait
> Invites me more to hope: she's the duke's wife;
> Who knows not this? -- she's bosom'd to my friend;
> There, there, I am quite lost: will not be won;
> Still worse and worse: abhors to hear me speak;
> Eternal mischief! I must urge no more;
> For were I not be-leper'd in my soul,
> Here were flames enough to quench the flames of hell.
> What then? pish! (if) I must not speak, I'll write.
> (Vol. II, p. 36)

Fernando very coldly and mechanically goes over in his mind every point of the issue. Surely, if Ford had meant to sympathize with this man, he would never have revealed Fernando as calculating some way to satiate his passion. This passage and the others preceding it show that in the first half of

the play both Fernando and Bianca have admitted the immorality of the relationship which Fernando suggests. There can be no doubt as to each one's knowledge of the dire consequences that would result if they should be discovered in such an affair; nevertheless, Fernando makes one last effort to win the Duchess. He surpasses the flattery that he used in his earlier pleas. He admits that Bianca cannot pose one reason that he had not already thought of for rejecting his desire. He tells her that the only cure for his torture is to be rid of the torture itself, i. e., to be granted the love of Bianca. The answer which Bianca gives to this plea can dispel any doubt about her recognition of his words as inspired by lust:

> Look on our face:
> What see you there that may persuade a hope
> Of lawless love? Know, most unworthy man,
> So much we hate the baseness of thy lust,
> As, were none living of thy sex but thee,
> We had much rather prostitute our blood
> To some envenom'd serpent than to admit
> Thy bestial dalliance . . . (Vol. II, p. 48)

This speech represents Bianca's last honest judgment of the relationship which Fernando proposes, for shortly thereafter she offers herself to him and admits "with shame and passion" (Vol. II, p. 51) that she had inwardly desired him since she first saw him. She wants to enjoy the passionate love of Fernando, yet she is afraid to break her wedding vow to Caraffa. To compromise her conscience, she offers herself to Fernando with the condition that if he "ruins" her, or consummates their love, she will kill herself afterwards. She refers to the station to which the Duke has raised her, and she talks about her position of honor. Her words

imply that she is probably more concerned about losing her wealth and title than about hurting her husband.

The two lovers decide to conduct their love Platonically, or without physical union, and the relationship goes well for a time; however, because of the too frequent secret rendezvous in each other's bedchambers, and the stolen kisses in the presence of others, the lovers do not keep their love hidden or unnoticed for very long. Bianca's vow to remain chaste also weakens. She soon tries to persuade Fernando to abandon his vow and to enjoy her fully:

> Why shouldst thou not by mine? why should the laws,
> The iron laws of ceremony, bar
> Mutual embraces? what's a vow? a vow?
> Can there be sin in unity? could I
> As well dispense with conscience as renounce
> The outside of my titles, the poor style
> Of duchess, I had rather change my life
> With any waiting-woman in the land
> To purchase one night's rest with thee, Fernando,
> Than be Caraffa's spouse a thousand years. (Vol. II, p. 89)

At this point of submission, Bianca is willing to break both her vow of fidelity to Caraffa and her vow of chastity to Fernando. Before anything can result from this submission, however, the Duke discovers the lovers. He imprisons Fernando, and turns his wrath upon Bianca. When Bianca is accused of adultery, she denies that she is guilty, but not because of any virtue of hers: she credits Fernando with being too slow to soil the Duke's sheets. Bianca then explains why she chose to have an affair with Fernando:

> Can you imagine, sir, the name of duke
> Could make a crooked leg, a scambling foot,
> A tolerable face, a wearish hand,
> A bloodless lip, or such an untrimm'd beard

As yours, fit for a lady's pleasure? no:
I wonder you could think 'twere possible,
When I had once but look'd on your Fernando,
I ever could love you again; fie, fie!
. . . . . .
The self-same appetite which led you on
To marry me led me to love your friend:
O, he's a gallant man! if ever yet
Mine eyes beheld a miracle compos'd
Of flesh and blood, Fernando has my voice.
I must confess, my lord, that for a prince
Handsome enough you are, and no more;
But to compare yourself with him! trust me,
You are too much in fault. Shall I advise you?
Hark in your ear; thank heaven he was so slow
As not to wrong your sheets; for, as I live,
The fault was his, not mine. (Vol. II, pp. 92-93)

