

"Be-Holde the First Acte of this Tragedy" : Generic Symbiosis and Cross-Pollination in Jacobean Drama and the Early Modern Prose Novella

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“BE-HOLDE THE FIRST ACTE OF THIS TRAGEDY”: GENERIC SYMBIOSIS AND
CROSS-POLLINATION IN JACOBAN DRAMA AND THE EARLY MODERN
PROSE NOVELLA

by

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ABSTRACT
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The role of the early modern novella in the formation of Jacobean drama has been consistently understated in literary criticism. Source study and independent criticism of Elizabethan prose fiction, the two most common areas in which these novellas are discussed, are as quick to reference these works as they are to dismiss them. Using a primarily intertextual lens, it is the purpose of this dissertation to expose the rich relationship between early modern English, Italian, and Spanish novellas and their Jacobean dramatic counterparts. Specifically, my dissertation seeks to examine the deep thematic influences of the early modern novella on Jacobean drama, influences that go well beyond plot source contribution, focusing not strictly on the one-to-one relationship of novella X to play Y but on the interrelationships between the development of specific themes in both the novellas and the plays. By looking at the early modern novella and Jacobean drama in conjunction with one another, rather than in separate studies, as has been done previously, or in works of source criticism, where the novellas and plays have been looked at together but to different ends, this dissertation provides a clearer picture of exactly how these disparate but related genres speak to one another.

The argument is built around three salient themes that seem to arise consistently within and crossing over between these two genres — interiority versus theatricality/performativity, passion versus reason, and marriage versus the single state — and is arranged, by chapters, around these specific themes. By dealing with a group of novellas and plays, rather than a single novella-play relationship, this dissertation seeks to reveal patterns within the larger interaction of the early modern prose novella and Jacobean drama, patterns which can only be located by looking at several different novella-drama relationships. These patterns reveal, in turn, a richness of interconnectivity that I believe single author- or text-focused intertextual research cannot reach. Ultimately, by arguing for the novellas’ significant contributions to Jacobean dramatic works beyond the superficial levels of “textual borrowing” and “plot source material,” this dissertation reveals the “complexity and sophistication” of the early modern novella in its own right.

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INTRODUCTION

At an early modern studies conference I attended at the University of Toronto back in 2009, the overarching theme was “Beg, Borrow, and Steal: Acquisition in Early Modern England.” One of my colleagues, as a follow-up to my presentation on the use of source material in John Webster’s *Duchess of Malfi* (a precursor to the *Duchess* section in the first chapter of this dissertation), pointed out the potential difficulties of using the terms suggested by the conference’s title to describe the multiple ways pre-existing literary materials were used by early modern authors. Begging, of course, implied the act of actively requesting something. Borrowing, he stated, suggested that one used something and then simply returned it, while stealing suggested that the original was not left intact. Plagiarism, while the word did first arise in the early modern period, suggested — at least to our twenty-first-century ears — that the authors had somehow acted maliciously in their appropriation and use of prior texts. His thoughtful observations sparked a lively debate among conference-goers that stayed with me long after I had returned home: just how did early modern authors — and primarily Jacobean dramatists — utilize the texts that are now commonly considered as merely “plot source material”? I was convinced, then as I am now, that there remained significant research to be done on such “plot source material” and its relationship to these plays. Moving from critical works that delineate specific plot sources, such as those on Shakespeare by Geoffrey Bullough, Kenneth Muir, and others, to texts that investigate more detailed textual and thematic borrowings such as R. W. Dent’s *John Webster’s Borrowings* and myriad shorter articles and notes, to the current trend on intertextuality (see authors such as Robert S. Miola, Michele Marrapodi, and others), I proceeded to explore the history of

source study and intertextual studies in hopes of learning more about exactly how early modern authors utilized, and entered into conversation with, the preceding texts on which their later works were based.

Through this research I gradually learned more about what had already been a topic of interest for me — the prose novellas of early modern Europe. While I knew that they had been discussed for years as a part of plot source study, it soon became apparent that the English versions in particular of this widely popular Italian form had been largely neglected as literary works in and of themselves. Like the source critics, I was interested in learning more about the relationships between these novellas, their predecessors, and the plays that succeeded them; however, unlike most source critics, I was particularly interested in exploring these relationships beyond the superficial levels of “textual borrowing” and “plot source material.” In order to explore the rich relationship between early modern novellas and their dramatic counterparts, I felt that I had to look not only at the plays as coherent, complex literary texts, but also at the novellas as distinctly literary texts that provided more than just plot source material for the subsequent plays.

Intertextual critic Michele Marrapodi, in his introduction to his collection of essays on intertextuality, recognizes “the circular negotiations between theatre and prose” that are so crucial to my work (5). Lorna Hutson, in turn, notes the current lack of critical examination of the “formal and thematic concerns” of the early modern novella:

For while specific *novelle* have been examined as sources for specific plays, there has never seemed to be any question about what the *novelle* themselves, as a cultural form, were saying to contemporary readers. It may well be that, once the formal and thematic concerns of these *novelle* begin to emerge as central to the culture of sixteenth-century humanism, it will not be hard to see ways in which a number of Shakespeare’s plays dramatize concerns which are very similar. (Hutson, *Usurer’s Daughter* 88-89)

Caroline Lucas agrees that there is a current critical lack regarding the early modern novella, arguing that “it is indeed high time to reappraise Elizabethan fiction and to recognize its complexity and sophistication” (38). This dissertation, therefore, is the result of my coexisting desires both to pursue a detailed study of the intertextual relationship of the early modern novella and Jacobean drama and, through this study, to expose the “complexity and sophistication” of the early modern novella in its own right.

As of the writing of this dissertation, there had been no study that looked at the various narrative and dramatic elements of the early modern novella and Jacobean drama and how these interrelated genres shed light on one another, and certainly very few critical works that attribute to this group of novellas any real literary credence. Novellas are, of course, well known as the scouring grounds for many early modern dramatists: authors, from the more obscure, such as Markham or Machin (co-authors of *The Dumb Knight*, a play whose plot is based on William Painter’s [originally Bandello’s] novella entitled “The Lord of Virle”), to Shakespeare, are acknowledged to have used these novellas as a fruitful source of plot material for their dramatic works. However, the fact that these short, diverse tales were also popular in their own right during the early modern period and enjoyed a significant readership is usually glossed over or overlooked entirely. William Painter’s *Palace of Pleasure*, for example, went through two editions, not including the publication of subsequent volumes, and George Pettie’s extremely successful *A Petite Palace of Pettie His Pleasure* (connecting itself to Painter’s novellas by imitating the popular work’s title), was published in 1576 and subsequently reissued at least four times during the early modern period. Steve Mentz, in his 2006 *Romance for Sale in Early Modern England*, notes that “During the 1560s and 1570s, the most popular

genre of Elizabethan fiction was the novella” (123), and, according to R. W. Maslen, Elizabethan author Roger Ascham viewed the scandalous early modern novellas (which he hated) as “sophisticated[. They] tempt their youthful readers to employ their intellects in the service of extra-curricular activities. By this means they destroy that unthinking adherence to a set of simple values which Ascham holds to be the best qualification for trustworthy servants of the state” (6). Judging by Ascham’s passionate response alone, these novellas were clearly thought by contemporary readers to be popular enough to warrant public denunciation.

Despite their popularity during the early modern period, however, since that time the popular and critical favor of these texts has sharply declined, and as a result there has been relatively little critical attention paid to this genre’s *extended* contributions and interconnections to Jacobean drama (again, beyond those of source study) — and even less in the opposite direction (drama to novella), a connection which I explore intermittently over the course of this dissertation. While the Italian novellists have been studied at some length (even in connection to English prose fiction, such as in Pruvost’s older but still helpful 1937 study of *Bandello and Elizabethan Prose Fiction*), and Spanish novellists, particularly Cervantes, remain of great interest to scholars (although less so for his *novelas* than for his *Don Quixote*), critical interest in the English novellists, particularly William Painter (many of whose stories originate from Bandello, though through the highly altered and augmented styles of the French authors/translators Boaistuau and Belleforest), is very uncommon. Although recent critical works have acknowledged the English novellas of Painter and Pettie, such treatment is rare and usually takes place either within the larger context of English prose fiction (an incredibly

diverse genre, of which the novella is a related but distinct subgenre) or, as I have noted above, as the (usually briefly mentioned) source material for a dramatic work. In this latter situation, the novella, whether English or otherwise European, is often mentioned only to be rejected, the “formless clay” fashioned by the subsequent playwright into a “true” work of art. Comments like the following are common: “in *Othello* Shakespeare creates from Giraldi Cinthio’s dull, unnamed Moor a courageous and eloquent protagonist” (Miola 155). Generally regarded as unoriginal, “tedious,” and “all but unreadable” (Hutson, *Usurer’s* 88), the novellas are rarely regarded in English criticism as anything worthy of in-depth analysis. Although the norm, however, this attitude is not universal, even among the novellas’ most vocal detractors. Hutson, although dismissive of the early modern novella in general, defends her decision to discuss them in her 1994 book, *The Usurer’s Daughter: Male Friendship and Fictions of Women in Sixteenth-Century England*, both above and in the following excerpt:

Although we find these stories now all but unreadable, the fact of their contemporary popularity is attested by numerous allusions and exemplary imitations. As for evidence of their cultural survival in forms that we continue to find emotionally intelligible and compelling, we need look no further than Shakespeare. It is true that studies which examine Shakespeare's plays in relation to these sources have never seemed to account for anything very much. However, this is not in itself an argument that the subject is exhausted. (88-89)

Lucas, in her *Writing for Women: The Example of Woman as Reader in Elizabethan Romance* (1989), also acknowledges the usefulness of studying the early modern novella. Particularly interested in George Pettie’s *A Petite Palace of George Pettie His Pleasure*, she argues that, from a feminist, reader-response perspective, the English novellas have critical value, even going so far as to argue for “more fully developed characters” (55), something very few critics of the early modern novellas (excepting those working on

Cervantes) claim. It should be noted, however, that Lucas's critical interest in Pettie stems mainly from Pettie's purported interest in writing for a specifically *female* clientele and not from an interest in the novella form *per se*, an interest that I, along with critics such as Steve Mentz, believe is feigned rather than real.¹ This lack of sustained critical attention in regard to the popular English early modern novella is one of the gaps which I attempt to fill over the course of this dissertation. It is my hope to bring Painter back into the conversation by viewing him with both his contemporary novellists (primarily Cinthio and Cervantes, but also others) and with related thematic concerns within Jacobean drama.

Seeing this lack of serious scholarly interest in the early modern novella as something of a critical trend, I began to wonder why, particularly with the contemporary rise of critical interest in Elizabethan prose fiction, the novella had not been more commonly included in these newer publications. It has been my finding that, unfortunately, "Elizabethan prose fiction" has too often become synonymous with "Elizabethan prose romance," an important area of study but still only one of several subgenres of Elizabethan prose fiction, another being the early modern novella. Mentz, in his book mentioned above, does treat the novella as a distinct subgenre, although he too falls into the habit of using the broader term to mean prose romance; however, his view of the prose romance as "an antidote" (130) to the Italianate novella once again suggests that the novella is a stepping stone to the superior prose romance and the subsequent "rise of prose fiction" in England. Mentz's presentation suggests that the romance was the answer or solution to the novella, much as many source critics implicitly or explicitly

¹ Mentz notes, for example, in his *Romance for Sale in Early Modern England: The Rise of Prose Fiction*, that "The sly 'Gentleman' reminds readers that Greene's address to women readers (like those of Lyly, Pettie, and Riche) are to be read voyeuristically by male courtiers" (113).

dismiss the novella as necessarily inferior to the plays based on them. This suggestion discounts not only the early modern novellas' significant influence on the drama of the early modern period but also disregards the different phases of early modern novella — particularly the transition from novellas included within a frame narrative, such as those by Boccaccio in his *Decameron* or, later, by Marguerite de Navarre in her *Heptameron*, to free-standing, though meticulously planned and organized, novella collections, such as Painter's *Palace of Pleasure* or Cervantes's *Novelas ejemplares*.

Following Marguerite's *Heptameron*, the frame-narrative style of telling *nouvelle*-stories was largely, though not completely, tossed by the wayside. This transition is important because, without the frame narrative, the meaning of each novella had to be made clear elsewhere. As Maslen notes, there was a great fear in the early modern period of multiple, or incorrect, interpretations of written material, especially foreign works: "By the 1560s . . . Continental prose fiction . . . was wild. Its early translators handled it as if it were an expensive and highly dangerous exotic beast which needed to be kept at bay with every editorial control at their disposal. . . . [T]his new continental fiction set off a veritable stampede of interpretive dilemmas" (82). In this dissertation part of my argument stems from my belief that these "dilemmas" became amplified when the foreign novellas were taken out of their accompanying letters or frame narrative material, leaving them without any moral or explanatory framework. Even Marguerite's *nouvelles*, despite their original organization, were first published, with severe edits and alterations, as a collection of seemingly unconnected stories by Pierre Boaistuau in 1558 (Kelly 4), just as he would do in his contributions to the later *Histoires tragiques*, a translation and embellishment of Bandello undertaken by himself and Francois Belleforest. This kind of

de-framing and “enhanced translation” soon became popular with English authors as well, particularly William Painter, Geoffrey Fenton, Barnaby Rich, and George Pettie. These novellists, all working without the benefit of the earlier frame narratives, sought to retain the passionate nature of the stories while providing for their readers a concluding moral. Maslen views this situation as less “sophisticated” writers’ inability to “deal with their material”:

Neither Painter nor Fenton knew quite how to deal with their material. They responded to its blend of complexity, variety, and strangeness with a mixture of excitement and suspicion, and tried to bring these conflicting responses under control by means of lengthy prefatory essays and elaborate glosses, which struggle vainly to fit the new fiction into the procrustean bed of Elizabethan poetic theory. *But their unruly imports resisted all attempts to simplify them*, and the translators’ efforts to give them fabular morals inevitably degenerated into absurdities. *These absurdities are worth investigating, because the sophisticated writers of the following decade chose to construct their own narratives out of the contradictions which emerged when English translators encountered Italian domestic fictions.* (82-83, emphasis mine)

I would add to Maslen’s description that whereas in earlier versions of these novella-stories there was either an absence of overt moralizing or a clear separation of the moralizations from the stories via a frame narrative or other appended text, as these novellas were imported into England moralizing became an intrinsic part of each novella, with no separation of text from narrative voice. Helen Hackett acknowledges Maslen’s reading, while adding her own interpretation:

R. W. Maslen regards both Fenton and Painter as simply unable to cope with their material, confused by their own “conflicting responses” of “excitement and suspicion.” Alternately, it may be that they were consciously using moral disquisitions hypocritically, to deflect criticism for exploiting the commercial appeal of morally dubious reading matter. At the same time, though, such authorial attempts to dictate how their texts should be received implicitly acknowledge the difficulty of regulating interpretation of a story once it is in circulation. (41-42)

Hackett further argues that the novellas' "muddles and self-contradictions" (36) are the result of Painter's being "anxious to prove that just because he is writing about women's doings in love, and has some expectations of being read by women, does not mean that he is providing women with examples of disruptive or improper behavior" (36). In other words, he is attempting, ever so carefully, to depict the scandal desired by his readers without appearing to endorse such behavior. This balance, as Hackett notes, is very difficult for the novellists to sustain. This impetus, however, was felt beyond the works of the English and French novellists. Even Cinthio and Cervantes felt pressure, writing in the context of the Catholic Counter-Reformation and without a frame narrative (in Cervantes's case), to write in a more instructive manner than would have been necessary, for example, during the time of Boccaccio's writing (or Chaucer's, for that matter), when lustful or cozening friars could be laughed at with impunity. Cinthio, using a traditional frame structure and the plainer, fabular writing style of Bandello, does not overwhelm his stories with moralizing; however, the narrator still clearly inputs moralistic additions, such as when Disdemona laments, ". . . I fear greatly that I shall be a warning to young girls not to marry against their parents' wishes; and Italian ladies will learn by my example not to tie themselves to a man whom Nature, Heaven, and manner of life separate from us" ("Moor" *novelle* 39). Cervantes, writing under the oppressive environment of the Spanish Inquisition in addition to the influences of the Counter-Reformation, uses different, sometimes subtler yet still effective techniques to instruct his readers as to the "correct" interpretation of his *novelas*. Rejecting the frame-narrative structure, which is not used in Spain until Maria de Zayas y Sotomayor's *Novelas amorosas y ejemplares* (1637), he includes a "Prologue," which contains humor and an

assertion of the *novelas*' usefulness and lack of evil inclination. He also utilizes at times an intrusive and sarcastic narrator and is clearly in tune with the contemporary religious climate of Spain. The fact that his collection is called *Novelas ejemplares*, of course, is meant to imply that the *novelas* collected within are indeed intended for the benefit of those who read them: Cervantes asserts that "At my time of life I cannot afford to mess about with the hereafter" ("Prologue" 5), and that therefore there is nothing offensive in his *novelas*. If there is nothing overtly offensive, however, he suggests that there is "some hidden mystery which elevates them" ("Prologue" 5). These additions are clearly seeking to make up for something felt to be missing — the frame through which the novellas could have been explicated for their readers.

While both Maslen and Hackett provide their own valid explanations as to why there are "muddles and self-contradictions" within the novellas, I maintain that it is the loss of the frame as a mode of authorial communication, along with contemporary cultural pressures and philosophical influences, that led to the inclusion of moralization within the novellas themselves and thus triggered the complexity that inevitably follows. The narrator of each story is now in a position to be both the readers' friend and their instructor. He is (for in my primary texts they are all male) the same persona who not only speaks with the reader on intimate terms, as in a frame-narrative novella, but who also tells the reader how to read or interpret the story from within that very story; this thus allows for the fascinating complexity (what Maslen calls, I think incorrectly, the "absurdity") that is inevitably created from the difficulty of balancing the salaciousness of many of the stories with the usefulness that many of the novellas purport to have.

Noticing how common a dismissal of the complexity of these novellas seemed to be, I began to wonder how much this general dismissal might be due to popular veneration of the subsequent plays that relied on these novellas — particularly those attributed to Shakespeare. Mentz argues, and I agree, that “[b]y emphasizing the triumph of the public theater at the expense of printed fiction, early modern studies has long claimed for dramatists like Shakespeare a cultural independence that they did not have” (6). I have been significantly influenced in this specific train of thought by Julia Reinhard Lupton’s work on typology in her *The Afterlives of Saints: Hagiography, Typology, and Renaissance Literature*. In this book, Lupton argues that “every text or discourse necessarily forfeits an original intent, import, and context when it receives a new meaning and orientation in the evolving narrative of history” (xxix). That is, because of early modern drama (or because of canonical prose romance such as Philip Sidney’s *Arcadia*), our view of the early modern novellas which preceded such popular works has been significantly colored. Using the typological relationship between the Old and New Testament as her base, Lupton shows how “[t]he Hebrew Bible, taken as a distinct text with its own canonical organization and set of hermeneutic protocols, disappears into the Old Testament that takes its place once the New Testament has been installed as its fulfillment. Or it appears to disappear” (xviii). I believe that this same theory of typological “disappearance” can be applied to the relationship between the early modern novella and the subsequent early modern literature influenced by it. Early modern drama in particular is seen, wrongly, I think, as fulfilling the incomplete narratological mission begun by the medieval and early modern novellas. The novellas “appear to disappear”

into the novella-as-dramatic-source “once the [dramatic form] has been installed as its fulfillment” (xviii).

In making this argument I am not of course implying that the novella was “before” drama in the same way that the Old Testament was incontestably previous to the New; indeed, as is evident from such references to “acts” and “tragedies” as we find in the novellas, the novella, like the drama of the period, was engaging with and adapting dramatic themes and techniques for its own purposes, and this mutual engagement is crucial to what follows. Although in the following chapters I focus primarily on the novella’s influence on the play, it is important to note that the relationship between the two genres is fundamentally intertextual — there would be no early modern novellas without the drama that preceded it, and there would be no Jacobean drama without the influence of these novellas. In Painter’s novellas, for example, we can see strong elements of intertextuality and cross-pollination through their clear dramatic characteristics. Painter structures his tales around dramatic references, using theatrical language such as “play[ing] the last Acte of thys Tragedy” (“Countesse” 77), “mount[ing] on stage” (“Two Gentlewomen” 125), and “declar[ing] the last act of this Comical discourse” (144). As I will note in the chapters that follow, there is a constant feeling in many of the novellas of watching a play unfold: the characters are presented on stage and the plot is often divided into acts, with specific references denoting its theatrical genre (tragedy, comedy, or some combination of the two). However, with the meteoric rise of Shakespeare to the central position in the literary canon, along with the slower but also central rise of several of his dramatic contemporaries, the novella as a distinct early modern literary genre was simultaneously overshadowed and subsumed as

merely a contributing part of this later, larger whole, and this intertextual component was largely forgotten. Although we cannot “forget” about Shakespeare any more than we can ignore our knowledge of the existence of a “New” Testament, we can recognize the significant power and influence of the latter phenomenon over the former and seek to engage with them on equal footing rather than as “source” and some kind of “final product.” In doing so, the novella becomes once again more than mere source material, even in a discussion of its relationship to the drama that engages with it. As Mentz notes, “Prose fiction has long been the ignored little sibling of drama and verse in Renaissance studies” (219), but once the early modern novella has been established as a useful generic category within the larger genre of early modern prose fiction, novella-as-plot-source material (or novella as “antidote” to the rise of a greater English prose fiction) becomes just one aspect of the many interconnections between these two genres. Using Lupton’s theory of typology helps, I believe, to enrich the lens of intertextuality through which I deal with my primary problem: the nature of generic cross-pollination between the prose novella and Jacobean drama, and primarily the early modern prose novella’s thematic impact (well beyond plot source material) on Jacobean drama.

In my research for this dissertation, I have noted three salient themes that seem to arise consistently within and between these two genres — interiority versus theatricality/performativity, passion versus reason, and marriage versus the single state — and my argument is arranged, by chapters, around these specific themes. Unlike critics such as Miola or Dent, I am not dealing in my dissertation with a single author, as I am particularly interested in revealing patterns within the larger interaction of the early modern prose novella and Jacobean drama, patterns which can only be located by looking

at several different novella-drama relationships. These patterns reveal, in turn, a richness of interconnectivity that I believe single author- or text-focused intertextual research cannot reach, the focus inevitably being on that author or that specific text, with other works/authors influencing it but always ending up somehow inferior or, at the very least, Other. Once Jacobean dramatic works — even works attributed to Shakespeare — are not defined in opposition to the Other that is the early modern prose novella and *with* the dominant Authority that is canonical dramatic literature (to paraphrase Greenblatt), we can begin to see how they engage with and speak to one another in a rich and mutually beneficial way.

Therefore, using intertextuality as my primary critical lens and using Lupton's theory of typology to assist in forming the nature of the relationship, in this dissertation I focus on the symbiotic relationship between the early modern novella and Jacobean drama, and particularly on the rich thematic contributions of the early modern novella to Jacobean drama. Although there have been many studies on one or the other separately, or on the novellas as source material for specific early modern dramatic works, my dissertation offers an analysis that recognizes the cross-pollination that occurs between these two genres and seeks to understand how these two distinct but related genres shed light on one another. I seek not only to find specific affinities or diversions within the texts but to analyze the significant contributions of the early modern novella to Jacobean drama in order to suggest certain areas of connectivity that underscore the deeper relationship that these two genres have, beyond a mere source-to-play connection.

In order to focus on these patterns of narrative and dramatic thematic elements in the prose novellas and dramatic works of the early modern period I have focused my

research particularly on a select number of plays from the Jacobean period whose major or primary source can be somewhat definitively traced to one or more prose novellas, all of which, as I have mentioned above, were written without the benefit of a frame narrative. I have further focused my research on those Jacobean plays that are in some way derived from prose novella collections that were fairly fertile sources for other dramas of the period. Therefore I deal particularly (although not exclusively) with the following plays and novellas: two plays associated with William Painter's *Palace of Pleasure*: John Webster's *The Duchess of Malfi* and John Marston's *The Insatiate Countess*; two plays associated with Giambattista Gherardi Cinthio's *Hecatommithi*: William Shakespeare's *Othello* and his *Measure for Measure*; and two plays associated with Miguel de Cervantes's *Novelas ejemplares*: John Fletcher's *The Queen of Corinth* and his *The Fair Maid of the Inn*. Although this list may initially seem limiting to my study, I believe that these choices provide a good cross-section of the early modern novella (working with Italianate, French- and English- influenced novellas, as well as Spanish *novelas* and Italian *novelles*) as well as of Jacobean drama (including both well known and less canonical plays of the period). I also, as necessary, bring in numerous other novellistic and dramatic works, an example being my discussions of Shakespeare's *Measure for Measure*, in which I acknowledge its rich history, which is not only connected with Cinthio's *novelle* but also with his dramatic version, *Epitia*, and with George Whetstone's dramatic version *Promos and Cassandra* and his (uniquely subsequent) prose novella version in his *Heptameron*. I note, further, the vast intertextual history of all these works, recognizing that even Boccaccio, considered the most

accomplished reviver of the novella form, was in fact working with borrowed and transformed material.

Ultimately, my dissertation seeks to examine the deep thematic and narrative influences of the early modern novella on Jacobean drama, focusing not strictly on the one-to-one relationship of novella X to play Y but on the interrelationships between the development of specific themes in both the novellas and the dramatic works. I believe that by looking at the early modern novella and Jacobean drama in conjunction with one another, rather than in separate studies as has been done previously, or in works of source criticism, where the novellas and plays have been looked at together but to different ends, I have provided in the pages below a clearer picture of exactly how these disparate but related genres speak to one another.

As I noted above, I have organized my dissertation thematically into three chapters. My first chapter, "Interiority versus Performativity/Theatricality," discusses the consciousness with which performativity and theatricality are utilized in both the early modern novella and Jacobean drama, in contrast to the interiority that is, in disparate but related ways, developed within each genre. I analyze the performative aspects of the genre of the novella, which was intended originally not merely to be read silently but to be read aloud or performed before a group of people, and look at this in conjunction with the literary aspects (using Lukas Erne as a base) of the dramatic works. Then, looking more closely at specific texts, I apply this seeming dichotomy to individual character portrayal within and across the two genres and, ultimately, show how the treatment of interiority and performativity/theatricality in the novellas strongly influenced its corresponding treatment in the subsequent plays.

My second chapter, "Passion versus Reason," discusses the extremely prevalent thematic debate between the desires of the body versus the logic of the mind. As Philip Sidney so eloquently shows in his *Old Arcadia*, the pull within individuals between passion, or one's "natural" urges, and reason, is a powerful internal battle. In this chapter I reveal how these novellists take advantage of the many competing definitions of passion and reason during the early modern period in order to create novellas with complex, contradictory morals that very often satisfy their readers' desire both for passion and for (at least the appearance of) a moral, reasoned conclusion. I further show how Jacobean playwrights recognized the complexity of these novellas' conclusions and sought to explore and exploit this complexity by essentially removing any sense of perceived moral closure. Once again, I attempt to show the fluidity of this seeming dichotomy within both the novellas and the plays, and how the novellas' rich treatment of this theme influenced its corresponding treatment in the Jacobean plays.

My third and final chapter, "Marriage versus the Single State," grounds my dissertation in the early modern period. By examining marriage and its converse in the early modern period, both in Protestant England and Counter-Reformation (Catholic) Europe, I reveal how these early modern novellists took advantage of the confused and contradictory definitions of marriage and the often displaced and misunderstood single state in order to create novellas that questioned these contradictions as well as the changes that were constantly being attempted in both Protestant England and Counter-Reformation Europe. In turn, I show how Jacobean dramatists responded in their plays to the complex and contradictory representations of marriage and the single state in the novellas they used as their base. While this theme obviously shares similarities with that

of the previous chapter, the two themes' interrelatedness further emphasizes the symbiotic relationship of the two genres.

I end with a brief conclusion which further ties together the strands of interconnectedness that hover at the edges of this dissertation. It is clear, by the end of this dissertation, that while there is ample cross-pollination between the two genres, there are no clear borders. The thematic elements of each chapter necessarily fade into one another, as do the various thematic and other elements within the prose and drama of the period. It is difficult, as Mentz, Lucas, Hutson, and others have shown, to look at even these two genres in a vacuum, and this dissertation represents only a small beginning. I therefore emphasize here a need for further research and scholarship on the interconnectedness and interdependence of theme and literary technique in and through these seemingly disparate early modern genres.

CHAPTER ONE: INTERIORITY VERSUS PERFORMATIVITY/THEATRICALITY

“I see the play so lies / That I must bear a part” (Perdita, Shakespeare’s *The Winter’s Tale*, IV.iv.672-673)

In Shakespeare’s play *The Winter’s Tale*, the overt (meta-)theatricality of the drama’s characters is at several points explicitly stated. Perdita’s lines in the quote above, for example, illustrate a clever “play” on dramatic terminology. In one interpretation, the action, or “play,” around her has fallen in such a way that she is forced to participate: she, like Florizel, must disguise herself in order to flee to Leontes. In another interpretation, however, “the play” — the actual theatrical performance, as a re-presentation of a fictitious storyline — is lying to or deceiving the audience, forcing her, as a character within this false storyline (who was in turn traditionally, in the early modern period, played by a boy actor) to take part in this false world upon the stage. Through this second interpretation, it becomes clear that her statement is not only a clever reference to her own performativity — “I am a character in a play” — but also of interiority, a revelation of deliberate self-consciousness — “I, as an individual (actor and/or character), am forced to change myself and my actions: to become a part of the lie.” Through the use of a single line, Shakespeare invokes both the self-referential performativity of the actor playing a role (one not indicative of his interiority) and the dual nature of Perdita herself: Perdita, who was once, in a way, a member of the audience, has now become self-consciously performative: an aspect of her interiority has been tentatively revealed through the self-conscious performativity of the moment and the larger performativity of the play.

This conscious theatricality, which in turn suggests an obscured and ambiguous interiority, has its roots in the play’s main source, Robert Greene’s prose work *Pandosto*. As Sandra Clark points out, there is an insistent “. . . metatheatricality of [Renaissance]

drama, [with] its constant reminders to the audience of their status as audience. . . . ‘All the world’s a stage’ was one of the great commonplaces of the period” (16). This conscious theatricality, however, is not simply created within the drama of the Renaissance but is also found within the prose fiction of the early modern period, much of which was utilized as source material for these plays. *Pandosto*, like much of early modern prose fiction, is not easily classified according to genre; it crosses several generic boundaries, containing elements that could in turn categorize it as prose romance, novella, and even prose-drama. As Jacques Derrida states, “a text cannot belong to no genre [nor can it] be without . . . a genre. Every text participates in one or several genres, there is no genreless text” (61). It is already commonly accepted that Greene’s *Pandosto* “participates” in several generic categories; it is my further assertion that the (somewhat loosely categorized) novellas and dramas with which I am working also “participate[] in . . . several genres.” This argument for generic flexibility or interconnectivity has of course been extended in the recent past by critics such as Lukas Erne and others, who contend that it is acceptable and not necessarily anachronistic to focus on the plays of the early modern period as written pieces of literature as well as “scripts” written for stage performance. If it is indeed true that (at least some) plays were (re-)written for the page as well as the stage, it is entirely conceivable that the novellas,² which were so commonly used as source material, were also written with the intention that they be performed as well as read. It will become clear, as this chapter continues, that many early modern novellas were written with dramatic effects, as well as effects more typical of those written for a (strictly) reading audience, in mind. Like the popular contemporary writer

² I use the English term here as a matter of convenience to refer to the Spanish *novela*, the French *nouvelle*, and the Italian *novella*. When discussing particular texts, I will use the language-specific term.

William Painter, who called his short stories novellas but whose works could also be considered generically flexible, Greene uses overt theatrical language in such a way that calls the reader's attention to the performativity of the text: "and to close up the comedy with a tragical stratagem, he [Pandosto] slew himself" (317). In this example the reader is watching the action in her mind and is able to picture it that much more clearly because he is familiar with the "tragical stratagem" of suicide. It is through literary clues such as these that the reciprocity of the complex and at times ambiguous relationship between drama and prose fiction can initially be discerned.

The novella, as a loose generic category, serves, throughout the early modern period, not only as a convenient source for plot material — indeed I believe few critics would dismiss Greene's generically ambiguous *Pandosto* as a source for Shakespeare's *Winter's Tale* as lightly as they have Painter's novellas — but also as a category of prose fiction that is inherently and self-consciously dramatic. Performativity in particular, both as a theme and as a literary technique, is rather to be expected in the early modern novella, particularly when its firm roots in oral tradition are considered: "The genre of the novella was widespread in sixteenth-century Italy. It enjoyed great elevation after the *Prose* by Bembo indicated the *Decameron* as a linguistic model and *continued to rely on the traditional sources which oral narrative had always drawn on*" (Perocco 37, emphasis mine). As part of an oral tradition that goes back at least as far as Homer, many of these shorter stories were, as I mentioned in the introduction, originally intended not merely to be read silently but to be read aloud, or performed, before a group of people. This history is clearly emphasized in the format of works such as those by Giovanni Boccaccio, Geoffrey Chaucer, Marguerite de Navarre, George Whetstone, and Giraldi

Cinthio, all of whom convey their novellas via a larger frame narrative, one in which characters *perform* their stories aloud for an established group of characters in order to gain the approbation and appreciation of a listening audience that includes these characters as well as assumed readers. Those novellists who moved away from the traditional frame narrative format retained these dramatic aspects of the frame narrative elements, though in slightly different ways, often turning to overt theatrical language and form.

Painter's and Cervantes's novellas, for example, although not organized around a frame narrative, are organized in such a way that they speak to one another as a group and also highlight the conscious drama contained within the individual novellas. Painter, in particular, as an author-translator, gathered many of these frame-narrative tales and situated them in such a way that they both stood on their own and were supported by the tales that surrounded them. R. W. Maslen in particular notes this, stating that "[Painter] arranges [his stories] in an order which sometimes suggests that he was more interested in setting up witty comparisons than in propping up the social hierarchy" (91). This is particularly evident in his arrangement of three novellas, "The Countess of Celant," "Rhomeo and Julietta," and "The Two Gentlewomen of Verona," which, taken together, look at the irrationality of passion from three different perspectives (which I will treat in depth in Chapter Two). All three also contain dramatic elements that help to highlight the characters' conscious performativity. In his version of "The Countesse of Celant," for example, Painter's narrator makes reference to Bianca Maria's (the Countess's) second marriage as a comedy (though presumably a dark one). Gonzaga, the suitor who, at the last moment, loses the hand of Bianca Maria to the Count of Celant, "laughed at the

matter, and prayed God for that the thing was so wel broken off: and he did foresee already what issue that *Comedy* would haue, beyng very famylyar for certayne Dayes in the House of Bianca Maria” (52-53, emphasis mine). This “comedy,” ostensibly, is alluding to the cuckolding that he thinks is likely to take place based on what Gonzaga has seen of Bianca Maria’s “loose” behavior. The comedy, however, ends as a tragedy according to the narrator: “The Countesse hauing sentence pronounced vppon hir . . . as conueyed out of the Castell, and ledde to the common place of execution, *where a Scaffolde was prepared for hir to play the last Acte of thys Tragedy*” (77, emphasis mine). This theatrical language is utilized in Painter as a way to highlight the performativity of the novellas despite the lack of a frame narrative: the stories “come to life” before the reader without the additional assistance of another character as narrator, abandoning the frame instead for an omniscient, untrustworthy narrator who, in a sense, functions as another character and who can both control and comment upon the action.

