

Love, Marriage, and Death in John Ford's Tragedy

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ABSTRACT

In this study an attempt is made to prove, through analytical study of Ford's Tragedy especially his best two: **The Broken Heart** (1933) and **'Tis Pity She's a Whore** (1933), that these plays reveal, rather than decadent drama, modernized, progressive, and morally sound dramatic masterpieces.

Focus is made in this study on Ford's treatment of the themes of love, marriage and death, as dominant motifs in the tragedy and as a triangle within which his star-crossed and melancholic characters have their pathetic doom. Love and marriage are presented as concomitant stabilizing forces in the well-being of lovers. Once these are severed from one another, through such disintegrating agents as frustrated love or arranged marriage, the consequence is inevitably tragic.

It is a remarkable characteristic feature of Ford's heroes and heroines that they have a "baroque" tendency toward death as the only solution for their social and moral predicaments. They aspire to death for a release from their frustrations as well as for a happy reunion with their loved ones.

The unfortunate lovers have a blending of erotic and religious feelings that makes them insist on the "tragic" unmindful of the inevitable loss of love and life since, they believe, they will be forever registered in love's martyrdom.

It might be a mark of the dramatist's complexity of artistic genius that the critics should differ in their assessment of John Ford's tragedy. Charles Lamb, for instance, praises him for being one "of the first order of poets", because:

He sought for sublimity, not by parcels, in metaphors or visible images, but directly where she has her full residence in the heart of man; in the actions and sufferings of the greatest minds. There is a grandeur of the soul above mountains, seas, and the elements. (Lamb, 1970: 25)

Professor A.W. Ward discerns in Ford an author who by the most striking features of his genius is entitled to an entirely distinct place among the English most gifted dramatists (Ward, 1966: 86). He argues that the strength of Ford's genius lies in the intensity of his imagination:

The intensity of his imagination enables him to reproduce situations of the most harrowing kind, and to reveal, with a vividness and suddenness wholly peculiar to himself, the depths of passion, sorrow, and despair which lie hidden in the hearts of men and women. (ward, 1966: 87)

Una Ellis-Fermor gives Ford the credit of being "a psychologist of clear, steady and slowly progressing insight whose field is by preference abnormal conditions of mind or unusual experiences and relations" (Ellis - Fermor, 1965: 245-46).

T.S. Eliot seems reluctant to place him alongside his predecessors, the great early Jacobean dramatists of the first decade of the century, because of what he calls, "the absence of purpose", yet he admits that "the verisification and poetry,..., are of a very high order." (Eliot, 1962: 125, 132).

This "absence of purpose," discerned, in Ford and in such other dramatists of the period as Beaumont, Fletcher, and Shirley, is conceived to have made their drama tend towards mere sensationalism (Eliot, 1962: 132-133), and, hence, towards decadence. Professor G.B. Harrison, for instance, detects signs of decadence in the abnormal passions and exciting situations which permeate a tragedy like *'Tis Pity She's a Whore*, and he argues that such tendencies met certain demands of the contemporary audience who, "needed such a stimulus to arouse their excitement" (Harrison, 1966: xii-xiii).

Robert Ornstein, recognizing some novelty in Ford's dramatic achievements, and accounting for the dramatist's relative absence of purpose, observes that:

Because Ford had the courage and the will to break new dramatic ground, he was a less consistent and "correct" playwright than they. Yet even when his reach exceeds his grasp, he is indisputably the last of the Jacobean-the last dramatist to make an original and significant contribution to early seventeenth-century tragedy (Ornstein, 1965: 200).

More recent criticism of Ford's tragedy tends to acknowledge in it some artistic practices which distinguish Ford from his more famous contemporaries. In his most distinguished and illuminating study of Ford, as "baroque English dramatist," Professor Ronald Heubert reestablishes Ford's literary reputation as an exceptionally talented playwright:

There is only one reason why Ford in fact deserves a more sympathetic audience: he was a playwright of exceptional talent. 'Tis Pity, **The Broken Heart**, and **Perkin Warbeck** are brilliant achievements, both as literature and as theatre.

In this article I propose to prove, through analytical study of Ford's tragedy, especially his best two: **The Broken Heart** and **'Tis Pity She's a Whore**, that these plays reveal, rather than decadent drama, modernized, progressive, and morally sound dramatic masterpieces. A discussion of this kind would inevitably take into consideration the elements in the background of the late Jacobean and Caroline eras that must have inspired the playwright with the inner impulse which prompted his writings.

As the title of this study indicates, a special focus will be made on Ford's treatment of the themes of love, marriage and death, as dominant motifs in the playwright's tragedy and as a triangle within which his star-crossed and melancholic characters have their pathetic doom. And since this dramatist's tragedy derives much of its meaning and significance from its contemporary world, it will not, I hope, be out of place to refer to social, economic, political and cultural facts and forces to explain matters which may, otherwise, look ambivalent, abnormal, or even immoral.

The treatment of the theme of love in Ford's tragedy is naturally intertwined with the treatment of the theme of marriage. It will be seen that love and marriage are concomitant stabilizing forces in the well-being of the lovers. Once these are severed from one another, through such disintegrating agents as frustrated love or arranged marriages, the consequence is inevitably tragic.

Yet it is indeed curious that what is "tragic" to us, students and scholars of drama, about the pathetic deaths of Ford's characters, is no more tragic in the context of the plays than are the glorious and heroic deaths of Antony and Cleopatra at the end of Shakespeare's play.