In this passage Ford clearly exposes Bianca as a woman who has committed adultery in intention, if not in action. Her love is founded on a desire for Fernando's physical attributes, just as the Duke's love was based on his desire for her beauty. According to the Platonic principle that the degree of one's virtue is commensurate with the degree of one's beauty, Bianca is justified in leaving Caraffa for the more handsome Fernando. The Platonic belief that true love is more important than marriage also justifies Bianca's affair. From this passage, however, it is clear that Bianca has neither of these beliefs at heart. She is merely pursuing satisfaction of her passion, yet the code allows both her and Fernando to rationalize their sin by misinterpreting the ambiguous tenets. The audience during Ford's time would have recognized the patterns presented here, such as the courtly language, the secret rendezvous, and the deification of love and beauty, as those practices used by advocates of courtly love. Looking only at the surface of this play and

seeing Ford's inclusion of these Platonic rites might prompt such a reaction as that which was stated by Gifford when he sees Bianca described as "innocent" in the text:

> Our author seems to have very loose notions of female honour. He certainly goes much beyond his age, which was far enough from squeamish on this point, in terming Bianca innocent. She is, in fact, a gross and profligate adulteress, and her ridiculous reservations, while they mark her lubricity, only enhance her shame.[26]

Such a statement exhibits surface-level reading of the play, since the passages that expose the shallow love of Fernando and the willingness of Bianca to complete her adultery are included by Ford to show his opinion of such a relationship.

Within this play are several other studies of characters who disguise their lust under the mask of Platonic love. The most obvious villain in the play is Ferantes, who is described by Ford in the Dramatis Personae as "the wanton courtier". Ferentes has succeeded in impregnating two maids and a widow. He is first seen as vowing his love to Colona and arranging to meet her privately later. No sooner has Colona left then Julia arrives, and Ferentes tells her a similar tale of his love and of his desire to meet with her later, also. To both of these girls he swears constancy; he flatters them for their beauty by using typical courtly language. When he is by himself, however, he contemplates the

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[26]Gifford, The Works of John Ford, Vol. II, p. 91.

the female sex and reveals his attitude toward women, chastity, and constancy:

> --Very passing good! three honest women in our courts here of Italy are enough to discredit a whole nation of that sex. He that is not a cuckold or a bastard is a strangely happy man; for a chaste wife, or a mother that never stept awry, are wonders, wonders in Italy . . . . . .
> . . . . . .
> . . . Chastity! I am an eunuch if I think there be any such thing; or if there be, 'tis amongst us men, for I never found it in a woman thoroughly tempted yet . . . (Vol. II, pp. 19-21)

Living by such an amoral philosophy leads to Ferentes's destruction, however. Each woman confronts Ferentes with her condition and asks him to make good his marriage vow, which he used as a device to persuade the women to yield to his desires. Ferentes laughs off the request of each woman and says that Morona is too old and too often used, that Julia has "a scurvy face", and that Colona was "too suddenly won" (Vol. II, p. 59). He wishes the women speedy deliverance of their burdens, and then he leaves. The women band together and stage a masque for the Duke. In this masque Ferentes is stabbed to death by the revenging women. Once again, Ford shows open criticism of the lack of morality in court life, much as he did in his early works. He also shows here how excusing or rationalizing immorality results in a tragic end: the three women are shamed, and Ferentes is murdered.

A fourth character, Fiormonda, is also guilty of living her life by the Platonic code. She desires Fernando as her lover, but Fernando rejects her proposal in favor of Bianca.

D'Avolos, Firomonda's friend, tells Fernando of Fiormonda's love and also tells him how to win her over:

> Please but to speak to her; be but courtly-ceremonious with her, use once but the language of affection, . . . O, these women, my lord, are as brittle metal as your glasses, as mooth, as slippery, -- their very first substance was quicksands: let 'em look never so demurely, one fillup chokes them . . . (Vol. II, p. 17)

The magic power of courtly language is described here as being able to instantly conquer the will of any woman. This is a good example of Ford's satire of the courtly affectations of the Platonic code. Fernando prefers to use this charm on Bianca, as has been demonstrated, but he does not try to win the powerful widow Fiormonda. When Fiormonda gives Fernando her wedding ring as a sign of her love, she also boldly implies that she is willing to grant physical liberties:

> . . . .Look here,
> My blood is not yet freez'd; for better instance,
> Be judge yourself; experience is no danger --
> Cold are my sighs; but feel, my lips are warm.
> (Vol. II, p. 24)

Although she kisses Fernando, and practically begs him to be her lover, Fernando rejects her offer by telling her that he has taken a vow of celibacy. Fiormonda's love then proves to be a dangerous enemy to Fernando when Fiormonda discovers that Fernando is actually the lover of Bianca. Fernando is warned by his friend Roseilli about the potential evil which lurks in Fiormonda's heart. He says that her heart is so set on having Fernando that it lies in such extremes of "violence and passion"; Roseilli fears "or she'll enjoy you,

or she'll ruin you." (Vol. II, p. 65) The warning proves to be valid, as Fiormonda is the person who informs the Duke about the adulterous affair between Bianca and Fernando. She also urges the Duke to slay Bianca. The fact that Fiormonda's love was so strongly based on physical passion proves, according to Ford, that hers was an unworthy love. Such a shallow love could, and did, easily turn into contempt for the man that she once desired.

Ford does not let such an unworthy lover escape with no just punishment. After Fernando kills himself, Fiormonda accepts the marriage proposal of her long-time suitor Roseilli. In order to chastise the once passion-dominated woman, he decrees:

> . . . henceforth I here dismiss
> The mutual comforts of our marriage-bed:
> Learn to new-live, my vows unmov'd shall stand;
> And since your life hath been so much uneven,
> Bethink in time to make your peace with heaven.
> (Vol. II, p. 102)

Fiormonda is at first shocked and dismayed by this statement, but then she resigns herself to her sentence: "happy too late, since lust hath made me foul, / Henceforth I'll dress my bride-bed in my soul." (Vol. II, p. 108) Ford shows here that a woman who has lived in abuse of the Platonic code deserves no better than to be robbed of all further physical union. The code that Fiormonda and others used to cover their illicit affairs is now responsible for sentencing her to enforced chastity and union of souls. The fact that

Ford uses the tenets of pure Platonism as a punishment shows that Ford views the code as abnormal and difficult to uphold.

The final study of Platonic love in Love's Sacrifice can be found in the comic character of Mauruccio, who parallels and satirizes the Platonic ways of Caraffa, Fernando, and Ferentes. Mauruccio is madly in love with Fiormonda and he expresses his love through various Platonic ceremonies. When he is first encountered, he is worried about the chance of some bristles of his beard pricking his mistress's lip. He then expresses concern over whether he has mastered the art of courtly language, whether his words flow out gracefully, whether his voice has harmony, and whether his breath is handsomely shaped as it forms into syllables. He even tries his hand at writing poetry, which results in a laughable parody of cavalier love poems. He even practices his walk in front of his servant Giacopo:

> . . . Advance
> the glass, Giacopo, that I may practice, as I
> pass, to walk a portly grace like a marquis,
> to which degree I am now a-climbing. (Vol. II, p. 33)

The real motivation behind Mauruccio's "love" for the Duke's sister is revealed here as ambition for a higher social standing. His love, as an example of all courtly or Platonic lovers, is shown to be basically shallow and motivated by lust and ambition.

In Love's Sacrifice, then, Ford uses his same recurrent theme of exposing the unworthiness of lovers who use Platonic tenets to mask their true intentions; furthermore,

by revealing the frequent abuse of the code, Ford is actually criticizing the impracticality of such an idealized system. Ford also uses his pattern of comic characters who satirize the extremes of use and/or abuse of the code. He also clearly reveals his attitude toward the licentiousness of the adulterous lovers by having them both die tragically. Those lovers, such as Ferentes and Caraffa, who live by the Platonic code, also die unnatural deaths.