As stated in my introduction, my research in this dissertation focuses on intertextuality in the early modern period and the surprising ways in which it functions across the genres of the early modern novella and Jacobean drama. In this chapter I note how an understanding of interiority and performativity/theatricality connects these two genres in ways that heretofore have not been observed. In order to do so, however, I have to acknowledge what I am dealing with, and what I am not. First, I am undoubtedly dealing with two slippery categories: interiority and performativity/theatricality (And even performativity and theatricality, although closely related, present their own difficulties as they elude specific definition).

I find it important to begin a definition of these terms by noting that although I am bringing in these categories, I am not interested in subjectivity; nor am I taking a phenomenological approach. Despite the current critical trend regarding notions of character in Renaissance literature, there are some critics who have argued for a sense of interiority without invoking subjectivity or the idea of Renaissance characters as “real people.” Katharine Eisaman Maus’s 1995 book, *Inwardness and Theater in the English Renaissance*, is significant to my research because in it she argues for the relevance of inward character in light of opposing critical opinion. She argues, correctly I believe, that “inwardness” and “subjectivity” are not one and the same, and that one can look at inwardness without necessarily invoking the subjectivity debate (29-30). She contends, and shows by example, that inwardness was very much a part of early modern life and that in many different texts one can find the disparity between inward and outward character and the problems this disparity caused, particularly in never being able to be sure that what is displayed outwardly accurately reflects that which is inside a person. Maus demonstrates that this is not only a current interest but a topic that held great fascination in the early modern period:

when one looks at a wide variety of printed material produced in the reigns of Elizabeth and James, it becomes difficult to claim that Hamlet’s boast of “that within” is anachronistic — that Shakespeare has mysteriously managed to jump forward in time and expropriate the conceptual equipment of a later era. . . . This book . . . will explore the afflictions and satisfactions that attend upon the difference between an unexpressed interior and a theatricalized exterior. . . . It is not . . . that the Renaissance invents a previously unarticulated or inarticulable possibility. Rather, . . . the sense of discrepancy between “inward disposition” and “outward appearance” seems unusually urgent and consequential for a very large number of people, who occupy virtually every person on the ideological spectrum. (3, 13)

Maus presents an astute analysis of the difficulties of differentiating interiority (what she calls “inwardness”) and performativity and connects these crises specifically to the different epistemological approaches of the Protestant and Catholic churches. While the issue of religion is certainly a factor in some of my texts (I address this in my third chapter on marriage and the single state), and I am certainly interested in the ongoing epistemological question, “how can one person know another?” (31), I am interested primarily in the influences of the early modern novella on Jacobean drama and how these influences manifest themselves in surprising ways in the related (and sometimes only tangentially related) texts in this study.

My definition of interiority is, then, much the same as Maus’s definition of “inwardness”: ultimately it is a flexible notion, “at once privileged and elusive, an absent presence ‘interpreted’ to observers by ambiguous inklings and tokens” (11). She argues, rightly, I believe, that “the public domain seems to derive its significance from the possibility of privacy — from what is withheld or excluded from it — and vice versa” (Maus 29). We are compelled to seek the interior in the exterior; that is, we are interested in what outward actions (performativity/theatricality) tell us about a person or character’s inner life, because that is *all* we have to go on, imperfect though it may be.

The terms performativity and theatricality, which serve as problematic expressions of interiority in this chapter, are somewhat interchangeable for me in this particular study and will generally be used as such: the main difference is that I see performativity as being a cluster of outward words and actions — a public persona or the quality of someone putting on a show — while I see theatricality with the exact same definition save that theatricality sometimes connotes a performativity that is even more

conscious than normal and that may consciously refer to *stage* performativity. We all “perform” myriad roles in our lives — daughter, student, father, employee — as do the characters in the novellas and the plays. Occasional overt or covert references to the stage can bring this performativity to an additional level of awareness or consciousness — what on the stage might be called metatheatricality but in the novella simply shows an awareness and conscious connection between the novella and the drama of the period. Maus notes that she has chosen to look at inwardness and early modern theater not only because this is her area of interest (31) but also because she believes that “the English Renaissance stage seems deliberately to foster theatergoers’ capacity to use partial and limited presentations as a basis for conjecture about what is undisplayed or undisplayable” (32). I would agree with this and extend its application not only to the drama of the period but also to the novellas included in this study. Like Maus, I am compelled by my interests to question the relationship between interiority and performativity/theatricality. For me, however, this relationship between interiority and performativity/theatricality is explored not in the drama alone, but particularly in the intertextual connections between the early modern novella and Jacobean drama.

In developing and writing this chapter, I was necessarily influenced by the energetic debate currently raging in many early modern circles regarding the issue of “character.” Clark, in *Renaissance Drama*, touches on the notion of character on the early modern stage, noting a palpable change in both playwright and actor:

Marston was notoriously adventurous in his vocabulary, as Jonson jeeringly noticed, but this usage does indicate the development of a new attitude to stage representation, a sense that “drama is turning to the depiction of individuals, characters with a particular ‘identity’ or inner self.” Contemporary responses to the acting of Burbage indicate that he moved his audience through his power to create an illusion through characterization. (18)

Writing from the perspective that playwrights wrote solely for the stage, Clark at once notes a change in writing style that conveys a “depiction of individuals” and an on-stage “illusion through characterization,” suggesting that the appearance of an “inner self,” or interiority, on stage was both the result of authorial changes and the skill of the actor, intimating that a true individual did not exist on the page but only when brought to life on the stage. Stephen Greenblatt, already well known for his interest in self-fashioning in the early modern period, argues for character creation that occurs in one’s encounter with another seeming dichotomy: “the authority and the alien” (*Renaissance Self-Fashioning* 9). While Greenblatt is interested in the fashioning of character and discusses such things as an “inner self” and a “private identity,” he suggests that there is an emptiness to the plays and to the characters, and that the characters must constantly call themselves into existence: “The character repeats himself in order to continue to be that same character on the stage. Identity is a theatrical invention that must be reiterated if it is to endure” (201). Like Clark, Greenblatt implies that character is something that is “called into existence” in theatrical performance (whether in “real life” or on the stage). Lukas Erne’s recent work, *Shakespeare as Literary Dramatist* (2003), moved the discussion of dramatic character on the stage away from literal performance and suggested the literariness of some of the plays in and of themselves. Looking at *Hamlet*, for example, Erne states that

If a character passes within a few lines from enthusiasm to dejection, this challenges expectations and requires explanation. The long texts [of *Hamlet*] thus invite us to inquire into a character who *conveys a strong sense of interiority and psychological complexity*. In Q1, in contrast, the Prince’s character is more easily understandable and therefore can recede behind the intrigue and action which the stage play is most interested in. (236, emphasis mine)

Erne's work therefore suggests that character, or at least the "sense" of character, *can* exist on the page. William Dodd, in his chapter "Character as Dynamic Identity: From Fictional Interaction Script to Performance" (in Yachnin and Slights's 2009 *Shakespeare and Character: Theory, History, Performance, and Theatrical Persons*), similarly argues for the "sense" of a character that we get from reading Shakespeare:

If character is not essential, as [Lynne] Magnusson persuasively argues, then where do we locate our sense of a character's quiddity and agency? I suggest that we locate it in the *dramatis persona*'s discourse biography — the unique history of interactions that accrues to its character and is more than the sum of its total determinations. The make-believe game of drama wouldn't work if we weren't able to process discourse events as capable in principle of clinging to characters as well as to contexts and plots. . . . Verbal interactions adhere to *dramatis personae* and define their relation, moment by moment, to semantic identities. They produce a self to which social and moral identities can be attached or by which they can be challenged. (63)

These statements lend themselves to further speculation, for if both theatricality and "a strong sense of interiority" can be found within the characters of early modern drama *in the plays' written form* via their various "verbal interactions," then the same, arguably, might well be said for prose works of the same time period.

This, therefore, is the position I hold when I look at the plays and novellas in this study. It is not my goal to investigate the notion of character other than to ground my argument in my belief that "character," however it is created or understood, inheres both on the page and on the stage (and primarily, always, on the page) and that, as Paul Yachnin and Jessica Slights so aptly state in the introduction to their recently published essay collection *Shakespeare and Character: Theory, History, Performance, and Theatrical Persons* (2009), "Although recognizing 'character' as a valid analytic category became anathema for many scholars, Shakespeare's characters have continued to have a

lively existence for theater practitioners, playgoers, students, and general readers” (3).

“Character,” in all its myriad manifestations, “has made a comeback” (1).

While I felt the need to address the “character” debate, however, I believe that my work here is only tangential to the issue of the existence of “character” in early modern texts. I neither argue for nor against the controversial idea of “inward, agential personhood” (Yachnin and Slights 3), though I do agree with these critics when they state that

even if it . . . emerged that early modern ideas about character were so at odds with modern views as to constitute an essentially different understanding of the term — none of that would change the historical fact that character, defined more or less as self-same, capable of autonomy and change, and possessed of some measure of inwardness and inscrutability, has stood at the center of the literary engagement with Shakespeare for at least the past 350 years. That engagement has come to form an integral part of what Shakespeare means, and of how his plays connect with and influence the world. Even if the modern emphasis on character turns out to have been a massive mistake, it could not now be prised away from Shakespeare. (5)

I am interested, not in whether (or not) there is a psychologically complex notion of “character” or subjectivity existent in my texts, but in how elements of interiority (however ambiguous) are revealed *through* the conscious theatricality or performativity inherent in these texts. To argue that there is conscious theatricality/performativity in both the drama and the prose work of the early modern period, and that this theatricality/performativity in and of itself reveals, or serves as a vehicle for, a certain level of interiority is not to simplify the issue. I am interested, in this chapter, not in the *existence* of “character” as it continues to be debated but rather in the similarities and cross-pollinations apparent in the *utilization* of theatricality/performativity and any resultant interiority that appears in the novellas and dramas. Critics such as Clark, Erne, Yachnin, Slights, Bristol, Dodd, and others suggest that these elements exist in the drama

of the early modern period, and I am interested in building upon their assertions in order to explore the sources for such use and manipulation. Based in part on Christy Desmet's reading of Shakespearean character, I see three basic ways in which interiority is conveyed in both the novellas and the dramas: (1) pre-existing (i.e. before the start of the text) habitual nature as described by other (potentially untrustworthy) characters or by the (similarly questionable) "omniscient" narrator; (2) actions/words of the character as he/she interacts with other characters; and (3) soliloquies of the character when he/she is alone with the audience. All three suggest and reinforce the complex relationship within early modern texts between interiority and the performativity/theatricality with which it both integrates and engages. This is a close, complex relationship that, in turn, mirrors the relationship between the early modern novella and Jacobean drama, and between generic limitations within the early modern period in general. Just as Maslen states that "When reading sixteenth-century texts it is dangerous to make clear-cut distinctions between genres" (21), it is similarly difficult to differentiate between "interiority" and "theatricality" or "performativity," if indeed there is a way to do this at all. All of these seeming dichotomies are inextricably intertwined, and I hope to show just how the complex representations of interiority and performativity/theatricality are represented in the novella and how, in turn, they influence the drama that has always already influenced its own source material.

My first chapter, then, "Interiority versus Performativity/Theatricality," discusses the consciousness with which performance or theatricality is utilized in both the early modern novella and Jacobean drama and the ways in which this very performativity paradoxically reveals the characters' own "muddled" interiority (Dent 31). This serves to

support the overarching thesis of this dissertation, which argues that the use of early modern novellas as source material affected not only the plot but also the themes and formal and literary techniques of the drama of the period. I begin with Painter and Webster and the Duchess of Malfi story, where I pay particular attention to the theatrical nature of the novella's introductory pages and its connection to the development of theatricality and interiority within Webster's play, particularly in Act One, Scene One. From there I move on to a detailed discussion of Bosola. First I analyze how he is adapted from Painter to Webster and his much-expanded role in Webster's play; then I move on to a more intertextual assessment of the relationship between Bosola and Shakespeare's Iago (*Othello*); and, finally, I make connections between these characters and Cinthio's Ensign (the source for Iago from his novella in his *Hecatommithi* [1565]). In my next section I discuss the thread of theatricality and its connection to interiority through the relationship of two of Cervantes's *novelas* — *La ilustre fregona* and *La fuerza de la sangre* — to two of Fletcher et al.'s plays — *The Fair Maid of the Inn* and, briefly, *The Queen of Corinth*. I end the chapter with a discussion of the history of Shakespeare's *Measure for Measure*, a play whose conscious performativity has long been a topic of (often legalistic) scholarly debate.

Having begun this chapter with a brief look at the relationship between Greene's *Pandosto* and Shakespeare's *The Winter's Tale*, and having made some initial connections between the theatrical/performative nature of Greene's and Shakespeare's texts, I feel that it is helpful to move from there to an examination of some more specific examples of characters' overt theatricality and its relation to interiority in the novellas

and plays of the early modern period. A particularly good study for this chapter is the story of the Duchess of Malfi. The story of the Duchess, although made famous by John Webster, had, by the time he wrote his play, already been told several times over. The first recorded version is found in Matteo Bandello's collection of *novelles*, with subsequent prose versions found in Pierre Boaistuau's and François de Belleforest's *Histoires tragiques*, William Painter's *Palace of Pleasure*, Simon Goulart's *Admirable and Memorable Histories*, Thomas Beard's *Theatre of God's Judgments*, and George Whetstone's *Heptameron*; dramatic versions include John Webster's version, *The Duchess of Malfi*, and Lope de Vega's *El mayordomo de la duquesa de Amalfi* (commonly translated from Spanish as *The Duchess of Malfi's Steward*). In way of brief summary, the story tells of a young widowed Duchess who, warned against remarriage by her controlling brothers, marries her master of household (a marriage that is beneath her), an action that ultimately leads to her death and the deaths of all the main characters of the story. While these central features of the *plot* remain essentially unchanged in each telling (showing, in a way, the irrelevance of plot in favor of the unique ways in which each version unfolds), there are distinct differences and interesting cross-pollinations between the different versions. There are of course some plot differences worthy of note: Beard, for example, unlike the other versions, places a majority of the blame on Antonio rather than the Duchess. Boaistuau and Belleforest, on the other hand, maintain sympathy for Antonio but are also strongly moralistic translators; they therefore add liberally to the more strictly "entertaining"³ *novelle* from which they translated. Yet despite (and perhaps

³ See Rodax: "It is clear that Bandello is not so much concerned with the edification of his readers as he is with their pleasure" (82), and Clements and Gibaldi: "The practice of conversing or telling tales primarily for the sheer entertainment of doing so is everywhere present in the novella tradition . . . Bandello, Lope de

sometimes, rather paradoxically, *because* of) its moralizing additions, the story and its characters remain engaging and interesting throughout its various versions. As Yvonne Rodax somewhat ambiguously states in her book *The Real and the Ideal in the Novella of Italy, France and England*, Antonio and the Duchess, while they “appear as types, . . . are no less human for all that” (131).

Very few critics — not even Rodax — see the issue of interiority as a by-product of the self-conscious performativity of the novella characters. The characters are, instead, generally condemned as Theophrastan — characters in the vein of Thomas Overbury’s short stereotypical descriptions of a “Tailor” or a “Meer Widow.” In her recent book, *The Invention of Suspicion: Law and Mimesis in Shakespeare and Renaissance Drama* (2007), Lorna Hutson, by no means a fan of the early modern novella, combats Erne’s “contention that the longer, more ‘literary’ versions of Shakespeare’s plays are the ones which offer hints of interiorized motivation and ‘rounded’ character” (110) by taking the “flatness” of novella characters for granted:

the character of “Gertred” in Q1 [of *Hamlet*] is actually closer to that of Geruth in the fifth history of the fifth volume of Francois Belleforest’s *Histoires Tragiques* (157) than it is to Q2 or F of *Hamlet*. As Belleforest’s *histoire* was designed for print consumption, just as Erne persuasively contends that the longer versions of Shakespeare’s play texts were, mimesis cannot be said to be an effect solely of designing a text for literary consumption. (111)

In order for this argument to stand, Hutson must assume not only that Belleforest’s *Histoires tragiques* was written only to be read privately (rather than read or performed publicly or in a group setting), but also that all characters in Belleforest’s *Histoires tragiques* are flat. Hutson therefore implies, through her assumption of flat, Theophrastan

Vega . . . [this] seems to be rooted in a belief in the recreational function of both hearing or reading stories” (9).

characters, that the novellas of the early modern period lacked dramatic or performative characteristics, an argument I hope to thoroughly refute.

In spite of this general critical trend toward the dismissal of the early modern novella, there are clearly performative aspects of the novella that are in need of further investigation. By analyzing these “dramatic” aspects, it becomes clear that there is a degree of interiority, or at least an awareness of interiority and its interplay with the outward performativity or theatricality of the novella characters. In fact, it is these hints, drawn from Painter’s novella and adapted for Webster’s dramatic version, that create a basis for the method of overt theatrical characterization developed within *The Duchess of Malfi*. In this section I intend to argue that the characterization in Webster’s play has been greatly influenced by the characterization in Painter’s novella and that the characters’ interiority is profoundly influenced by this overt theatricality. Once this point has been made, I move on to an intertextual discussion of the play’s relation to another *novelle*-play pairing: Cinthio’s “Moor” *novelle* from his *Hecatommithi* and Shakespeare’s *Othello*.

The initial characterization in Painter’s “Duchesse” novella is revealed through the moralistic lens of a narrator. The role of the narrator in the early modern novella is of particular importance, because generally speaking the narrator is not an omniscient, truth-telling narrator but, following the tradition of the frame narrative, where the narrator is just another character in a larger story, is just another character with his or her own biases that need to be taken into account. He/she is within the narrative, a part of it rather than merely outside it. While this is more obviously true of those novellas situated within a larger frame narrative, the many different versions of the Duchess story, mentioned

earlier, can provide several examples of the bias of the narrator. Painter's novella uses a version of the novella's conventional introduction, which is summarized by Robert J.

Clements and Joseph Gibaldi, in their book *Anatomy of the Novella*, as follows:

The personalities of such recurrent novellistic types as the jealous older husband, the lively young wife, the persistent paramour [etc.] . . . are . . . usually *told* rather than *shown* — or, more properly, *told* and then *shown* — to the listener-reader. The customary practice was to inform the audience of a character's stock personality at the outset of "prologue" of the tale and then to present striking illustrations of that personality in action. (63)

This is roughly what occurs in Painter's own introductory material; however, it need not be seen, as implied here, in a negative light. Painter's narrator, as the novella advances, complicates these initial descriptions rather than simply "showing" them. By the end of the novella neither Antonio nor the Duchess are completely guilty or completely innocent. The bias of Painter's narrator and his heavy reliance on fortune allow for a flexibility of character (in which their overt theatricality is somewhat distanced from, or belies, their interiority) that challenges his straightforward beginning and further complicates his moralizing additions.

Painter's narrator in his "Duchesse" novella begins with a long, positive⁴ description of Antonio: he is "a Gentleman," "valiant of his persone, a good man of Warre, and wel esteemed amons the best, had a passing number of good graces, which made him to be loved and cherished of every wight" (4-5). He states that Antonio's only purpose in returning home from France is, innocently enough, to "lyve at rest and to avoyd trouble" (5). As this description indicates (longer by far than any description of the Duchess), Painter's novella is *not* the tragedy of the Duchess but is rather the tragedy of

⁴ I argue this in opposition to T. F. Wharton's misleading statement on the critical consensus: "Various commentators have pointed out that, contrary to the sources, Webster makes Antonio's character a noble and accomplished one" (82). Antonio, indeed, is portrayed as much more noble in Painter than he is in Webster's play.

the innocent Antonio, an alternative bias that is, interestingly, also recognized and carried over in Lope de Vega's later dramatic version, *El mayordomo*, the title of which emphasizes Antonio's, rather than the Duchess's, role. That Antonio initially signifies virtue and innocence is further emphasized by the fact that his downfall is attributed in Painter to "the heavens," which so direct Antonio's life that even though he, like others, may "seemeth the wisest man, [he is] guided by misfortune, [and] hasteth himself with stouping head to fall headlonge into hys death and ruine" (5). It is this descriptive introduction — with Painter simply *telling* us about Antonio's supposed "character" and thus, ostensibly, shaping our opinion of him — that often leads critics to believe in the lack of interiority of the novella's characters. This introduction, however, is not as simplistic as it may appear; its simplicity is challenged later in the text by the constant reshaping of his (and the Duchess's) characters as the story advances. Antonio becomes a very contradictory character, with many different "definitions" of his character vying for priority: he is a gentleman but he is a servant; he is "commanded" to attend the Duchess at the same time that she acknowledges the position "vnworthy for [his] calling" (6); he does not want to accept the Duchess's offer of the stewardship and thus he accepts; and he sees and recognizes the problems that could be caused by the Duchess's love for him and "yet knowing loue to haue no respect to state or dignity, determined to folow his fortune, and to serue hir which so louingly shewed hir selfe to him" (10). Webster, too, grasped this contradictory style of characterization and adapted this same introductory technique for his own dramatic purposes.

Webster mirrors and builds off of Painter's characterization technique by beginning his play with a series of opinionated, moralistic character descriptions. Lee Bliss calls this

beginning “a panoramic overview of normality, a sense of both social and moral security” (141). She argues that “Far from being thrust into the plot’s action, we can discern no plot at all” (141). She does not, however, provide an explanation for this introduction. She sees it as a “calm surface [that] will of course explode” (141); and perhaps it is, but it is a calm surface that is already complicating the characterization of each of the play’s principal characters. If this scene provides a sense of “grounding” in “traditional values,” the contradictions of several of the descriptions soon puts an end to this illusion (141). Antonio, Bosola, and Delio replace Painter’s single, biased, “omniscient” narrator and become (untrustworthy) narrators in their own right, sharing descriptions and opinions of those around them at the court of the Duchess of Malfi. These descriptions are initiated by Delio, who is interested in learning Antonio’s opinion on a wide range of courtly places and persons. Delio first asks Antonio about the French court, from where he has recently returned. Antonio sums up the French court in a mere eighteen lines or so, and then the descriptions of the play’s characters follow. The first description he provides is that of Bosola, who first appears in the drama pestering the Cardinal for money:

The only court-gall; — yet I observe his railing
Is not for simple love of piety;
Indeed he rails at those things which he wants,
Would be as lecherous, covetous, or proud,
Bloody, or envious, as any man,
If he had means to be so. (I.i.23-28)

Delio’s description of the Cardinal follows; he states that, according to popular description, “he’s a brave fellow, / Will play his five thousand crowns at tennis, dance, / Court ladies, and one that hath fought single combats” (I.i.149-151). His brother Ferdinand, the Cardinal’s “[Twin] / In Quality” (I.i.167), is then described: he is of a “most perverse and turbulent nature; / What appears in him mirth is merely outside. / If

he laugh heartily, it is to laugh / All honesty out of fashion” (I.i.164-167). The final description, of the Duchess, by Antonio rather than Delio, is by far the most laudatory: she is, among other things, a “right noble Duchess” (I.i.187), whose “discourse, it is so full of rapture / You only will begin then to be sorry / When she doth end her speech” (I.i.185-187). The descriptions given in this first scene are seemingly only enough to enable the reader/audience to form an initial, slanted opinion, to create so-called “stock” characters; however, like Painter, Webster presents these initial descriptions only to repeatedly contradict and challenge them throughout the rest of the play, thus using Painter’s contradictory style of characterization in order to set up a precedent of an interiority which is revealed via a complex and contradictory performativity — something that will be explained in more detail below.⁵

In looking more closely at the quotes above from Webster’s first scene, one can immediately recognize the inconsistency of the overt theatrical assignment of character. Looking at the Cardinal, for example, we can see that Delio’s initial description, while certainly not the description one expects to hear of a pious man of religion, is a more positive vision, at least, of the leader of a princely court. He is, after all, “. . . a brave fellow” (I.i.149-151), if not a pious one. This half-positive description, however, which consciously ignores his religious function, is complicated by Antonio’s counter-description: “Some such flashes superficially hang on him, for form, but observe his *inward character*: he is a melancholy churchman” (I.i.156-158, emphasis mine). By

⁵ Dent argues against Webster’s “indebtedness to Painter,” but only specifically against “verbal” borrowing — he is not as interested in ideas or concepts. He states that “Very rarely . . . does Webster betray even the slightest verbal indebtedness to Painter” (4). This is correct, but I am looking here at technique rather than word choice. T. F. Wharton argues correctly that “It may have been, not moral certainty, but ambiguity that [Webster] sought” (76).

responding with this alternate view of the Cardinal's character, Antonio acknowledges the two "performances" which the Cardinal must give: that of a ruler/soldier/courtly man and that of a religious official. He plays off of these contradictory exterior theatrical personas in order to attempt to "reveal" the Cardinal's interiority or "true self":

where he is jealous of any man, he lays worse plots for him than ever was imposed on Hercules, for he strews in his way flatterers, panders, intelligencers, atheists, and a thousand such political monsters. He should have been Pope, but instead of coming to it by the primitive decency of the church, he did bestow bribes so largely, and so impudently, as if he would have carried it away without heaven's knowledge. Some good he hath done. (I.i.159-167)

Here Antonio contends that the Cardinal is ambitious to be Pope but has pursued this goal in unscrupulous ways. What is unique about Antonio's description is not the Cardinal's "shocking" deviance, however, but his reference to the Cardinal's "inward character." This overt reference to interiority, I think, resonates for each of the main characters in the play. What, we are encouraged to question, is a true expression of their interiority, their "inward character," and how does it relate to the persona(s) which they "perform" for their society and for the play's audience? The reference to an "inward character" suggests (1) that such a thing exists and (2) that it is at least partially "observable" through all of the different impressions conveyed through the characters' words and actions: in other words, through the characters' performativity. What we are told by the characters (in regard to themselves and one another), what we observe of their actions, and the connections and divergences between these competing messages all come together to form an imperfect vision of a character's interiority that is at least partly observable in the different impressions we get.

Webster, in continuing his parallel of Painter, has Antonio narrate two final descriptions of Duke Ferdinand and the Duchess. Of Ferdinand Antonio states not only

that he has “[a] most perverse and turbulent nature” (I.i.169-171), but also that “He speaks with others’ tongues, and hears mens suits / With others’ ears” (I.i.174-175). In this case Ferdinand is not only revealing his own interiority through an overt performativity; he appears to be afflicted with, for lack of a better term, multiple personality disorder. Ferdinand is a particularly interesting case because his interiority, according to Antonio — his “perverse and turbulent nature” — is portrayed in the play as entirely performative. Ferdinand is theatricality multiplied, or at the very least, dissociative; ironically, it is his overabundance of performativity — his inability to play one version of himself with any solidity — that makes his interiority so elusive and “muddled” (Dent 31), and yet his actions and overt performativity so clearly evil. Of all the descriptions in this first scene, only that of the Duchess refuses, at first impression, to conform to this reading: she is only praised; there are no contradictory reports at this stage of the dialogue. However, in placing her description *last* in this scene, Webster creates an additional tie-in to Painter’s method of characterization. The Duchess, in either version being discussed here, is neither perfect nor lacking in contradiction. In Painter, we are presented with a negative vision that becomes somehow more forgiving, more ambiguous as the story progresses. Like Antonio’s description in Painter, discussed earlier, Webster’s description of the Duchess is not contradicted immediately but is unfolded through the subsequent scenes: this is one of the reasons that *The Duchess of Malfi* is the Duchess’s play (and not Antonio’s or Bosola’s). Ferdinand, as described in this scene, is deceptively complex; the Duchess, I would argue, is deceptively simple. As the play goes on we find Ferdinand, if anything, easier to understand, while we find the Duchess inevitably more difficult. Webster therefore seems to pair these descriptions

together: that of Bosola and the Cardinal and that of Ferdinand and the Duchess, to give us snapshots of their character and at the same time to suggest that everything is not as it seems.

I want to move now from a discussion of characterization in the first scene alone to a more detailed look at a single character: Bosola. Named for a relatively minor character in Painter's novella, Daniel de Bozola, Bosola is, interestingly, the character who is given the most complex interiority through his, and others', overt performativity. As T. F. Wharton states, "From our first acquaintance with Bosola, we are taught to see him in terms of a mixed potential for good and evil" (83). In the first scene, Bosola is introduced as an opportunistic malcontent. Although he "rails" and bemoans the state of the court, he does so not for "simple love of piety" or with the intention of improving life at the court but instead uses his outbursts as a kind of reverse psychology, a manipulation to get "at those things which he wants" (I.i.24, 25). Our first impression, therefore, is that Bosola is simply an ambitious railer. However, this view is immediately contradicted, not once, but twice: first by Delio, and then by Antonio. Upon Bosola's exit of the scene, Delio remarks, inexplicably, that "I knew this fellow seven years in the galleys / For a notorious murder" (I.i.69-70). It is almost as though Delio has forgotten Antonio's earlier description of him. And Antonio's reply, his last comment on Bosola in this scene, seems to border on the bizarre, as he appears to contradict himself outright: "'Tis great pity / He should be thus neglected; I have heard / He's very valiant . . . This foul melancholy / Will poison his goodness" (I.i.73-76). Who, we are left to ask, is Bosola? Is he a simple railer, a proud overreacher, a brutal murderer, or a melancholy but essentially good man? Antonio, for one, does not seem to know: he initially characterizes Bosola as only falsely

melancholic and then suggests that he is actually a good man being ruined by a melancholy that is ostensibly brought on because of his “neglect” at court. This confusion is only furthered when Bosola is ordered by Ferdinand to “Be yourself: / Keep your old garb of melancholy” (I.i.278-9), and later, in Act II, Scene iii, when Delio, asked by Silvio “What’s that Bosola?” (III.iii.40), states:

I knew him [Bosola] in Padua — a fantastical scholar, like such who study to know how many knots was in Hercules’ club, of what colour Achilles’ beard was, or whether Hector were not troubled with the toothache; he hath studied himself half blear-eyed to know the true symmetry of Caesar’s nose by a shoeing-horn; and this he did to gain the name of a speculative man. (III.iii.41-47)

Is it a “garb” or is it real? Webster, through the device of Antonio’s promise to Delio “To make me the partaker of the natures of some of your great courtiers” (I.i.82-83), both replicates and complicates Painter’s novellistic characterization technique. Bosola’s interiority is repeatedly created and destroyed in this scene, through both his own overt performativity and through the overt theatricality of others, revealing a “muddled” (Dent 31), complex personality. The impressions we are given of his character *point* to an inner life; however, these impressions are mysterious, giving us not an intentionally confused character but a glimpse of interiority that induces us to question exactly *what* lies beneath the performance. Through a detailed look at this scene, therefore, we can see both Painter’s influence and Webster’s complex use of Painter’s techniques in order to create “muddled” interiority through a heightened, overtly theatrical “introduction” to the characters within the play.

As I noted earlier, it initially appears that Bosola is the character in Webster’s play with the least amount of foundation in Painter’s novella. Bosola, in Painter, is a “bloody beaste” hired and paid to kill Antonio, not the Duchess or her children: “Thys

newe Judas and pestilent manqueller [man-killer]” chooses, of all places, to kill Antonio where he “often-tymes Repayred to hear Seruice at the Church and conuent of S. Fraunces” (42). This is all that is mentioned concerning the character of Bozola, and soon after his bloody act the narrator returns to the morals to be gleaned from the unfortunate endings of the lives of all the principal characters of the story. In Painter’s novella, however, there is more than one murderer hired to bring about the death of Antonio. Webster, therefore, does not glean his complex characterization of Bosola from this one, fairly straightforward character in Painter but instead *combines* two disparate murderers from Painter’s text in order to create the foundation for Bosola’s complexity. Painter’s narrator tells of another, nameless man who is originally hired to kill Antonio but decides against it. This nameless man does not want to perform the murder and therefore informs Delio (in the novella a kind stranger rather than Antonio’s close friend) so that Antonio can be warned that murderers are after him. Webster’s creation of Bosola, therefore, is clearly influenced by both Daniel de Bozola and the first hired assassin. This combination of two murderers — both hired for the same job, but one refusing — creates a strong basis for the character who, in the play, does and does not murder the Duchess’s husband.

Bosola’s basis in these two contradictory characters therefore helps him to become, arguably, the most complex character in the play. As I have shown above, the first scene presents a very “muddled” picture of Bosola’s interiority. Both his own performativity and others’ in relation to him fail to put together any kind of understandable picture. This confusion remains, and is heightened, throughout the rest of the play. I believe that in the case of Bosola, Webster pulls not only from Painter and his own creative resources, but from the existence of another famous, ambiguously evil

character: Shakespeare's Iago, the literary descendent of Cinthio's Ensign. This connection is suggested early in the play (what Dent would call a "dubious echo[]" [46]), when the Cardinal says to Bosola, who is trying to collect money for (dishonest) services rendered: "Would you could become honest" (I.i.39). This, one of many references to Bosola as dubiously "honest," can be seen as a potential reference to "honest Iago," a veritable refrain within *Othello*. While the Cardinal's words cannot be considered a definitive allusion, by taking this statement in conjunction with the complex, negative characterization of Bosola established early in the play, Webster thus at least hints at an immediate connection between the two characters. Webster's Bosola, therefore, while "new" in a sense to the play, is clearly, to use Erich Auerbach's terminology, "fraught with background." In other words, I believe that Webster is consciously calling to mind a previous literary history (i.e. various villainous personages) that helps to shape Bosola into a character with a complex and contradictory "history" of sorts, in part through a parallel association with Shakespeare's Iago.