It is a remarkable characteristic feature that Ford's heroes and heroines have a baroque tendency towards death as the only possible solution for the social and moral predicaments in which they are miserably caught. They aspire at their deaths as at their lovers, exulting at death approach for a release from their secular frustrations and afflictions, as well as for a happy reunion with their loved ones.

A glance at the main story of **The Broken Heart** would reveal the pre-occupation of the play with the themes of love, marriage, and death as the

principal motifs that dominate the action throughout. Penthea, in love with Orgilus, was betrothed to him by her father. After the latter's death her brother Ithocles forced her to leave her lover and get married to Bassanes, a rich old nobleman. The arranged marriage proved to be most unhappy for both parties, as Bassanes is an excessively jealous and doting husband, and Penthea is overgrieved by her thwarted love. By a swing of the pendulum, Ithocles, who heartlessly imposed a marriage of convenience upon his sister, himself falls in love with Calantha, the princess of Sparta, who only finally requites his love and accepts him for husband. meanwhile Penthea, starved and overwhelmed by grief, her mind virtually cracks and dies, and Orgilus avenges her death and his own loss of love on Ithocles by murdering him. Calantha, now queen after her father's death, orders Orgilus to choose his own death for his crime, disposes of the kingdom to the Prince of Argus, puts the wedding ring on the finger of Ithocles's corpse, and dies with a broken heart. The play ends with the prophecy, once made by Tecnicus, the philosopher, coming true:

When youth is ripe and age from time doth part,
The lifeless trunk shall wed the broken heart.

(V.iii.99-100)⁽¹⁾

At the beginning of **The Broken Heart** we are already presented with a moral and social dilemma that well makes for tragedy. Penthea is forced by her brother into getting married to a man whom she does not love and is thus deprived of her right to get married to the young gentleman, Orgilus, whom she actually loves and to whom she was betrothed in her father's life. The tragic situation of Penthea is summed up by Orgilus in a dialogue between him and his father:

Beauteous Penthea, wedded to this torture
By an insulting brother, being secretly
Compell'd to yield her virgin freedom up
To him who never can usurp her heart,
Before contracted mine,...

(I. i. 49-53)

The most pathetic image of the overgrieved Penthea as described by her neglected lover, is that of a strictly virtuous young lady who, having lost her love, has also lost the taste of life and has thus been given in to melancholy. The authoritative tyranny of brother, supported by social convention and custom, would have Penthea live with an excessively jealous and suspicious husband. She would have flouted at that imposed, loveless marriage, were it not for her dutiful and overvirtuous character. Nor can the delicate and sensitive young wife play the jade with her husband and pursue her love secretly. The resolution, as Ford conceived it, of such a tragic dilemma is inevitably death. For in **The Broken Heart** it is clear that Penthea has only two alternatives: either to accept her cruel fate, or to struggle and free herself, and the latter would be attained only through revenge. However

Pentheia prefers suffering silently, but her very melancholic silence will engender in others the urge for vengeance.

Throughout the dialogue between Penthea and her lost lover, it is taken for granted that since their betrothal, they have become one another's. Consequently Orgilus demands that Penthea be his wife: "I would possess my wife; the equity/of very reason bids me" (II.iii.71-72). But Penthea's honour would not allow her to trifle with her matrimonial bond, however abominable this may be to her:

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.

(II.iii. 54-47)

Her body she has had to give to Bassanes, who has virtually bought it from her ambitious brother, Ithocles, but her heart will always remain Orgilus's. It follows, then, that Penthea, caught in such a mercenary, arranged marriage, should pine under a weary and miserable life in which she considers herself to be no better than a whore:

How, Orgilus, by promise I was thine,
The heavens do witness; they can witness too
A rape done on my truth....

(II.iii. 77-79)

When she finds Orgilus insist on getting her for his "wife", she tells him that her "true love" would not allow her to bestow upon him nothing better than a second bed:

The virgin dowry which my birth bestow'd
Is ravish'd by another. My true love
Abhors to think that Orgilus deserv'd
No better favors than a second bed.

(II.iii. 99-102)

It is noticeable that, in Ford's tragedy, love does not only unite the lovers spiritually, but bodily as well. The power of love which once brought Penthea and Orgilus together had united their souls, and it would have united their bodies, had it not been for the imposed marriage.

We had enjoy'd
The sweets our vows expected, had not cruelty
Prevented all those triumphs we prepar'd for,
...

(I. i. 32-34)

Having been dismissed by Penthea, Orgilus laments the fact that the enforced marriage has separated him from his beloved and has, thus, deprived him of his right to taste the delicious pleasures of love:

All pleasures are but mere imagination,
Feeding the hungry appetite with steam
And sight of banquet, whilst the body pines,
Not relishing the real tasted food.

(II.iii. 34-37)

Indeed both Ithocles and Orgilus liken love to banquets that are to be eaten, and "Pentheia starves to death for want of love as well as food" (Anderson, 1968: xvi). Furthermore, in Ford's tragedy the exchange of perfect love elevates love to holiness and the beloved to a saint. Orgilus, for example, has been united with Penthea through:

A freedom of converse, and interchange
of holy and chaste love, so fix'd our souls
In a firm growth of union, that no time
Can eat into the pledge;...