In Ford's historical play Perkin Warbeck (1622-32), an example of marital fidelity can be found in the marriage of Lady Katherine Gordon and Perkin Warbeck. This example serves as a contrasting study to the infidelity of Bianca in Love's Sacrifice. Although the play deals primarily with an account of the pretender Warbeck and does not have a study of love as its central theme, the play does contain the best example of trust and constancy of any of Ford's tragedies. Katherine is first seen as being courted by Lord Dalyell, who has the permission of Katherine's father to try to win her love. The lady accepts Dalyell only as a friend, however, until she can be sure of her final choice for a husband. During this time, Warbeck has arrived in Scotland and he wins the favor of King James, who bestows Katherine to him for a bride. Both Katherine and her father abide by the King's request, as does Dalyell. Katherine shows her loyalty to the King by being married to Warbeck, but she also seeks her father's blessing:

I miss yet
A father's blessing. Let me find it; -- humbly
Upon my knees I seek it. (Vol. II, p. 152)

Her father blesses the marriage, even though he is disappointed at Katherine's choice since he favored Dalyell. Ford shows here the way marriages should be conducted, with both the child's and the parent's consent; if either is lacking, the marriage is more prone to unhappiness.

Before Warbeck leaves for England, Katherine asks that she might go with him. Warbeck tells her that she should wait for him in the safety of the Scottish court, since war is no place for a lady. Katherine exclaims that she would rather face all hardships with her husband than be separated from him, yet she bows to his request:

. . . your right
In me is without question, and however
Events of time may shorten my deserts
In others' pity, yet it shall not stagger
Or constancy or duty in a wife.
You must be king of me; and my poor heart
Is all I can call mine. (Vol. II, p. 168)

In this passage Ford opposes the Platonic notion that men must worship and serve women, for in this case Warbeck is elected the sovereign of Katherine. The word "elected" is important here because although both Bassanes and Caraffa attempt to rule their wives, their position is similar to a dictatorship forced on their wives. Katherine here chooses to be ruled by Warbeck, who does not abuse his granted power.

When Warbeck returns unsuccessfully from his attempt to capture the English throne, he fears that King James will

take Katherine away from him. She bravely tells Warbeck, in the King's presence, that she is his wife, and that no human power can separate her faith and duty to her husband. Warbeck accepts her pledge of constancy and claims that he fears no change in her devotion.

Warbeck returns to England; this time he is accompanied by Katherine. He is captured in battle, and Katherine is taken as a prisoner to the English court. When she arrives before King Henry, however, the King is so impressed by her majesty and beauty that he grants her all of the privileges of a royal guest. Her first and only thoughts during this time are for the safety of her husband. She is finally granted permission to visit Warbeck in the tower. When she sees him, she begs his forgiveness for being so long in coming to his side. She tells him about her great concern in his troubles:

> O, my lov'd lord! can any scorn be yours
> In which I have no interest? -- Some kind hand
> Lend me assistance, that I may partake
> Th' infliction of this penance . . . (Vol..II, p. 211)

Warbeck marvels at Katherine's constancy and at his great blessing in having such a faithful wife. He claims that Katherine will serve as a model for constancy and virtue to all future generations. This speech implies that Ford also has this intention of upholding Katherine as a model wife.

When Warbeck is declared guilty of treason because he refuses to renounce his claim to the throne, the Earl of Oxford tells Katherine to leave the "impudent impostor". Katherine states this in reply:

You abuse us:
For when the holy churchman join'd our hands,
Our vows were real then; the ceremony
Was not in apparition, but in act. --
Be what these people term thee, I am certain
Thou art my husband, no divorce in heaven
Has been su'd-out between us; 'tis injustice
For any earthly power to divide us:
Or we will live or let us die together.
There is a cruel mercy. (Vol. II, pp. 212-213)

The two lovers swear their last vows of love to each other, but first Warbeck rejoices in his great fortune of being a monarch "of one chaste wife's troth pure and uncorrupted". (Vol. II, p. 213) The final parting scene shows the undying love each has had and will maintain for the other:

War. . . . upon thy lips,
Those equal twins of comeliness, I seal
The testament of honourable vows:)kisses her
Whoever be that man that shall unkiss
This sacred print next, may he prove more thrifty
In this world's just applause, not more desertful!

Kath. By this sweet pledge of both our souls, I swear
To die a faithful widow to thy bed;
Not to be forc'd or won: O, never, never!
(Vol. II, pp. 213-214)

Warbeck here grants Katherine the freedom to marry again, yet she chooses to remain true to her original marriage vows by promising never to accept another man as a lover. Katherine's fidelity wins the respect of her father, who had always up to this point, wished that she had chosen Dalyell for her husband. By having Katherine and Warbeck win the respect of Katherine's father, Ford is further upholding their marriage as a model to be praised and accepted by the audience, also.