Webster, like Shakespeare with Iago, makes certain that Bosola's true motives are never apparent. As is mentioned earlier, we are never sure whether or not Bosola is truly melancholic or even, for that matter, whether or not he is loyal to money or to the Aragonian brothers, to both, or to neither. Critics generally seem to accept, at least to an extent, Bosola's so-called "transformation" at the end as genuine, or at the very least attempt to pigeon-hole his character into some kind of recognizable form;⁶ but again, we

⁶ Wharton, for example, states of Bosola: "It is only surprising that he has any illusions of final innocence. There is no doubt that he does have good in him. That is precisely what lends fascination to the spectacle of him setting out, like other far more cynical experimenters, to see how far he can violate his own goodness; what evil he can achieve; and what will happen to him when he does so. Like all the other experimenters, he is also irresistibly drawn to tamper with the fates of others, and see how they live and die. Again like the others, at some stage or another in their career, he discovers an exhilarating existential freedom in his own acts of violation. The only difference is in the degree of confusion he suffers as to his own motives and

can never be sure whether or not he is dissembling: we can never be sure which theatrical performance “reveals” his interiority and which obscures it. I believe that to accept this supposed “transformation” at face value is to drastically underestimate Webster’s dramatic abilities. Bosola’s interiority is founded on his multiple contradictory performances and on the theatrical descriptions of him provided by the other unreliable narrators in the play. He is not merely inconsistent — he is created and re-created through circumstance and outside influence into a character whose interiority is simultaneously apparent and always just out of reach. I find it fascinating that in his final speeches Bosola manages to confess without actually assuming any guilt for himself:

Revenge for the Duchess of Malfi, murdered
By the’ Aragonian brethren; for Antonio,
Slain by this hand; for lustful Julia,
Poisoned by this man; and lastly, for myself,
That was an actor in the main of all,
Much ‘gainst mine own good nature, yet I’th’end
Neglected. (V.v.80-85)

Iago, in the end, becomes a portrait of unintelligible evil; Bosola, on the other hand, becomes something potentially worse — potential evil unaware of, or unwilling to acknowledge, his own complicity with his evil actions. Webster, working intertextually with Painter’s original, nameless hired assassin and the actual murderer, Daniel de Bozola, as well as Shakespeare’s Iago (and his own precursor, Cinthio’s Ensign), is able to create a character who is overtly performative and yet who refuses to openly acknowledge his own contradictions. By integrating the man “of larger Conscience” (42) with that of Daniel de Bozola and the original, unnamed, murderer in Painter, Webster

identity” (89). Dena Goldberg rationalizes Bosola’s actions by stating that “Bosola, like Ferdinand, needs action, but it needs not be destructive action. It is when society denies him an honourable competitive function that he channels his energies into the evil role that is offered to him” (88).

begins to create the confusion of character that we get with Bosola. Dent states of Webster's characterization:

On the level of consistency in characterization and plot, certainly, some critics have exaggerated the difficulties produced by minor distractions. The development of Bosola, in question above, seems to me dramatically convincing and effective despite a few distracting lines in the play that might better have been omitted. . . . In short, I prefer regarding Webster as an effective dramatist who intentionally made muddled characters, rather than as a dramatist whose own view of the action was incredibly muddled. (26, 31)

Bosola is “intentionally muddled” because we are seeing him from multiple perspectives, including his own, which do not line up with one another. As Bliss notes, Bosola is “clearly self-divided” (138). Bosola is an intense exploration of the human character because of Webster's understanding of these conflicting perspectives as gleaned from Painter and undoubtedly a multitude of other perspectives.

I am certainly not the first critic to associate the character of Bosola with Shakespeare's devilish Iago. Harold Bloom, for example, conjectures of the relationship between Iago and Bosola: “The hero-villains of John Webster and Cyril Tourneur are mere names on the page when we contrast them with Iago; they lack Promethean fire” (453). I, however, must disagree with this statement. Where Shakespeare plays with Iago's theatricality and a lack of clear internal motivation through theatricality — as Tolstoy lamented, “There are many motives, but they are all vague” (qtd. in Bloom 465) — Webster plays with a lack of clear interiority through the theatricality of Bosola and others, further muddled by others' external visions of him. As I stated earlier, there are three main ways of understanding the interiority of a character: descriptions by others, actions/words of the character him/herself to others in the play, and soliloquies. Iago's character is dependent on the latter two: Iago has several soliloquies and is constantly

plotting with other members of the play. We are given, however, very little of his character from the other characters in the play; and this is because no one in the play — or outside of it — actually knows him. Othello trusts him because of his *actions* outside of the play: his loyalty in battle, his seeming loyalty throughout the play, and his words and actions towards himself. This relationship, it seems, is as close as Othello had gotten to anyone until his marriage to Desdemona; and yet it is largely a selfish relationship based on each character's own needs and desires (although we are afraid to accept this of Iago by the end). Othello is first and foremost a soldier; and although he is not presented simplistically, his needs and desires are undoubtedly presented as simple: loyalty and courage under fire are all he had ever looked for in another human being. Thus he does not seek to know Desdemona through her thoughts and “inner self,” if indeed he had ever thought of such a thing, but instead through her words and actions. Initially he loves her for what he sees and hears: “She loved me for the dangers I had passed, / And I loved her that she did pity him” (I.iii.166-167). He loves her for her actions: her pity, her strength in standing up to her father, and her courage in being willing, and even insistent, that she join him as he travels to Cyprus. Her *outward actions* suggest to him loyalty, and he does not question these until Iago colors his *interpretation* of her *outward actions*. Iago, cleverly, understands Othello's reliance on outward actions and uses words, not to persuade, but to suggest a different angle of viewing what is happening before him. As Maus puts it, “Iago tantalizes Othello by reminding him of the limitations of his ‘mortal eyes,’ and then, by pretending to satisfy his longing, encourages him to imagine those limitations as overcome. . . . Either Othello must accept a degree of uncertainty in his relation to Desdemona, or he must repress his awareness of his own limitations as an

observer” (120). Once the seed has been planted, the words of others in her defense have no power to sway him, because he believes in the power of his eyes to have already seen what they cannot possibly see — the actions of Desdemona against him.

Similarly, just as actions and not words influence Othello, we have no words (other than Iago’s own, which are always suspect and untrustworthy) but only actions in order to attempt to comprehend the character of Iago. Iago is pure theatricality: he is entirely his own creation. However, pure theatricality does not exclude interiority here any more than it does upon an analysis of Webster’s Ferdinand, whom we have discussed earlier. Rather, it makes Iago’s character that much more mysterious because it forces us as readers/audience to question what is beneath his performance; and this, I think, is what makes Iago such a fascinating character even today. *Is Iago his actions? What is his motivation? Should we trust some of Iago’s words? If so, which ones? If he is his actions alone, then it necessarily follows that he is pure evil, another Judas just like Painter’s Daniel de Bozola without the tempering of the first hired assassin. His refusal to explain his actions confounds the persons around him; and the audience/reader, who is provided with conflicting motivations through his soliloquies and his association with Roderigo, ultimately know no more than do the characters in the play. In his *Moral Experiment in Jacobean Drama*, Wharton argues that many Jacobean dramatists were interested in testing and pushing the boundaries of morality within their plays. In order to do this they often seem to play with the idea of who is or is not a “good” character. He analyzes, for example, the “disguised dukes” in Marston’s *Malcontent* and Shakespeare’s *Measure for Measure* (which I discuss below) in order to discuss ostensibly “good” characters who nevertheless act in morally questionable ways. Wharton’s explanation for these*

characters' behavior is that they have a "completely dispassionate curiosity to see how people will behave *in extremis*" (42). He argues that these characters (including Bosola) are completely self-absorbed; and that it is at least partially this self-absorption that confuses their status in the plays for the audience/reader. Wharton further notes that these self-absorbed characters are often not "themselves" but are in fact playing roles throughout: "in plays so strongly concerned with unstable identity, disguise and role-playing are endemic" (3). Oddly enough, however, he connects this moral experimentation to Bosola but not to Iago. He argues that "*Othello* seems written actively to contest the idea of experiment, or proof, or trial, and to show its destructive effect on an honest man" (112). I believe that Wharton is basing this upon the relatively straightforward, if very controversial, evil of Iago, and is unnecessarily simplifying the "honesty" of Othello, whose character is (I would like to believe) more complex than that. Othello, like Pietro in *The Malcontent* (who is, according to Wharton, a clear example of this moral experiment), is unable to play a role and gets duped because of it; however, he is far from a total innocent. Iago is engaged in moral experimentation that leads to the death of another central character, just like Bosola; the only difference is that Iago never wavers or has a glimpse of overt (if still questionable) conscience. Bosola's belated performance of conscience is, in fact, the dividing line at which I think Bosola, and even the Ensign of Cinthio's novella, becomes perhaps a more interesting character study in terms of the relationship between performativity and interiority. We will never know *for sure* if Iago's actions reveal himself or conceal an interior "self," no more than anyone in the early modern period could be sure that one's actions were in accordance with what was in their heart of hearts; which, as Maus and others have shown, is a big,

ongoing concern in the early modern period, whether on paper, on the stage, or in “real life.” We are also given a dearth of information on Iago and at the same time multiple, contradictory explanations (somewhat like Bosola, although our information on Bosola is more description and less explanation), which inevitably leads to more speculation. With the character of Bosola, an opposite but similarly effective tactic is taken. Instead of a pervasive silence, seen particularly toward the end of Shakespeare’s play, in *Duchess* we are given a surplus of conflicting information that continues (at times simultaneously) to reveal and destroy his interiority right up until his last moments in the play, when Bosola says, fittingly, “Such a mistake as I have often seen / In a play” (V.v.95-96). Bosola thus dies with his own overt theatricality on his lips: Antonio has died (note the passive — there is no “I killed Antonio because . . .”) because of Bosola’s own “muddled” interiority. He is, throughout the play and at the end, “In a mist: I know not how — ” (V.v.94).

The Ensign, in Cinthio’s *novelle* about the Moor, is shown to be complex in ways that reflect both Iago and Bosola. The narrator gives the Ensign a clear motivation for his actions: he “fell ardently in love with Disdemona, and bent all his thoughts to see if he could manage to enjoy her” (34). Because he is not successful, “he imagined that this was because she was in love with the Corporal” (35). This provides an explanation for why he seeks the Corporal’s (Cassio’s) downfall and why he seeks to destroy Disdemona, and thus gives the audience a clue as to his inward “character”: Cinthio’s Ensign is capable of love and capable of hatred. Also, the omniscient narrator provides what is not given in *Othello* — a window to interiority that helps to explain his own theatricality. The

narrator, Curzio (one of a group of narrators involved in the larger frame narrative), describes explicitly the divide between his outside performativity and his interior self:

Now amongst the soldiery there was an Ensign, a man of handsome figure, but of the most depraved nature in the world. The man was in great favor with the Moor, who had not the slightest idea of his wickedness; for, despite the malice lurking in his heart, he cloaked with proud and valorous speech and with a specious presence the villainy of his soul with such art that he was to all outward show another Hector or Achilles. (136)

However, this explicitly stated divide becomes complicated by the humanness of the Ensign in comparison with Iago. The Ensign “fell passionately in love with Disdemona” (136); we can hardly imagine Iago being passionately in love with anyone. Despite the evil lurking in his heart, therefore, the Ensign is not the cold-hearted man represented in *Othello*. Further, the Ensign does not sail through his manipulation with the same ease as does Iago: “But the evil-minded Ensign was, on his part, not less troubled by the chastity which he knew the lady Disdemona observed inviolate; and it seemed to him impossible to discover a means of making the Moor believe what he had falsely told him; and turning the matter over in his thoughts in various ways, the villain resolved on a new deed of guilt” (139). The Ensign is in no way sure of his plan; it is through luck alone that he succeeds. The story concludes with the Ensign, having gotten away with his actions undetected, “return[ing] to his own country, [where] . . . following up on his wonted villainy, he accused one of his companions of having sought to persuade him to kill an enemy of his, who was a man of noble rank” (146). He does not get out of this second predicament quite so easily, and, having been “tortured so that his body ruptured . . . he died a miserable death” (146). What is interesting about the Ensign, and about Bosola, is that, although we are given some interior description by the narrator, he is a mass of contradictions that belies the straight reading of evil that can (though perhaps should not)

be gleaned from a reading of Shakespeare's *Iago*. The Ensign is repeatedly described as inwardly evil, and yet we see that he is able to love deeply, to think things out carefully, and to worry about his next move. Although we are given a clear motive for his actions in the primary story in Cinthio's *novelle* (that of the Moor and Desdemona), the motive for his accusation in his secondary story is less clear; is the enemy "of his" an enemy of the companion whom he accuses, or of the Ensign himself? Although we might assume it is of the Ensign, this is not clear; for why would he accuse his companion of plotting this man's death, which would only result in trouble for the companion, not for the enemy? Does this action serve to confirm the inward evil that the narrator has been professing in regard to the Ensign? The narrator suggests that the Ensign's death finalizes "Heaven['s vengeance of] the innocence of Desdemona" (146). It is this short, secondary story that provides Shakespeare with *Iago's* own "muddled" interiority. The Ensign's actions regarding the Moor and Desdemona are explainable, thanks to the (questionable) narrator; for this final action, however, we are given no background, no explanation. Just as we think we can understand the Ensign's actions, we realize, through this final snippet, that we cannot — and everything we have understood to be true of his character up until this point becomes questionable.

Curzio's story ends: "and all these events were narrated by the Ensign's wife, who was privy to the whole, after his death, as I have told them here" (146). This ending further complicates the story in a number of ways. In *Othello*, *Iago's* wife is innocent of all knowledge and, when she finally comprehends her husband's actions, she vocalizes her objections and is murdered. *Iago's* extreme privacy serves to generate further interest in his inner life precisely because there is no perceived difference between his "private"

life with Emilia and his “public,” working life with Othello. The Ensign, on the other hand, has a wife who truly knows him — knows him, and fears him. And yet, interestingly, the relationship of the Ensign and his wife provokes a similar interest in the Ensign’s interiority.

The relationship between Iago and the Ensign thus correlates neatly with the relationship between Iago and Bosola discussed above. In the case of the Ensign, we are not given a *surplus* of information *per se* (as is done in the case of Webster’s Bosola), but we are given additional insight into his interiority that is not provided for Iago; however, this additional insight generates as many questions as it does answers. In the case of the Ensign, we are left to wonder: what *else* did the Ensign’s wife know? If his public and private selves were different, then who exactly *was* he in private? Emilia, Iago’s wife, is fooled by Iago until the very end, suggesting that he hid his evil actions with a theatrical veil so closely that not even the person who should, perhaps, have been closest to him understood the evil that he was perpetrating. The Ensign, is, to my mind, a more “human” character than Iago; his humanity, however, does not preclude a clearer understanding of his interiority. The Ensign is an angry and perhaps violent individual, and this comes across both through the narrator and through his actions. Although he is able to hide his evil from the Moor, unlike Iago he is not able to hide it from his own wife. While he does not have supposed “changes of heart,” as does Bosola, his complexities show that he is more than a mere stick figure of inexplicable evil. Further, having the Ensign’s wife as the hidden narrator of the story, which is in turn being re-narrated by Cinthio’s narrator Curzio, puts the story at twice remove — we need now trust not only what a single narrator tells us, but that the narrator is re-narrating the story narrated by the Ensign’s

wife correctly and accurately — further emphasizing the unreliability of the narrator, and thus the reliance on overt theatricality (i.e. the performance of several narrators) to provoke interest in the problematic complexity of these “villain” characters’ inner lives.

Webster’s rendering of Bosola as a highly performative character whose interiority is thus revealed, in a “muddled” and incoherent way, through that performativity, thus ties him closely to several literary ancestors: Painter’s Daniel de Bozola and the unnamed first assassin, Shakespeare’s Iago, and Cinthio’s Ensign. The novellas have both the benefit and the curse of an untrustworthy omniscient narrator, one who usually attempts to guide the trusting reader/listener as to the various characters’ natures. Plays in general do not have this aspect, although, as I have shown, I believe that Webster builds upon Painter’s outside narrator when he has Antonio and others act as “narrators” of the various persons and courtiers surrounding him at the Duchess’s court. Instead of a single omniscient narrator (who often has only one biased perspective), Webster complicates the idea of narration by having Antonio narrate his *opinions* of his fellow courtiers to Delio, who in turn has his own, *differing* opinions, particularly of Bosola, both in this scene and later in the play. In providing contradictory narrations of character, Webster emphasizes the idea of the “narrator” as essentially unreliable, something that is first revealed by Cinthio and Painter in their preceding novellas. We can be told what other people think of a character (narrator included), or even what they “think” themselves (as in a soliloquy) but their true nature, their true interiority, is always tantalizingly just out of reach — we grasp at it eagerly, but it always slips away at the last second. Hutson, in *The Invention of Suspicion*, “argues that what underlies those features with which we are so familiar from Shakespeare’s plays — effects of character realism and of the heightened moral

intelligibility of an apparently natural sequence of time — is actually a forensic understanding of narrative composition” (10-11). This is a technique that she feels is lacking in the early modern novella. Although I agree that we are left with an impression of interiority based on the rhetorical techniques of the writers in question, I extend this courtesy beyond Shakespeare and his contemporary playwrights to the novellists of the time period, and I argue that these techniques are not only *not* unique to the playwrights but are actively taken from and thus shared by those same early modern novellists. Thanks to the intertextual relationship between the early modern novellas and Jacobean drama, we are encouraged, even compelled, to try to decipher a character’s interiority via his or her performativity. Through the techniques shared and adapted intertextually in these texts, we gain more than an illusion of interiority but less than total comprehension; we are always seeking and always wanting more.

In this next section, I deal with the overt theatricality and resultant interiority within the connected texts of Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra and John Fletcher. A confusion of identity — a lack of understanding of the meaning of one’s overt performativity in relation to any kind of revealed interiority — is a common theme throughout Cervantes’s *novela* collection and is especially apparent in his *La ilustre fregona*. This *novela* and others also served as plot source material for a number of Fletcher’s plays (many of which were based on this *novela* collection). Beginning with *La ilustre fregona*, I then turn to Fletcher’s corresponding play, *The Fair Maid of the Inn*. I conclude this section with a brief look at Fletcher’s *Queen of Corinth* and its intertextual connections to both *La ilustre fregona* and *The Fair Maid of the Inn*.

Cervantes's *La ilustre fregona* (*The Illustrious Kitchen-Maid*) is, according to William H. Clamurro, “. . . one of the least studied of Cervantes' *Novelas ejemplares*” (“Identity” 39). Despite its relative critical neglect, however, the *novela* provides excellent examples of the use of conscious performativity as a vehicle through which interiority is simultaneously revealed and obscured. In this story, the main characters, two noblemen's sons named Carriazo and Avendaño, embark on an adventure that ultimately forces them to decide whom they are; this is particularly true for Carriazo, whom I will discuss in depth. Carriazo loves the tunny fisheries (a place in Spain full of rogues and peasants) and longs to play the *pícaro* there. The story begins with a brief narration of Carriazo's earlier adventures at the tunny fisheries. For three years (aged thirteen to sixteen) Carriazo spends his time in utter happiness, living the life of a *pícaro* with the safety of his parents' money and a false identity to protect his and his family's noble reputation. After a while, he lets his tan fade, buys some nice clothes and a mule, and returns home to his clueless parents with all the glory appropriate to one of noble birth. However, once he returns, he quickly becomes “homesick” for his life amongst the tunny fisheries, to the extent that his new friend Avendaño, the son of his father's good friend, becomes concerned. When Carriazo enthusiastically confesses his secret adventures, Avendaño becomes interested and agrees to return with him to the tunny fisheries under the guise of going to study at Salamanca. They change names and desert their parentally appointed tutor, selling their rich things in exchange for peasant clothing along the way. Their plans quickly get derailed, however, when Avendaño falls in love at first sight with the kitchen-maid of an inn along the way. Carriazo — despite his strong desire to return

to the tunny fisheries — stays with Avendaño at the inn, his behavior there revealing the decided confusion between his interiority and his overt theatricality.

Cervantes's narrator in this *novela* is very outspoken. In a way, he seems to mirror the heavy moralizing of novellists such as Painter by beginning *La ilustre fregona* with an opinionated diatribe. Instead of pretending seriousness, however, this narrator's commentary is more obviously tongue-in-cheek. As we will see with Carriazo, the narrator is so forthcoming with his own strong opinions that it becomes impossible to get a discernable read on his interiority. A great example of this is the following:

Oh, you kitchen *pícaros*, filthy, fat and sleek, fake beggars, false cripples, pickpockets of Zocodover and the main square in Madrid, gaudy prayer-mongers, Sevillian carriers, serving-boys of the underworld, with that whole numberless throng of those who are included under the name *pícaro*. Lower your sails, moderate your jaunty ways, and don't call yourself *pícaros* unless you've studied for two years in the academy at the tunny fisheries. Yes, that's the place where industry and idleness go hand in hand! (63)

We are not sure, from the narrator's description, whether he believes that the life of a *pícaro* is a good or bad choice. The narrator, in this case, seems to maintain his position as narrator while taking on what he believes to be Carriazo's subconscious beliefs. The paragraph begins with what one would ostensibly believe to be a negative picture of the *pícaros*. However, it soon becomes apparent that he is only criticizing those persons who *pretend* to the picaresque without having had the "education" that Carriazo has received: at least "two years in the academy at the tunny fisheries" (63). This kind of close narratorial involvement continues throughout the text, paradoxically, in an overt yet subtle manner. The narrator openly acknowledges his control of the story numerous times, saying, for example, "Let us leave them there for the moment, since they are going merrily on their way, and return to see what the tutor did on opening the letter the servant

brought to him” (69). Although this may seem like a simple narrative technique, the narrator is letting the reader know that he is *not* going to tell her/him about the boys’ journey but is instead narrating about the tutor *at the expense* of the boys’ story at this point — time does not stop.

The narrator also gives to the characters narration that is traditionally held by an omniscient narrator. The characters’ doing this narration gives the *novela*, at times, the additional feeling that Cervantes is playing with the boundaries between character and narrator, so that they become virtually interchangeable. For example, when the boys awaken to music outside their room, they attempt to come up with an explanation as to what it might be:

Carriazo then said:

“I’ll bet it’s daytime already and there’s a fiesta at the monastery of Our Lady of Carmen, which is near here, and that’s why they’re playing those flageolets.”

“That’s not the reason,” replied Avendaño, “because we haven’t yet slept long enough for it to be day.” (77)

This dialogue is clearly unnecessary; first, because the narrator has already supplied the reader with the information that the music is being played by “many flageolets” (75), and second, because the boys could have merely looked outside a window in order to determine the current time, rather than attempting to calculate the number of hours they have slept. The easiest way to deliver this scene would clearly be for the narrator to explain that they were awakened by flageolets in the night and were wondering why music was being played. However, the narrator leaves the delivery of this message to the characters, thus shifting some of the responsibilities of narration onto them. These narrative shifts suggest yet again that the narrator is unreliable and that we must seek information, and confirmation of that information, from numerous disparate locations.

Although the *novela* is ostensibly about two friends, Carriazo quickly becomes the more interesting study. As one can see from the brief summary above, Carriazo struggles throughout the text to keep a delicate balance between his performance of two very different roles: that of a nobleman's son and that of a rogue. He embraces both roles thoroughly, but also with carelessness and a lack of seeming forethought. Instead of fully performing either role, he is in a constant state of flux: he behaves in unpredictable ways, playing the *pícaro* in one instant and performing a noble speech the next. It is our inability to decide whether he is a nobleman or a *pícaro* that induces us to attempt to decipher his "true" interiority. Like Bosola, Carriazo seems to have incomplete knowledge of his own self, and those around him — including the narrator — do little to help either him or us.

The narrator is very much involved in the confusion of Carriazo's interiority through his theatrical performances. For example, the narrator tells us that

. . . despite the fact that poverty and want are part and parcel of this style of life he showed himself to be a leader in every aspect of it: his good breeding stood out from afar in so many obvious ways, for he was generous and unselfish with his companions. He rarely worshipped at the altar of Bacchus. . . . In short, to the world Carriazo was a virtuous *pícaro*, unsullied by that life, well bred and with more than his fair share of wisdom. He went through all the grades of the picaresque hierarchy until he graduated a master of the tunny fisheries of Zahara, the very Mecca of the picaresque life. (63)

The translators of this *novela*, Michael and Jonathan Thacker, view the narrator's vision of Carriazo here as the version of Carriazo exemplified through his actions throughout the *novela*. They praise Carriazo for staying with his friend at the Sevillano Inn, against his own desires to return immediately to the tunny fisheries; however, Carriazo is as much trouble as ever at the inn and still plays the *pícaro*, getting in fights at least twice and being thrown in jail. At the end of the *novela*, the narrator makes a half-hearted

attempt to neatly return Carriazo to his position as the son of a nobleman and thus a nobleman himself: “they observed that Lope Asturiano [Carriazo’s name as a *pícaro*/muleteer] was a real gentleman after he had changed his clothes and forsaken his ass and his pitchers. . . . [He has] three sons who do not take after their father, nor are they aware that there are tunny fisheries in the world, and who are all studying at Salamanca” (135). However, it is not clear which role — that of *pícaro* or that of nobleman — dominates either throughout the story or at the *novela*’s conclusion. The narrator’s weak effort to return Carriazo to the behavior and character of a nobleman is clearly questioned throughout the text. Cervantes’s translators seem to accept the word of the tale’s unreliable narrator at the expense of what is shown via Carriazo’s actual performance of his two disparate roles. Although Carriazo may have behaved uncommonly well as a *pícaro* in his time at the tunny fisheries, his behavior at the inn is not necessarily indicative of a noble upbringing. In two separate instances, Carriazo comes close to killing someone because of a vague insult. In the second episode, he is arrested just prior to the arrival of his father, before whom he is brought “covered in blood.” We learn that “when Asturiano [Carriazo] had been going through the Alcántara Gate with the boys pressing him with their demand for the tail he had got off his ass and given chase. He caught one and beat him till he was half dead. When they tried to arrest him, he had put up resistance and it was for this reason that he was in such a state” (131). (Here the narrator again takes on the subconscious voice of Carriazo: Carriazo wants it known that was due to his valiant “resistance” to authority, and not due to a fight with some street kid, that he is worse for wear.) Carriazo, immediately after this incident, sees his father and “[goes] down on his knees” (131), but this appears to be not so much an act

of repentance as an act of guilty remorse resulting from the embarrassment of being caught by his father. In fact, it appears that through his narrator and the *novela*'s action, Cervantes is questioning the very idea of difference between the performance of a *pícaro* and the performance of a nobleman (and, perhaps, the performance of a narrator).

The true identity of Carriazo's father further complicates the confusion of Carriazo's interiority through his performativity. Carriazo's lineage is undoubtedly troubling, for at the end of the story we learn that his nobleman father has also played the *pícaro* in his day, in a way that makes Carriazo's outbursts of temper look tame in comparison: his father violently and unrepentantly raped a noblewoman and then abandoned her, an action which led to the secret birth of Costanza (the kitchen-maid) and the ultimate realization that she is of noble parentage and therefore worthy of Avendaño's hand in marriage. Although they are not overtly involved in much of the story, the *novela* is almost as much about the fathers as it is about the sons. The *novela*, after all, begins, with an introduction of the fathers: "Not long ago in Burgos . . . there lived two noble, wealthy gentleman. . . . Both had sons . . . [who] are to be the heroes of this story" (63).⁷ The translators corroborate this reading to some extent, stating that "the end of the story insists . . . on the repentance of the prodigal sons and on the purging of the sins of Carriazo Senior" (60). The fathers form a sort of frame for the *novela*, much like that of the traditional frame narrative of Boccaccio and others. It is the performance of the fathers, perhaps, that is responsible for the performance of the sons. Carriazo's father has clearly learned nothing from his actions; it is thus difficult to believe that Carriazo is or

⁷ "Heroes," I believe, is an erroneous translation of "las principales personas de este cuento" (62). This phrase is more accurately translated as "the main, or principal, characters of this story." Carriazo and Avendaño are by no means "heroes" in this story — or, at best, very problematic ones.

will be any different. Noble of birth and noble of character are imperfectly aligned here; and the performance of nobility is blurred with the performance of the *pícaro*.

Thus in the end we are led to ask ourselves, who is Carriazo? Is he truly a nobleman who every now and then takes on the disguise and actions of a *pícaro*, or is he a *pícaro* who can perform the role of a nobleman when it suits him? The narrator states that Carriazo's future sons "are not aware that there are tunny fisheries in the world, and . . . are all [actually] studying at Salamanca" (135); but can we trust this? What about Carriazo himself? Although we know that he still fears, somewhat irrationally, the taunting he received as a muleteer, we have no idea whether he is truly content as a full-time nobleman with a noble wife (of whom we know nothing) suddenly thrust upon him. The narrator suggests that Carriazo is truly a gentleman and a nobleman's son because he does not take what he won while gambling from the (actually poor) muleteer. This, however, conveniently ignores the dishonest way in which he "won" these things in the first place — by cheating (he argues to [actually poor] muleteers that he did not bet the tail of his ass, which he legitimately lost, with the rest of his ass, at a game of cards, not to mention he threatens to "sink six inches of dagger into his guts without him knowing who did it, whence or how it came" [113]). The translators once again side blindly with the bias of the narrator, arguing that Carriazo's "misbehaviour is not serious, and as a *pícaro* he acts in a way consistent with his socially superior origins. . . . Carriazo's conduct is the reverse of that expected from the *pícaro*, a popular literary character in Cervantes's day, whose main aim in life was to look after his own interests, usually by cheating others" (58). The fact that he *does* cheat — not to mention the fact that he almost kills two people and threatens to kill others — is ignored. Carriazo seems to

become the “role” he plays as a *pícaro*; and yet he is “essentially” a nobleman? His *actions* imply the opposite: that he is a *pícaro* at heart with a nobleman’s upbringing. Thus Cervantes presents his audience with a tantalizingly complex interiority for Carriazo by enabling him to perform different, contradictory roles simultaneously. Clamurro supports this reading by stating that “*La ilustre fregona* embodies the plurality and coexistence of discourses that, under the concept of *heteroglossia*, Bakhtin has proposed as a fundamental defining feature of the modern novel. . . .” (195). The “linguistic diversity” (195) of the *novela* is paralleled in the division of Carriazo’s character into nobleman and *pícaro*, and this “*heteroglossic*” characterization is carried over by John Fletcher in his subsequent tragicomedy, *The Fair Maid of the Inn*.

Although some critics have contested the connections between Cervantes’s *novela* and Fletcher’s play, I agree with Bertha Hensman’s assessment that “[a] detailed examination reveals points of similarity . . . that are too many and too close to be accidental, especially when due allowance is made for Fletcher’s characteristically creative adaptation and deployment of the elements he selects from his source-materials” (355).⁸ The most obvious initial connection is in the titles of the two texts: *The Fair Maid of the Inn*, like the *La ilustre fregona*, is, interestingly, named after the “fair maid” (Costanza in the *novela*, Bianca in *Fair Maid*) rather than after its principal character (Carriazo in *Fregona*, Cesario in *Fair Maid*). Although it might seem contradictory to the focus of these stories, this emphasis on the one character whose *performance* of the role of a lowly maid serves, in effect, to reveal her true status as the daughter of a nobleman, actually embodies the *theme* of the stories rather than the importance of Costanza/Bianca

⁸ Hensman lists E. K. Chambers, F. L. Lucas, and Baldwin Maxwell as critics denying a connection that is other than coincidental (355).

as a central character. Both Costanza and Bianca *perform* or *behave* in such a way that, in a stereotypical world, belies their lowly status. It is in part because they *perform* their chastity and purity so well that they are able to be elevated to the status of noblewomen. Their interiority is thus expressed through their innate performativity; and in turn they become the bar by which we attempt to measure the behavior of the other characters in the *novela* and the play: primarily that of Carriazo and Cesario. Both of these main characters, however, refuse to fit comfortably into this mold, thus creating a more complex, and thus more rewarding, picture of the complex relationship between interiority and performativity/theatricality.

In *Fair Maid*, the story, like the *novela*, is again about a pair of noble fathers and sons. Taking place in this instance in Italy rather than Spain, the story of the fathers plays a somewhat larger role in the drama and yet still in large part frames the action. The fathers, Baptista and Alberto, are both military leaders; they are noblemen and have a long peacetime and military history together. Their sons, Mentivole and Cesario respectively, are also introduced as close friends. These friendships, however, are shown to be tenuous at best; they are clearly reflective of Cervantes's clever and subtle analysis of the "friendship" between Carriazo and Avendaño, and are based in particular on the complex characterization of Carriazo. In Cervantes, Avendaño, although crucial to the action, is clearly the less interesting character. He is in love with the kitchen-maid Costanza, and in the end events unfold so that he may marry her. Carriazo also gets a wife out of the bargain, but it is unclear whether a noble bride and no more thoughts of the tunny fisheries is actually what he desires from life. In Fletcher, the uninteresting parts of Avendaño are placed in the character of Mentivole: Mentivole is the upright,

noble son. Like Avendaño, he has no real desire to play the *pícaro*; he is content to be a good son and to marry Cesario's sister, the noble Clarissa. Fletcher thus shifts the lust for a "kitchen-maid" to the character who is more likely to behave in a way unbecoming his status — Carriazo/Cesario. Thus, the character of Cesario is born from the complex performativity of Carriazo and the more straightforward "noble lust" of Avendaño. Cesario is able, over the course of the play, to experience life as a nobleman and life as someone lowborn; he plays the *pícaro* when he is noble and yet scoffs at interacting with those same people when he is disowned, in a matter of speaking, from his own noble family, and is thus of a status equal to their own. His marriage at the end is discomfiting, to say the least. His outward actions thus complicate and confuse any understanding of his true interiority. The status of nobility in the play is thus called into question, reflecting Cervantes's complex characterization of Carriazo through his multivocal theatricality and his resultant intentionally "muddled," complex interiority.

Fletcher seems to have been especially attuned to Cervantes's more subtle critiques of his central characters, particularly their claims to friendship and nobility as inherent versus behavioral. Although Carriazo and Avendaño maintain their friendship, it is a combination of selfishness and pride that keeps them together rather than a true amity. The friendship of Mentivole and Cesario is also subjected to selfishness and pride but is quickly ended by a petty squabble, an event that triggers a feud between the fathers as well, leading to the temporary de-nobilization of Cesario. Fletcher follows these twists and turns and losses or confusions of identity with a similar and yet more complex *anagnorisis* at the end — a dual recognition scene in which both Cesario and Bianca are

found to be of true noble birth (not to mention that Bianca's mother is discovered alive)⁹ — thus making the play, like the *novela*, about the concept of identity through the questioning of each of the key characters' external, performative persona and its correlation with their confused interiority, what Clamurro sees as the “larger question of the relationships between one's origin in the social hierarchy and one's individual, autonomous — or perhaps not fully autonomous — virtue and moral character” (198). “Virtue and moral character” are attributes of one's inner life that may or may not be revealed through a character's performativity: they are neither “autonomous” nor “not fully autonomous” but are dependent, in the play as in the *novela*, on each character's performativity and the role or roles that they play throughout the course of the text. The ending of the play, as of the *novela*, is uncomfortable at best: as a result of the dual *anagnorisis*, Cesario is allowed to marry Bianca — the kitchen-maid he wooed as a mistress and declined as a wife in his ignoble state — and supposedly ends in a (clearly uncomfortable) state of “happiness” and “forgiveness.”