(I.i. 29-32)

When Ithocles meets Penthea, Who has virtuously and heroically submitted to her cruel fate, and having given her body like a whore to disliked Bassanes while her desires are for her forsaken Orgilus, he reproaches himself severely and praises his sister's patient suffering for martyrdom:

Thou shalt stand
a deity, my sister, and be worshipp'd
For thy resolved martyrdom. Wrong'd maids
And married wives shall to thy hallowed shrine
Offer their orisons,

(III.ii. 82-86)

In his most perceptive study of Ford, to which reference has already been made, Professor Ronald Huebert proves that Ford exhibits his kinship with baroque tradition through the practice of blending the themes of sex and death, and that his approach to love reveals a fusion of sensuous and sacred impulses. "In Ford's dramatic poetry," this able critic argues, "the erotic world and the religious world mingle, intertwine, and become almost indistinguishable from one another," (Hueber, 1977: 35-37). Such remarkable blending of erotic and religious feelings makes the unfortunate lovers insist on the "tragic," unmindful of the inevitable loss of both lover and life since, they believe, they will be forever registered in love's martyrdom.

When Penthea learns that her cruel brother has fallen in love and that he is on the rack of agony, unable to admit his "bondage", she enquires "who is the saint you serve," (III.ii.93). Even to jealous Bassanes Penthea's looks are "sovereignty," her "breath is balm" (III.ii.164); he is in pain that he could not preserve her in fruition/As in devotion," (III.ii.165-166), and in his ecstatic feelings he exclaims: "Oh, my senses/Are charm'd with sounds celestial" (III.ii.173-174) ... "A goddess! let me kneel." (III.ii.178).

In **'Tis Pity She's a Whore** this tendency towards blending the erotic and the religious permeates the tragedy, although the source of trouble is, in this case, incestuous love which makes the downfall of the lovers much more urgent and inevitable than that of Orgilus and Penthea whose love is merely thwarted in **The Broken Heart**.

In **'Tis Pity** Giovanni has an overwhelming passion for his own sister, Annabella, and revealing his love to her he finds it already requited. On the event of her pregnancy, Annabella resolves to get married to Soranzo who discovers the secret incestuous relationship between his wife and her brother, and decides to have them killed. Seeing through Sornzo's ruse, Giovanni kills his own sister himself and, in a violent scene at the end of the play, he and Soranzo die, and the tragedy comes to an end with the Cardinal's most suggestive comment:

but never yet
Incest and murder have so strangely met.
Of one so young, so rich in nature's store,
Who could not say, 'tis pity she's a whore?

Ford makes it clear, from the opening of this tragedy, that the illicit love which united Giovannia and his sister is self-destructive as well as socially and morally rebellious. Possessed by this overpowering passion, Giovanni violates both the moral order and social custom. In his argument with Friar Bonaventura, he tries to justify his naturalistic outlook on his love:

Shall a peevish sound,
A customary form, from man to man,
Of brother and of sister, be a bar
'Twixt my perpetual happiness and me?

(I.i. 24-27)⁽²⁾

Thus in having chosen the gratification of his passion, Giovanni has in fact alienated himself and his sister from their own social world as well as from the divine order, and as Volpone makes of his gold his god, he, too, tends to make of his sister's beauty his idol. He makes expression to his ecstatic feelings in sacramental terms:

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?

(I.i; 20-23)

When he meets the Friar again, at the end of Act 11, he has already been coarsened by adultery; he tries to convince him that incest between himself and his sister is justifiable. But the religious man finds Giovanni's sophistry and atheism only "ignorance in knowledge" (II.v.27), and warns him against being led alone by nature's light because "nature is in Heaven's positions blind" (II.v.34). However, Giovanni's retort reveals that he has

been too far gone in his sinful relationship with his sister to hope for salvation:

Your age o'errules you; had you youth like mine,
You'd make her love your Heaven, and her divine.

(I.v. 35-36)

Giovanfii's retort to the Friar's warning is also characteristic of the baroque blending of the erotic passion with the religious tone—a tendency that has been seen permeating the dialogues between Penthea and Orgilus in **The Broken Heart**.

If we agree that the Friar represents the moral and religious order in the world of **'Tis Pity**, then his position in the tragedy is rather ambivalent. When he finds that Giovanni and Annabella have been deeply involved in incest and, more problematically still, that the young lady is pregnant, he advises that she be married off to one of her three suitors.

Although this may seem to be the only solution for her dilemma, it is nevertheless a disgraceful marriage of convenience based on deception and subterfuge and as such it will only accelerate the downfall of the sinful lovers.

Indeed, "Unless we understand the Friar's place in Ford's moral design, he must seem an ambiguous character (Ornstein, 1965: 208). Careful study of the dramatic role played by the Friar in the moral vision of **'Tis Pity** will indicate that this curious figure must have been designed to contribute to creating an atmosphere of mystery and duplicity which well corresponds to the abnormality of the major dramatic situation of the play as well as to the rotten way of the lovers' world. "The truth is," one critic argues, "that the Friar cannot help being corrupted by the evil world of Parma (Orbison, 1974:55).

It is significant that when the Friar advises Giovanni to persuade his illegitimately pregnant sister to some marriage, the young man at once rejects the idea as impossible and as more damning of his already degraded sister. When the Friar requests that he meet Annabella himself to make her confess her guilt and repent her sins, "lest she should die unabsolv'd" (II.v.44), Giovanni welcomes the idea, but comments:

...., then she'll tel you,
How dearly she doth prize my matchless love;
Then you will know what pity 'twere we two
Should have been sunder'd from each other's arms.

(II.v. 45-48)

In the aforesaid comment, an implicit contrast is drawn between Giovanni's love for Annabella and the love which the world of Parma can afford her. In the context of **'Tis Pity** such a contrast will obviously favour

Giovanni's love as matchless, being set forth against a whole world dominated by vicious intrigues and outright villainy. As Shakespeare managed to make Antony and Cleopatra, whose love was also illicit, more sympathetic human beings than their antagonists in the Roman world of the play, through showing the lovers possessed of some degree of nobility of nature, constancy in love, and moral courage-so well does Ford manage to arouse our sympathy for the lovers of his play that we may be induced to forget about their illicit love.