Warbeck is killed because of a mistaken belief in his identity, not because of any unworthiness as a lover, as

happens in Ford's other tragedies. Both Katherine and Warbeck stand as examples of perfect lovers, and the play itself exhibits Ford's positive alternative to the Platonic code. This alternative includes respect for the conventional institution of marriage, a belief in the subservience of woman to man, a recognition of the necessity of marital constancy regardless of hardships, and a belief in the sacred and binding power of vows.

In the last play to be examined, 'Tis Pity She's a Whore (1629-1633), Ford presents the extremes to which the Platonic code may be used to justify or rationalize immorality. Within the play are characters who justify incest, adultery, and murder by using the tenets of the code as their reasons.

A first encounter with the protagonist Giovanni reveals that he is similar to Fernando in Love's Sacrifice: from the very start he is aware of the immoral quality of the love that he wants to pursue. He shows his awareness of the potential evil by going to the friar Bonaventura for help in his conflict. In a soliloquy Giovanni admits that in their religion his worship of his love is a sin (Vol. I, p. 122). He attempts, nonethelss, to justify his feelings to the friar, in hope that he will receive the friar's approval Giovanni speaks of his "religious" duty to love his sister Annabella, but when he talks about his love, he always confines it to worship of Annabella's beauty:

> Must I not praise
> That beauty which, if fram'd anew, the gods
> Would make a god of, if they had it there,
> And kneel to it, as I do kneel to them? (Vol. I, p. 114)

Here Giovanni expresses reliance on the Platonic tenet that beautiful women are saints to be worshipped. He is actually telling Bonaventura that his sister's beauty is so great that even the gods would have worshipped it had they been given the chance. The friar does not agree with this blasphemy; instead, he accuses Giovanni of conversing with "lust and death" and he tells him to beg heaven to cleanse him of his "leprosy of lust / That rots thy soul . . ." (Vol. I, pp. 115-116) Giovanni says that he will try to rid himself of his obsession with Annabella, but by the next time Giovanni is seen, he has already determined to give in to his lust and to pursue his sister. He blames his predicament on fate, as the Platonists do, and he conveniently absolves himself of any blame in the consequences:

> Lost! I am lost! my fates have doom'd my death:
> The more I strive, I love; the more I love,
> The less I hope: I see my ruin certain
> . . . . . .
> Or I must speak, or burst. 'Tis not, I know,
> My lust, but 'tis my fate that leads me on.
> (Vol. I, pp. 122-123)

It should be noted that Giovanni uses the word "lust" instead of love in the last line quoted; this shows that he actually does recognize his feeling as lust, which he later elevates to the status of love.

When Giovanni proposes his love to his sister, he relies on familiar courtly phrases that praise her forehead, dimpled cheeks, lips, and hands. He tells her that it is his destiny to love her, and then he reassures her that he has obtained the church's permission to love her:

> I have ask'd counsel of the holy church,
> Who tells me I may love you; and 'tis just
> That, since I may, I should; and will, yes, will.
> (Vol. I, p. 126)

Giovanni has obviously lied here, since the friar told him that his lust would condemn him to hell. He is using the rules of the Platonic code in place of the rules of the Church because Platonism offers him the complete liberty in action that he needs and wants. Annabella accepts the love of her brother at this point, and although she admits that she has had the same desire for Giovanni, she always remains very passive in their relationship.

Having consummated their love, Giovanni and Annabella charge each other with secrecy and admit that others would not understand their kind of love. This secrecy implies that they do realize the baseness of their lust for each other. Giovanni further reveals his basic insecurity about the morality of his affair by returning to the friar to see if he might now win his approval. In his persuasive speech to Bonaventura, Giovanni uses the Platonic concept that beauty and virtue are one:

> What I have done I'll prove both fit and good.
> 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; which allow'd,
> Virtue itself is reason but refin'd,
> And love the quintessence of that: this proves,
> My sister's beauty being rarely fair
> Is rarely virtuous; chiefly in her love,
> And chiefly in that love, her love to me:
> If hers to me, then so is mine to her;
> Since in like causes are effects alike.
> (Vol. I, p. 146)

The friar's immediate response to this logic is "O ignorance in knowledge!" which sums up the attitude that should be taken toward Giovanni's Platonic argument. Ford shows here how the liberality of the code may be abused and applied to any pursuit of pleasure, either wholesome or incestuous, since the code makes no distinction.