Cesario's name, almost an anagram of Carriazo, serves to associate him immediately with his literary precursor. Cesario is the son of a nobleman and yet he, like Carriazo, is inclined to play the *pícaro*. The play begins at home, where he is having a sexually charged conversation with his sister, Clarissa. In a scene highly reminiscent of Ferdinand's conversation with his sister the Duchess in Webster's *The Duchess of Malfi*, Cesario interrogates Clarissa's behavior with the opposite sex. She is clearly a strong character, parleying with him well, accusing him of hypocrisy in his wooing of the fair maid of the inn, Bianca, who is much below him in status: “Are you touch'd? / Why, did

⁹ Hensman notes that this is “in keeping with the decorum of romantic comedy” (358) — a brutal rape and abandonment does not quite fit with the generic expectations of the play.

you think that you had Gyges' ring, / Or the herb that gives invisibility? / Or that Bianca's name had never been mention'd? / The fair maid of the grand osteria [inn], brother?" (I.i. p.14). Cesario claims to "love her; / But virtuously:" (I.i. p.14), as an excuse for his attentions to Bianca, and yet he follows by saying: "My dearest Clarissa: do not think / . . . I wish you should live / A barren virgin life: I rather aim at / A noble husband" (I.i. p.14). Cesario is, in this scene, setting up a number of contradictions that are ultimately untenable. Cesario loves his sister "[w]ith more than common ardour" (I.i. p.13) and he loves Bianca "[b]ut virtuously" (I.i. p.14), associations which, in most cases, one would hope would be reversed. He wants a noble suitor for his sister (himself) and yet claims to love "virtuously" and chastely one much beneath him, one that Clarissa would clearly scorn to "call sister" (I.i. p.14). At the conclusion of this first scene he gives Clarissa a ring (foreshadowing his desire to marry her later in the play) and demands that she give it to no man without consulting him first: "As a pawn of this, / Receive this ring; but, ere you part with it / On any terms, be certain of your choice, / And make it known to me" (I.i. p.15). When she offers him her hand in agreement, he replies: "Which, were it not my sister's, I should kiss with too much heat" (I.i. p.15). Cesario professes to love Bianca and yet he behaves as though he loves/lusts after his own sister.

Even the love between Clarissa and Mentivole is tainted by the inappropriateness of Cesario and Clarissa's relationship. Mentivole declares, in an aside: "How I envy / Those amorous smiles, those kisses, *but, sure, chaste ones,* / Which she vouchsafes her brother!" (II.i. p.21, emphasis mine). Mentivole himself has seen enough to suspect something between them, although he is "sure" they are "chaste." Cesario's "love" for

Bianca is thus immediately placed into competition with his more violent passion for his own sister. These two women and their relationship to Cesario in this scene serve to foreshadow the split in his theatricality that we see, implicitly then later explicitly, in Cesario over the course of the play. Fletcher adapts Carriazo's performative duality and confused interiority, due to his conflicting desires to perform the disparate roles of "nobleman" and "*pícaro*," to the more tragicomic-friendly conundrum of sex. Cesario plays the *pícaro* not because of his love of the lifestyle or his love of the "tunny fisheries" but because he is sexually attracted to two highly inappropriate women: his sister and the lowborn Bianca.

Cesario's picaresque actions extend around him to the man who is his main rival for Clarissa, his supposed friend Mentivole. Later in the first act, Cesario and Mentivole decide to engage in a friendly race; however, the situation quickly becomes serious when Cesario clearly cheats in order to gain the win. Using the same narrative technique that Webster, in *Duchess*, gleans from Painter, Fletcher uses an outside observer as narrator of the scene: "No question, 'twas not well done in Cesario / To cross the horse of young Mentivole / In the midst of this course" (I.iii. p.25). This scene once again seems to be about Cesario's confused feelings toward his sister rather than Mentivole's perceived wrong. Cesario states in response to Mentivole's objections to his actions: "Why, sir, are you injur'd / In that I take my right, which I would force, / Should you detain it?" (I.ii. p.25). Cesario determines to defend himself, his "honor," and his lady here by behaving brashly and attacking his only friend, the son of his father's best friend, a very picaresque action (Carriazo "was used to making deals in the tunny fisheries where every kind of danger is met and threatening behaviour, as well as outrageous swearing and bragging, is

practiced” [Cervantes, *Fregona* 113]). As with Carriazo, we are forced to look to Cesario’s performativity in order to determine his interiority: he, like Carriazo, is a nobleman’s son whose behavior, much of the time, belies his status.

Cesario’s actions in the race with Mentivole end with Cesario seriously hurt when they both rely on their swords to save face. As Mentivole accurately predicts, the worst fallout from this rivalry is their “father’s frowns” (I.iii. p.26). Baptista, furious with his son for hurting Cesario, orders Mentivole to apologize to Alberto on Baptista’s behalf. This plan backfires, and Alberto turns his wrath on both Mentivole and Baptista, threatening to cut off Mentivole’s hand. Cesario stops this punishment only to discover that Mentivole has in his keeping “[t]he ring I enjoin’d [Clarissa] never part withal / Without my knowledge” (II.i. p.33). This discovery prompts a feint of forgiveness on Cesario’s part, provided he gets the ring and Mentivole’s sword. Cesario’s emasculating actions force Mentivole and Baptista to take sides against Cesario and Alberto, the latter whom has been dispatched by the Duke to fight against the Turks.

Soon after he leaves, we learn that Alberto has perished in the fighting. Alberto’s purported death has Cesario’s mother, Mariana, fearful for her son’s life. When he refuses, at her behest, to “travel; / Both to prevent their fury, and wear out / The injury” (II.iv. p.43), she decides that the only way to protect her only son is to publicly disown him. Cesario, who has, just prior to this scene, asked Bianca to be his mistress (to her horrified refusal), is shocked when his mother states, before the Duke and his officials, that “this Cesario, / Neither for father had Alberto, me / For mother, nor Clarissa for his sister” (III.ii. p.54). It is at this point that we see another split in Cesario’s theatricality. Cesario is adamant that his sister marry according to her status; similarly, he has just

propositioned Bianca as a mistress because he has no intention of marrying someone lowborn. Now that his mother has declared him to be of other, lowborn parentage, Cesario, ironically, performs an elegant speech on the possibilities of social mobility:

. . . for to be basely born,
 If not base-born, detracts not from the bounty
 Of Nature's freedom or an honest birth.
 Nobility claim'd by the right of blood
 Shews chiefly that our ancestors deserv'd
 What we inherit: but that man whose actions
 Purchase a real merit to himself,
 And rank him in the file of Praise and Honour,
 Creates his own advancement. (III.ii. p.56)

Although Mentivole and Baptista are immediately appeased, Mariana's plan becomes complicated when the Duke suggests that Cesario "create his own advancement" by marrying his "former" mother. She, of course, is horrified but is unable to refuse the Duke's command. Cesario, realizing that he is still to be held in high esteem, appears unconcerned with the situation and reveals his concerted interest in the *status*, if not the *actions*, of nobility (and his former sister) by laughing in Bianca's face when she comes to offer him her hand in marriage. He instead suggests to his mother and the Duke that he marry Clarissa, his erstwhile sister, in order to regain his former status. His mother's lie to keep him safe thus threatens to resolve Cesario's inappropriate feelings for his sister and to perpetuate the feud between the two families, which had been appeased by Cesario's change in status (because Cesario, they believed, was no longer in a position to interfere with their plans). When both Clarissa and his mother Mariana refuse to marry him, Cesario laments, "Oh, with what speed men tumble down / From hopes that soar too high! Bianca now / May scorn me justly too;" (IV.i. p.68). And indeed, when he next asks Bianca to marry him in desperation, she refuses him outright.

In the final act, Alberto returns in his own *anagnorisis* scene, having in fact been captured but not killed in battle. His arrival signals a return to some semblance of “normality,” although he has retained his anger over Cesario’s injury and does not desire to reconcile with his former best friend. Alberto is upset by the changes he sees in Cesario and enjoins him to “*be thyself*; be mine, Cesario: / Make not thyself incapable of that portion / I have full purpose to confer upon thee, / By falling into madness;” (V.i. p.89, emphasis mine). Cesario’s “former virtue,” which he claims has been returned to him with Alberto’s return, is “awak’d” not for noble purposes but to “stop the marriage” of Mentivole and Clarissa (V.i. p.90) — in other words, to continue the feud.

Cesario is not a likable character. Like Carriazo, he performs different roles: that of a (noble) nobleman, that of an ignoble nobleman, and that of a *pícaro*. At the end of Cervantes’s *novela*, we remain confused as to Carriazo’s interiority as primarily a nobleman or a *pícaro*; this is uncomfortable, perhaps, but not necessarily disconcerting. Birth, we are shown, may determine one’s social status, but that does not preclude the nature of one’s character. One’s behavior should be indicative of class status — as proves to be the case, first with Costanza, then with Bianca — but there is no real connection for the main characters in either text. Cesario, ironically, shows himself most noble when he first learns of his supposed base birth. Right up until the end, when he learns that he is in fact Alberto’s son and that Bianca is Baptista’s long-lost daughter rather than a lowborn maid, he is, along with his father, hell-bent on vengeance against Baptista and Mentivole. The proclamation is made by the Duke, following these revelations, for “the marriage / Of young Mentivole and fair Clarissa, / So you consent, great lady, your Bianca / Shall call Cesario husband” (V.iii. p.103). The Bianca who was once bold and outspoken

becomes silent at the end of the play (much like Isabella in Shakespeare's *Measure for Measure*, whom I discuss below), saying only to her future husband: "Kneel not; all forgiven" (V.iii. p. 103). The play thus ends, problematically, with a supposedly penitent Cesario wed to a woman he once thought worthy of only a mistress's status. Her rich clothes, it would seem, are enough to change Cesario's opinion here. At the end of *La ilustre fregona*, Carriazo's interiority remains muddled; we are not certain that he is in fact happy at the end of the *novela* with his noble bride and three dutiful children. However, there is zero focus on his bride, so our concern lies with *him*. His interiority remains obscured and yet the ending is not overly unsettling. In the case of the play, Fletcher has utilized Cervantes's characterization techniques from the *novela* in order to create a character who is inherently disturbing. Cesario — and his father, for that matter — perform vastly differing roles whose connections to interiority are not immediately apparent. Still, we are left to question: Is Cesario the noble character he sometimes performs, or is he, after a fashion, his own style of *picaro*? We know that, by birth, Cesario is a nobleman — one who wants, primarily, what he cannot have: his sister, Bianca, his mother, his inheritance. Cesario performs both roles at different times throughout the play: as in Cervantes's *novela*, this characterization encourages us to interrogate Cesario's interiority, but we cannot be sure which performance wins out in the end. Fletcher has created, from Cervantes's Carriazo, a more complex — and more disturbing — vision of unresolved interiority in Cesario.

Although Fletcher builds upon Cervantes's complex characterization of Carriazo in his creation of Cesario in *The Fair Maid of the Inn*, he explores the notion of class and the disassociation between class status, performativity, and interiority most explicitly in

his play *The Queen of Corinth*. This play is based loosely and in part on Cervantes's *La fuerza de la sangre*, which I will discuss in depth in Chapter Two. In addition to its loose connection to this *novela*, I argue that *The Queen of Corinth* is also intertextually connected to *La ilustre fregona* and *Fair Maid* and their demonstrations of confused interiority through overt theatricality. Fletcher uses this confusion of interiority most explicitly, in *The Queen of Corinth*, in his characterization of Theanor, who is descended from the same villainy as Rodolfo, the rapist-turned-questionable-husband in *La fuerza de la sangre*. Theanor is in some ways a similar character to Cesario, yet he evokes even stronger feelings of discomfort. Although Cesario's behavior is often unsettling, particularly because he seems to have greater strength and intelligence than Theanor, Theanor's actions are more disturbing because they involve rape and the endangerment of an entire kingdom.

Theanor (perhaps a cruel caricature of James I, who was known for his lascivious lifestyle) is the son of the Queen of Corinth (perhaps representative of Elizabeth I) and is therefore noble. However, the play is largely an interrogation of the concept of nobility and whether it is to be inherited or earned (although in the end it settles back on the established view of hereditary succession). As Clark notes, "Both Elizabeth and James, in different ways, were conscious of the uses to which theatre might be put to serve their own interests, though this did not deprive the drama of the ability to express criticism of and even opposition to royal practice and policies" (*Renaissance Drama* 27). The Queen of Corinth herself states: "They are fools that hold them dignified by blood; / They should be only made great that are good" (III.i. p.444). Similarly, Beliza says to Euphanes: "Believe I am not one of those weak ladies, / That (barren of all inward worth)

are proud / Of what they cannot truly call their own, / Their birth or fortune, which are things without them;” (I.ii. p.404). This is a theme that runs throughout the play and a feeling that is echoed in the Queen’s attitude toward Theanor and Euphanes respectively. Theanor, as the royal son (and rapist), and Euphanes, as the royal favorite (justified by his constant good behavior and his staunch dedication to mercy over justice) thus serve as explicators of this theme. Theanor’s late father, we learn, is not of noble birth. Theanor’s behavior, also, (unlike Euphanes’s) in no way conforms to the behavior of royalty. Instead, his royalty is encompassed by Euphanes, a courtier whose noble behavior raises him very quickly to the position of the Queen’s favorite. We learn about Theanor in a tripartite manner; and, as in *The Duchess of Malfi*, these impressions we get of his character vary widely. We learn, at the beginning of the play, that “The prince Theanor made love to this lady [Merione], / And in the noblest way” (I.i., p.398). We thus learn from other characters in the play, who once again serve the function of narrators, that Theanor is, at least prior to the beginning of the play, behaving in such a way as is conducive to his position as prince. The characters discussing Merione’s sudden betrothal to Agenor further comment that they would not “sit down with this wrong” (I.i., p.398) if they were in Theanor’s position. As introduced by others, therefore, Theanor is a noble son being forced to give up the love of his life for “[t]he common good” (I.i., p.398), and we as the audience/reader are inclined to feel sympathy for him.

However, when Theanor himself enters the play for the first time at the end of the first scene, his words and behavior clearly contradict the words of these unreliable narrators. Instead of behaving nobly, he seems to be agreeing to commit some foul deed with the encouragement of his friend Crates, who advises him to “still disguise your

malice / In your humility. / . . . / Tho' in your heart there rage a thousand tempests, / All calmness in your looks" (I.i., pp.399-400). It is unclear whether the "malice" that Theanor is concealing is truly his own or is being attributed to him and encouraged in him by Crates, his Bosola-like companion who in some ways acts as a direct narrator for Theanor's inner thoughts (and is of course yet another unreliable source of inner information). Up until this point Theanor has evidently been "performing" the role of noble prince and dutiful son; we can have no assurance, however, that this is reflective of his interiority, for although initially he shows some reluctance to rape his former beloved, he agrees rather quickly and consistently puts himself and his future, unthinking, into the hands of Crates, his friend but also a courtier with specific ambitions. Also, interestingly, Neanthes notes in the opening scene that, had Theanor and Merione already married — even without her knowledge or consent — the Queen had once explicitly stated that she would do nothing to prohibit the match. If Theanor's love for Merione is so strong, therefore, it is unclear as to why he does not marry her earlier, or marry her in secret once he finds out that she is to be married to another in order to forge a peace treaty, an action that would have stopped the arranged marriage just as effectively — and with far less harm, physically, emotionally, *or* even politically, as we eventually discern — than rape. When Theanor behaves nobly before Agenor and his mother the Queen, Crates makes it clear that he believes Theanor to be acting — "'Tis well cover'd" (I.iii., p.413) — and indeed this is likely, since Theanor has already agreed to the rape and, despite his noble handing over of Merione, intends to basically "ruin" her for the marriage later that night. His cruelty is further revealed when Merione pleads, after she has been raped, for him to "but look upon me, / But one kind loving look, be what you will, / So from this hour you

will be mine, my husband” (II.i., p.415). The competing figures of Theanor as noble prince and violent rapist, both which have been performed by Theanor himself and substantiated by other characters, are thrown into stark contrast. We cannot be sure which performance reflects Theanor’s dominant interiority. Theanor in fact does not attempt to redeem himself until the very end of the play; and this “royal” performance may be a “return” to a pre-play Theanor or it may simply be a neck-saving measure.

Theanor, assisted by an at times Iago/Bosola-like Crates (a character whose behavior depends entirely on the mood of the court and where he can best get favor and preferment), decides to rape the woman he loves since he cannot marry her, making this crime even more horrific by having his friends dance around in masks. Later in the play he resolves to rape Beliza, Euphanes’s intended, and seems to have no remorse whatsoever. However, at the end of the play he performs a very noble speech in which he offers to marry Merione to save her honor, after which he would be beheaded. Through the Marshal, who has observed Theanor in prison (and thus acts as another “narrator”), we get another behind-the-scenes, positive view of Theanor’s behavior, just as we did at the beginning of the play. The Marshal believes that in Theanor he sees that “the deep / Consideration of what’s past more frights him / Than any other punishment” (V.iv. p.479). In his final speech Theanor sounds strong, royal, and truly contrite. Is this “performance” the “real” Theanor, a royal Theanor who up until this point has been hidden in the guise of a petulant and violent child? Or is this a Theanor who comes out when he is facing his own death as a direct result of his actions? The Theanor of the play up until this point seems like a weak boy who is controlled by his Queen mother (and Crates, although he is not as aware of this control) and therefore resents his current

position of helplessness. Because he feels that he has been bullied, he decides to bully others: Merione, Euphanes, Beliza, even his own closest friends. Because it is eventually revealed that Theanor did not actually rape Beliza but Merione (again), he is allowed to live and (after the conclusion of the play) to marry his original intended. We as readers, however, cannot help but fear for Merione in this situation; although it is at her request that she is married to Theanor, we are not quite sure to *whom* she is married: a repentant prince or a violent rapist. We can only hope that, at the very least, he will maintain his “performance” of the noble prince from this point forward.

Similarly, in *La fuerza de la sangre*, Rodolfo (which is in fact a pseudonym — we never learn his true identity) remains unconcerned about his rape of Leocadia until he is confronted with his victim and the child that is the result of that attack; and then, he seems to be happy only that he is marrying someone beautiful. Like Theanor, Rodolfo is a rather despicable character who, toward the end, is given a noble speech, which provides an additional layer of information that induces us to question his true interiority: “marriage,” Rodolfo proclaims, “is a knot untied only by death” (121). He claims that “beauty is what I seek and desire, and no other dowry than that of chastity and good morals; if my bride brings these with her, I will serve God with pleasure and give my parents a happy old age” (121). We are enticed by these competing strands of interiority into seeking a solution: the true inner life of each of these interconnected characters. Theanor’s confusion of interiority based upon competing theatrical personas is clearly connected both to Cervantes’s confusion of identity in *La fuerza de la sangre* and *La ilustre fregona* and is, perhaps, in remaining enticingly (and uncomfortably) mysterious,

Fletcher's commentary on the negative effect that performing multiple roles ineffectively, as royalty, can have on the stability of a country.

For my final section, I turn to a better known work: Shakespeare's *Measure for Measure*. *Measure for Measure* has a particularly interesting history, as it has direct roots in not one but in four separate contemporary pieces of writing:¹⁰ Cinthio's "Epitia" *novelle* (the fifth *novelle* of the eighth day of his *Hecatommithi*), Cinthio's dramatic version, entitled *Epitia* (published posthumously), George Whetstone's lengthy two-part play, *Promos and Cassandra*, and Whetstone's short novella version of the story included in his *Heptameron*. Most critics tend to make the strongest connections between Whetstone's play (which was undoubtedly based on Cinthio's *novelle* and play) and *Measure for Measure*, with only tentative connections between Shakespeare's play and Cinthio's works.¹¹ Although Ivo Kamps and Karen Raber use Cinthio's *novelle* as their only specific example of Shakespeare's source material for the play in their 2004 *Measure for Measure: Texts and Contexts*, they displace its importance in favor of the "cultural context" of *Measure for Measure*: "Now what can we make of this story's relevance to *Measure for Measure*? . . . We can make many . . . guesses, as long as we recognize that Shakespeare's choices in *Measure for Measure* were influenced more deeply by his own cultural context than they were by Cinthio's tale" (10). Source material analysis is here considered "guesswork," while "cultural context" is considered much more reliable and important. By looking at an examination of Cinthio's *novelle* — in itself a literary work deserving of consideration — as merely a formal exercise in

¹⁰ Not to mention indirect connections, of which there are many; see Bullough 399-417.

¹¹ See Doran 385-389; Bullough 399-417; and Nagarajan 107.

ascertaining “the textual origin of a plot line, device, or character” (9), Kamps and Raber discard the intertextual in favor of the contextual (which is of course important as well), ignoring the impact that source material can have beyond the discovery of mere “similarities” and “differences” (9). In contrast, in “The Politics of Persuasion: *Measure for Measure* and Cinthio’s *Hecatommithi*,” Caroline Roberts argues for an intertextual relationship between Shakespeare’s *Measure for Measure* and Cinthio’s *novelle* that moves beyond superficial differences and seeks to engage more deeply with the power of this text and its complex relationship to Shakespeare’s later play. Roberts’s article is particularly pertinent to my argument because it supports a more solid intertextual connection between the two texts, beyond its existence as a source text for *Measure for Measure* and other works. Roberts argues that Shakespeare purposely eliminates the feminism which she sees in Cinthio’s *novelle* version in order to emphasize his own commentary on contemporary Jacobean politics. Marcia Riefer Poulsen makes a similar argument in regard to Isabella, stating that “*Measure for Measure* traces Isabella’s gradual loss of autonomy and ultimately demonstrates, among other things, the incompatibility of sexual subjugation with successful comic dramaturgy” (154); in other words, Poulsen attributes the problematic nature of this play to the “sexual subjugation of Isabella” as the play progresses. Roberts notes helpfully that the characters in each text use two different rhetorical strategies — forensic (arguing about past things) and deliberative (arguing about possible future things) — and that it is their effective use of these differing strategies that reveals which character holds the power in the end. She suggests that Cinthio’s *novelle* is (proto-) feminist because it gives the principal female character, Epitia (the Isabella equivalent), the use of “deliberative rhetoric” throughout

and at the end of the tale, while “Shakespeare departs from Cinthio’s assignation of deliberative rhetoric to a female character,” thus “deviat[ing] from the inherent feminism of Cinthio’s story” (1).

Roberts argues that the play is about a rhetorical struggle and that ultimately the Duke is triumphant: “Departing from Cinthio, the play’s last scene focuses on the Duke’s exclusive power to dictate events. Isabella’s rhetoric also ends on a forensic and powerless note, unlike Epitia’s” (17). In other words, the Duke’s performativity remains central, and even increases in volume and scope, over the course of the play, while Isabella’s performativity peaks during her encounters with Angelo but is effectively silenced by the end of the play. Building on Roberts’s arguments regarding the intertextual relationship between the two texts, I believe that, while her interpretations of Epitia and Isabella are valid, they fail to understand completely the reasons for the differences between the portrayal of Epitia in the *novelle* and Isabella in the play — a crucial point being that, in Shakespeare’s version, the Duke, and not Isabella, becomes the main character of the story and thus that this shift, along with other changes, alters the rhetorical focus of the play. As Yachnin and Slight state in their introduction to *Shakespeare and Character: Theory, History, Performance, and Theatrical Persons* (2009), “The central plot-points of plays such as . . . *Measure for Measure*, and others depend for their meaning on how they are performed and grasped by the central characters” (7). Although their essay collection tends to focus on the *actual* performance of Shakespeare plays and the effect(s) of actors’ interpretations of these characters on stage, I believe that they are correct in that this movement away from plot-driven analysis and towards a more character-driven analysis is a helpful shift in the way we read/view

Measure for Measure. Rather than just something that is inherent in how each actor *performs* the character, however, I think that we can also see character-driven performance as always already inherent in the text (separate from its performance on stage). From this angle, it is possible to view *Measure for Measure* in a completely different way based on whom we believe is the focus of this play.

I would thus like to conclude this chapter with a close examination of the ways in which the overt performativity of the principal characters in Cinthio's *novelle* is borrowed and transformed in Shakespeare's principal characters in *Measure for Measure*, and how this overt theatricality serves to elucidate said characters' interiority. Of particular interest is the theme of self-knowledge that is evident in both the *novelle* and the play. The three character pairings I will focus on here are Isabella (Epitia), Angelo (Juriste), and the Duke (Emperor).

Roberts and Poulsen are both interested in Isabella's decreasing power of rhetoric over the course of the play. What they neglect to notice, however, is that there is an inverse relationship to this progression in the preceding *novelle*. In the *novelle*, Epitia does not even speak directly until Juriste asks to sleep with her. Up until this point, Epitia's "sweet way of talking" (422) is evidenced by nothing more than the narrator's summary of her arguments:

Epitia, was smitten with grief on hearing that her brother was condemned to die, and resolved to see whether she could, if not liberate him, at least soften the penalty; and having been, with her brother, under the tutelage of an old man whom their father had kept in the house to teach them both Philosophy (though her brother had followed its precepts but ill), she went to Juriste and prayed him to have compassion on her brother, because of his youth (he was no more than sixteen years old) which made him deserving of pardon, and because of his inexperience of life, and the violent impulse that Love had in his heart. (421-422)

Epitia is thus effectively “spoken for” by Cinthio’s narrator in what *should* be a speech of primary importance in the story, one in which she shows off her rhetorical abilities not only to save her brother’s life but also, inadvertently, to arouse Juriste’s lust. This is a mirror image of *Measure for Measure*, where Isabella’s greatest rhetorical display takes place in this early scene. Her long speech, though slow to start, ends with these powerful and resonant words: “go to your bosom, / Knock there, and ask your heart what it doth know / That’s like my brother’s fault; if it confess / A natural guiltiness such as his, / Let it not sound a thought upon your tongue / Against my brother’s life” (II.ii.136-141).

Isabella’s use of her rhetorical skill as an independent woman thus peaks early in the play and then diminishes as the play continues.¹² As the *novelle* progresses, however, Cinthio’s narrator steps away and lets Epitia, increasingly, have free rhetorical reign. Her longest speech takes place at the end of the *novelle* rather than at the beginning, when she eloquently argues before the Emperor to have Juriste — who has killed her brother but is now her husband — spared a death sentence:

O most sacred Emperor, the injustice and ingratitude shown by Juriste against me induced me to beg for justice against him from your Majesty. And you, with regard to the two crimes he has committed, have preceded most justly. . . . But just as, before I was his wife, I had to desire your Majesty to condemn him to the death which you have most justly assigned him, so now, when according to your pleasure I am bound to Juriste in the sacred bonds of matrimony, I should, if I consented to his death, regard myself as deserving perpetual infamy as a pitiless and cruel woman. That would be a result contrary to your Majesty’s intention of preserving both Justice and my honour. (429)

Epitia’s words and actions throughout the *novelle* reveal a clear connection between her overt performativity and her corresponding interiority; this is particularly evident in the above quote, in which she is able to recognize how the changes in herself and in her

¹² Although the full impact of Isabella’s silence is not felt until the very end of the play, at the Duke’s proposal, I am hesitant to attribute her speech at the final trial scene to her own rhetorical abilities, since she has been so thoroughly influenced and coached by the Duke-as-Friar.

status (through her marriage) alter the circumstances around her: her interiority is stable and yet flexible. Epitia is willing to speak up for herself, and for justice, without sacrificing her interiority for her theatricality or vice versa: she recognizes the change, verbally acknowledges it before an audience, and requests a corresponding change in how the goals of “Justice” and “honour” should be achieved.

Isabella, on the other hand, is a much more rigidly inflexible character; it is because of this inflexibility, paradoxically, that her interiority is much less clearly conveyed through her words and actions. She, as a novice nun, is much less willing to speak publicly on behalf of herself or others. It is only as Isabella is increasingly controlled by other characters in the play that she is dragged away from the silence and inner peace of the convent to the overt theatricality of the public stage of Vienna. Whereas at the beginning of the play she is fully bent on becoming a nun, she is reluctantly convinced, first by Lucio and then by Claudio, Angelo, and the Duke-as-Friar, to put this plan on hold in order to attempt to save her brother. As this plan becomes more complex and it becomes necessary to save her own virginity as well as the fate of a new character, Mariana, in addition to Claudio, Isabella is increasingly influenced by these other characters — and primarily the disguised Duke — until her outward performativity bears little to no similarity to the her initially assumed interiority — her supposed desire for silence and separation as a novice nun. Although Isabella, like Epitia, seems to “know herself” at the beginning of the play, rather than acting in accordance with that self-knowledge, she is repeatedly forced against it until neither she — nor we — are aware of her true interiority. Unlike Epitia, who decides of her own accord to attempt to help her brother, Isabella simply has no desire to use her natural rhetorical skills for her own or

anyone else's advantage. She "doubt[s]" the rhetorical "power [she has]" and, by the end of the first act, her power is described as the ability to "weep and kneel" rather than as an ability to win Angelo over with words (I.iv.77, 76, 81). When she actually approaches Angelo, reluctantly, to argue for her brother's life, Isabella gives up almost immediately: "O just but severe law! / I had a brother, then. Heaven keep your honor" (II.ii.42-43). She is ready to pick up and leave right there. Lucio must repeatedly prompt her — "You are too cold" (II.ii.45, 56) — until she finally warms up into a full rhetorical onslaught. Isabella, unlike Epitia, is in training for the sisterhood, which means giving up public life; thus, when she remains silent at the end of the play, it is not entirely unexpected. Isabella, in effect, has come an awkward full circle. Where in the convent Isabella would have been silent by rule of the order and of the prioress, Isabella's abilities become used or silenced entirely at the discretion of the Duke-as-Friar. Towards the end of the play, Isabella explicates this new situation to Mariana: "To speak so indirectly I am loath: / I would say the truth; but to accuse him [Angelo] so, / *That is your [Mariana's] part*. Yet I am advised to do it, / He [the Duke-as-Friar] says, to veil full purpose" (IV.vi.1-4, emphasis mine). Isabella and Mariana thus become actors in the Duke's play; they are forced to perform parts that belie their own interiority — to sacrifice their own self-knowledge — ironically enough, in order to expose the divergence between Angelo's performativity and his interiority.

Although I necessarily talk about Juriste and Angelo both above in my section on Epitia and Isabella and below in my section on the Emperor and the Duke, I wanted to briefly touch upon the performativity of this pair of characters and how it relates to their interiority. In Cinthio's *novelle*, the Emperor is good friends with Juriste. Although he is

strict in his enforcement of justice, the Emperor understands that his standards are high and difficult to keep. When he offers Juriste the rule of Innsbruck, he gives Juriste the chance to decline, warning him that in order to keep his favor he will have to “keep justice inviolate, even if you have to give sentence against me who am your overlord” (420). However, Juriste takes the position right away, because, as Cinthio’s narrator explains, “Juriste was more pleased with the office to which the Emperor called him than *sound in knowledge of his own nature*” (421, emphasis mine). Thus right from the beginning the *novelle* announces its overt interest in interiority versus performativity, in this case what Juriste believes to be true of himself versus what his actions profess.

Although in *Measure for Measure* the Duke does not give Angelo the option of rejecting his offer, Shakespeare similarly expresses an immediate interest in interiority versus performativity. In the play it is Angelo, rather than the Duke, who suggests that “. . . some test [be] made of my mettle / Before so noble and so great a figure / Be stamped upon it” (I.i.47-49). The Duke, rather than crediting this behavior, considers it “evasion” (I.i.50) and insists that he take the position. Unlike the Emperor, who strongly emphasizes “Justice” but is willing to allow Juriste to refuse the job, the Duke insists on his taking the position; like the Emperor, however, he emphasizes mercy rather than following the letter of the law: “So to enforce *or qualify* the laws / As to your soul seems good” (I.i.65-66, emphasis mine). This is a strange emphasis for the Duke to make, considering his later claim that he has enlisted Angelo to enforce weakened laws. Therefore, the Emperor emphasizes a clear correspondence between one’s interiority and one’s performativity as a *prerequisite* to rule, while the Duke *uses* rule in order to test and shape the relationship of Angelo’s interiority to his performativity while scurrying

around in the background pulling strings. Thus we can see the influence of this issue as it goes back and forth between the two texts; both authors are interested in the relationship of performativity to interiority: both Cinthio's narrator and Shakespeare (mainly through the Duke/narrator) demonstrate what performativity necessarily reveals — usually the contradictions between one's performativity and one's interiority.

Shakespeare's Duke, throughout *Measure for Measure*, performs several roles, including that of Duke, Friar, narrator, and, essentially, puppet master. One of the key mistakes I believe Roberts makes is in seeing Isabella in a role of primary importance in Shakespeare's play, one that is unfairly diminished by the tyrannical control of the Duke. *Measure for Measure*, in fact, can be seen as a subtle “play within a play,” for the story is not in fact about the travails of Claudio, Isabella, and Angelo, but is rather about the Duke's ability to control and orchestrate the actions of these characters; this is, unequivocally, the Duke's play. In the *novelle*, the narrator facilitates the explication of the story; in the play, without an external narrator, narratological control is given over to the Duke. By giving narratological power to a principal character in the play, Shakespeare creates a fundamental shift in the play's rhetorical purpose. Although Escalus claims that the Duke, “above all other strifes, contended especially to know himself” (III.ii.235-236) and to align his behavior with his beliefs, the Duke's real purpose behind his actions — the relationship of his interiority to his performativity — is ultimately unclear. The Duke thus joins ranks with characters such as Iago and Bosola, discussed earlier: his interiority is obscured by his own performativity and that of the characters whom he essentially controls. In the *novelle* the Emperor cares enough about his friend to warn him of the difficulties of his proposed position as ruler, but in the play

the job is forced on Angelo and is not even “real” — it is a fixed test, one that the Duke has apparently pre-arranged in order to ensure that Angelo’s previously ill treatment of Mariana would be publicly discovered and rectified.