Placed alongside Annabella's suitors, Soranzo, Bergetto, and Grimaldi, Giovanni's love is matchless, his talents are much superior to theirs, and his motives less repugnant. The two correlated minor actions of the play, namely: Soranzo-Hippolyta and Bergetto-Philotis intrigues, make this point clear.

Soranzo, a type of Jacobean man of honour and wealth, has cast away his mistress Hippolyta who, therefore, has revengeful plans against him. She tempts his servant Vasques to poison him and have her body for reward. To her chagrin, the villainous servant manages to make her drink her own poison, and comments "Know now, Mistress She-Devil, your own mischievous treachery hath kill'd you; ..." (IV.i.68-69).

Hippolyta's husband, Richarditto, supposed to have died, comes back to Parma disguised as a physician. The idiotic Bergetto, also designed for a mercenary match with Annabella, is nevertheless attracted to Richarditto's niece, Philotes. Although Richarditto has consented to the match between his niece and Bergetto, the latter is stabbed by Grimaldi, who has mistaken him for Soranzo.

Perhaps the most abominable example of social evils contaminating the world of Parma is the cold-blooded injustice done Bergetto who has been mistakenly killed by Grimaldi. Being a member of the nobility, the latter is shielded up by his family name. In his refusal to take the consequence of his bloody deed, he is even protected by the Cardinal himself, and we have the following sardonic comment on that deeply corrupted society, significantly given by two helpless citizens:

Don. Is this churchman's voice? Dwells justice here?

Flo. Justice is fled to Heaven and comes no nearer.

(III.ix.61-62)

Thus the audience and readers of **'Tis Pity** are naturally shocked by the enormity of this unhealthy environment and they are left to imagine that the incestuous relationship between brother and sister might have been born of such a contaminated atmosphere. True love's exchange is almost absent in this play, and instead, there are mere attempts to secure mercenary bargains motivated by greed, folly, tyranny, or revenge. Since all the endeavours of Sornzo, Grimaldi, and Bergetto have not been motivated by real love's ex-

change, they have all misfired and have only led to utter failure or even to crime. Set in juxtaposition with these forms of game or compromise, only Giovanni's and Annabella's is, in its own limits, sincere love's exchange. Though it is eventually condemned as fruitless and sinful, it is the only one, in the world of the play, practised by a man and a woman for love's own sake and for no other consideration or interest. It is true that:

Giovanni's love is set in a context of rival wooers, each of whom in his own way is more despicable than Giovanni. Thus the viewers are barred from an easy transfer of sympathy away from Giovanni, and their condemnation of the aberrational passion is mitigated further (Champion, 1975: 82).

Giovanni's "matchless love" is thus well understood and his remark, "what pity 'twere we two/Should have been sunder'd from each other's arms" already quoted-sounds most significant and convincing. With its echo of the title of the play itself, one is left to feel sorry for and, hence, willing to sympathize with the poor lovers who have been surrounded by an evil, cruel world which only contributed to make their irrational sickly passion much more damaging to their already afflicted minds and troubled souls. One must agree with Professor Leech that 'Tis Pity She's a Whore" is both plain statement and irony; and that:

It is a play which accepts Giovanni's and Annabella's love as sickness, as involving further corruption with passage of time; but it affirms a measure of nobility in them that distinguishes them from their world.

(Leech, 1964:22).

Probing into the nature of the marital relationship between Penthea and Bassanes in **The Broken Heart**, and that between Annabella and Giovanni in 'Tis Pity may reveal no essential difference between loveless marriage of convenience and incestuous alliance. For in the contexts of the plays both relations are variant forms of misalliance which make for man's misery and lead to equally tragic consequences. In 'Tis Pity, Annabella knows, from the moment she requites her brother's passion for her, that gratification of such a passion is destructive, and that it will alienate them from the society of men, and that only death can solve their problem:

Forbid it, my just fears!
If this be true, 'twere fitter I were dead.

(I.ii. 215-216)

And in **The Broken Heart** Penthea, perhaps the most pathetic of Ford's tragic heroines, feels she has been utterly disgraced and humiliated by being separated from her true lover and married off to Bassanes, against her will. In her dilemma, she, too, finds that only death can solve her problem, and in her submission to the demands of a tyrannical brother and an excessively

jealous husband, she curses herself for a "faith-breaker" and a "spotted whore". Demanding that her brother relieve her by killing her, she makes it clear to him that the true, mutual love which united her with Orgilus is powerful enough to make them man and wife and, as such, her life with Bassanes, the result of imposed marriage, is no better than adultery:

For she that's wife to Orgilus, and lives
In known adultery with Bassanes,
Is, at the best, a whore.

(III.ii. 73-75)

When Ithocles, the cruel brother who imposed that match on his sister Penthea, has himself fallen in love with Princess Calantha, he finds himself in agony and he calls on his wronged sister to help him. In her melancholy, Penthea promises to help him but she cannot help making a case for herself against her brother's interference in her love and his reckless imposition upon her of a loveless marriage that has almost broken her heart for her:

Suppose you were contracted to her, would it not
Split even your very soul to see her father
Snatch her out of your arms against her will,
And force her on the Prince of Argos?