Giovanni tries further to win the approval of the friar by reverting to courtly praise of his sister's physical beauty: he glorifies her face, lips, breath, eyes, hair, and cheeks. He carries this praise to such an extent as to practically attempt to make the friar envious of his good fortune. This long list of Annabella's attributes fails to arouse the sympathy of the friar, so Giovanni leaves; he is resolved at last to fully indulge himself in his incestuous desires.

When Annabella discovers that she is pregnant, she decides to marry Soranzo, who is one of her suitors. She decides to marry this man only to protect her own honor and her baby's reputation, but Giovanni still displays unwarranted jealousy. He denies her the freedom which Platonic lovers are supposed to grant. Annabella, at this point, confesses her guilt to Bonaventura. She weeps and repents, and vows to abandon her incestuous relationship with her brother and to begin a new life. However, when Giovanni is later heard in a soliloquy he speaks about the "life of pleasure" that he has enjoyed with Annabella since she has married:

> So did it me, who, ere my precious sister
> Was married, thought all taste of love would die

> In such a contract; but I find no change
> Of pleasure in this formal law of sports.
> She is still one to me, and every kiss
> As sweet and as delicious as the first
> I reap'd when yet the privilege of youth
> Entitled her a virgin . . . (Vol. I, pp. 191-192)

Annabella's contrition is short-lived, obviously, especially when she is confronted by her husband Soranzo, who has discovered that his wife is pregnant by another man. She actually flaunts her immoral conduct. She blames fate for her condition and excuses her desire to sin. She also incites the anger of Soranzo by praising the man who fathered her child: she describes him as "angel-like" and "glorious" (Vol. I, p. 179).

In the final act of the play, however, Annabella is found to have changed her attitude once again: she now admits to herself that the feeling which she had for Giovanni was lust, after all:

> Pleasures, farewell, and all ye thriftless minutes
> Wherein false joys have spun a weary life!
> . . . . . .
> My conscience now stands up against my lust
> With depositions character'd in guilt,
> And tells me I am lost: now I confess
> Beauty that clothes the outside of the face
> Is cursed if it be not cloth'd with grace.
> (Vol. I, pp. 188-189)

Here Annabella discloses that her lust has brought her "false joys". She also pronounces the fallibility of the Platonic belief that beauty and virtue are one. In speeches such as this, Ford reveals his criticism of the Platonic code that easily harbors such lust and quickly brings Annabella to such a state of "vile unhappiness" (Vol. I, p. 189).

When Annabella confesses her change to Giovanni, he

becomes angry and reproaches her for her infidelity. He exposes himself as the jealous, possessive lover who is obsessed with ruling his beloved. Rather than lose Annabella to another man, Giovanni stabs her to death. Even in death, Annabella's beauty appeals to him; the audience sees here how completely Giovanni is dominated by his passion for his sister's physical beauty. Carrying Annabella's bleeding heart on the tip of his dagger, Giovanni presents himself to a group of men who include his father and his rival Soranzo. He discloses the incestuous affair and pronounces himself monarch of Annabella's heart and body; here, again, he shows his desire to possess entirely the body and soul of his lover. This sudden and cruel revelation causes his father's heart to break, and Giovanni revels in the drama of his father's death. Giovanni then attacks his rival Soranzo and mortally wounds him. Giovanni is then stabbed by Soranzo's servant Vasques. While Giovanni is dying, he is told to cry for heaven's mercy, but Giovanni staunchly replies, "Mercy! why, I have found it in this justice." (Vol. I, p. 205) He refuses to acknowledge his own need for mercy, and he finds consolation in the "justice" that he has accomplished in killing Soranzo. His last thought is about his ability to see Annabella's face once again after death; this thought shows that he still idolizes the beauty of his sister. Giovanni must die tragically according to the pattern established in Ford's tragedies, whereby unworthy lovers, or those whose love is ruled by lust, meet unnatural deaths. Annabella also suffers

the fate of such lovers since most of her life was dominated by incestuous lust.