The Duke is thus clearly interested from the start in the contradictions between one’s outer behavior (performativity or theatricality) and one’s inner life (interiority). When the Duke calls on Angelo to take over, temporarily, the rule of Vienna, the first words he speaks are in reference to Angelo’s “character”: “Angelo, / There is a kind of character in thy life, / That to th’ observer doth thy history / Fully unfold” (I.i.26-29). Angelo’s actions, the Duke suggests, are interpreted by “observers” as an accurate gauge of his true interiority; whether or not this is justified, the Duke leaves ambiguous and open to interpretation. Angelo has clearly, up until this point, been *performing* a role that is meant to ingratiate himself with the Duke and the average “observer,” but, paradoxically, this leads the Duke to *test* him rather than to praise him. The Duke, then, from the very beginning, is trying to determine just how Angelo’s overt theatricality relates to his interiority; we can assume, because of his knowledge of Angelo’s discarded betrothed Mariana, that he already knows that they are not in complete alignment. Poulsen argues that the Duke’s choice of Angelo is irrational: “That the Duke’s actions are questionable is apparent from the beginning, when he unexpectedly appoints Angelo to rule in his place instead of Escalus, who, as the opening scene establishes, is clearly the logical choice” (156). While I agree that this is not necessarily a logical choice for the good of Vienna (and I agree strongly that the Duke is a troubling figure within the play), the purpose that the Duke puts forth at the beginning of the play is *not* to find the best man for the job (who of course would be Escalus) but to test Angelo for his own veiled

purposes. Escalus is old and tried; the Duke states in his first speech that “I am put to know that your own science / Exceeds, in that, the lists of all advice / My strength can give you. Then *no more remains*” (I.i.5-7, emphasis mine). The Duke has nothing more that he can teach Escalus; therefore, he chooses not Escalus but the untried Angelo to take his place. As the Duke argues to Angelo, “Thyself and thy belongings / Are not thine own so proper as to waste / Thyself upon thy virtues, they on thee” (I.i.29-31). Angelo, the Duke argues, is being selfish in keeping his “virtues” to himself, and thus he offers Angelo a chance to use them in order to benefit the entire city. When the Duke later learns (or pretends to learn) that Angelo’s public performance of his duties is in fact not in line with his previous “history” of theatricality and thus his supposed interiority, the Duke feigns horror: “O, what may man within him hide, / Though angel on the outward side” (III.ii.274-275). When he returns to meet Angelo and learn of his rule, he feigns friendliness, declaring ambiguously: “Give me your hand, / And let the subject see, to make them know / That *outward courtesies* would fain proclaim / *Favors that keep within*” (V.i.13-16, emphasis mine). How Angelo handles his illusory power over Vienna (for, in the end, every action he takes is subject to the Duke’s control and direction) — is the test implemented by the Duke in order to reveal any potential breaks between what he practices and what he preaches, a test which he inevitably fails, to the benefit of Mariana but to the ultimately unclear benefit of the Duke.

Although he rules from the periphery for much of the play, the Duke never abandons his conscious performativity and his understanding of the importance of performance as both an indicator and a dissembler of one’s interiority: he has self-knowledge (though we are unable to clearly understand him). Angelo, on the other hand,

does not understand the complex connection between his performance as a ruler and his own private interiority and thus lacks the ability to rule with justice, mercy, and discretion. He performs one role in public — champion of moral behavior — and another role in private — corrupter of morals — and these competing roles suggest that the Duke, although misguided in much of his thinking, is correct in giving him this particular “test.” For some of the same reasons that this play is labeled a “problem” play, the Duke is successful where Angelo is not: we can understand Angelo — not like, necessarily, but understand — but we cannot understand the Duke, any more than we can understand Iago or Bosola. Why does the Duke leave Angelo in charge? Like Iago, he throws out reasons — to test Angelo, to bring back a stricter adherence to the law (I.iii.19-31) — but none of these is sufficient, or really rings true, as to the actual motivation behind his actions. The Duke overtly performs authority in such a way that he almost negates his own interiority: like Iago, he is all action, all words; one has to struggle to keep up. As Escalus declares when he receives word that the Duke will be returning to Vienna, “Every letter he hath writ hath disvouched other” (IV.i.182-183). Although reasons are given, only the Duke knows the true motivation for his varied and contradictory actions. Thus the reason the Duke’s concluding marriage proposal to Isabella is so disturbing is because we as readers do not *know* the Duke. He may be seen as a Machiavellian ruler, but because we have no clear understanding of the ultimate motivation(s) behind his actions, we similarly cannot have any real idea as to how to read his performance as indicative of his interiority. He is in many ways the all-powerful, unknowable ruler of Proverbs: “It is the glory of God to conceal a matter, But the glory of kings to search out a matter. As the heavens for height and the earth for depth, So the heart of kings is unsearchable” (Proverbs 25:2-3).¹³ The

¹³ Bullough notes that earlier scholars such as Roy Battenhouse and Wilson Knight see the Duke’s behavior

Duke is powerful in his performance as ruler, but his interiority as conveyed by his performance is “unsearchable.”

Ultimately, the Duke becomes an unconscious echo of Cinthio’s narrator, much in the way that several characters in *The Duchess of Malfi* take on that function in Webster’s rendering of Painter’s novella. The theatrical control that the narrator has over the action of the story is appropriated by the Duke in order to further explicate the theme of interiority versus performativity. The Duke and Cinthio’s narrator perform and direct action but are “unsearchable” themselves — their decisions serve a higher purpose that is unknown and likely unknowable. The other characters, in turn, reveal how overt theatricality can muffle, mask, control, and occasionally reveal interiority.

Having looked at several early modern novellas and their intertextual relationships to Jacobean drama — whether the novellas are direct source material or not — I hope these examples have reinforced the complex relationship between interiority and performativity/theatricality within early modern texts. As generically flexible categories, the novella and even the drama reveal that seeming dichotomies, regardless of genre — novella versus play, prose romance versus epic, etc. — are inextricably intertwined. I hope I have begun to show the many different, but still connected, intertextual ways in which the complex representations of interiority and performativity/theatricality are represented in the novella and how, in turn, they influence the drama that has always already influenced its inherently dramatic source material.

CHAPTER TWO: PASSION VERSUS REASON

“Kalander [was] found lying upon the ground, having ever since banished both sleep and food, as enemies to the mourning which *passion* persuaded him was *reasonable*” (Sidney’s *Arcadia* 283, emphasis mine)

In Chapter One, I utilized the theme of interiority versus theatricality/performativity in order to explicate the central thesis of this dissertation, namely that the early modern novellas as source material influenced not only the plot but, more importantly, the themes and formal and literary techniques of Jacobean drama. In this second chapter I intend to further support this overarching argument through a close analysis of a second seeming dichotomy, that of passion versus reason. The complex relationship between passion and reason is a major ongoing theme, not only of the novellas and dramas of the early modern period, but also of a great majority of early modern works in poetry and prose,¹⁴ and thus it is an effective lens through which to view the intertextual connections between my chosen genres.

Before I begin, however, it is necessary to clarify what is meant by these seemingly opposing terms. “Passion,” particularly, is a term that had a wide resonance in the early modern period. While it might be said to be roughly synonymous with what we today refer to as the whole spectrum of human emotion,¹⁵ including pity, sadness, lust, love, hate, and all other mental agitations, big and small, in general any disturbance of the mind (including those said to be effected by the bodily humors, such as melancholy), was termed “passion,” while “reason,” in contrast, was generally understood to be any faculty

¹⁴ Edmund Spenser’s *Faerie Queene*, Philip Sidney’s *Arcadia*, George Pettie’s *A Petite Palace of Pettie His Pleasure*, Robert Greene’s *Pandosto*, and William Shakespeare’s *The Winter’s Tale*, among others (the latter two which were discussed in the previous chapter) are all examples of works in which the complex dynamics between reason and passion are explored.

¹⁵ It should be noted that the use of the term “emotion” is anachronistic in the early modern period and that “passion” encompassed most of the feelings that would now be considered “emotions.” However, given the narrowing of the definition of “passion” over time I find it helpful to use the term “emotion” to clarify any misunderstandings that may arise from the sole use of “passion.”

that worked against (or to contain) these disturbances. As this initial, broad description indicates, however, there were during the early modern period numerous competing and contradictory sub-definitions of these terms put forth, not only by fiction writers but by philosophers and religious thinkers as well, and evidence of these multiple, coexisting interpretations abound in the texts of the period. In addition, the interdependence of passion and reason on one another helps to further complicate their depiction in early modern literature.

There are numerous instances, for example, several of which appear in the body of this chapter, in which a reasonable action may be spurred on by passion, or a passionate action may have its basis in reason. The quote with which I begin this chapter, from Philip Sidney's *Arcadia*, is clearly indicative of this trend, in which Sidney portrays these two human faculties not as opposites but as controlling forces which can take over, or even fool, one another. According to Paul Salzman in his important critical work, *English Prose Fiction, 1558-1700: A Critical History*, the *Arcadia*'s "tragi-comic ending neatly satisfies the reader's *potentially conflicting desires* for, on the one hand, right judgement (Euarchus' reason) and, on the other, the lovers' triumph (passion) . . . [for] initial conflict but ultimate reconciliation of reason and passion" (56, emphasis mine). Lisa Hopkins, in "Passion and Reason in Sir Philip Sidney's *Arcadia*," agrees while putting a more overtly negative spin on the passion within the text, arguing that Sidney "alerts his audience to these hazards . . . showing how passion must and can be tempered by reason" (61). As Salzman shows, Sidney focuses on the forever-dueling natures of human passion versus human reason while also recognizing his readers' *conflicting* desires for both passionate love/lust *and* a rational, orderly resolution to conflict. In this

example and others, the many competing sub-definitions of “passion” and “reason,” which I will discuss in more detail below, not only become complicated, but also call into question the true power of reason as a controlling force over passion. In the following pages I will examine the treatment of passion and reason in my chosen texts in order to once again reveal the significant influence of the early modern novella on Jacobean drama.

Although the topics of my first two chapters may seem relatively disjointed, in actuality they are very closely aligned. Nearly every recent critical work on passion and reason in the early modern period addresses the important topics of “subjectivity” and “character” and their relation to “emotional” discourse.¹⁶ Thus, as in the previous chapter, the question of “treating dramatic characters as if they were real people rather than textual effects” (Tilmouth 76) must be briefly addressed. Passion and reason, after all, are attributable to human behavior, and it is difficult to talk about characters within the novellas and plays as displaying or experiencing such behavior without reconciling this issue. Charles Tilmouth, early in *Passion’s Triumph Over Reason*, feels compelled to explicate the connection between “character” and “passion and reason.” Using several examples, he argues that

fictional characters are shown to possess their own, complex kind of reality. Furthermore, that reality extends to the fact that these same *characters encapsulate genuine passions, virtues, and vices, qualities which it is precisely the player’s task to represent*. . . . Given such contemporary proofs of the realism of

¹⁶ A few examples: Christopher Tilmouth, of course, addresses this as follows below in his *Passion’s Triumph over Reason: A History of the Moral Imagination from Spenser to Rochester* (2007). Gail Kern Paster, Katherine Rowe, and Mary Floyd-Wilson address the subject of “inwardness” in their 2004 book *Reading the Early Modern Passions: Essays in the Cultural History of Emotion*, and Constance Relihan and Goran V. Stanivukovic address the issues of subjectivity and character in their 2003 *Prose Fiction and Early Modern Sexualities in England, 1570-1640*.

dramatic characters, *it cannot, then, be considered illegitimate to explore the displays of emotion, introspection, and self-deception manifest in these figures.* Nor does it seem unreasonable to assume that playwrights, in creating these “personated men,” used the drama as a vehicle through which to interrogate questions of moral psychology. (77, emphasis mine)

The complexities of passion and reason as exhibited by characters in the novella and dramatic examples that follow are thus shown to be a legitimate line of inquiry and to further facilitate an interrogation of the complex and multi-definitional nature of these interconnected terms in the early modern period.

Later in his book, Tilmouth goes on to use Montaigne’s *Essays* to show the revealing potential of dramatic presentation in particular for the interrogation of passion and reason:

Montaigne, sketching the vagaries of the soul, comes to realize that man is physiologically and psychologically incapable of virtuous constancy. Hence, in [the A Text of “De l’Exercitation”] he notes that our deeds — our own as much as other men’s — are often mutually contradictory, guided by incompatible beliefs. Willingly or not, *most individuals vacillate so much that it would be fanciful to identify any one principle as the ruling force of a given person’s self*, to frame him into “a constant . . . solide contexture.” *The more honest method by which to judge a man’s conduct is in its detail, “part by part,” inferring motives and intentions only from a contextual understanding, from a sense of the “next circumstances” either side of each act.* (118, emphasis mine)¹⁷

Montaigne’s shrewd recognition of the inconstancy of human behavior and internal motivation is particularly significant to this chapter because he thereby implies the inherent difficulty in separating passionate actions from reasonable ones. He suggests that only through presentation of such morally complex situations via literary or stage characters can we begin to understand passion and reason and their relationship to each other in the early modern period.

¹⁷ Montaigne’s astute assessment that “individuals vacillate so much that it would be fanciful to identify any one principle as the ruling force of a given person’s self” further connects this chapter with the arguments of Chapter One regarding Bosola, Iago, and the Duke.

Early modern novellas and plays each attempt to depict human psychology and its vagaries via “a contextual understanding” as stated above; thus both necessarily fall into the problem of dealing with the complex, interconnected, cross-motivational relationship between passion and reason as they attempt to depict the multifaceted nature of human motivation and behavior on the page as well as on the stage. Novellas in particular, as the precursors to the plays with which I am dealing in this dissertation, are of principal importance in my analysis of passion and reason because they are the primary source of the complex treatment of passion and reason in the dramas based on these stories. Without these novellas — which supply in their own right numerous examples of the complex personages exemplified in Montaigne’s definition and thus provide their own complex and multifaceted look at passion and reason — Jacobean treatment of these similar themes in the resultant plays would undoubtedly be much altered from its present sophisticated state.

As I noted above, “passion” in the early modern period is roughly synonymous with what we now call emotion. Reason, seen generally as an attempt to stop or control passion, has corollaries in Stoicism, Calvinism, Aristotelianism, Augustinianism, and many other religiously and philosophically based fields of thought. A few of the numerous competing sub-definitions include “right reason,” which is our God-given moral inclination to follow good and eschew the bad (i.e. the passionate); reason as logic, which is an inclination to do that which makes the most sense in a given situation (and inclines more to Stoicism, in which all strong emotion is eschewed); and reason as self-control or self-governance — the notion found in the works of Aristotle and, later,

Augustine, that one has the power to deal with passion in a controlled manner, in a way that neither dismisses passion altogether nor falls victim to it entirely, but learns to use it to one's advantage and/or to reject it on a case-by-case basis. While all of these sub-definitions appear in the texts of the early modern period, in this chapter I focus primarily on this last definition, because it is the one that most overtly recognizes the extremely close and interdependent relationship between passion and reason that is so evident in my chosen texts. Tilmouth describes this complex relationship clearly and succinctly:

Desire driven by rational goals is, in Aristotle's view, morally valuable, and so too are the passions which are expressions of that desire. Hence, whereas in the Socratic and Stoic traditions passions are intrinsically reprehensible, reflections of misguided judgements about what sorts of goods are valuable, this philosophy offers a different perspective. Here the passions, if commensurate with reason, become the very manifestations of a virtuous soul. Such points are much supported by those Continental moralists who draw on Aristotle. (23)

Like Aristotle, "for Augustine what counts is intention and the quality of willing. Rightly directed, these make passions virtuous" (161). Unlike the coexisting definitions of right reason and logic, this understanding of the relationship between reason and passion allows for a flexibility of interpretation, one in which passionate actions can be reasonably motivated and in which passionate actions can lead to ultimately reasonable conclusions.

As I noted in my first chapter, the novellas of Painter, Cinthio, and Cervantes were all used multiple times as source material for early modern drama. Jacobean dramatists used these novellists more than any others for their storylines, but, again as I have stated before, they ended up taking away much more than merely plot source material. In the early modern novella, the relationship between passion and reason is complex. Although there are inferences of "right reason," these novellists take advantage

of the several competing definitions of passion and reason in the early modern period in order to create novellas with complex, contradictory morals that very often satisfy their readers' desire both for passion and for (at least the appearance of) a moral, reasoned conclusion. Jacobean playwrights, as Maslen has pointed out, recognized the complexity of these novellas' conclusions — what Maslen calls their “[vain] efforts to give them fabular morals” (82-83) — and sought to explore and exploit this complexity by essentially removing the sense of perceived moral closure: what if there is no plausible explanation or motivation for the passionate actions taking place in the story? What if they were to take these stories and split them open again to reveal a new and more complex — and more disturbing — set of “interpretive dilemmas” (Maslen 82)?

Although this has been discussed *ad nauseam* when it comes to, for example, *Othello's* Iago, I argue that this is not an isolated event but is instead part of a much larger pattern in Jacobean drama, one which is engaged in a direct response to the tenuous resolutions of passion and reason proposed within the source novellas. Tilmouth, I think accurately, charts passion's gradual triumph over reason from the Tudor to the Jacobean period. I would add, however, that the Jacobean playwrights were responding not only to contemporary politics and the philosophical writing outlined in Tilmouth's book, but to their own source material as well. The very style and rhetoric of the novellas of the early modern period, themselves influenced by the contemporary shifting viewpoints on passion and reason, influenced the dramatists and caused them not only to “recognize the desirability of according the passions a positive role in their ideals of moral consciousness” (Tilmouth 115) but also to thoroughly explore the consequences of doing so. The “interpretive dilemmas” put forth by the various novellas of the early modern

period thus clearly set the groundwork for the treatment of passion and reason in Jacobean drama, in which contradictions between passion and reason are exploited and passion, rather than reason, becomes the perceived focus of both the body and conclusion of the plays.

As I began my first chapter with a brief analysis of Robert Greene's *Pandosto* in order to demonstrate the prevalence of conscious theatricality/revealed interiority in early modern literature, I will again commence with two short preliminary examples which will serve to demonstrate the complexity of passion and reason in early modern literature and, more importantly, the sophistication of that portrayal in the novellas of the early modern period. Moving on to an analysis of my primary texts, I will first look at the relationship between Painter's two novellas "The Countesse of Celant" and "Two Gentlewomen of Venice" and John Marston et al's fascinating interrogation of passion, *The Insatiate Countess*. Next I will discuss the relationship of Painter's "Duchesse of Malfi" to Webster's *Duchess of Malfi*, focusing mainly on the passions and motivations of the Duchess and Ferdinand. Third, I will look briefly at passion and reason in Cinthio's "Epitia" *novelle* and Shakespeare's *Measure for Measure*. Finally, I will shift gears in order to focus on the use of passion and reason in a specifically religious context, that of Cervantes's *La fuerza de la sangre*, and its influence on Fletcher et al's pagan-set *Queen of Corinth*.

Most would agree that the basic storyline of the familiar tale of Romeo and Juliet is about passionate love and the tragedy that ensues as a result of the lovers' passion. In every version of the Romeo and Juliet story, including the multiple novellas in Italian,

French, and English, at least one poem, and at least two plays (although the pre-Shakespeare version has been lost), the lovers decide, through rational deliberation, to kill themselves as a result of their doomed passion for one another. Once this is done, in Painter's novella version the lovers' families, although sad for their loss, use these passionate acts as a *reason* for their reconciliation:

And for the *compassion* of so straunge an infortune, the Montesches, and Capellets poured forth sutch abundaunce of teares, as with the same they did *euacuate* their auncient grudge and choler, whereby they were then reconciled: and they *which coulde not bee brought to attonement by any wisdom or humayne councell*, were in the ende vanquished and made frends by pity. (Painter 124, emphasis mine)

The passionate grief (for “com-passion” is nothing other than mutual passionate suffering for others) that these two families experience following the death of their young children leads them to reason where “wisdom” and logical advice could not. Through the sadness and compassion that is evoked in themselves following the deaths of Romeo and Juliet, these families, who were long-time mutual enemies, are able to feel com-passion for the opposing side in a way that they were not able to before they underwent this mutual suffering. The purpose of the lovers' deaths and the resultant suffering of their families is thus clearly stated: without passion and com-passion there would have been no reconciliation between the two families. The lovers' passion, therefore, while seemingly unreasonable, has a reason and purpose in Painter's novella, and in the end the families' reconciliation reflects back, not on a passionate (and thus unreasonable) love, but on a love that was well directed and ultimately appropriate. The com-passion created by the lovers' demise is thus simultaneously passionate *and* reasonable. Just as Sidney, according to Salzman, recognized the need, in his *Arcadia*, for passion *and*, crucially, an “ultimate reconciliation of reason and passion” (56), Painter's desire to provide a

moralizing conclusion for his novella in fact ensures a thorough and complex integration of passionate and reasonable actions. Romeo and Juliet's passion and suffering become purposeful and ultimately reason-inducing — because of them anger is abolished and friendship established.

The complexity of the conclusion of Painter's "Rhomeo and Julietta" is found in many early modern novellas. Although a moral is provided, these morals usually serve to problematize and complicate the relationship between passion and reason and thus provide Jacobean playwrights with rich material for their own compositions. The complexity of these novellas is built upon by the Jacobean playwrights — and not only built upon, but broken apart, expanded, exploded. Shakespeare, who utilized Painter's novella in his composition of *Romeo and Juliet*, also suggests some preliminary reconciliation between the feuding families that echoes quite closely Painter's "Famous . . . Monument of Rhomeo and Iulietta" (124); however, the final words of the play are not those of reconciliation and peace, or even of condemnation of the lovers. Instead, they reveal in more overt terms the complex relationship between passion and reason in the play. The Prince states sorrowfully:

A glooming peace this morning with it brings.
 The sun for sorrow will not show his head.
 Go hence, to have more talk of these sad things;
 Some shall be pardoned, and some punished;
 For never was a story of more woe
 Than this of Juliet and her Romeo. (V.iii.305-310, emphasis mine)

Unlike in the novella, we are never sure whether or not there will be an actual reconciliation between the families, nor are we ever sure if there is really any reasonable outcome to the lovers' passionate actions. While in the novella the openness of the ending is created by the conflicting messages between the efficacy of passion in the face

of ultimate reconciliation, in the play Shakespeare builds upon and exploits this openness by leaving his ending completely open. As Helen Hackett notes in *Women and Romance Fiction in the English Renaissance* (2000), “Eleven of Shakespeare’s plays have what Dennis Kay has called ‘postponed endings’ — the postponement of full explanatory narrative beyond what is shown on stage. While, as Kay shows, the effects of this vary, they often included the sense of a . . . narrative spilling over beyond the confines of the five Acts we have seen” (157). The play is over, but the story continues: Who is to be pardoned? Who punished? When the characters discuss what has happened, what will they say? What message will they carry away? We cannot be sure of the answers to any of these pressing questions. Shakespeare thus senses the complexity and the contradictions inherent in Painter’s conclusion, which accepts passion as a vehicle for an impassioned yet reasonable outcome while simultaneously condemning that initial passion, and builds upon it in order to create a conclusion that further encourages his readers/audience to interrogate the complex issues of passion and reason and their relationship to one another.

A second important preliminary example is Painter’s version of the story of Appius Claudius and Virginia, along with John Webster’s subsequent dramatic version. To summarize briefly, this novella tells the story of Appius Claudius, who is one of ten leaders of Rome. While Virginius is away fighting, Appius develops a desire for his daughter Virginia and therefore collaborates with his friend M. Claudius in order to fulfill his desire. M. Claudius argues in court (falsely) that Virginia is his escaped bondswoman rather than Virginius’s daughter in order to give her to Appius. Appius, as the judge, of course upholds his argument. Virginius returns home in order to try to save his daughter,

but when he is unable to do so he instead slays her with a handy butcher knife and then returns to the war camp, where he repeats his story and rallies help from his friends and fellow soldiers. The soldiers create a new Tribunal with Virginius as its leader and threaten to attack Rome if the ten current leaders are not deposed. Eventually the ten voluntarily step down and Appius is tried for his crime and sent to prison, where he kills himself. Virginius and Virginia's fiancé are seen as saviors and thus become two of the three new principal Tribunes of Rome.

Virginia's father and his supporters (and Virginia herself, in George Pettie's novella version and in the play version attributed to John Webster¹⁸) believe that murdering his own daughter is the most *reasonable* way to protect her from the passionate advances of Appius Claudius. Appius Claudius's passion, which springs from no rational source but merely from lust (without any thought of marriage), is therefore crushed by an equally passionate, yet rationally motivated, act of filicide. Virginius murders Virginia not calmly in a private moment, but at the very scene of her trial, in front of a large number of onlookers. His passion (in the sense here of "crime of passion") is seen as justified and is the very reason that he is allowed to get away with the murder: here is a father who loved his daughter *so* much that he is willing to murder her in order to save her. Virginius and Virginia's fiancé subsequently mourn her death as the result of *Appius Claudius's*, and not Virginius's, actions. His rationally motivated passionate actions have thus not only saved Virginia (through death) but also saved Rome from tyranny: Appius Claudius is overthrown, and Virginius and his daughter's fiancé

¹⁸ There is another, earlier play version attributed to an R. B., entitled *A New Tragical Comedie of Apius and Virginia* . . . (1575), but I will confine my discussion to Painter and Webster as they are two of the authors central to this dissertation, and also as R. B.'s version is the only one to interpret the story as a comedy.

take over the rule of Rome. In the end, Painter's narrator once again suggests that there is a "morally valuable" reason for the passionate destruction that occurs: Virginia's murder leads to the arrest and death of Appius Claudius and the establishment of new and better leadership in Rome. Filicide, like suicide in "Rhomeo and Julietta," is a passionate act guided by reason, which Painter's narrator justifies, at least in part.

Webster, like Shakespeare, recognizes the complexity of his novella source's resolution. Unlike Shakespeare, however, Webster places an overt emphasis on passion versus reason at the close of his drama. As I have noted earlier, Webster makes Virginia complicit in her own death: she, in fact, proposes the idea to her father, who then carries it out without discussion. Once Virginius performs the murder, however, justice is not so swiftly or easily accomplished. Although Virginius is made General and Appius is arrested, Virginius is not easily acquitted of his actions, either by himself or by his daughter's betrothed, Icilius. Virginius falls ill following his filicide and begins to think that he must have mercy on Appius; his mind is only changed when he sees his daughter's mutilated body, which has been paraded through the streets. Icilius, who in the novella is shown to be solidly on Virginius's side, chastises Virginius for his actions, calling him "a noble *Roman*, / but an unnatural father" and denouncing his actions as "unnatural and damnable" (V.i., p. 55). Icilius will stand by Virginius, but only if he will follow through on what his actions began and put Appius and Clodius to death. The passion which overcame Virginius and gave him the impetus to kill his own daughter at the end of the play threatens to sabotage the very purpose of that deed, and thus it becomes of primary importance as the trial of Appius and Clodius begins. Minutius highlights this danger when he says to Virginius, "Let not your passion bring a fatal end /

to such a good beginning. All the world / shall honour that deed in him, which first grew to a reconciliation” (V.i., p. 56). As in “Rhomeo and Julietta,” passion has the opportunity here to lead to a positive outcome, but that positive outcome is not at all assured.

Thus, building off Painter’s treatment of passion in his novella, Webster chooses *explicitly* rather than implicitly to address the problematic nature of passion in the salvation of both Virginia and of the state. While Painter focuses on the positive outcomes which result from the filicide while simultaneously implying the complicated roles of passion and reason in his novella, Webster focuses overtly on Painter’s implications, noting the dangerous and tenuous nature of passion, which can just as easily work to destroy as it can, when utilized properly, work to reconcile. While reason, despite the passion that fills the novella, is still a factor in even the passionate actions of Painter’s characters, reason does not have the same impact in Webster’s drama. Appius’s passion, which earlier in the play had thoroughly justified Virginius’s own passionate and yet reasoned actions, must be put away now that he is General and in charge of the trial of Appius and Clodius and, on a larger scale, the moral welfare of Rome. As if to emphasize this point, Numitorius tells Virginius that, much like Shakespeare’s Brutus, “You must fashion now / your actions to your place, not to your passion” (V.i., p. 59). Now that he is a leader rather than merely a distraught father, Numitorius suggests that Stoic resolve is necessary in order to justify the force of his former passion. Even the condemned Appius, whose passion has put him on trial in the first place, instructs Virginius, as his judge, to “Leave this passion, / proceed to your sentence” (V.i., p. 59). Appius, in the end, rectifies himself somewhat in the public eye by killing himself before the court; Clodius does not

have the nobility for this action and is thus condemned to hang. Virginia is credited, through her death, with having “freed great *Rome*” (V.i., p. 61), and Virginius and Icilius are made Consuls. In a way, however, Appius’s passionate lust for Virginia has simply been replaced by another kind of passion, and thus the future of this “new Rome” remains uncertain. Passion — even morally and rationally justified passion — may or may not have been necessary in this case; it is never truly justified or condemned. It does, however, hold power over the Stoicism that tries to take hold in the second half of the play. Like Shakespeare, Webster recognizes the multiple moral conclusions of Painter’s novella and leaves his audience uncertain as to whether or not reason will ultimately justify passion — whether or not Virginia’s death will be justified by the “better” rule of Virginius and Icilius.

From Webster’s adaptation of Painter I now move on to an analysis of my primary texts and Marston’s use of Painter’s “The Countesse of Celant” and “Two Gentlewomen of Venice” as the basis of his *The Insatiate Countess*. Because I do not deal with this grouping in my first chapter, I will begin with some brief background information. The stories of the Countess of Celant and the Two Gentlewomen of Venice, like *Romeo and Juliet*, the *Duchess of Malfi*, and others found in Painter’s *Palace of Pleasure*, are Italian in origin. First written by Bandello, the “Countesse” novella was creatively translated into English first by Geoffrey Fenton, then by William Painter and George Whetstone. While the dramatic version, *The Insatiate Countess*, is mainly attributed to John Marston (and thus references to the author will remain “Marston” throughout this dissertation), critics acknowledge that other playwrights also had a hand

in its composition, mainly in the latter stages.¹⁹ Based on textual evidence, it appears that the play, written or at least planned mostly by Marston, was in an unfinished form when it was hastily “completed” by another dramatist (or dramatists) to make it workable for the stage. Giorgio Melchiori, one of the only critics to deal with *The Insatiate Countess* in any detail,²⁰ argues that

The sources of *The Insatiate Countess* seem to be much too obvious for a dramatist like John Marston, who in his previous plays had put together plots based not on single straightforward stories, but rather on incidents derived from a multiplicity of sources, so that the interest centred more on the atmosphere created by the cumulative effect of ever new complications than on narrative consistency. (17)

Undoubtedly, had it not been left unfinished by Marston, the play’s effect would have been less plot-centric and more of a melding of the two novellas. However, in working with the play in this semi-unfinished state, we are not only presented with a unique look into the mind of a Jacobean playwright as he works with source material in the early stages of composition, we are also able to see, hear, and feel the significant role that source material plays in the composition of Jacobean drama. Additionally, we are able to see that, rather than adding their own, unique touches of brilliance into what is otherwise a “simple” plot (as has been previously argued), Jacobean dramatists very often build upon and rework the complexity which they find already extant in their novella sources.

¹⁹ Giorgio Melchiori, Michael Scott, and Charles Cathcart all argue for the involvement of additional playwrights in the composition of *The Insatiate Countess*. Potential additional authors include William Barksted, Lewis Machin, and (unnamed) others.

²⁰ Philip J. Finkelpearl and Anthony Francis Caputi mention the play only in passing (Caputi disparages the play and believes that Marston was involved only in the writing of the comic plot and had little or nothing to do with the plot involving the Countess). Albert H. Tricomi, in his 2001 article “Counting Insatiate Countesses: The Seventeenth-Century Annotations to Marston’s *The Insatiate Countess*,” argues for the importance of analyzing a particular annotated copy of the play but does not perform an analysis of the play itself. Charles Cathcart, in his 2008 *Marston, Rivalry, Rapprochement, and Jonson*, does also deal with *The Insatiate Countess*; his chapter builds largely off of a 1977 note by Michael Scott in *Notes and Queries*, which suggests an earlier composition date for *The Insatiate Countess*. However, I find these arguments for an earlier date of composition to be highly suspect due to their failure to acknowledge the novella’s role in plot, place, or composition, particularly in their use of the Romeo and Juliet reference to back-date the play.

Painter's "Countesse of Celant" relates the story of a young, half-Greek (and thus hot-blooded) woman, Bianca Maria, who is married at a young age to a controlling husband and then widowed six years later. Originally a quiet, moral girl, she enthusiastically embraces her new freedom, indulging in cosmetics, dancing, and flirtations. She is wooed seriously by two men and is convinced to choose one, the Count of Celant, over the other based on his promise that he will not curb her freedoms as her first husband had. When the Count reneges on his promise, she flees to Pavy and sets up her own residence. At this point her second husband forsakes her and she begins to look for new flirtations. Her reputation begins to go downhill as she takes various lovers, ultimately causing enough friction that her discarded lovers start to speak badly of her in public. Enraged by this betrayal, she convinces her newest lover, Dom Pietro, to slay Count Massino, who then gets caught and confesses Bianca Maria's role in the murder. She is condemned to death, and just before she is killed she confesses to and repents of her actions. The story is once again told by an untrustworthy, moralizing narrator, who seeks to reveal the story in all its salacious detail while simultaneously teaching a lesson through its conveyance.

The "Countesse of Celant" in structure is in many ways very similar to the "Duchesse of Malfi." "Countesse," like "Duchesse," begins, not with condemnation, but instead with a surprisingly sympathetic portrait of the woman later to be described as insatiate. The soon-to-be Countess, Bianca Maria (changed to Isabella in *The Insatiate Countess*), is as well known for "hir Beauty, Gentlenes, and good grace, as for her goods, and riches" (46). During her first marriage she ". . . liued in reputation of a modest and sober wife. Nothing was seene in hir that could defame hir renoume" (45). Despite this

initial positive description, however, it is soon revealed that her first husband, Viscount Hermes, has a very different understanding of her character. Although there is never any reason given for his opinion (excepting her hot Greek blood), he sees her as one who is “wanton, full of desire, and coueted nothing so much as fond and disordered liberty” (46); he therefore “saw that it behooved hym rather to deale with the Bit and bridle” and to keep her closely guarded. The narrator notes that “although the Millan Dames haue almost like liberties that ours [in England] haue, yet the Lord Hermes kept hir wythin Dores, and suffred hir to frequent none other house and company but the Lady Hippolita Sforcia” (46). Interestingly, this observation directly contradicts the narrator’s simultaneous assertions, as the novella progresses, that the husband’s actions toward Bianca Maria are reasonable. The husband thus is seen as acting passionately in his “reasonable” containment of his wife, while an assessment of her “passionate” nature appears unreasonable. There is therefore from the outset a confusion of passion and reason and of the manifestation of supposed reason through passionate actions. When Lady Hippolita questions the Viscount’s unusual behavior toward his wife, he tells her in no uncertain terms that he knows his wife and will handle her as he sees fit, asking that the subject be dropped “least too importunate suites do offend my nature” (47) — in other words, lest he take away even the Lady Hippolita’s company from his cloistered wife. The initial view we have of the Countess is therefore complex — we cannot be sure whether the Viscount is acting out of some kind of passionate, irrational jealousy or if he is acting on behalf of “right reason” and attempting to impose Stoic ideals of passionless living.