(III.ii. 106-9)

It is in the mad-scene where Penthea comes on the stage, in tears and with her hair loose, that we have the most moving scene in the play. With its echo of Ophelia's pathetic madness, this scene is an outcry against thwarted ambitions, frustrated loves, and enforced marriages that bring misery and starvation to "virgin wives" and "married maids" who are buried in thier bride-beds:

Oh, my wreck'd honour, ruin'd by those tyrants,
A cruel brother and a desperate dotage!
There is no peace left for a revish'd wife
Widow'd by lawless marriage;....

(IV.ii. 144-47)

One cannot here resist associating Penthea's dilemma, in **The Broken Heart**, with that of Annabella in **'Tis Pity**. For if it is pity that Annabella has been the victim of an evil corrupted society which could not provide her with a good husband, it is pity, too, that Penthea has fallen victim to a brother's tyranny and a husband's mad jealousies. Like Ophelia, both young ladies are the victims of circumstances and of certain social values and standards of morality in confrontation with which they are entirely powerless. Bassanes, having realized the damaging effect his jealousy has worked on Penthea's soul, is made to study reformation, but he finds it too late to have a cure for a heart already broken and, thus, in self-torture he reproaches himself:

I, who was made a monarch
Of what a heart could wish for, a chaste, wife,
Endeavour'd what in me lay to pull down
That temple built for adoration only,
And level't in the dust of causeless scandal.

(IV.ii. 29-33)

In her silent suffering and melancholic patience, the tragic figure of Pen-thea becomes an object-lesson for characters like Nearchus, Prince of Argus, who dares see the true nature and dimensions of the relationship between himself and Princess Calantha. He can see that the young lady is in love with another young man, Ithocles, who "is lord ascendant/Of her devotions;..." (IV.ii.200-1). Although this military young man is much inferior to the Prince in social standing, the latter cannot, nevertheless, enforce his love upon the Princess against her will-which will only lead to a miserable matrimonial relationship like the one between Penthea and Bassanes. When the Prince's friend, Amelus, raises the question of inequality in social standing between him and Ithocles, the Prince has sense enough to own that love, where hearts only choose, has nothing to do with such distinction, and he argues:

 ; for affections, injur'd
By tyranny or rigor of compulsion,
Like tempest-threaten'd trees unfirmly rooted,
Ne'er spring to timely growth: Observe, for instance,
Life-spent Penthea and unhappy Orgilus.

(IV.ii. 205-9)

This lesson is well digested by King Amyclas who, though a match between his daughter and Prince Nearchus would make him happy, will not enforce marriage upon Calantha. The lovers are thus, in this case, made to choose and to base their marriage upon mutual love, and they would have made each other happy, had it not been for the bloody revenge Orgilus has taken on Ithocles.

It is easy to note that in **The Broken Heart** Ford introduces one positive example of ideal marriage based on equality, mutual love and deep understanding between the two parties concerned, namely, Prophilus and Euphranea. In this one instance the sincere love of the young couple is crowned with a happy, compatible marriage because it has the support of social custom as well as the approval of parents on its side.

Crotolen, Euphranea's father, will willingly give his consent on proviso that his daughter herself desires the match: "If Euphranea/Herself admits the motion, let it be so;" (II.ii.58-59), and although Orgilus, her brother, is reluctant to consent to his sister's marriage to Prophilus-the latter being Ithocles's bosom-friend, yet he eventually sides with the lovers who are honestly in love and who seek to join their hands in marriage. In the bridal

song Orgilus gives, in celebration of this ideal union, there is insistence on the priority of the "holy union" of the lovers' hearts over the demands of custom in the bridal bed:

Comforts lasting, loves increasing,
Like soft hours never ceasing,...
Hearts by holy union wedded,
More than theirs by custom bedded.

(III.iv. 70-75)

Even Bassanes, who has caused his wife, Penthea, enormous torture through his mad suspicions, can dwell on the virtues and joys of marriage. In his melancholic wife, he sees a treasure of beauty and nicety which he would like to possess, but which he has utterly ruined and is now satisfied to silently adore:

The joys of marriage are the heaven on earth,
Life's paradise, great princess, the soul's quiet
Sinews of concord, earthly immortality,
Eternity of pleasures;...

(II.ii. 86-89)

It has already been argued that the heroes and heroines of Ford's tragedy have a tendency towards death as the only resolution available for their tragic dilemmas, and that this tendency is baroque, in the sense that they welcome and exult at death in the manner Antony and Cleopatra do at the end of Shakespeare's play. One of the remarkable characteristic features in Ford's tragedy is the dominance of a melancholic mood over the characters' minds. This mood or humour can be seen intensifying in these characters a feeling of alienation from their world and, hence, arousing in them a mounting desire for death, which in many cases becomes a preoccupation for a considerable span of time ending in the denouements of the plays.

This death-wish seems to be merely a passing mood in Antony and Cleopatra, who go to their deaths contented to have sacrificed all for a fulfilment of love's exchange. In *Hamlet*, a more typically "renaissance" tragedy, Ophelia does not express a wish to die in the sense Penthea does in Ford's tragedy, although Ophelia's world, too, is "out of joint" and her melancholy leads up to her madness and to her most pathetic death. Hamlet himself who, in his dying moments, would have Horatio absent himself from "felicity" awhile, does not have such death-wish. His death is certainly his only relief, but his concern is all for this world which must be told his right story. That is to say Hamlet dies with a typical "renaissance" wish for a reestablishment of justice, beauty, and harmony in a world that has only temporarily been dominated by evil, usurpation and disease. He does not have the baroque tendency of Ford's characters who leave behind an irrecoverably evil and corrupted life which they willingly sacrifice for a

fulfilment of love, as Fernando and Biancha, for instance, do in **Love's Sacrifice**.