The character Soranzo, who married Annabella, presents another study of one who uses the Platonic code. He is briefly known first as a potential suitor of Annabella, but a more thorough knowledge of him is gained in the scene where Hippolita, who believes herself to be a widow, is demanding from him the love which Soranzo had earlier vowed. In this passage she reveals her case against her lover:

> . . . Look, perjur'd man, on her
> Whom thou and thy distracted lust have wrong'd.
> Thy sensual rage of blood hath made my youth
> A scorn to men and angels; and shall I
> Be now a foil to thy unsated change?
> Thou know'st, false wanton, when my modest fame
> Stood free from stain or scandal, all the charms
> Of hell or sorcery could not prevail
> Against the honour of my chaster bosom.
> Thine eyes did plead in tears, thy tongue in oaths,
> Such and so many, that a heart of steel
> Would have been wrought to pity, as was mine.
> And shall the conquest of my lawful bed,
> My husband's death, urg'd on by his disgrace,
> My loss of womanhood, be ill-rewarded
> With hatred and contempt? . . . (Vol. I, pp. 135-136)

In this passage Soranzo is exposed as a lying courtier who used all the Platonic ceremonies of crying, of swearing oaths of undying love, and later of promising to marry Hippolita when her husband dies. Hippolita excuses her adultery by blaming her trust in these shallow imitations of love. Soranzo also refuses to accept responsibility for their sin and he absolves himself of any further obligation to the woman by stating:

> The vows I made, if you remember well,
> Were wicked and unlawful; 'twere more sin
> To keep them than to break them: as for me,
> I cannot mask my penitence. Think thou

> How much thou hast digress'd from honest shame
> In bringing of a gentleman to death
> Who was thy husband; such a one as he,
> So noble in his quality, condition,
> Learning, behavior, entertainment, love,
> As Parma could not show a braver man.
> . . . . . .
> Learn to repent, and die; for, by my honour,
> I hate thee and thy lust: you've been too foul.
> (Vol. I, p. 138)

Soranzo shifts the blame right back to Hippolita by blaming her for her husband's downfall. He adds insult to his accusation by superfluously praising the man whom Soranzo cuckolded. Both lovers part in hatred after they acknowledge each other's former protestations of love as base lust. Soranzo terminates all obligation to Hippolita, much as Ferentes does in Love's Sacrifice. Hippolita parts seeking vengeance, and in an elaborate plan with Vasques, she plots to poison Soranzo at his marriage feast. She promises great pleasure and wealth to Vasques for his assistance. Vasques deceives her, however, and gives the poisoned drink to Hippolita, who dies a victim of her own revenge; thus, another character who lived in pursuit of pleasure meets a tragic death.

When Soranzo abandons Hippolita, as mentioned earlier, he courts Annabella and pledges the same oaths of love that he used with Hippolita. The audience already knows his true character, which is that of an unconscionable liar. He tries to feign tears and he asks Annabella if she doesn't see them. To this question Annabella replies honestly that she does not. Annabella mocks the hypocritical Platonic words he uses: when he claims that he is "sick to the heart" because

of her coldness, she calls for some medicine to cure his ailment; when he accuses her of mocking him, she tells him that he is "no looking-glass", or else she would "dress" her language by him (Vol. I, pp. 156-157).

Annabella recognizes the shallowness of Soranzo's love, but she reverts to marrying him for reasons already explained. When Soranzo discovers the deception, he lashes out at her with a torrent of epithets:

> Come, strumpet, famous whore! were every drop
> Of blood that runs in thy adulterous veins
> A life, this sword -- dost see't? -- should in one blow
> Confound them all. Harlot, rare, notable harlot,
> That with thy brazen face maintain'st thy sin,
> Was there no man in Parma to be bawd
> To your loose cunning whoredom else but I?
> Must your hot itch and plurisy of lust,
> The heyday of your luxury, be fed
> Up to a surfeit, and could none but I
> Be pick'd out to be cloak to your close tricks,
> Your belly-sports? Now I must be the dad
> To all that gallimaufry that is stuff'd
> In thy corrupted bastard-bearing womb! (Vol. I, pp. 177-178)

Soranzo here feels justified in condemning Annabella for illicit behavior, yet he excuses his own adulterous escapades with Hippolita. He is applying a double standard in his marriage: he is allowed to sin, but his wife is not. Ford shows the justice of the situation in which Soranzo finds himself: the adulterer who scorns his lover marries an incestuous wife who intends to present him with another man's illegitimate child. In all of Ford's plays, both those characters who allow themselves to be ruled by their passion and those who vindicate their lust by use of the Platonic code always attract other characters of the same type. These

characters inevitably bring about their own destruction because of their lack of control over their passions. True to the pattern, both Soranzo and Annabella meet violent deaths.