This description of the Countess's early years is accompanied by the narrator's opening remarks on female behavior. As in "Duchesse," Painter's narrator accompanies his description of the Countess with moralizing commentary — in this instance, on women and chastity. He compares the treatment and behavior of women in England to those in other places and time periods (mainly ancient Rome), cautioning his readers not only against immorality but even the *appearance* of immorality:

Not without good cause of long tyme haue the wyse, and discrete, . . . taken great heede ouer their Daughters, and those also whom they haue chosen to bee their Wyues, not in vsing them lyke Bondwomen, and Slaues, to beerieue them of all Liberty, but rather to auoyde the murmur, and secrete slaunderous Speech of the common people . . . (44)

While women, according to the narrator, are not to be treated as slaves or chattel, they still must be controlled in order to save them from their own indiscreet tendencies. The narrator laments the current state of womanhood in England, stating, "But who can learne ciuility and vertue in these our dayes? our Daughters nousled in companies, whose mouthes run over with Whorish amd filthy talke, wyth behaiour full of Ribauldry, and many fraughted wyth facts lesse honest than Speach is able to expresse" (45). Women, he allows, are not necessarily "whorish" or indiscreet by nature, but rather are easily influenced by those around them. The narrator completes this confusing lecture by arguing that he does not wish for English women be to kept away from all company, but only that they be trained up in "vertue" (45). The "moral" of this novella, therefore, like that of the "Duchesse of Malfi," is simultaneously being pulled in two different directions. While he considers it unreasonable and a passionate overreaction to lock up a woman in fear for her chastity, he concedes that not doing so will likely result in a loss of chastity, since women are more easily influenced by passion than reason. What, then, is

to be done? The novella never settles these contradictory viewpoints, thus adding to the complexity of the novella's ultimately moralistic conclusion.

I go into some detail about this moralistic introduction in order to demonstrate the novella's early attempts to reconcile several opposing viewpoints on passion and reason. Because of the complexity of this treatment, which carries throughout the novella despite the increasingly bad behavior of the Countess, the final "lesson" of the novella, that God punishes those who "follow the way of damnable iniquity" (79), feels tenuous, for we have seen the contradictions not only in the narrator's presentation of Bianca Maria but also in how and why she is ultimately condemned. As in his "Duchesse" novella (to be discussed in this context below), Painter reveals the complexity of the relationship between passion and reason and the difficulty of depicting human motivation and behavior as either strictly passionate or strictly reasonable.

Painter's narrator notes that Bianca Maria truly loves and mourns her husband when he passes, despite his treatment of her (and of which she is never shown to complain): "she was very sory bycause she loued him derely" (47). Although this is in line with his initial positive description of the Countess, soon after this the narrator's perspective begins to change, and he quickly comes to view her solely as a passionate being without reason or morals. However, as Bianca Maria's passionate nature gradually is exposed, it is evident that her behavior soon after being widowed, while wanton in the narrator's view, is not necessarily wanton in the eyes of the other characters. If she was known publicly as a whore, it is unlikely that "many at Casall . . . [would have] desired hir to Wyfe" (48). She is unreasonable and whorish in the opinion of the narrator because she enjoys clothing and makeup and the attention of suitors — all typical and even

expected characteristics of women in the early modern period. Her passion, therefore, in the beginning is nothing more than a vanity within the scope of what any young widow would feel in suddenly (and, in her case, for the first time) having the eyes of the admiring world upon her.

In addition to the initial contradictions between the Countess's actions and the narrator's assessment of those actions, we must also look at the Countess's behavior in conjunction with the behavior of those closest to her. Although over the course of the novella there is a clear *progression* towards increased passionate licentiousness, this is not shown to be solely the fault of the Countess. In fact, the seemingly "reasonable" actions of several men in the story actually end up egging her on rather than restraining her. Interestingly, despite his eventual bias against Bianca Maria, the narrator implies through his wording that her husband's strict care of her, however well-intentioned, proves to have been ultimately short-sighted and damaging to his wife, for in controlling her so closely and unreasonably while he was alive, and in making no arrangements for her to be cared for in the event of his death, he releases her into the world a rich widow, with no family to guide her and without exposure to or experience dealing with "the licorous baits of sutch liberty" (47). She is an innocent with dangerous tendencies and no understanding of self-control; she seems to have a natural inclination to passion that leads her to behave correctly (i.e. mournfully) in the event of her husband's death but provides her with no guidelines for how to behave on her own.

Despite this inclination, Bianca Maria is, in fact, shown to be reasonable and well-intentioned in her decision-making process, particularly when it comes to marrying for a second time: "Bianca Maria vanquished with that importunity, and fearing againe to fal

into seruytude, hoping that the Counte would mainteine sutch liberty as he had assured, agreed vnto him and plighted vnto him her faithe” (52). Because of her fear of once again being confined as she was with her first husband, Bianca Maria decides to break off her engagement to Gonzaga and marry the Count, not lightly, but because he leads her to believe that doing so will allow her the freedom that was forbidden her for so long. This reasonable decision, however, paradoxically is held up by the narrator as another example of Bianca Maria’s passionate nature. Thus, in this decision she is shown to be simultaneously reasonable and passionate. As I previously mentioned, once they are married, the Count does not keep his promises but instead attempts to control her and her behavior, just as he claimed Gonzaga would. It is these false actions on the part of the Count, and not her own naturally “light behaiour” (52), that force Bianca Maria to begin to “counterfayte the simple Dame, . . . who flattered him wyth so fayre Wordes, as she won him to goe to Casal, to visite the lands of her Inheritaunce” (54). Although she leaves without any intention of returning to her husband, whom she now sees as deceitful and untrustworthy, she does not leave him for another man but only to keep that promise to herself which her husband had broken.

Bianca Maria’s more sympathetic quest for freedom up until this point becomes complicated when she, as a married woman, places herself in the company of men not as potential (chaste) suitors but as potential lovers. Now living in her own independent household in Pauie, passion, in the form of lust and desire, soon becomes the focus of her life as she takes first Massino, and then Gaiazzo, as lovers. In this story sexual passion is seen as leading to other, worsere passions, and murder, in the end, becomes Bianca Maria’s only answer as her public reputation deteriorates and her life spins out of control.

It is only once she is arrested and submitted once again to outside constraints, however, that she finally “repents” and is put to death.

The Countess’s repentance is particularly significant to my analysis because it can simultaneously be seen as unreasonable and as another expression of her passionate nature. She does not show any repentance until she is “ledde to the common place of execution” (77) — that is, when it is absolutely certain that she is not to be saved.

Painter’s narrator believes this repentance in the face of immediate death to be sincere:

Thus miserably and repentantly dyed the countesse, which in hir lyfe refused not to imbrace and follow any wickednes, no mischiefe she accompted evill done, so the same were employed for hir pleasure and pastime. *A goodly example truly for the youth of our present time*, syth the most part indifferently do launch into the gulfe of disordred lyfe, suffring theymselues to bee plunged in the puddles of their owne vayne conceiptes, without consideration of the mischieues that may ensue. (77, emphasis mine)

However, Bianca Maria’s sudden repentance only further exposes the ambiguity of passion and reason as expressed within the novellas and elsewhere in early modern literature. Is her repentance a genuine expression of passion based on the reasonable expectation of her impending death? Is it merely a passionate act that appears rational because it is a traditional, conditioned response? Is she faking a passionate repentance because it is expected at such moments?

The novella’s conclusion is troubling beyond the problematic assumption of the Countess’s “true” repentance: as I have intimated before, this moral further reveals how the narrator completely changes his viewpoint of the Countess from the beginning to the end of the novella. The narrator introduces Bianca Maria as an innocent girl (though perhaps one with passionate tendencies) who is completely protected from the world and then let loose within it, without any internalized (or externally guided) ways of dealing

with society and the world. As she breaks more and more social mores and eventually turns to murder, the narrator appears to forget the path that brought her to this point and instead seeks to condemn her utterly, both in court and in the eyes of God. This alteration may on some levels appear justified, but it also opens up the novella to a number of interpretive possibilities: Bianca Maria is shown to be innocent in the beginning. What, therefore, might have happened had the Viscount handled her “tendencies” differently? If she had had someone to guide her appropriately following his death, seeking to help rather than to control her? How much is she to blame for her downward spiral? The narrator ends the story with a reference to God’s justice — but is the Countess truly “bad”? Is she innocent at the beginning, as the narrator implies, or are we meant to understand that she is she destined to behave badly because of her innate personality and half-Greek blood? Are we to feel sorry for the Countess or condemn her? Or is it a mixture of both? What is Painter’s take on the ongoing, evolving debate in the early modern period on passion and reason? Multiple explanations are given and although there is a moral provided, the novella simultaneously provides us with a number of possible interpretations. All these questions and more arise from the narrator’s alternating viewpoint over the course of the novella.

Therefore, although the conclusion of the “Comtesse of Celant” seems at first to decry the salacious, passionate tale of an overly passionate woman whose actions lead to her necessary execution, a closer look reveals a complex, cross-motivational relationship between passion and reason that purposefully reveals the intricate nature of human motivation and behavior. As I have shown above, Bianca Maria is not merely passionate — she is a product of the persons and situations around her, which all work in concert to

shape the ultimate outcome of her life. Unlike Marston, Painter's narrator does not eliminate all that has come before as to Bianca Maria's background and character, nor does he hide or obscure the character of those around her. This fascinating exploration of passion and reason leaves the story with a moral, and yet with multiple interpretations, not only for the Countess's repentance, but for the Countess's character as a whole. Marston recognizes the richness of this story and utilizes these interpretive possibilities in his dramatic version to create his own insatiate Countess.

Before I move on to Marston's Countess, however, we also need to look closely at his play's second source novella, the "Two Gentlewomen of Venice," as it is crucial to an understanding, not only of the play as a whole and its treatment of passion and reason, but of Marston's portrayal of the Countess in particular. "Two Gentlewomen of Venice" tells the story of Lucia and Isotta, two young noblewomen who are brought up together from birth. The story begins when two gentlemen of feuding families, Girolamo Bembo and Anselmo Barbadico, marry Lucia and Isotta respectively and end up moving next door to one another. Their proximity, combined with their mutual hatred, leads the men to "fall in love" (read: lust) with one another's spouses. The wives, seeing no other way to get the attention from their own husbands that is necessary to start a family, decide to pretend to accept each others' husbands as lovers and, by switching houses in the dead of night, to sleep with their own husbands without them being any the wiser. Both women quickly become pregnant but, before they can find a way out of their scheming, the subplot interjects. Aloisio Foscari, nephew to the Duke, had been attempting to visit his beloved Gismonda when he falls from the ladder leading to her chamber. To avoid exposing her to public censure, he crawls away as far as he can before he passes out.

Because he is found, supposedly dead, outside Girolamo and Anselmo's houses, they are not only exposed as cuckolds but are also suspected of having murdered Foscari. Rather than admit to the former, they decide to confess to the murder, bonding somewhat through their mutual shame. Meanwhile, Foscari wakes up and, to protect Gismonda, says that he had intended to rob and kill her when he fell from the ladder leading to her balcony. As all three women are in some way responsible for their men being in prison, they at last decide to present the Duke, as judge, with the truth. Both Isotta and Gismonda make long speeches explaining their actions and their husband's/lover's innocence. The men are released, Foscari and Gismonda are married, and everyone lives together in perpetual harmony. All, that is, except for the Duke:

The wisdom of the Duke also was wonderfully extolled and commended of all men, the fame whereof was increased and bruted throughout the Region of Italy. And not without cause. For by his prudence and advise, the Dominion of the State, and Common wealth was amplified and dilated. And yet in th'ende being old and impotent, they vnkindly deposed him from his Dukedom. (156)

These final lines of the novella, as out of place as they may seem in the context of the larger story, are strongly indicative of the counteracting forces of passion and reason at work in Painter's novellas. "Two Gentlewomen" is at first glance much more cohesive than "Countesse" in its portrayal of its female protagonists: they are "good" at the beginning and they are "good" at the end. So what is tenuous about this novella's conclusion? What about this particular novella makes for Maslen's "interpretive dilemmas" (82)? A first clue to the answer to these questions lies in the above quote. The Duke, like the women, is also good. He uses reason to hear all sides and ultimately makes a decision that spares all involved and praises the women for their "proper" behavior in saving their husbands (and husband-to-be) from themselves. Two marriages are saved

and one takes place; it is ostensibly a happy ending for all — all, that is, except for this minor character. Despite the Duke's goodness, his people show him no loyalty and instead choose to depose him when he is at his weakest. Where has his reasonable justice gotten him? Nowhere. Thus, in a novella that purports to show the triumph of prudence over lust, of reason over passion, prudence and reason are discarded at the first sign of weakness. Passion in the end refuses to be defeated and ultimately serves as the facilitator of good in the story. And as we look more closely at the rest of the novella, we begin to see that the "reasonable" actions of the women in the story are not actually all that reasonable after all.

Although Lucia and Isotta are praised from the beginning for their clever handling of their husbands' mutual enmity, their actions lack any real, reasoned follow-through. It is unclear how the women, had the Foscari incident never occurred, would have resolved the bed-swap situation: having become pregnant, they "beganne to devise howe they might break of the same, douting [fearing] least some slaunders and ill talke should rise: and thereby the hatred and malice between theyre husbandes increase to greater fury" (132-33). Therefore, although Painter's narrator suggests that the happy conclusion is a direct result of their actions, in reality it is more luck than planning. The women's decision to bed-switch is not intended to help heal the breach between their husbands but instead is borne out of the women's anger at their husbands:

Whereat although they were in a great rage for theyr husbands follye, yet for the time they laughed out the matter, and thought that they were sufficient (as in very deede they were, a thing not to be doubted) and able to satisfie their husbands hunger and therewithal began to blame them and to say that they deserued to learn to play of the Cornets [to be cuckolded], if they had no greater feare of God, and care of honesty than their husbands had. (128)

They therefore decide to punish their husbands by allowing them to think they are cuckolding their enemy without their actually doing so. When their cuckolding scheme is made public due to Foscari's fall, they have no plan and their fear of "slander and ill talke" becomes a reality. Instead of their deceit ending "as merily [as] they had begon" (133) they are called whores in the street and are only cleared once the Duke accepts their explanation.

Thus, although the husbands are the originators of passion in the story through their mutual hatred and passion for each others' wives, the wives (who as women are always already a source of passion and lust) enable this passion to continue through their ruse and even actively participate in it. Lucia and Isotta are the happy beneficiaries of their husbands' "greater prooffe of their Manhoode," which not only enables them to become pregnant but also is an end in and of itself, evidenced by the fact that these bedroom meetings continue well into their pregnancies (132). Despite what Painter's narrator calls the women's "prudence, foresight and ware gouernment" (125), passion controls the women in the novella as much as the men; the women merely find (what turns out to be) a more socially acceptable way of indulging it. At the same time, however, that Painter's narrator seems to argue for the women's exercise of reason and self-government over passion, he also implicitly endorses licit passion between man and wife through his tantalizing descriptions of "[amorous entertainment]" (132). The contrast between the passion of the Countess, whose passionate actions are mostly for herself, and the passion of the gentlewomen, whose passion is somewhat selfish but also within the confines of marriage and therefore licit, is a powerful comparison, and one that Marston clearly exploits in his play. While the Countess may negate reason by sheer

force of will, the two gentlewomen call reason into question by successfully solving their marital problems through unreasonable yet well-fated acts of passion.

The force of reason is similarly called into question through the Gismonda and Foscari storyline. Gismonda, a young widow determined to be chaste, has been wooed by Foscari, the Duke's nephew, for some time before she finally allows him to sneak up to her chamber. It is only when she and Foscari decide to give in to their illicit passion that he falls almost to his death, threatening not only his life but also her much-prized reputation. Here the narrator interjects with an obvious moral, stating that

Sutch Chaunces happen to earnest Louers, who when they think they haue scaled the top of theyr Felicity, sodaynly tomble downe into the Pit of extreme despayre, that better it had ben for them leysurely to expect the grace of their Ladyes at conuenient place and houre, than hardily without prouidence to aduventure lyke desperat souldiers to clym the top of the vamure, without measuryng the height of the Wals, or viewyng the substaunce of theyr Ladders, do receyue in the ende cruell repulse, and fal down headlonge either by present Death or mortall Wounde, to receyue euerlastyng reproche and shame. (134)

This kind of hasty, unplanned passion, the narrator suggests, almost inevitably leads to physical or social death; and in this case it nearly leads to both. Initially this would seem rather cut and dry; however, none of these stern warnings ever *actually* come to pass. It is passion rather than reason that envelopes this entire story, and passion that saves them both: it is passion that leads Foscari to Gismonda's window and causes him to fall; it is passion that leads him to crawl away; it is passion that leads him to lie about his reason for being there; and it is passion that ultimately leads Gismonda, with the help of Lucia and Isotta, to confess before the Duke Foscari's true reason for being there, which ultimately leads to their happy marriage — a simultaneously passionate and reasonable outcome. Thus, once again there are multiple interpretations available: a verbalized denunciation of passion and the actual storyline, which implicitly endorses it.

As in the “Countesse of Celant,” there is a precarious balance between passion and reason in the “Two Gentlewomen of Venice” that leaves it open to the “interpretive dilemmas” (Maslen 82) that Jacobean playwrights found so intriguing for their own dramatic works. At first glance reason appears to win out in each of these novellas; however, in actuality, passion pervades both and is never really able to be escaped. According to Philip J. Finkelpearl, Marston in particular was fascinated by “the moral cost of immersion in the destructive element. This became the central concern of most of his later work” (161). As (allegedly) one of his very last, unfinished plays, *The Insatiate Countess* is a prime example of this total immersion in passion and the simultaneously passionate and reasonable results of such a powerful experiment.

One final thing to note prior to delving into an analysis of these novellas’ influence on *The Insatiate Countess* is their relation to one another within Painter’s *Palace of Pleasure*. As I have previously mentioned, although Painter wrote without a frame narrative, he did think carefully about the order and placement of his novellas. The placement of the “Countesse” and “Two Gentlewomen” novellas (before and after “Rhomeo and Iulietta”) is clearly part of an overall structural progression. For example, Painter’s narrator mentions “Rhomeo and Iulietta” twice before the Countess tale is complete. First he states,

And because almost euery day semblable examples be seene, I will leaue of this discourse, to take me to a matter, not farre more pleasaunt than this, although founded vpon better grounde, and stablished upon loue, the first onset of lawfull mariage, the successe whereof chaunced to murderous ende, and yet the same intended by neyther of the beloued: as you shall be iudge by the continuance of reading of the history ensuing. (78)

He then ends “Countesse” with a reference to “the rarest Louers that euer were” in the novella to come (79).

Similarly, Painter provides continuity from “Rhomeo and Iulietta” to “Two Gentlewomen” by beginning the latter, “Heere haue I thought good to summon 2 Gentlewomen of Venice to appeare in Place, and to mount on Stage amongs other Italian Dames [i.e. the Countess and Iulietta] to shew cause of their bolde incountry against the Folly of their two Husbands . . . ” (125). Painter’s narrator uses this opening to set up a comparison between all the Italian dames discussed in this section of his *Palace of Pleasure*, as well as a progression from a passion that appears almost entirely negative and one that is strongly warned against (that of the Countess), to a passion that results in a positive outcome despite its other negative traits (that of Romeo and Juliet), to a passion that is redirected to a positive purpose with ultimately no negative outcome (that of “Two Gentlewomen,” in which the two gentlewomen and their husbands are happily reunited, and the marriage of Gismonda and Foscari takes place). Passion, in all of the novellas of this section of Painter’s *Palace of Pleasure* (one of which is the “Duchesse of Malfi” as well), is a powerful force that is only tenuously contained because of Painter’s purposeful interventions.

The novellas’ placement also highlights several connections between them which emphasize the significance of their coexistence in Marston’s play. As in “Countesse,” the relationship between passion and reason is central to “Two Gentlewomen.” The women, like Bianca Maria, have the ability encourage or prevent lust through their own (good or bad) behavior:

These passing good pollicies of women many times abolish the frantick lecherous fits of husbands gieuen to superfluous lusts, when first by their chast behaiour and womanly patience they contayne that which they be loth to see or heare of, and then demaunding counsell of sobriety and wisdom, excogitate sleights to shun folly, and expell discourtesie, by husband’s careless use. Such practises, and

deuses, these two Gentlewomen whom I now bringe forth, disclose in this discourse ensuing. (126)

The existence of these four women — the Countess, Lucia, Isotta, and Gismonda — in a single play creates a fascinating view of the multiplicity and complexity of passion, the way it is revealed, and the way with which it is dealt. Paradoxically, their coexistence reveals such complexity by exposing the similarities inherent in the many different manifestations and treatments of passion. Love, for example, is consistently treated as a higher passion that is somehow untainted by baser, lustful passion, and yet Foscari's honorable love leads him to attempt to see his lover at night alone, and with the chaste Gismonda's reluctant permission. Similarly, Massino, who begins an adulterous, passionate affair, is led through her abandonment of him to rationalize his rage against her as a criticism of all womankind: "the whole race of woman kind was not spared by the Counte, *against whom he then inueyed more through rage than reason*, he considered not the honest sort of women, which deface the vyllany of those that giue themselues over to theyr own lusts" (56, emphasis mine). Thus even the characters who should in fact be inherently reasonable use reason to rationalize passion and passion to cover their lack of reason.

I believe that Marston recognized Painter's conscious display and arrangement of various passionate persons and situations and determined that the way in which these specific novellas were situated, in addition to their inherent theatricality (which has been previously discussed), was particularly conducive to a combined and synthesized dramatic representation. As the only play in my study that is based on two separate novellas, *The Insatiate Countess* offers a unique insight into the "interpretive dilemmas" (Maslen 82) that Marston saw in Painter's works as he sought to integrate the two

disparate novellas and the complexity he found within them and, in so doing, to interrogate further their treatments of passion and reason.

Now that I have gone into some detail regarding the novellas used by Marston as source material for his *Insatiate Countess*, I would like to move on to a discussion of their influence on that play, which Melchiori calls the “most puzzling play of the Jacobean age” (1). The titular character of Marston’s *Insatiate Countess* is in many ways altered from the Countess of Painter’s novella while still retaining and building upon key parts of her character. As I have previously mentioned, in the “Countesse of Celant” we constantly feel the dual nature of Bianca Maria as one who is simultaneously the “actor” (i.e. responsible for her own fate) and one who is being “acted upon” by external forces and circumstances (i.e. the victim of things outside of her control). Painter in his novella creates a fascinating and tenuous balance between sympathy and condemnation that is never adequately resolved. Marston, I believe, senses the delicate balance of contradictions surrounding the character of the Countess and chooses to build on this ambiguity. However, interestingly, while Painter sympathizes with a younger, untried Countess but then condemns her as she progresses further into dissipation, Marston creates a Countess who is always already sympathetic and always already insatiate. Consistent strength of character replaces youth, innocence, and bad influences, but just as we sympathize with Bianca Maria, we cannot help admiring and feeling for this new Isabella, Countess of Celant.

Unlike Painter, Marston begins the play *in medias res*: gone is the young, innocent Countess. Instead, her first husband already dead, Isabella is introduced like an unbroken stallion let loose from its stall. Marston’s Countess is a lustful widow who

tolerates crassness of speech in those around her and weeps not because her husband is dead, as in the novella, but “‘cause he died no sooner” (I.i.46). Not only is this Countess less innocent than Painter’s, she is also far more confident than the one revealed by Painter’s narrator, although both retain their reason for a good deal of time despite their passionate downfall. She may be lustful, but throughout the play she is revealed to be a strong, independently minded woman who frequently speaks her mind, often in a rational manner despite her strong association with passion.

Even prior to the Countess’s initial entrance, Marston prepares his audience for the passion that will dominate the play. Mizaldus (the sole character not taken from either novella), although he soon disappears from the play entirely, connects the play’s three plots through his relationships to characters who otherwise would have no connection to one another. In the play’s introductory scene, he is full of sexual allusions in reference to both the Countess and her suitors, Guido and Roberto: “Marry, I fear none of these will fall into the right ditch” (I.i.17). This obvious sexual reference is compounded by an allusion to their downfall as a result of their association with the Countess. As of this point the only “reasonable” step that has been taken is that Isabella is indeed mourning her husband at all. At first, she pretends genuinely to mourn him and argues for reason-based passion: “My lord of Cyprus, do not mock my grief: / Tears are as due a tribute to the dead, / As fear to God, and duty unto kings, / Love to the just, or hate unto the wicked” (I.i.32-35). Roberto, in wooing her, tries to convince her that it “is a wrong against the gods” (I.i.37) to feel passion for something as final as death, which cannot be changed, and thus that her passions are better directed at a living person (such as himself). Even though we find out soon enough that Isabella does not genuinely mourn

her husband, this does not really change her statement on “grief.” The Countess, through her mourning, both performs a final show of respect for her dead husband and expresses, for the first time fully, her passionate nature and her true feelings about her first husband.

Thus her passionate displays of mourning, just like those of Bianca Maria, are simultaneously passionate and reasonable. She explains why she is behaving in this overly passionate way: “I wail his loss! Sink him ten cubits deeper, / I may not fear his resurrection: / I will be sworn upon the Holy Writ / I mourn thus fervent, ‘cause he died no sooner: / He buried me alive, / And mewed me up like Cretan Daedalus; / And with wall-eyed jealousy kept me from hope / Of any waxen wings to fly to pleasure” (I.i.43-50). In this quote once again we can see the competing passions of her husband’s irrationality and her own (foreshadowed) irrational wish to fly too close to the sun (i.e. to forbidden pleasure) with waxen wings which will eventually melt and cause her to die for her insatiate pursuit of pleasure. Passion is thus rationalized, reason becomes impassioned, and motivations become blurred even as Marston introduces his Countess.

As I have previously noted, the Countess’s backslide into dissipation occurs much more quickly in the play than in the novella. In the novella, the Countess’s extensive back-story prevents the sudden alteration that takes place in Marston’s play. Bianca Maria’s surrender to passion takes place over many years and is supplied with motivational factors such as her heritage, her husband’s confinement, her innocence of the ways of the world, and her trust in the Count of Celant. In contrast, in the play we learn nothing about her parentage and very little about her first marriage. Despite the proximity of time (or so it seems) between the death of Isabella’s first husband and the presence of suitors, we also learn very little of note regarding her courtship with either

Guido or Roberto. Isabella's decision to marry Roberto seems to have very little to do with either his or Guido's arguments or a reasoned decision (as in the novella) but rather her own passionate lust. Guido is a viable option, and then he is not. Isabella is shown to be attracted to Roberto instead, and in the play we see the power of her passion and self-confidence as *she woos him*, and *she kisses him*.²¹ Marston thus builds upon Bianca Maria's dual nature, created over time, in order to create an alternate, complementary, and almost instantaneously dual nature in Isabella.

When Guido and Mizaldus learn of the Countess's sudden change from mourning widow to lover of Roberto, they marvel at this alteration: "A players passion I'll believe hereafter" (I.i.120). In the novella there is arguably no feigned passion: the Countess genuinely loves and mourns her first husband and then slowly succumbs to passion following his death, and it is not passion but mostly reason that induces her to marry the Count of Celant. Because the play accelerates the speed of the story while building upon the Countess's duality, the lines between truth and falsehood become blurred. What is feigned passion and what is real? What is calculated and deliberate passion and what is uncontrolled impulse? Every instance of passion becomes questionable at this point: Isabella's passionate response to her husband (whether love or anger), her love/lust for Roberto, his pledge against jealousy. Marston's Countess cannot be wooed, for *she* is the actor in this tragicomedy: only she makes anything happen in *her* play.

In the progression of Painter's *Palace of Pleasure*, the inclusion of the "Two Gentlewomen" novella is supposed to represent a welcome break from the evil passions of the previous Italian women. Lucia and Isotta provide an obvious contrast to the

²¹ Although the Countess *says* that Roberto has been passionately wooing her, all that we see in the play is her wooing of him.

Countess's own unbridled passion, as well as to that of their new husbands. Their use of passion for good is ultimately accepted rather than condemned, as it is within marital constraints and all turns out for the best in the end. As in Painter's other novellas, the conclusion is a deliciously tenuous balance between a happy ending (with a moral as to the husbands' behavior) and a number of bizarrely passionate incidents that could have gone horribly wrong at any instant, some which are never satisfactorily resolved in the end. Marston clearly recognizes the passion behind the gentlewomen's decision to perform the bed-swap and makes that passion overt in the play by giving the women a more obviously bawdy, comic function. Although it is their husbands' passion and crazed enmity, and not their own, that threatens to destroy themselves and everyone around them, Thais and Abigail are not portrayed simply as innocents but as women with sexual needs and desires of their own. The gentlewomen, already strong, competent women in the novella, are influenced through their proximity to the Countess in their language and behavior while still, amazingly, staying within the bounds of accepted behavior. While the image of the bridle is used in the "Countesse" novella to indicate the "necessary" subservience of Bianca Maria, here Marston adapts it in such a way to show both the women's bond with one another and the fact that they hold the power in their marriages. Thais says to Abigail, "Who shall I have to keep my counsel if I miss thee? Who shall teach me to use the bridle, when the reins are in mine own hand?" (I.i.232-234). While the Countesse becomes "unbridled" after her first husband's death, this image clearly expresses a maintenance of control — at the very least, self-control — that becomes absent in the play's parallel plot. Abigail, in turn, gives Thais this advice: "This is a rule I still will keep in breast: / Love well thy husband, wench, but thyself best" (IV.iii.43-44).

Their behavior is ultimately self-preserving within the bounds set by the self-imposed bridle and by the constraints of societal norms: they want sexual pleasure, and perhaps children, in the context of their lawful marriages, and they do not care if they put their reputations, and those of their husbands, in danger, to satisfy these passionate — but still lawful — desires.

Although Thais and Abigail are caught up in their own rationalizations of passion, their husbands remain the more overtly passionate of the four. We see immediately after the wedding that Claridiana begins to lust after Rogero's wife, Thais, saying, "In heaven and earth this power beauty hath, / It inflames Temp'rance and temp-rates Wrath" (I.i.304-305). Passion factors into the decision-making process of every single person in the play. Thais attaches herself to this theme of temperance (reason) and wrath (passion), telling him to behave in a more reasonable manner: "Good husband, show yourself a temp'rate man, / Your mother was a woman, I dare swear; / No tiger got you, nor no bear was rival in your conception: you seem like the issue / The painters limn leaping from Envy's mouth, / That devours all he meets" (I.i.328-333). Claridiana, however, continues to pursue his lust: "Thou shalt as soon find Truth telling a lie, / Virtue a bawd, Honesty a courtier, / As me turned recreant to thy least design: / Love makes me speak, and he makes love divine," (II.i.87-90), to which Thais replies, "Would Love could make you so: but 'tis his guise / To let us surfeit ere he ope our eyes" (II.i.91-92). There is of course the tautology of love making love divine, but there is, further, the idea that nothing is as it seems. If Claridiana's adulterous love is as constant as truth, virtue, and honesty, how constant are truth, virtue, and honesty? Thus even the arguably more "rational" passions of the two gentlewomen are exposed to a multiplicity of interpretations. When Rogero

and Claridiana discover each other cuckolded, Claridiana says, “I’ll confess anything since I am made a fool by a knave. I’ll be hanged like an innocent, that’s flat” (III.i.14-150). They both would rather die for a crime they did not commit than be exposed as cuckolds.

Thus, just as he does for the Countess plot, Marston builds upon the complex motivational factors found in “Two Gentlemen” in order to heighten the passion and increase the “interpretive dilemmas” already well established in the novellas. The play interrogates, for example, why “we two that any time these fourteen years have called sisters, brought and bred up together, that have told one another all our wanton dreams, talked all night long of young men . . . yet have . . . concealed not only the marriage, but the man” (I.i.206-213). Did their passion for these mortal enemies take precedence over the love for each other which would guide them to confide in one another as sisters? Marston refuses to shy away from these interesting details but instead brings each passionate act to the forefront.

In a play overrun by passion, Lady Lentalus makes a somewhat startling contrast. Compared to the two gentlewomen and to Abigail in particular, the young widow seems overly and even negatively reasonable. She adheres to a severe modesty following her husband’s death that is in stark contrast both to the Countess’s false mourning and to the wives’ bawdy humor. Thais and Abigail love their husbands, but it is mainly about sex and procreation, not about honor. For them passion trumps traditional, rational love; however, paradoxically, it is their passionate natures enable them to resume their sex (and procreative) lives with their husbands and ultimately reconcile them to one another. Lady

Lentalus, on the other hand, refuses not only to marry again but also to even let another man cross her threshold.

Unfortunately, the Lady Lentalus storyline in the play is never resolved, but were it completed I think we would see a purposeful contrast between the passionate widowhood and remarriage of the Countess and Lady Lentalus's own overly "reasonable" widowhood and (assumed) remarriage. While the Countess's mourning is brief and disingenuous, Lady Lentalus stubbornly refuses to forget her first husband and instead "wear[s] his memory like a death's head" (I.i.82). Lady Lentalus clearly sees Mendosa, her suitor, as someone who is filled with passion and is thus unreasonable. She says,

Good my lord, learn to swear by rote:
Your birth and fortune makes my brain suppose
That, like a man heated with wines and lust, [unreasonable passion]
She that is next your object is your mate,
Till the foul water have quenched out the fire. (I.i.246-250)

She does not believe that his motives for wooing her are rational. Because of his exalted status as "the duke's kinsman," she is concerned that he is looking for a passionate conquest rather than for a wife.