Although psychological writings like burton's **Anatomy of Melancholy** (1621) had their influence on the minds of Ford and his contemporary writers in their delineation of their characters (Craig, 1966:183), the humour of "melancholy" can be at least partly attributed to the unfavourable social and economic conditions of the time. In his perceptive exploration of the causes of seventeenth-century melancholy, Professor L.C. Knights finds that the realization of death was one of the most important factors in producing melancholy:

The persistence of the plague and the consequent realization of man's impotence by a generation hitherto impressed by man's powers was undoubtedly one cause of early seventeenth-century melancholy.

(Knights, 1962:265-67)

The war with Spain, the scarcity of suitable employments for merited young intellectuals, "the advancement of unworthy persons" by James I-must have contributed to many young gentlemen's discontent with their fortunes and hence their melancholy or madness (Knights. 1962:268-72). Even as early as 1601, Hamlet is made to complain about:

The oppressor's wrong, the proud man's contumely,
The pangs of dispriz'd love, the law's delay,
The insolence of office, and the spurns
That patient merit of the unworthy takes,(3)

In **The Broken Heart**, the melancholic characters' thwarted ambitions lead steadily to their deaths. In the moral vision of the play the individual ambition of the character is closely related to the idea of honour which is viewed from different angles in accordance with each character's conception of honour. In juxtaposition with such individual conceptions, Ford sets a broader idea of honour based on virtue, and represented by Tecnicus' philosophy:

But real honour
Is the reward of virtue, and acquir'd
By justice or by valor, which, for bases,
Has justice to uphold it.

(III.i. 37-40)

Although Ithocles has, as a man of valour in the wars, proved himself to be a man of honour in the broader sense of the word, yet he is suffering from a private individualistic ambition for a more materialistic or even mercenary gain: to get married to Calantha, the Princess, and thereby to make his way into the throne of Sparta:

Ambition? 'Tis of vipers' breed; it gnaws
 A passage through the womb that gave it motion.
 Ambition, like a seeded dove, mounts upward,
 Higher and higher still, to perch on clouds,
 But tumbles headlong down with heavier ruin.

(II.ii. 1-5)

Between his public honour, based on virtue, and his private passion for Calantha, based on "brave appearance" or "vices of our passion"-in Tecnicus' speech-Ithocles is torn. Yet his case is more desperate than it appears to be, because he has essentially contributed to his sister's miseries by snatching her lover from her and by imposing another man upon her for husband. In his tragic dilemma, he finds that only death can relieve him of his torn and tortured self:

Death waits to waft me to the Stygian banks,
 And free me from the chaos of my bondage.

(III.ii. 90-91)

It is significant that in his very last breath, Ithocles welcomes death as the way to salvation, in such sacramental terms that may be equated with those usually connected with a lover's erotic feelings:

In my last breath, which on the sacred altar
 Of a long-look'd-for peace-now-moves-to heaven.
 [Dies.

(IV.iv. 69-70)

Orgilus' honour can be considered a private gentlemanly code of manners and morals which is maintained merely in terms of revenge. As is the case with Ithocles' this is also a private passion, a sort of individualism that is opposed to honour based on virtue, and as such it must inevitably destroy itself because it is made a fact beyond doubt, in Ford's tragedy, that: "Revenge proves its own executioner" (V.ii.147).

This private type of honour recalls to one's mind the "duelling" of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Being a form of personal justice, opposed to social custom and the traditions, it must be doomed to failure. Again one has to turn to Tecnicus of **The Broken Heart** for judgement:

He then fails
 In honour, who, for lucre or revenge,
 Commits thefts, murder, treasons, and adulteries,
 With such like, by intrenching on just laws,
 Whose sovereignty is best preserv'd by justice.

(III.i. 40-44)

When Orgilus' murder of Ithocles is discovered, and he is allowed to choose how to die, he decides "To bleed to death", and to be his own ex-

ecutioner. The terrible bleeding process taken by Orgilus: his piercing of his vein with his own dagger, and the cruelty of Bassanes' help in opening his vein, argues that he must have awaited death as the only outlet available for his frustrated love and thwarted ambition. As is the case with many of Ford's heroes and heroines, Orgilus has a strong desire for suffering for the gratification of which, as Professor Heubert puts it, "He wishes to die slowly, so that he can savour each moment of this unique experience as long as possible," (Huebert, 1977:52):

Welcome thou ice, that sit'st about my heart,
No heat can ever thaw thee.

(V.ii. 153-154)

Calantha's case is different in that she stands for rationality. Although she is overcome by a great amount of tragedy heaped upon her, she seems to have exercised a full command of her emotions and passions. One is induced to think that her honour is an ideal of decorum in conformity with which one must stand steadfast in confrontation with misery and misfortune even though one's heart has broken! During the celebrated dance, at the end of the play, she displays a wonderful self-control when she receives the horrible news of the deaths of her father, her friend, and her lover, and yet she perseveres and preserves the decorum of the scene till the end. Yet even she cannot help, at the end of the revels, giving vent to her suppressed inner feeling of grief:

O, my lords,
I but deceiv'd your eyes with antic gesture,
When one news straight came huddling on another
Of death, and death, and death. still I danc'd forward;
But it struck home, and here, and in an instant.