The last character to be examined in this play is Putana, Annabella's guardian, who advises Annabella in the ways of lust. When Annabella is still innocent of Giovanni's desire for her, she is seen conversing with Putana about the attributes of each of her suitors. Putana readily offers her opinions and states that she dislikes one because he "crinkles so much in the hams", and that she likes another, Soranzo, because he is handsome and has alréady proven himself a virile lover by the widow Hippolita's known lust for him. She tells Annabella to take a husband for his attributes as a "plain, sufficient, naked man", and one who will serve her well in bed. (Vol. I, p. 120) Putana shows that her primary interest in judging a man lies in his ability at sexual performance. When she learns of Giovanni's desire for Annabella, she waits to hear Annabella's appraisal of Giovanni's sexual ability. After the lovers' first physical union, Putana eagerly asks Annabella, "Child, how is't, child?" (Vol. I, p. 132) Putana then tells Annabella:

> Nay, what a paradise of joy have you passed under! Why, now I commend thee, charge. Fear nothing, sweetheart: what though he be your brother? your brother's a man, I hope; and I say still, if a young wench feel the fit upon her, let her take any body, father or brother, all is one. (Vol. I, pa. 133)

Putana reveals here that she lives by an amoral philosophy, which is actually very similar to the Platonic code: the

code makes no distinction as to who the lover should be, and all that matters is the pursuit of one's love. Putana does not care who the lover may be, "father or brother", just as long as personal satisfaction is obtained. For her amoral advice and her participation in the cover-up of the incestuous affair, Putana has her eyes plucked out and is ordered to be burned to death as a public example of licentious behavior. She, like the others obsessed by lust, meets a tragic death. In 'Tis Pity Ford once again reveals his condemnation of those people who rationalize their sins by means of the idealized, but too liberal, tenets of the Platonic code. In such passages as those which have been quoted, Ford exposes the insincerity of the characters who use Platonic beliefs to convince themselves and others of their goodness; however, these passages reveal not only a character's insincerity, but also his false logic that brings about his downfall.

Throughout all of the works that have been examined, Ford has maintained a consistent attitude toward the Platonic code and those characters who rely on its tenets. Ford is obviously not glorifying Platonic love, nor is he simply satirizing the abuse of such a code; he is clearly pointing out the inevitable failure of such an idealized philosophy by presenting the disastrous consequences which result from either naïve reliance on the code or calculating abuse of the code's ambiguous principles. Ford's critical attitude

can be traced from his earliest works, in which he shows opposition to the principles that are proposed by the code. In these early works, which are Fame's Memorial, Honour Triumphant, Christes Bloody Sweat, and A Line of Life, we find that Ford is not afraid to oppose the court. We also find Ford supporting the conventional institution of marriage and opposing the elevation of "true love" over marriage. Ford also expresses his belief in man's responsibility for his own actions, and his disbelief in man's subservience to fate. We see Ford arguing that virtue is equated with action and not with physical beauty. Ford also attacks the idleness of the court and the insincerity of courtiers' flattery. By his criticism of those who flatter royalty simply to advance themselves, Ford proves that he is unafraid to oppose the Platonic love code, even though it is proposed by the Queen.

The criticisms found in these early works constitute the themes in Ford's tragedies: for example, those characters who flatter royalty are recognized as shallow, and those who use courtly phrases that are based on Platonic beliefs are recognized as insincere and unworthy of successful love relationships. In Broken Heart, Love's Sacrifice, and 'Tis Pity She's a Whore, Ford establishes the pattern in which lovers who rely on Platonic arguments meet unnatural and violent deaths. A contrasting example to the adultery and incest of these tragedies is found in Perkin Warbeck, in which Ford upholds the virtue of marital fidelity.

The question that was initially raised of whether or not Ford glorifies Platonic love and advocates immorality can be settled from the evidence that is found in both his nondramatic works and his tragedies. This evidence proves that Ford opposes the Platonic code as both an unrealistic philosophy and as a ready means by which licentiousness can be rationalized as "true love".

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