Reason is even a factor in Lady Lentalus's grudging decision to allow Mendosa to visit her. Lady Lentalus reasons that "Your honour made me promise your ascent / Into my house, since my vow barred my doors, / By some wit's engine, made for theft and lust" (III.i.24-26); that is, she allows him to climb her balcony because she only vowed to keep her *doors* barred, not her windows or balconies. When Mendosa falls in attempting to climb up to the balcony, Lady Lentalus argues that they are being punished for looking for a semi-legitimate or reasonable way to satisfy their passionate lust. Her reason is

carried to even more extreme heights of folly when Lady Lentalus declares that, since she has vowed not to have any man enter the doors of her house, she cannot assist him when he is severely injured in the fall: “My doors are vowed shut, and I cannot help you. / Your wounds are mortal, wounded is mine honour” (III.i.54-55). Honor, which Lady Lentalus here attempts to correlate with reason, does not in fact fit, as she is using the defense of her honor as an excuse not to help a person in need. In contrast, Thais and Abigail are able to maintain the honor of their households *through* their passionate acts. Thus Marston, in a play immersed in passion, includes Lady Lentalus as an overly reasonable character whose resistance to passion and stubborn adherence to honor puts her in more danger than those in the play who choose to submit.

Marston again plays with the complex and perhaps inverted relationship of honor to passion and reason towards the end of the Countess plot. It is in defense of Isabella’s honor (despite her passionate nature) that first Gniaca, and then Don Sago, attempt to murder Guido. Guido is able to talk Gniaca out of the murder by appealing to reason and honor (shame):

Hath thy faith and reason left thee both,
That thou art only flesh without a soul?
Has thou no feeling of thyself and me?
Blind rage that will not let thee see thyself.
...
Let reason govern rage, yet let us leave,
Although most wrong be mine, I can forgive:
In this attempt, thy shame will ever live. (IV.ii.47-50, 55-57)

Don Sago, however, refuses to be moved. As he approaches Guido to kill him, he says: “I am Don Sago thy mortal enemy, / Whose hand love makes thy executioner” (IV.iv.36-37). Guido argues that Don Sago’s actions stem from passion rather than reason, “Thy rage is treachery without a cause” (IV.iv.45). However, Sago responds that “My rage is

just, and thy heart blood shall know / He that wrongs beauty must be honour's foe"

(IV.iv.47-48). Sago believes that his passionate rage against Guido is a justified and reasonable action, just as Virginius believes that it is reasonable to murder his daughter, and thus he carries out the murder. Don Sago is not convinced of the error of his actions until he is told something of Isabella's ways. He then declares that

The bubbling wounds do murmur for revenge:
This is the end of lust, where men may see
Murder's the shadow of adultery
And follows it to death. (V.i.24-27)

The lesson Sago learns is that while his revenge was wrong, it calls for more revenge. Much like Virginius in Painter's earlier novella, he is almost immediately pardoned (as his actions are rationalized by a noble but misled passion) and not only that but, as Virginius is made Consul, Sago is made "colonel of our horse, / Levied against the proud Venetian state" (V.i.31-32). Don Sago, therefore, is not guilty of murder — all blame is placed squarely on the shoulders of the Countess, who must be killed for her passion and her use of that passion in order to bring her lovers into rage and murder. Reason and passion in these preceding actions are inextricably intertwined, but throughout the play the relative powerlessness of reason in comparison to passion is highlighted. It is not reason but the threat of shame, itself passionate, that convinces Gniaca to forego his murder of Guido. Don Sago's passionate murder of Guido leads not to his arrest and execution but to his promotion; and it is only through a greater understanding of the passionate nature of the Countess that he becomes somewhat repentant of the murder, only to want to murder once again in a seemingly endless cycle of passion and (reasonable) revenge.

At the end of the play there is a semblance of repentance on the part of the Countess, as there is in the novella. It is not clear, however, if this repentance is acted or truly felt: and if it is truly felt, whether it is true sorrow for her actions, or guilt brought on by Roberto's presence, or just fear and sorrow at her own impending death. In addition, even though she is condemned to die and is killed, there still remains a constant feeling of sympathy: no matter how much havoc she has wreaked, the men are still enchanted by her and feel sorry that it had to end this way for her at a mere twenty-three years old. Interestingly, however, the play ends not with the death of the Countess but with the Duke's resolution of the fate of Rogero and Claridiana, who have confessed to the murder of the still-living Mendosa. Marston builds upon Painter's moralistic conclusion in favor of the wives and against the husbands by implying a moral that more overtly recognizes the passionate natures of Thais and Abigail:

And thus much to all married men:
 Now I see great reason why
 Love should marry Jealousy:
 Since man's best of life is fame,
 He had need preserve the same.
 When 'tis in a woman's keeping,
 Let not Argos' eyes be sleeping. (V.i.221-227)

This seems to be a strange lesson, since the play ends with the wives (again, it never addresses Mendosa and Lady Lentalus); women, even though the wives turned out to be chaste, are still not to be trusted.

The play, therefore, ends in such a way that does not allow for any kind of real closure. Though I do not believe that the Mendosa/Lady Lentalus plot was purposely left out of the end of the play, it does leave a hole in the conclusion that can never be sealed. In addition, the execution of the Countess Isabella — which portrays her as

simultaneously strong and sympathetic as well as a dangerous, lustful creature who inclines all men to adultery and murder — provides no more closure than does the ending of the story of the two wives and their husbands. Although Rogero and Claridiana are ultimately saved from the gallows by the true story of their wives' trickery, this is never even explicitly stated — the men are simply handed a letter explaining the whole situation. This abrupt ending, in contrast with the extremely long speeches of Isotta and Gismonda in the novella, leads me to believe that the men see their wives' passionate actions not as a kind and necessary step but only as a bit of tomfoolery that fortunately turned out for the best in conjunction with their own passionate actions. The abundance of passionate actions in the play thus builds upon Painter's skilled balance of passion and reason in both earlier novellas. It is only by explicitly connecting these two chronologically related novellas in one play that Marston is able to overtly expose passion as simultaneously destructive and reasonable — a quality that can lead both to death and to the creation of new life.

From the Countess I would like to move on to a brief discussion of the story of another fallen noblewoman, the Duchess of Malfi. As I have discussed this text in depth in Chapter One I will forgo any background information and instead will go immediately to my analysis, which will focus primarily on the Duchess and her brother Ferdinand.

There are of course two main struggles between passion and reason that are highlighted in the novella: the first centers around love/lust and the second around anger/revenge (and lust, in the dramatic version). Both seek to rationalize passion in ways that are either ultimately unsuccessful or only tenuously supported. While the two

struggles are tied together within the story, however, the narrator chooses, for the most part, to deal with these issues separately. Thus, I will first discuss the passion born of the love/lust between the Duchess and Antonio and then will move on to an analysis of the passion of anger and revenge that is nursed by the Cardinal and his brother Ferdinand.

Passion and reason are of course key thematic elements within Painter's novella the "Duchesse of Malfi," particularly in reference to the relationship between the Duchess and Antonio. While deciding whether to respond to the Duchess's obvious interest in him, for example, Antonio reasons that love can "pricketh and prouoketh the spirite to do well, I do confesse, but that affection ought to be addressed to some vertuous end, tending to mariage, for otherwise that vnspotted Image shall be soyled wyth the villany of Beastly pleasure" (11). Antonio concedes that love is not necessarily negative while maintaining that married love and desire for sexual pleasure are mutually exclusive. It is clear, however, that Antonio is undergoing a powerful internal debate between a theoretical and the practical understanding of passion versus reason. There is a part of him (however theoretical and unlikely) that wants to eschew all passion and live a separate, Stoic life devoid of feelings in favor of a quiet rationality. Every time this part surfaces, however, he tempers it with equally noble rationalizations of loyalty and service to the house of Aragon: "I feele in mynde I know not what, which commaundeth me to withdraw my selfe to lyue alone at home within my lyttle house, and to be content with that I haue, forgoing the sumptuous charge of Prynces houses, which Lyfe would be wel liked of my self, were it not for the feare that you Madame should be discontented with my refusall" (6-7). These secondary noble feelings (exacerbated, perhaps, by a passionate "fear") in turn compete with his desires for sex, honor, and power, as he admits how

difficult it is to resist the Duchess when he is in her presence: ““how easie it is to dispute, when the thyng is absent, which can both force and violently assayle the Bulwarks of most constant hearts”” (11). Like Massino in “Countesse” (and with the additional pressure of the Duchess’s rank and authoritative position), Antonio feels that he will be unable to resist the Duchess’s advances, physically or otherwise. Passion and reason thus compete with one another within Antonio’s thoughts, but they are clearly not mutually exclusive, despite his continuing desire for them to be so. Sexual passion may be difficult to resist, but so is the equally passionate desire (which is in turn simultaneously rationally motivated) for the prestige of serving once again in a noble household.

Although through his internal monologue Antonio seeks to determine whether his desire to accept the Duchess as a lover and a wife is “driven by rational goals” (Tilmouth 23) or by a base desire for “Beastly pleasure” (11), this attempt to select a single motivation for desiring the union is ultimately shown to be impossible. Instead, his thought process devolves into an elaborate rationalization of passion:

Is it not more honourable for mee to settle my mind vpon a place so high, than vpon some simple wench by whome I shall neyther attayne profit, or aduancement? Baldouine of Flaunders, did not he a Noble enterprise when he carried away Iudith the daughter of the French kynge, as she was passing vpon the Seas into England, to be married to the kynge of that Countrey? What wrong doe I then to any person by rendringe loue agayne? (11)

Passions noble and base are thus allowed, through a process of careful reasoning, to vanquish any reasonable arguments against his marrying the Countess. With the elevation especially of some kinds of love and desire there is no longer even the pretense of a clear dichotomy between passion and reason. Like Virginius’s noble filicide or the ultimately reason-inducing suicides of Romeo and Juliet, Antonio’s decision to accept the Duchess becomes at once an act of passion, a reasonable and acceptable career move, and an act of

noble self-sacrifice to the desires of a woman above him, for “Who knoweth not the fury of a woman: specially the Noble dame, by seeing hirselfe despised?” (11). Passion, however, is forefront as the primary and strongest motivator in Antonio’s decision.

Passion and reason are similarly comingled in the Duchess’s thought process regarding her relationship with Antonio. The Duchess is a young widow whose equals in age and status have, along with her husband, all been killed in recent wars. She has lusts and desires but does not want to act on these outside of marriage; she thus uses her reason and judgment to ascertain who might be appropriate (enough) for her to marry from her limited, lower-class pool of potential candidates. While choosing to “settle” in this way seems destined to cause problems, her situation suggests that this is the best, or at least most seemingly “chaste” or reasonable of the options available to her. She also makes some persuasive, eloquent arguments against the current class structure which appear to further support her case:

And what greater right haue Princes to ioyne wyth a simple Gentlewoman, than the Princesse to mary a Gentleman. . . . I thinke we be the dayly slaues of the fond and cruell fantasie of those Tyraunts, which say they haue puissance over vs: . . . The bond of mariage made, shal couer the faulte whych men woulde fynde, and leauyng myne estate, I shall do no wrong but to the greatnesse of my house, which maketh me amongs men right honorable. (13)

Of course the Duchess, like Antonio, is attempting to justify a marriage that she knows will not be acceptable either to her family or to contemporary society as a whole. Her main motivation appears to be that she “waxed very weary of lying alone” (8) and, without a more socially acceptable alternative available, she turns to Antonio. Despite the fact that much of her passion is shared by Antonio, however, because of her higher rank and her sex, which prohibits her from an ability to elevate him through the marriage (women take on their husband’s rank and title), the narrator proceeds to condemn her

actions as solely the result of her sexual desire: she "...[made] hir waye to pleasure, which she lusted more than mariage, the same seruyng hir, but for a Maske and couerture to hide hir folly deseued. For no colorable dede or deceitful trumpery can serue the excuse of any notable wyckednesse" (14).

As I discussed in my first chapter, the narrator is more partial to Antonio than he is to the Duchess and thus, although they are both "unfortunate" and "condemned," and despite the close similarity between their passion-fueled reasoning processes, Antonio's internal monologues are met with less overt criticism than those of the Duchess. The Duchess's own internal monologue, though seemingly reasonable, is completely reinterpreted in the narrator's subsequent commentary. Like Kalander in Sidney's *Arcadia*, mentioned above, who starves his body because of a "mourning which passion persuaded him was reasonable" (283), the Duchess's passion "persuades" her that marriage below her station is a reasonable, acceptable, constructive outlet for her passion. Although the Duchess's decision is theoretically more logical and virtuous than that of Kalander, neither ultimately tends to a positive outcome. In the case of the Duchess, this negative outcome is inextricably tied to another type of passion: the passionate anger of her brothers, the Cardinal and the Prince.

Although the Duchess and Antonio are able to reason themselves into an unauthorized marriage and the birth of children, they are always aware of her family's disapproval and thus strive to keep their relationship a secret. Despite this attempted secrecy, however, word of the Duchess's pregnancies eventually reaches her brothers through their servants, who are worried about the repercussions should her brothers find out some other way: "These newes reported to the Cardinal and his brother, it may be

coniectured how grievously they took the same, and that they were not able to digest them with modesty, the youngest of the brethren, yelped forth a Thousand Curses and despite, against the simple sex of womankind” (31-32). Thus passion in the novella, which up until this point has been equated with love and lust, is extended to encompass the brothers’ feelings of anger and revenge toward their sister and Antonio: “The Cardinal night nor day did sleep, and his brother still did way to performe his othe of revenge” (33). Although the Prince, in the novella as in the play, is the more vocal of the two, neither the Cardinal nor the Prince (Ferdinand in the play) is shown to have any sympathy for the couple and instead, once the story is confirmed, seek only revenge in death.

This outpouring of hatred and revenge adds yet another layer of complexity to the moralistic conclusion tenuously put forth by Painter’s narrator against the actions of the Duchess and Antonio, because the brothers’ actions are presented simultaneously as just recompense for the actions of the Duchess and Antonio and a similarly inexcusable surrender to baser passions. Clearly the brothers believe themselves to be acting with a justified, reasoned sense of outrage at the blemish the Duchess has brought to their family name; thus they too rationalize and justify their anger, deciding ultimately to engage in passionate revenge and murder in order to rectify the situation: “And what if marriage was concluded, be we of so little respect, as the carion beast could not vouchsafe to advertise vs of his intent? Or is Bologna a man worthy to be allied or mingled with the royal blood of Aragon and Castille? No, no, be he neuer so good a gentleman, his race agreeth not with kingly state” (32). However, at the same time, following the ordered murder of the Duchess, her maidservant, and her two oldest children, the narrator declares: “Behold

here how far the cruelty of man extendeth, when it coueteth nothing else but vengeance, and marke what excessyue choler the mind of them produceth, which suffer themselues to be forced and ouerwhelmed with fury” (38). The narrator even explicitly criticizes the Cardinal’s actions in opposition to those of Antonio: “Beholde heere the Noble fact of a Cardinall, and what sauer it has of Christian purity, to commit a slaughter for a fact done many yeares past vpon a poore Gentleman [Antonio] which neuer thought him hurt” (42).

Despite these sympathetic moments, however, the narrator concludes the novella shortly after not as a moral tale against an overabundance of passionate rage or revenge but ultimately as “the miserable disourse of a Princesse loue, that was not very wyse, and of a Gentleman that had forgotten his estate,” whose actions “ought to serue for a lookinge Glasse to them which bee ouer hardy in makinge Enterprises, and doe not measure their Ability wyth the greatnesse of their Attemptes” (43). Because of the purposeful placement of each novella in the *Palace of Pleasure*, Painter’s narrator must conclude with a moral that condemns the Duchess and Antonio; however, this is ultimately and cleverly destabilized by the rationalizations and passionate actions of all the major characters.

As I have previously shown in Chapter One, in *The Duchess of Malfi* Webster is very attuned to Painter’s stylistic techniques and the multi-faceted, complex presentation of the “Duchesse” novella. Just as he recognizes Painter’s intriguing characterization technique and builds upon it to create his own complex characterization, Webster also credits Painter’s complex treatment of passion and reason and his delicate balance of contradictory moralizations and seeks to exploit these contradictions by purposely

creating a play that is morally ambiguous.²² In his *Duchess of Malfi*, Webster relieves the pressure placed on the story of a need for moral closure while exposing and enhancing the complexities that the novellas have always already brought forth through their intricate treatment of passion and reason. Webster in particular accomplishes this through an attempt to remove or disguise character motivation.

As I have already discussed in detail the moral ambiguity of Bosola in the previous chapter, I will confine the remainder of my discussion to the moral and motivational mysteries of two other key characters in the play: the Duchess and the Duchess's brother Ferdinand. Webster's Duchess builds upon the complex motivations of Painter's character implicitly rather than explicitly, subtly incorporating her internal deliberations into a reaction against the overly passionate restrictions of her powerful brothers. After Ferdinand and the Cardinal finish discussing the possibility of marriage with her, she states clearly that "I'll never marry" (I.i.302); however, immediately after they depart she speaks a strongly worded soliloquy in which she contradicts everything she has just spoken:

Shall this move me? If all my royal kindred
Lay in my way unto this marriage,
I'd make them my low footsteps: and even now,
Even in this hate, as men in some great battles,
By apprehending danger, have achieved
Almost impossible actions — I have heard soldiers say so —
So I, through frights and threat'nings, will assay
This dangerous venture. Let old wives report
I winked and chose a husband. (I.i.341-349)

²² Wharton agrees, noting that "It may have been, not moral certainty, but ambiguity that he sought" (76). Dena Goldberg also reinforces the multiple, contradicting moral forces at work in not only this play but in all of Webster's works: "'life,' as it appears to Webster, is a moral chaos. Ultimately, no clarifying force is possible, for man's mortality renders meaningless the very terms on which such a philosophy must be based. Lacking such a philosophy, Webster's characters pass their lives in a struggle and depart from this world (as one of them puts it) in a 'mist'" (2).

She and her brothers are filled with a similar kind of passion: just as Ferdinand wishes to “leave this sportive action, and fall to action indeed[.]” (I.i.90-91), and as the Cardinal is “one that hath fought single combats” (I.i.155), she has an inclination to pursue danger; it is almost as though the Duchess wishes to marry primarily because it is forbidden her. Her maid Cariola’s assessment of the situation following their wedding supports this view of her complicated passionate nature: “Whether the spirit of greatness or of woman / Reign most in her, I know not, but it shows / A fearful madness” (II.i.504-506). Since Webster, like Marston in *The Insatiate Countess*, removes any kind of internal debate or gradual decision-making process from her decision to marry Antonio, it is unclear whether the Duchess is moved to marry because of her rebellious nature combined with a strong sense of confidence in her own status as a noblewoman who can and will make her own decisions, or because of lust, either in general or for Antonio in particular.

Webster further complicates the Duchess’s motivations when she is caught by her brothers. “Why might I not marry?” she asks. “I have not gone about, in this, to create / Any new world, or custom. / . . . / My reputation is safe” (III.ii.11-113, 118). She appears to have forgotten entirely the earlier conversation with her brothers and sees her marriage not as a bold and dangerous secret venture, but as a perfectly legitimate choice: “Methinks unjust actions / Should wear these masks and curtains, and not we” (III.ii.159). Her motivations and rationalizations for her passionate decision seem to change based on circumstance. While Goldberg argues that “The Duchess . . . has chosen to live according to her desires. . . . Her passion is justifiable to her because it is the expression of a natural order which she feels is essentially beneficent” (91), I believe that this is a simplification of the complexity of the Duchess’s passion as it has been built

upon from Painter's novella. As I have just shown above, the Duchess provides a number of justifications for her marriage to Antonio: a passionate desire, like her brothers, for dangerous combat; love and/or lust for Antonio; and, finally, simply because she can or should be able to do so. These offered justifications, however, never provide the background we receive in the novella as to how she comes to decide to marry in general and marry Antonio in particular. By introducing us to the Duchess after she has already decided to propose to Antonio, Webster thus builds upon the complex rationalizations of passion in Painter in order to intensify the problem — to “muddle” further what is reasoned and what is impulsive or passionate. While at the end of his novella Painter attempts to seal her fate, the Duchess of the play refuses either to be praised or condemned with impunity. And, as I will show, Webster further complicates this moral ambiguity through his complex interpretation of the Duchess's brother Ferdinand.

Ferdinand is one of the most interesting and most morally ambiguous characters in the play. While he speaks only once in the novella, in order to deliver a page-long diatribe “agaynste the simple sexe of womankind” (32), this speech is so overly passionate that it is not going too far to suggest that his dramatic counterpart is built directly off of this passionate speech. Goldberg notes that “The motivation of the Arragonian brothers has always presented a challenge to critics” (81); however, few critics take Painter's novella into consideration when exploring his apparent lack of motivation.

Webster expands upon Ferdinand's character in the novella, giving his readers/audience additional glimpses of his character that, however, serve to obscure his character more than to reveal it. In the play Ferdinand is introduced prior to the

Duchess's marriage to Antonio, thus establishing his passionate temperament well before he has any hint of the unsanctioned marriage. As is evident from the quote above regarding Ferdinand's preference for actual rather than feigned battle, his partiality for combat foreshadows his inclination to violence both in words and in actions. He is shown as a man who prefers to fight first and ask questions later: "You must give great men leave to take their times: / Distrust doth cause us seldom to be deceived; / You see, the oft shaking of the cedar tree / Fastens it more at the root" (I.i.233-236). Bosola foreshadows where this attitude might lead, saying, "Yet take heed: / For to suspect a friend unworthily / Instructs him the next way to suspect you, / And prompts him to deceive you" (I.i.236-239). Ferdinand does not acknowledge this advice but proceeds to pay Bosola to spy on the Duchess, whom he "would not have . . . marry again" (I.i.249):

Do not you ask the reason, but *be satisfied I say I would not*. (I.i.250-251, emphasis mine)

In the novella Ferdinand's passion is overwrought but somewhat justified: here Webster is consciously removing any rationalized motivation for his actions. In so doing, Webster exposes the complexities simmering at the surface of the source text.

As I noted above, Ferdinand speaks only once in the novella, but his anger and the violence of his speech are passionate far beyond what might be expected of a brother who finds out that his sister has married beneath her: "Ah, false and vile bytch, I swear by Almighty God . . . I wil make ye daunce sutch a bloody barget, as your whorish heate for euer shall be cooled" (32). While Painter's narrator does not comment explicitly on the depth of this anger and in the end justifies it as extreme though just recompense for his sister's disgrace, Webster recognizes the questions raised by such an overly

passionate outburst and further complicates it by removing any motivation for Ferdinand's seemingly excessive interest in his sister's marriage state and sexual activity.

Webster makes it clear early on that Ferdinand's attitude toward his sister is unusual, first through his engagement of Bosola to spy on her and then through the Cardinal's also strict but calmer, more coldly reasonable approach to her recent widowhood. For example, when the brothers approach the Duchess to discuss remarriage, the Cardinal advises her not to let anyone "without the addition, honour, / Sway your high blood" (I.i. 289-290). The Cardinal cries "O fie!" in agreement when Ferdinand's response to this discussion is that "They are most luxurious / Will wed twice" (I.i.290-291). Ferdinand's inexplicably passionate, sexual response to the Duchess escalates further when he and his brother receive confirmation that she has had a child: "Talk to me somewhat quickly, / Or my imagination will carry me / To see her in the shameful act of sin [with] . . . Happily some strong-thighed bargeman; / Or one o'th'woodyard that can quoit the sledge / Or toss the bar; or else some lovely squire / That carries coals up to her privy lodgings" (II.v.39-45). Once again the Cardinal questions his passionate response: "*You fly beyond your reason.* / . . . / I can be angry [but] / Without this rupture; there is not in nature / A thing that makes man so deformed, so beastly, / As doth *intemperate anger*" (II.v.46, 55-58, emphasis mine). In contrast with Ferdinand, the Cardinal exhibits a calm passion that is almost more frightening than Ferdinand's constant, impassioned outbursts. Ferdinand seems to be unable to govern his own passionate responses and reacts instinctively, while the Cardinal's anger is set aside, stored up until it can be of use to him. Both different and yet equally passionate responses serve to highlight the moral ambiguity of the play as Webster builds off of the competing passions within the novella

of the Duchess and Antonio, on the one hand, and the Cardinal and Ferdinand, on the other.

Ferdinand's overabundant passion regarding his sister grows and culminates with her death, devolving afterwards into a madness that is cured only by a deathblow. His motivation, meanwhile, continues to be a primary object of exploration by Webster. While she is alive, Ferdinand maintains that her marriage is a justifiable reason for her murder; however, there are constant sexual allusions that have led any number of scholars to suggest his own sexual interest in his sister as an alternate motivation, i.e. "Damn her, that body of hers" (IV.ii.117). The moment she is dead, however, Ferdinand accuses Bosola of cruelty and admits that her marriage was never really a legitimate reason for his passion; instead, an equally implausible excuse is thrown forth (like Iago's flimsy explanations for his actions in *Othello*): "For let me but examine well the cause: / What was the meanness of her match to me? / Only, I must confess, I had a hope — / Had she continued a widow — to have gained / An infinite mass of treasure by her death: / And that drew a stream of gall quite through my heart" (IV.ii.272-276). Rather than providing an explanation, Webster seeks instead to expand further the complexities of his passion (and the moral ambiguity of the play as a whole) by putting forth several untenable "reasons" for his passion. Ferdinand's final words exemplify this perfectly: "My sister! Oh my sister, there's the cause on't! / 'Whether we fall by ambition, blood, or lust, / Like diamonds we are cut with our own dust'" (V.v.70-72). While Painter suggests that the Duchess's behavior is an unfortunate but acceptable motivation for Ferdinand's extreme anger while simultaneously condemning that extreme anger, Webster recognizes the tenuousness of this conclusion and chooses to build upon it in order to create a rich and

complex character from this tension. He thus posits the question: How are we to derive a moral from a character's actions when those actions, and the motivations behind them, are incomprehensible? This question is, of course, far more interesting than any definitive answer; and it is from this question that I will move forward to another problematic play and its novella counterpart, Shakespeare's *Measure for Measure* and Cinthio's "Epitia" *novelle*.

I have already made a case for "Epitia"'s connection to Shakespeare's *Measure for Measure*, and many of the issues I discussed in the first chapter can, to an extent, be applied here. However, I believe that looking at the texts' connections through the lens of passion and reason adds several unique insights to an analysis of their intertextuality. Unlike the other novellas in my study, "Epitia" and the "Moor" *novelles* are part of a larger frame narrative. The days are thematically arranged so that the frame-narrative characters share stories based on the day's topic. As Caroline Roberts notes, "the tale of Epitia illustrates the theme of the eighth day's discourse, ingratitude. The fugitives have been moved by a story of ill-rewarded benevolence, and some wonder why God permits wrongdoers to live. The more experienced suggest that wrongdoers exercise the virtue of others" (4) The *novelles* therefore move from "ill-rewarded benevolence" to its opposite in the "Epitia" tale, where Juriste, despite his cruel actions, is allowed to marry his victim and live. The ingratitude of the tale is that of Juriste in accepting Epitia's sacrifice without keeping his promises to her.

As I have already mentioned, within the novellas there is generally a push to establish motivation by the narrator. Although Roberts's article is interested in rhetoric

more than passion and reason, her argument that Epitia's "internal concerns are forensic[, and that f]orensic rhetoric *requires the consideration of the motives of wrongdoing, the wrongdoer's frame of mind, and the character and disposition of the victim*" (4, emphasis mine) supports my argument in this chapter that the early modern novellists are interested in exploring passion and reason in complex and dynamic ways.

Cinthio's narrator in "Epitia," unlike those of Painter's novellas, does not preach or overtly moralize to his *novelle*'s readers. The moral instead is conveyed entirely by the *novelle* itself and particularly by its ending, in which feeling/passion is favored over straight reason/logic/adherence to the letter of the law. Juriste's actions, which favor the letter of the law (applicable to everyone but himself), lead to the deflowering of Epitia and the death of her brother. Yet he is shown mercy by the very woman he has wronged; and, having "realiz[ed] the extent of Epitia's generosity to him, held her ever so dear, so that she lived happily with him for the rest of her days" (430).

In this section I will begin by discussing the complex representation of passion and reason (and particularly its relationship to justice and jurisprudence) in this *novelle* through the interactions of its three principle characters, building to an extent off of earlier arguments from the first chapter. I will then move on to a more holistic discussion of how Shakespeare builds on the *novelle*'s treatment of passion and reason in order to further explore the interesting, tenuous conclusions presented within the *novelle*.

Passion and reason and their relationship to one another is a major theme in both Cinthio's *novelle* and Shakespeare's play. In "Epitia," the Holy Roman Emperor and Epitia exemplify the com-passionate perspective that eventually triumphs through the *novelle*'s "happy" ending. The Emperor is described at the outset as "a rare example of

courtesy, magnanimity and singular justice” (420). When he offers Juriste the rule of Innsbruck, he exemplifies his own just but interpretive approach to the law: “I could forgive you all other faults, whether you did them through ignorance or through negligence (though I wish you to guard against this as much as possible), but anything done against Justice could never obtain pardon from me” (421). Although this sounds inflexible, in actuality the Emperor is trying to convey to him that justice needs to be tempered with forgiveness and compassion: he is willing to forgive as well as to condemn *depending on a particular set of circumstances and motivations*. Com-*passion* as well as justice therefore must factor into the upholding of the law: reason alone is not sufficient. Because of the many informal and formal legal proceedings within both the *novelle* and the play, it is clear that circumstance and motivation thus factor into the pursuit of justice much as they factor into an understanding of the complex relationship between passion and reason. Reason is necessary for justice, but it cannot be carried out without passion or com-*passion* to temper that reason. Reason and passion thus become inextricably intertwined with the issues of justice and mercy at play in the *novelle*.

We see some of the explicit connections between passion and reason and the interpretation of the law through Epitia’s arguments in favor of leniency toward her brother Vico:

She argued that many wise men held the opinion that adultery committed through the violence of Love, and not undertaken to do injury to a woman’s husband, deserved a less penalty than if committed with injurious intent; that the same might be said in her brother’s case, who had done the deed for which he was condemned not out of malice but spurred by ardent love; that he was ready and willing to marry the girl, and do whatever else the law might demand; and that although the law might declare that such a settlement did not apply to a man who violated virgins, yet Juriste, being the wise man he was, could mitigate the severity of his attitude, *which was more rigorous than Justice demanded*; for he was in that City through the authority he held from the Emperor, as the living law,

and His Majesty in his equitable fairness showed himself rather merciful than savage in his judgements. (422, emphasis mine)

Epitia is a passionate character: she “was smitten with grief on hearing that her brother was condemned to die, and resolved to see whether she could, if not liberate him, at least soften the penalty” (421-422). Her own passionate response to the situation and her defense of her brother’s passion-fueled indiscretion do not deny reason or justice, but rather allow for motivational factors to enter into the equation and suggest that passionate actions are not evil in and of themselves but can lead to a rational goal that must supersede punishment for such an action, i.e. the marriage of the two persons in question. Like the Emperor she wishes to see justice done, but acknowledges that “courtesy, magnanimity,” and interpretation of the law as its “living” representative are necessary in order to “keep Justice inviolate” (420). She is clearly intelligent and rational but she also knows how to use passion in order to temper that reason with compassion and mercy.

Moving on to Juriste, there appears, initially, to be a rough similarity between Epitia’s and Juriste’s reasoning processes. Eager to prove himself to the Emperor,

Juriste began to rule over the city with great prudence and diligence, taking the utmost care and deliberation to ensure that the balance of Justice should be rightly poised not only in judgements but also in the bestowal of offices, in the reward of Virtue and the punishment of Vice. For a long time his moderation gained him great favour from his master and earned him the approval of all the people. And he would have been thus happily celebrated above all others if his government had continued in that fashion. (421)

Despite this fair description, however, the narrator warns readers that “Juriste was more pleased with the office to which the Emperor called him than sound in knowledge of his own nature” (421). Because I focused on the significance of interiority in this *novelle* in Chapter One I will not linger over this statement, other than to remind the reader that Epitia is sure in her self-knowledge and remains so throughout the story, while Juriste is

unaware of the extent of his own weaknesses until he is presented with the temptation of Epitia. Thus his early rule might be seen more as a good imitation of the Emperor's style of justice, and thus nothing more than a feigned impression of reason and compassion; it is not until he is confronted with his own passions as ruler of Innsbruck that he is forced to make his first real judgment call. All his reason, "prudence and diligence" thus become irrelevant in the face of great sexual temptation combined with great power.

When Juriste meets Epitia, he is filled not only with passionate lust but also a realization of his power over Innsbruck and thus over her. Ignoring the blatant similarity between Vico's crime and his own "lascivious" (423) desires, he not only alters the path of justice in order to see her again, he also makes a mockery of the Emperor's own words of forgiveness when doling out Vico's death sentence: "For there is a universal law, that when a man sins, not through ignorance, but negligently, his crime cannot be excused, since he ought to know that all men without exception should live virtuously; he who sins in neglect of this principle deserves neither pardon nor pity" (423). By using his position as "the living law" to obtain his own desires rather than to uphold justice, he abandons reason in favor of his own passionate desires, making illicit passion the only way Epitia can reach her rationally driven and compassionate desire for mercy. Juriste is no longer invested in justice but instead puts all his energy into an exploration of the extent of his power: "Again Juriste replied that she should . . . consider[] who he was, what power he had, and how useful he could be not only to her but to any of her friends, since he had in his hand both Reason and Authority" (424). Juriste has quickly come to believe that because he is arbiter of law and justice, "Reason" is his to manipulate and dictate with impunity. Thus he can think it reasonable that Epitia submit to his desires based on the

possibility of becoming his wife and her brother not being put to death, when reason and justice both dictate that these things are not naturally connected.

Reason in the *novelle* is abandoned in favor of passion not only by those in a position of power but by the powerless. Imprisonment and impending death cause Epitia's brother Vico not to be outraged at Juriste's offer, but instead to reason away the loss of his sister's honor as a sure bet: "Juriste has told you that he might make you his wife, and why should you disbelieve that it would be so? *You have no right to doubt* that Juriste would want you as his wife. Thus you may save your honour, and at the same time save the life of your brother" (424, emphasis mine). Although Juriste's proposal is driven solely by passionate lust, Epitia is persuaded to accept it through the passion-driven arguments of both Juriste and her brother and through her own strong desire to see her brother freed.

Vico's faith in Juriste's word is of course for naught, and he is put to death even before Epitia gives herself to Juriste. She feigns indifference upon hearing of her brother's death but privately is "urged on by just anger. . . .[and] incit[es] herself thus to revenge" (426). Epitia's thought process here is very interesting because she feels a just passion for revenge against Juriste and yet is able to work through those feelings rationally: although she is first inclined to murder him (which would make her fall similar to the passionate downfall of the Countess of Celant), she eventually realizes that the best option is to go over Juriste's head to the Emperor himself.