(V.iii. 67-71)

She, too, resorts to death as the only relief for her misfortunes, and as a means by which to reunite herself with her lost love. Placing her mother's wedding ring upon dead Ithocles's finger, she declares herself his wife:

Thus I new marry him whose wife I am;
Death shall not separate us.

(V.iii. 66-67)

Fittingly talking about "the silent griefs which cut the heart-strings" (V.iii.75), Calantha dies "smiling". And since she has composed the song "fitted for" her end, we get the impression that she must have pre-meditated her death. The last couplet of the Dirge makes love supreme in death:

Love only reigns in death, though art
Can find no comfort for a broken heart.

(V.iii. 92-93)

The influence of Burton's **Anatomy of Melancholy** on Ford's tragedy can obviously be seen in the delineation of the character of Penthea, who may be considered a study in the melancholic temperament. Her most pathetic melancholy is the outcome of her lost love and undesired marriage. In her steadfast virtue she can neither endure to betray her heart's love nor can she trifle with her matrimonial bond, and between the two forces she is torn and eventually her mind cracks.

It is this virtuous self-division that commands our sympathy for Penthea and establishes her in our memory, in her extreme suffering, as the greatest of Ford's love's martyrs. As Michael Neill admirably expresses it:

As a result of this hopeless division of her emotional from her social self, Penthea sees herself as having a species of inner deaths of which her starvation is only a symbolic confirmation:...

(Neill, 1980:259)

In this sense, Penthea is perhaps the only one of the principal characters of **The Broken Heart** who fulfils the ideal of true honour based on virtue. As early as the opening of Act 11 the symptoms of her melancholy appear in her stoical resignation to her cruel fate. When her Corvino-like jealous husband proposes to draw her away from her excessive grief to courtly pleasures, she is indifferent:

I am no mistress.
Whither you please, I must attend; all ways
Are alike pleasant to me.

(II.i. 107-9)

From the very beginning she has a longing for death as the only release from her tasteless life:

In vain we labor in this course of life
To piece our journey out at length, or crave
Respite of breath; our home is in the grave.

(II.iii. 146-48)

When she meets her cruel brother, later in the play, she bids him kill her to free her from her bondage to her husband, and she gains our sympathy and concern when she pleads the cause of her brother, the very maker of her misfortune, with Princess Calantha, the woman he loves. Her long dialogue with Calantha betrays in her a feeling of death approach, and we feel that Penthea has long been wishing for death. Calantha's anxiety over Penthea's loss of the desire to live makes her talk of a remedy for her melancholy, which the pathetic figure brushes aside:

Theat remedy
Must be a winding-sheet, a fold of lead,

And some untrod-on corner-in the earth-

(III.v. 31-33)

As previously mentioned, one of the most pathetic mementos in the play is when Penthea comes on the stage and starts, in her madness, her incoherent talk that recalls to one's mind Ophelia's. She is reported to have neither slept nor eaten for ten days, and her thoughts still run on death and the grave, and since "madness is an oracle" she can accuse her brother and husband of ruining her honour for her.

The dominant preoccupation of her mind with death, even in her madness, betrays most acute suppressions of her natural feelings for love, a spiritual starvation that has left her self-tortured. It is, indeed, clear that "Ford intends to make these restraints on love come more and more from within," and that with characters like Penthea, "a melancholy resignation forms the core of the drama" (Salinger, 1968:438). Although Penthea's death scene is not put on stage, she is "discovered in a chair, veiled," with her maids mourning at her feet, and bewailing her starvation. She is reported to have called for music,

And begg'd some gentle voice to tune a farewell
To life and griefs.

(IV.iv. 5-6)

Her last breath being spent on "O cruel Ithocles and injur'd Orgilus"! (IV.iv.9), points out to the fact that she, too, has died with a broken heart, reproachful of the tyranny of her brother and lamenting her loss of love. The song of lamentation which accompanies her dying moments, with its soft, sad music, reveals that this figure of pathos must have long longed for death. The ritual nature and the sacramental tone of her dying suggest that she has welcomed death as her salvation, her reunion with her lover, as well as her sublimation to martyrdom:

Love is dead; let lovers' eyes,
Lock'd in endless dreams,
Th' extremes of all extremes,
Ope no more, for now love dies,
Now love dies, implying
Love's martyrs must be ever, ever dying.

(IV.iii. 147-52)

It has been previously illustrated that, from the beginning of the tragic career of Giovanni and Annabella in 'Tis Pity, the lovers feel that only death can solve their problem. Annabella, whose incestuous relationship with her brother has been discovered by her husband, is imprisoned in her own chamber. In a meeting with the Friar, she repents her sinful life and bids her brother repent in order "to die blest," and she is grateful she has had this moment of repentance before her death:

thanks to the Heavens, who have prolong'd my breath
to this good use: now I can welcome death.

(V.ii. 58-59)

When Giovanni finds her repenting, he accuses her of having broken their vows and oaths of love. She tries to make him aware that their end is coming soon, that their exposure is inevitable, and that he had better be converted to virtue:

Be not deceiv'd, my brother:
This banquet is an harbinger of death
To you and me: resolve yourself it is,
And be prepar'd to welcome it.

(V.v. 26-29)

But Giovanni has by this time resolved on a course to kill Annabella and, most probably, to kill himself and follow her. In this last encounter between the two of them, she sees he weeps, and he discloses to her:

I do indeed; these are the funeral tears
Shed on your grave;...

(V.v. 49-50)

Then he starts admiring her matchless beauties and idealizing their love in sacramental terms which make Annabella one of love's martyrs. Unable to apprehend her brother's hidden intentions, he confides to her:

To save thy fame, and kill thee in a kiss. (stabs her)
Thus die, and die by me, and by my hand!
Revenge is mine; honour does love command.

(V.v. 84-86)

A recent critic, Lois E. Bueler, calls attention to the source of Giovanni's frustration, in an attempt to explain how he can save her fame by killing her. Since Giovanni cannot legally be Annabella's husband, he argues:

His only legitimate relationship to her is as her brother.
Given that relationship, and the indisputable fact of her
whoredom,..., the honour of her family, as well as the honour of her
husband, demands her death. (Bueler, 1980:341)

Whatever Giovanni's intentions, as revenger, may be, it is obvious that he, too, has had a craving for death. His melodramatic flaunting of his sister's heart on his dagger and his subsequent daring murder of Soranzo involving his own death, creates the impression that he looked on death as his and his calumniated sister's only relief from their highly dilemmatic life:

Death, thou art a guest long look'd for: I embrace
Thee and thy wounds; O, my last minute comes!
Where'er I go, let me enjoy this grace,

Freely to view my annabella's face. (Dies)

(V.vi. 105-8)

The abstract idea of death is beautifully concretized here into a personification of death as a guest that has long been expected and hence most welcome. Since Giovanni's embraces are usually reserved for love and Annabella, it follows that this welcome guest "death" is virtually identified in this vivid image with love. In this sense death is for Giovanni an ecstatic moment of victory over an unworthy world which declared war on his love and, conceived as such, death is a consummation of this love uniting him eternally with his loved one.

This metaphorical aspect of Ford's style, together with other distinctive qualities such as tone, imagery and visual aspects and parallels, enriches Ford's best tragedies with a dramatic effectiveness which, at moments, recalls to our memory the grandeur and the infinite variety of Shakespeare's memorable poetry. In speeches like the one just quoted, readers and audience cannot help being fascinated by the pictorial style that abounds in a fluidity of musical cadences, and a simplicity of verbal patterns which has direct bearings on man's actual experience. The dying lover does not mind where to go for an after-life so long as he will have the grace of freely viewing his beloved's face whose beauties are for him larger and worthier than life itself.

Furthermore, Ford's is a remarkably character-revealing style. Here, in this very instance, the directness and simplicity of the poetry corresponds with the speaker's surety and resolution; his self-willed death is his felicity-felicity that can be felt reflected and thrown into relief in the carefully selected words "embrace, grace, and face."

Almost all Penthea's speeches are characteristic of her tragic dilemma and they anticipate her tragic death throughout. Her frustrated love and the restraints her rigid virtue and true honour have pressed upon her, made her the prey of melancholy, of madness, and ultimately of starvation:

Honour,
How much we fight with weakness to preserve thee!

(II.iii. 130-31)

In this beautiful brevity of expression, Penthea is seen caught in her tragic dilemma where her weakness is her very strength, and her death is her triumph. In the same manner, Calantha's struggle to preserve her honour is a continuous fight between nature and custom or, indeed, art. Like Penthea she has suppressed her natural feeling for love and has displayed an incredible restraint on them through preserving a code of very rigid decorum of what may be called an "aristocratic" code of manners and conduct. This is her strength. But since she is a human being, this heroic restraint remains a violent act upon nature which must sooner or later give way to nature and the prominence of the real self.

Most typical of great tragedy, too, is Ithocles' tragic dilemma, when we see him held on the rack of agony and affliction. He has acquired public honour through his heroic endeavours in the wars, but he is unable to reconcile this with his private misery caused by his inability to express his affection for Calantha as well as by the ruin he brought on his own unhappy sister Penthea:

After my victories abroad, at home
I meet despair; ingratitude of nature
Hath made my actions monstrous....

(III.ii. 80-82)

When Orgilus, incited by the dying Penthea, with her finger reproachfully pointing to her brother, decides to revege his and her lost love on Ithocles, he gets the heroic young man tightly closed up in a chair to murder him:

Caught! you are caught,
Young master; 'tis thy throne of coronation,
Thou fool of greatness.

(IV.iv 22-24)

At the happy moment when Ithocles has got the favour of Princess Calantha's love, at the summit of his prosperity as the "minion" of fortune:

(Aside) Ho, here's a swinge in destiny! apparent
The youth is up on tiptoe, yet may stumble.

(IV.iii. 91-92)

And here lies the paradox of tragedy as well as of man. Ford has attained a masterly dramatic expression in his study of man, as a bundle of contradiction, whose dignity and nobility of nature are such that he is capable of ennobling himself to a status even higher than that of the angels. And yet, if he succumbs himself to his overwhelming passions he is liable to degrade himself to a level even lower than that of the beast. When one has deeply contemplated this wonderful dramatic presentation of man's struggle for self-integrity, one cannot help concluding this article with recalling to one's mind Hamlet's unforgettable soliloquy:

What a piece of work is a man! How noble in reason! how
infinite in faculty! in form, in moving, how express and
admirable! in action how like an angel! in apprehension
how like a god! the beauty of the world! the paragon of
animals! And yet, to me, what is this quintessence of dust?
man delights not me;...

Notes

1. This and all subsequent quotations from **The Broken Heart** are from the "Regents

- Renaissance Drama" Series, ed. Donald K. Anderson, JR. (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1968).
2. All quotations from **'Tis Pity She's Whore** are from the Regents Renaissance Drama Series, ed. N.W.Bawcutt, (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1966).
 3. Shakespeare, William. **Hamlet**, ed. G.Rylands, (London: Oxford University Press, 1968). III.i.71-74.

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