The conclusion of this *novelle* continues to balance both reason and com-passion in conjunction with the necessary balance between justice and mercy. The Emperor, for example, continues to be fair and just even after he receives Epitia's complaint: "But

although Maximian had great compassion on her, nonetheless having given one ear to Epitia . . . , he kept the other open for Juriste” (427). As a judge he is able to experience com-compassion for Epitia and to feel a rational desire for her to be redeemed in some fashion, but at the same time he never discards reason, understanding that he must not get carried away by his passions and sympathies to the detriment of reason; he never forgets the necessity of hearing both sides. His subsequent anger upon realizing Juriste’s certain guilt is also strong but is, according to the narrator, rationally motivated: his response to Juriste is “said with severity appropriate to so atrocious a thing” (427). The situation at the end thus becomes a mirror image of Vico’s predicament; although the narrator does not indicate that Juriste is at this time willing to make amends by marrying Epitia, he is forced as part of his punishment to marry her and does so willingly. The Emperor is prepared to carry out Old Testament justice — measure for measure — by putting him to death as well, but Epitia reminds him that “[i]t is, most sacred Majesty, no less praise for him who holds the government of the world as now your Majesty most worthily holds it, to exercise Clemency as to show Justice. For whereas Justice shows that Vices are hateful and punishes them accordingly, Clemency makes a monarch most like to the immortal Gods” (429). In other words, while punishment and retribution are correct to some extent, people are human and they make mistakes; thus it is necessary to judge each crime, as every passion, on an individual basis based upon motivational and situational factors, with a degree of com-compassion.

Although the Emperor is surprised at her plea for Juriste’s life, he grants it and she and Juriste supposedly live happily ever after. This closure, however, is of course tenuous and uncomfortable because, unlike in Vico’s case, there is no rationalization

available for Juriste's actions, nor is there any real reason for com-*passion*: Juriste consciously decides to trade sex for Vico's life and the possibility of a marriage to Epitia with no thought to following through on either promise. This supposedly happy resolution is at best uncomfortable, at worst rather disturbing — and thus great, complex material for subsequent playwrights. The most controversial part of this conclusion is of course that it compels Epitia to argue for the life of a husband she does not want, who has been forced to marry her and who is responsible for her ruin and for her brother's death. Her and the Emperor's tendencies toward com-*passion* over strict reason or justice are sympathetic in all but this final point. Although her decision to defend her new husband is highly commendable, it is also uncomfortable even for early modern readers, as exemplified by the fact that in every later version — even Cinthio's dramatic version — the brother's life is spared. As Shakespeare of course also makes this alteration, I will now turn to his version of the Epitia tale, *Measure for Measure*, and an analysis of how Shakespeare uses Cinthio's representation of reason and passion and their relationship to justice and mercy.

If we begin where we have left off, at the *novelle*'s troubling ending, it is clear that Shakespeare has no problem with discomfoting conclusions and in fact complicates and expands upon the mixed messages provided within Cinthio's *novelle*. In order to do so, Shakespeare uses the common motif of the disguised Duke. Dissatisfied perhaps with the strict but balanced goodness of Cinthio's Emperor, Shakespeare extends Juriste's lust and passion for control to his Duke as well. I have already discussed the disturbing nature of the Duke's proposal and his insatiable need to control everything and everyone in the play in terms of his performativity and muddled interiority; however, I would like to

discuss him, Isabella, and Angelo now in the context of a play that purports to be a comedy and yet withholds both the concluding marriage (of any of the principal characters) and any discernable moral resolution.

Shakespeare, I believe, was intrigued by the *novelle*'s exploration of reason and passion, justice and mercy, and their connections to one another, and sought to expand upon this complex balance in order to explore further the idea of a "living law." Shakespeare is able to keep much of Cinthio's story the same; however, although the Duke's motivations may initially appear somewhat transparent through his help of Mariana, through the Duke's final proposal I argue that Shakespeare ultimately removes any legitimate sense of direct justice from within the play. This is not to say that justice is not in large part served, despite the Duke's unconventional techniques: Isabella's brother, Claudio, is saved and Angelo is forced to marry Mariana; however, all this comes about not through a straightforward desire to balance justice and mercy, passion and reason, but, as I have pointed out earlier, through the machinations of a disguised Duke who chooses to control every aspect of the play's action from a hidden, protected vantage point. Because of the Duke's claim, in the beginning of the play, that he has no sexual or romantic motivation for his actions, contrasted with his proposal to Isabella at the end of the play, I argue that we are at the very least forced to wonder whether the Duke actually had designs on Isabella from the very start. By obscuring the Duke's motivations in this way, Shakespeare has exposed a new set of "interpretive dilemmas" (Maslen 82).

Shakespeare's reinterpretation of Cinthio's *novelle* is fascinating because he does not just utilize plot or thematic elements but instead incorporates and refigures Epitia's interest in the complex relationship between passion and reason. Shakespeare emphasizes

this relationship through and above the issue of justice in order to expose the problems inherent in rationalizing passion and in relying on the existence of motivational factors in terms of our words and behaviors. Although the moral of the *novelle* is not explicitly stated at the tale's end, the fact that everything is forced to come together and be resolved, along with the input of the frame narrative, reveals that the purpose of the story is to tell a moral tale against "ingratitude." It is interesting, however, that this tale against ingratitude ends with the ungrateful person escaping any real form of punishment. He fools a virgin into sleeping with him and then goes against his word both to marry her and to save the life of her brother, whom he actually has killed even before Epitia sleeps with him. This contradiction to the stated purpose of the *novelle* within the frame narrative, as well as the uncomfortable resolution of having Epitia not only marry the man who killed her brother but even defend him against death, makes the purported happy ending uncomfortable at the very least.

Shakespeare, like Marston and Webster, recognizes the hidden complexity of this seemingly happy ending and seeks to intensify it. The *novelle's* conclusion is based on a moderated use of passion in a rational manner, which includes love for one's spouse no matter how the marriage has come about. In *Measure for Measure*, on the other hand, uncontrolled passions abound despite the Duke's controlling force, and the action within the play is never truly resolved. As with the ending of his *Romeo and Juliet*, Shakespeare here denies his audience any kind of true closure. It is not only the proposal to Isabella that breaks open the story but also the reference of things to come:

Deal Isabel,
I have a motion much imports your good,
Whereto if you'll a willing ear incline,
What's mine is yours, and what is yours is mine. —

So, bring us to our palace, where we'll show
 What's yet behind, that's meet you all should know. (V.i.532-537)

Instead of providing any closure, Shakespeare once again leaves the ending open.

Although it seems unlikely that Isabella would be able to refuse the Duke — especially after spending time with him as a friar and his being responsible for saving her brother (although by his departure he is the one who puts Claudio in harm's way in the first place) — there is an “if” included in these the final lines of the play. Instead of attempting to resolve the storyline, then, Shakespeare removes any single plausible explanation for the action of the play and instead leaves us with more questions than answers: Will Isabella accept the Duke's proposal? Was his motive in all this just passion for Isabella or did he really desire to test Angelo? And beyond just the issue of the proposal: What about the final two lines? What else is there to be told? And to whom does he speak these lines: only to Isabella, or to Claudio, Juliet, and the rest of the characters remaining in the scene?

In stimulating all these speculative questions at the end of the play, Shakespeare leaves us uncertain as to the motivation(s) for the Duke's scheming, so that the entire play must be reassessed from the beginning. What shares do passion and reason (either together or combined) have in his decision to leave Vienna in the untried hands of Angelo? Why does the Duke choose to step down in the first place? To improve the enforcement of laws in Vienna? To test Angelo and save Mariana? To punish Claudio and Juliet? In the *novelle* we have little reason to distrust the actions of the Emperor, as he is not stepping down from a position of power but is simply delegating the governorship of Innsbruck, one of his territories, to one of his courtiers. The Emperor is actually more hesitant about giving the job to Juriste than Juriste is to take it.

Shakespeare, however, complicates this process in two ways: first by having the Duke appear to leave town for an unspecified amount of time in order to allow Angelo to rule; and second by reversing the roles of the original conversation. When Angelo suggests that he may not be ready to rule Vienna the Duke will have none of it; “No more evasion” (I.i.51) is the Duke’s agitated response to this his only inquiry, which seems out of compass with Angelo’s slight demurral. Thus a single line takes on a great deal of significance, as the irrational passion of Juriste is spread to include the one person who should be best equipped to combat it. The Duke, in *Measure for Measure*, seemingly cannot wait for his new secret life of disguise to begin.

I do not think that it is a coincidence that between this first scene and the third, involving the Duke and Friar Thomas, lies a comedic scene involving sexual innuendo as well as the news of Juliet’s pregnancy by Claudio, followed by Isabella’s presence at the convent, where she is solicited by Lucio to assist her imprisoned brother. The threat of the passions of lust and anger always hovers around the edges of even the most solemn scene. And with the questions that arise as to the Duke’s dubious motivation for leaving power, even the very things, such as religious life (both the Duke’s false friar and Isabella’s desire for sisterhood and celibacy), that purport to be immune to such passions, become suspect. For example, as a disguised friar for most of the play, the Duke establishes himself as a man immune to passion (or at least sworn to deny it) and thus the type of person on which Isabella is most likely to trust and rely. Poulsen notes that without this disguise the novice Isabella would have been very unlikely to venture as far as she does from the convent: “Isabella’s willingness to cooperate with the Duke’s unscrupulous plot — and so to forfeit her autonomy — is clearly related to his choice of

disguises. Vincentio, wearing Friar Francis' robe, has become the very thing he accuses Angelo of being: an 'angel on the outward side' (3.2.275)" (164). He promises Friar Thomas in taking on the friar's habit that he has no romantic reasons for disguising himself: "Believe not that the dribbling dart of love / Can pierce a complete bosom. Why I desire thee / To give me secret harbor hath a purpose / More grave and wrinkled than the aims and ends / Of burning youth" (I.iii.1-5). The scene begins in *medias res*, with the Duke answering an unknown question; thus once again Shakespeare provokes us to wonder why exactly this denial of passionate aims would be necessary at all. Every action the Duke takes thus becomes suspect — from the timing of his departure to coincide with Claudio's arrest, to his visit to the prison, to his convoluted plans to save both Claudio and Isabella. Does the Duke know, for example, of Claudio and Juliet's situation prior to stepping down? Poulsen notes that "the relationship between [the Friar/Duke's] professed intentions and the scenario he asks Isabella to act out [the bed-swap] is tenuous" (166), and this is a statement that I believe can be applied to the Duke's actions throughout the play. In eliminating any convincing motive for the Duke's self-removal through his proposal to Isabella at the end of the play, Shakespeare reveals a new and more complex set of "interpretive dilemmas" (Maslen 82).

Shakespeare's open-ended conclusion affects more than just the elusive Duke; Isabella, a reasonably passionate, independent character in "Epitia," becomes a character whose desire to remove herself from the world shows in direct contrast to the passion she has eschewed. Marriage is thus a problematic probable conclusion in *Measure for Measure*, just as it is in the final texts to be discussed: Cervantes's *La fuerza de la sangre* and Fletcher's *Queen of Corinth*.

I would like to end this chapter with a close look at Cervantes's *La fuerza de la sangre* and its relationship to Fletcher et al's *Queen of Corinth*. This *novela*, written in the Counter-Reformation culture of Spain's Golden Age, attempts to justify a brutal, thoughtless rape with an ostensibly happy ending — the marriage of the victim, Leocadia, to her rapist, Rodolfo (his name, we are told, is a pseudonym). Rape is a fairly common theme in early modern prose fiction, one that is normally the subject of at least some degree of scrutiny.

I have saved Cervantes's *La fuerza de la sangre* for last in this chapter because there is no *overt*, logical rationalizing of either the rape or the *novela*'s incredible conclusion. In fact, almost all overt moralizing is absent in this *novela*. While this is not necessarily unusual in Cervantes's tales, this *novela* is unique in that the reader must conclude that the end, in a sense, must justify the means: although the narrator never explicitly says so, the marriage must “make up for” the initial transgression in order for the story to resolve for the reader. But how are we as readers to accept this?

The answer in this *novela* is again unique from all of my other examples in this chapter. Although religious views are never stated explicitly, they are invoked and actually play a major role in this tale. Examples of this invocation are the characters' patience in adversity (Leocadia and her family and even Rodolfo's family) and the crucifix that is so central to the story. Passion, as lust, appears explicitly through Rodolfo's rape of Leocadia, but conventional, logic-based reason is conspicuously absent. Interestingly, this *novela* is the only one of the stories involved in this study that contains no conventional, philosophically based reasoning or logical explanations.

Reason, if appearing at all, appears only to be subverted so that passion may seemingly run amok, at least temporarily. Passion dominates the story, and yet there is a happy, seemingly moral ending. In this final example, I argue that it is “*patior*,” or the Passion of Christ, that controls the progression of this story rather than the passion of lust or the reasoning of man.

In their introduction to *Reading the Early Modern Passions: Essays in the Cultural History of Emotion*, the editors, Gail Kern Paster, Katherine Rowe, and Mary Floyd-Wilson, offer a potential explanation for this unusual structure:

We may recall that for the early moderns **the verb *patior* “combines the idea of passivity with that of suffering, a sense nowhere more vividly conveyed than in the story of Christ’s Passion,”** while *pathe* invokes the more active sense of perturbations. Certainly, a significant number of early moderns subscribed to the neo-Stoic sense of passions as perturbations, or perilous forces that acted on the suffering body. Yet it was Christ’s suffering, the theologians argued, that made him human, and **to imitate Christ was to identify with his Passion and to combat anger and revenge with love.** (12, emphasis mine — bolded to differentiate from in-text italics)

As these authors note, passion during the early modern period connoted not only strong emotions but also Christ’s Passion. “*Patior*,” rather than “*pathe*,” is what I argue is being relied upon in *La fuerza de la sangre*. Cervantes, in this tale, utilizes a Christian Catholic context in order to depict a situation in which a connection between the passion of lust and the Passion of Jesus Christ supersedes logical reasoning and yet still leads to a “moral” conclusion. He does so, I would suggest, in part to “explore[] the contradictions between civil and canon law regarding marriage within the private domain of the home in order to suggest further contradictions within the public sphere of the state and the Church” (Rabell 4). Fletcher (et al) subsequently recognized not only the story’s lack of verisimilitude (common in Cervantes) but also the problematic nature of such a

seemingly tidy resolution (as, I imagine, did Cervantes). By consciously removing the story from its original, very specifically *Catholic* environment of passion as “passivity” and “suffering” and placing it instead within a larger story and within in a pagan time and place, one full of reason as well as lust, love, anger, and jealousy, Fletcher removes (or at the very least complicates, since marriage is the “solution” in both) the only plausible explanation existent in the *novela*. In doing so, Fletcher expands upon and complicates the tenuous resolution of Cervantes’s *novela*.

As I have shown above, in Painter the complication of passion and reason is achieved by the addition of an obfuscating moralistic lens as expressed through the voice of an unreliable narrator. In his *novelas* Cervantes is also clearly interested, nominally, in the edification of his *novelas*’ readers/audience. However, his approach, particularly in *La fuerza de la sangre*, is one in which the larger structure of the *novela*, rather than the narrator or the characters themselves, conveys the overarching message. Interestingly, this *novela*, which has been called “a highly experimental failure” (J. B. Avalle-Arce paraphrased in Price 99), removes all human or temporal control and attempts to place everyone in the direct care of God and, specifically, Jesus Christ. The complex relationship of reason and passion, which we have seen in Painter’s and Cinthio’s novellas, including a complex, tenuous resolution, is integrated fully into this story but in an entirely different way. The tenuousness of the *novela* and its resolution is not formed from an attempt to attach a moral to a passionate action, but from an attempt to moralize the story of a rape passively within a completely Christian Catholic framework. Although there are some acts that can be rightly labeled “prudent,” the *novela* is very much lacking in reasonable actions. For example: Rodolfo kidnaps and rapes a young girl; his friends

cover for him; Leocadia suffers in silence at the recommendation of her parents; Rodolfo's mother believes Leocadia immediately when she tells her that her son raped her and that she had the child Luis as a result; and Rodolfo and Leocadia fall in love at first sight and are reconciled with no words of explicit apology or forgiveness. Reason is replaced quite thoroughly by "passion," but it is not merely the passion of lust or anger but *the* Passion — Christ's Passion, or passive suffering, on the cross. *La fuerza de la sangre* is a parable of sorts that seeks to show how a true (Catholic) Christian ought to behave, even in the most trying of circumstances: it exemplifies, rather brutally and not perhaps without a bit of tongue-in-cheek, that one cannot rely on law and justice or even reason at all times, but must employ Christian patience, love, trust, and forgiveness, even if that means allowing harm to come to oneself or turning the other cheek. As R. M. Price notes in his introduction, while this *novela* explores the story of a rape and its repercussions, it is not about revenge: "The story is to move into considerations which are higher than revenge and recompense" (100). As tenuous as its message may seem, *La fuerza* is a *novela* about living through others' irrational passion and through suffering, just as Jesus did; and even in this the rapist plays a necessary part. As Price states, "[Leocadia's] attitude of love and pardon is in accordance with the religious tone of the story; the rape took place underneath a symbol of suffering and forgiveness" (100), just as Merione's rape in *The Queen of Corinth* will take place in the holy place of Vesta's temple. Religion becomes the framework as well as the excuse for all the events within the *novela*, and its "interpretive dilemmas" are formed not by a conventional conflict between passion and reason but between accepting specifically religious justice in lieu of temporal restitution or even repentance and forgiveness.

There is a feeling that hovers over the *novela*, not of revenge, nor even of redemption, but of restoration. Francois, the Catholic author of *Introduction to a Devoute Life* (1613), offers the

more positive command to engage in intensely visualizing meditations upon Christ's Passion. It is these contemplative exercises which produce the "pour[ing] out" of "good motions" into the heart, an overwhelming "loue of God & our neighbour; the desire of Paradise, and eternall glory; zeale . . . compassion, ioye, feare of iudgement . . . ; hatred of sinne; confidence in the . . . mercy of God; shame . . . for our naughty life passed." (Tilmouth 167)

These meditations on passion as passive suffering, I believe, are exemplified in Cervantes's *novela* through Leocadia's retention of the crucifix taken from the scene of her rape, an object that becomes both witness and symbol of her struggle. Tilmouth goes on to explain that

[m]ore prosaically, Francois also urges his reader to translate such emotions into action: so if meditation upon Christ's first words from the Cross (Luke 23:34) provokes in the devotee a desire to pardon his enemies, he must then frame that impulse at a specific resolution to forgive or placate some particular individual. Seeking out the day-to-day opportunities to execute these good purposes becomes an immediate obligation. . . . As with the Calvinists, then, there is a clear purpose to such affectivity. (167)

The Passion is therefore associated not only with patience and meditation, but also with action resultant from these meditations, not hastily taken but inspired by this patience and attended to at the right time according to God's circumstances. In *La fuerza de la sangre*, this is exemplified by everyone's unspoken forgiveness of Rodolfo despite his lack of regret or apology.

In addition to the religious overtones that motivate the tale, there is also an almost legalese logic that must be addressed; both Leocadia and, at the end, Rodolfo, are adept at

this kind of rhetoric.²³ However, each time it is employed, it is employed for the glory of God. The one reference to “law” is a thinly veiled criticism of the recent Council of Trent suggesting that even religious law is to be avoided in favor of following the teachings of Jesus Christ. Leocadia believes that all things will be rectified by quiet, passionate suffering, and if she sees divine providence in her son being hit by the horse (“ . . . heaven permitted that he should be knocked down . . .” [117]), she, and we, must see divine providence at work in her rape as well. This passive suffering, this Christian Passion can be felt throughout the entire story, which Price has called a “tightly-written symbolic exercise” (101). Many things about the *novela* are of course highly impractical and highly improbable. As Price and others have previously pointed out, “Clearly, *The La fuerza de la sangre* concerns, as Casalduero says, metaphysics rather than psychology, that is, it relates and resolves a crime and its resolution in Christian and symbolic terms rather than in a context of human justice or probability” (Price 100).

Cervantes’s *novela* thus deals with the complex relationship of passion and reason in an unusual and rather disturbing but highly effective fashion by placing these concepts, not in a moral framework of right versus wrong, but in a distinctly Catholic one. In a moral framework any kidnapping and rape would be condemned, rightly so, either by the narrator or by other characters or both, and it is the *novela*’s lack of temporal justice — its failure to acknowledge mercy or justice, passion or reason — that contemporary readers find so disturbing. It is a veritable certainty that Painter or Fenton would have moralized on this violent and unrepentant rape, even if it was “justified” in the end. In

²³ See Rabell, Carmen R. *Rewriting the Italian Novella in Counter-Reformation Spain*. Woodbridge (UK): Tamesis, 2003, for more information on “how Spanish authors employed legal or forensic discourse to protect their narratives from censorship, while fulfilling the Renaissance poetic requirement of decorum” (2).

this specific framework, however, bad things happen and God *allows* them to happen, presumably for a reason. Things like revenge and moral criticism are therefore moot points despite how tenuous and unstable this makes the conclusion appear, as either would question God's will. The narrator thus attempts to exemplify what might happen if people were to follow Christ's passive yet passionate suffering on the cross rather than reacting with passionate anger and revenge. This is addressed directly through the presence of the crucifix at the rape and throughout the story as well as through the ending, which addresses "the blood . . . spilled on the ground" (127), as well as indirectly through the many references to waiting and patience. Unusually, there is no forgiveness for Rodolfo in the end, nor does he repent. Rodolfo needs no forgiveness because his actions are part of God's larger plan of bringing these two young persons, both noble but vastly disparate in wealth (and therefore not normally suited for one another in marriage), together. It is our discomfort with this lack of repentance and lack of forgiveness at the conclusion of the *novela* that we remember as we move into Fletcher et al's subsequent play, *The Queen of Corinth*.

As I noted earlier, Fletcher's (and Field's and Massinger's) *The Queen of Corinth* completely eliminates an overt Christian context in favor of a pagan one. Briefly, the play tells the story of several members of the Queen's court. Theanor, her only son, is seriously dating Merione, the daughter of their main military leader, when the Queen decides to betroth her instead to Agenor, a man with whom they have been at war but with whom they have just made an amicable peace. When Theanor hears this, he and his friend Crates decide that Theanor should rape Merione in disguise prior to the wedding. Merione calls off the wedding as a result of the rape. In the meantime, Crates's brother,

Euphanes, betrothed to Beliza, has just returned to Corinth and has quickly risen in the Queen's esteem. In revenge for his preference, Theanor frames Euphanes for Merione's rape and decides to rape Beliza as well. At this point Crates switches sides, secretly switches Merione for Beliza, and confesses their previous deeds to the Queen. The Queen holds a trial where it is revealed that Theanor has not raped Beliza and is thus able to be married to Merione, as is her wish. Beliza had thought that Euphanes would marry the queen, but he keeps his promise to marry Beliza instead, and the Queen offers to marry Agenor in Merione's place. Theanor appears reformed and everyone is (ostensibly) happy.

The parallels between Cervantes's *novela* and the play, though perhaps looser than other novella-play pairings, are still immediately apparent. A character is raped, and circumstances arrange themselves so that victim and rapist are eventually married. Fletcher, however, does a number of things that serve to complicate the tenuous basis on which Cervantes's resolution is balanced. First, Fletcher takes some of the Christian implications from the *novela* and translates them into a pagan setting — that of ancient Greece. Religion is still apparent; however, it does not have the plot control that it has in *La fuerza*. Merione, like Leocadia, is raped in a kind of sacred space: her rape takes place in Vesta's temple, where she had gone to prepare for her marriage to Agenor. A god, therefore — whether it be Jesus on the cross or Vesta in her temple — is present at both of the brutal rapes. The two women's responses to their situations, however, are very different. Unlike Leocadia, Merione does not feel comforted by the god's presence; instead, Merione feels abandoned by the goddess Vesta, whose primary symbols are the Vestal virgins who protected Rome and the sacred fire, which here can be seen as

representative of Merione's chastity. There is no sacred object which Merione can take with her from the temple to comfort her; instead, she leaves her virginity behind in the exact place where it would be most likely to be kept intact. Rather than emphasizing the religious power of the story, then, Fletcher chooses to purposely desecrate a holy place, leaving nothing of religious tangibility to be carried through the rest of the play.

Second, in Cervantes's *novela*, Leocadia's rape, however distasteful, has an ultimate, Godly purpose: to enable her to marry into a class that would normally be out of her reach, thanks to Leocadia's adherence to the passive, passionate suffering of the Passion of Christ. Although Merione is also, in the end, married to her rapist, this does not seem to have the same redeeming effect. As John Curran notes, although they "simply belong together, . . . this love affair is underwritten" (102) and lacks in verisimilitude, even in comparison to the relationship between Leocadia and Rodolfo. Despite her refusal to marry elsewhere and her willingness to be raped by Theanor twice, she "leav[es] us no assurance that a life with Theanor is what *she* truly *wishes* for" (105, emphasis in original). Therefore, the rape, while perhaps satisfying the illegitimate and misdirected passions of Theanor, is in my opinion unnecessary to the movement of the plot. Rather, Fletcher seems to remove purposefully any legitimate reason for Theanor's rape of Merione. He does so through the following alterations. First, Theanor and Merione are of like class and have already been courting for some time, so marriage is clearly within their reach. Second, in I.i, the introduction of sorts, Neanthes, a friend of Theanor's, states that "[the Queen] once did say, that if the prince should steal / A marriage, without her leave or knowledge, / With this Merione, with a little suit / She should grant both their pardons;" (I.i., p.398). Although the Queen has now decided to

marry Merione to Agenor instead, it seems unlikely that she would have been very upset should they simply have chosen to get married immediately after the Queen had made her new intentions known, especially since she had another (albeit less desirable) option available for Agenor (herself). Third, although Merione's rape is painstakingly thought out and arranged by Theanor and Crates, no obvious purpose is ever attributed to it. With Rodolfo, his motivation is clearly lust and nothing more (excluding its ultimate higher purpose). The idea to rape Merione, however, is the brainchild of both Theanor and Crates (who is more responsible is not quite clear), and it is also not apparent whether Theanor simply wishes to "have" her before her marriage (the primary motivation therefore being passionate lust); or whether it is passionate revenge aimed at Agenor and his mother the Queen; or whether he hopes that his actions will lead to the dissolution of Merione's betrothal to Agenor so that he can eventually marry her. As he does not actively pursue her following the rape and declines to marry her when asked directly by Merione to do so following the rape, the latter seems unlikely; however, Merione has also sworn off men, so her reaction also intentionally muddles the situation.

Interestingly, Fletcher reverses the situation of the crucifix and instead has Theanor take a ring from Merione. This ring, symbolizing wealth and privilege, becomes the means by which Theanor is able to frame Euphanes for the rape; thus rather than Merione's salvation, the ring becomes a symbol of ruin, first for Euphanes, and then for the entire city of Corinth when the Queen takes Euphanes's side against that of her son. Further, the ring, as it is disguised as a gift from the Queen to Euphanes, becomes a symbol of the potential destruction of Euphanes's and Belieza's betrothal, should the

Queen decide to once again marry below her rank. The resolution of all these threats is established ultimately in the Queen's court through temporal rather than celestial justice.

Finally, the relationship between the Queen and Euphanes also serves as a kind of complicated parallel of the relationship between Rodolfo and Leocadia. Although the Queen does not rape Euphanes, she is in a position of power and status, and Euphanes, who is much like Leocadia in that he is inclined to turn the other cheek and patiently endure trials, is in a position of favor, from which he would likely be unable to refuse his queen. It becomes evident that the Queen loves him: she elevates him, has him around her constantly, and makes references to marrying him. Unlike Rodolfo (or Theanor), however, she has self-control: "Only to try thee this, *for, though I love thee [Euphanes], I can subdue myself*, but she that can / Enjoy thee, doth enjoy more than a man" (III.i., p.446, emphasis mine). The Queen represents, in a way, the theoretical Rodolfo who resists his urges and who marries a wealthy woman of similar social standing chosen by his parents, as is threatened at the end of the *novela*. The Queen both loves and lusts after Euphanes, but as a ruler (i.e. as both Rodolfo *and* his parents) she must make the right decision for those whom she rules. She thus resists the temptation to take Euphanes from Beliza and instead marries Agenor, which makes Beliza happy and solidifies the peace between Agenor's country and her own. Fletcher therefore provides an implicit endorsement of Theanor's rape of Merione over the Queen's own resistance to passion: or at the very least, an implied endorsement of passion over reason. Although the Queen is a much more likable character than Theanor, in the end Theanor is allowed to marry Merione while the Queen is stuck marrying Agenor.

Fletcher's greatest complication, however, is the ending. As I have noted above, Crates decides to turn against Theanor once he expresses a desire to rape Beliza, and Crates arranges the meeting so that Theanor is with Merione again rather than with Beliza. When this truth comes out, Crates says to Theanor:

Such an age as this
 Shall ne'er be seen again. Virtue grows fat,
 And villany pines; the furies are asleep;
 Mischief, 'gainst goodness aim'd, is like a stone,
 Unnaturally forc'd up an eminent hill,
 Whose weight falls on our heads and buries us; (IV.iv., p.467)

Crates's comments are an excuse to his friend as much as an explanation: he is shocked by the goodness surrounding him and thus he resolves to "Repent, and grow good" (IV.iv., p.467). Through his scheming with Theanor and his treatment of his brother Euphanes, Crates is clearly accustomed to using evil and underhanded deeds to get his way. When that no longer seems to be working for him, he switches sides, if begrudgingly. It is not clear, at the end of the play, however, if all things have worked out for the best and, if so, if good deeds alone could have brought them to this conclusion. In *La fuerza de la sangre* it is apparent that only total submission to passive, passionate suffering — even to the negative things such as rape — brings about the (at least tenuously) happy ending. In Fletcher's play, gods are in existence but play no role in the outcome of the story. Ultimately, it is people rather than deities who force this mess into some resolution. The law as represented by the Queen's court is that which decides everyone's fates. Both Leocadia and Merione make speeches following their rapes. Leocadia's speech emphasizes the Christian purpose of the story, particularly when she says that ". . . my complaints will be heard only between me and heaven, without me wishing the world to hear them, because the world does not judge things as they truly

happened but as they occur to its judgement and estimate” (107). Leocadia cannot trust the judgment of the public and therefore the rape must remain secret. In contrast, it seems that the judgment of the public (and of the law) *can* be trusted in *Queen*. Thus, Fletcher seems to contrast reliance on God with reliance on humans, and on the law, and his conclusions are even more open-ended and ambiguous than those of Cervantes’s *novela*, which — although it tries to be closed in the end — offers only a tenuous resolution based on the reader’s faith in God versus their horror of just how that resolution comes about.

Fletcher chooses to exploit the Christian foundation on which Cervantes’s *novela* is based in order to portray an imperfect world in which evil is overcome, not by the Passion of Jesus Christ, but by the complex interplay of passion and reason within a distinctly human society. He senses the uneasy resolution of the rape of Leocadia and seeks to interrogate God’s role in such occurrences. Through the sheer deliberateness of Merione’s rape, including the disturbing figures who dance around her, we are shown evil — not for lust’s sake, but for no delineated reason at all. We are shown goodness, too, in the form of Euphanes and to an extent in the Queen as well. Although Euphanes can perhaps be seen as an exemplary Christian, adding the Queen and the legal scene at the end of this pagan-set tragicomedy suggests that merely behaving as a Christian without the intervention of the law does not always suffice, because people do not always behave in a Christian-like manner (or do not always “turn over a new leaf”) without the impetus of the law (or punishment) at one’s heels.

Goodness seems to win out in the end, but, as Crates, says, it is an unusual and unlikely occurrence, and hardly, we can imagine, one that will last long. We remain

skeptical that either Crates or Theanor has genuinely become good. Merione, inexplicably, accepts being raped a second time, and we can hardly believe that the Queen will be happy settling down with Agenor and bearing his children, as she proposes to do. Each character's actions become questionable. These interpretive dilemmas lead us to a more complex view of passion, both as Christ's Passion and as lust and love, even as passion seems ultimately to "triumph" over reason in each text.

As I noted in the beginning of the chapter, the relationship between passion and reason is not a simple one. Although "right reason" may have once portrayed these as a simple dichotomy of evil versus good, through the second half of the sixteenth century and the early part of the seventeenth century several different viewpoints of passion and reason emerged, particularly as this seeming dichotomy related to a human capacity for spiritual and moral growth. Whereas passion, in both the Stoic tradition and in the tradition of "right reason," is a potentially damning impulse that must be resisted, emerging theories posited that passions were God-given and thus could not be evil in and of themselves (Tilmouth 162). "Right reason" is by no means defeated in this period: Tilmouth notes, for example, Edmund Spenser's firm belief in "the passions' psychomachic power, their constant propensity to drag the soul into sin" (Tilmouth 49). Although Spenser toys with other contemporary approaches to passion and reason in his *Faerie Queene* (1590), he

nowhere abandons his faith in the primacy of right reason. . . . He may trace the limitations of human moral achievement and man's dependence on grace, but he nevertheless affirms the value of humanist and rationalist ideas of self-mastery. Right reason is always, here, the sovereign power within the mind, whose standards man should aspire to. For that reason, Spenser's epic . . . establishes a benchmark at the outset of this book, against which can be measured

developments in the history of the moral imagination over the next hundred years. (Tilmouth 38-39)

Spenser's epic is a tribute to Queen Elizabeth, but it is also a vision of a world of wandering knights and magical castles: in other words, a beautiful image of a world long past, if ever it existed in the first place. Although "right reason" remains foremost in the poem, even Spenser has difficulty proving that "man's emotions [always] drive him towards sin and carnality" (48).

During this time of great religious upheaval, exploration of this controversial topic took place in both Protestant and Catholic camps: "Theological claims for the moral value of the affections were not [solely] the preserve of the Puritans. After the Council of Trent, Counter-Reformation voices intent on matching the emotive appeal of Protestantism also set to work putting this case. Their texts, too, thus could meet England's need for a new ethical language" (Tilmouth 166). Thus, as I have shown, this new moral validation of the passions was accessible to Cervantes and Cinthio in Catholic Spain and Italy respectively as well as to Painter in newly Protestant England.

Responding to these contemporary ideological debates, the novellists in this study, like Spenser, bring psychomachic, Calvinist, Augustinian, and Aristotelian interpretations of the relationship between passion and reason into their tales; unlike Spenser, however, they choose to move away from the psychomachic vision and toward one that welcomes passion while simultaneously satisfying a perceived or real need for at least the appearance of a moral — an excuse for the salaciousness of the story. The flexibility of such tenuous moral conclusions serve not only for fascinating analysis of the novellas in their own right, but also, through their influence on Jacobean drama, add a richness to those plays for which they served as source material.

In all three chapters of this dissertation it is my goal to elucidate the rich narrative and dramatic thematic contributions of the early modern novella to Jacobean drama and thus, implicitly, to argue for the novellas' literary value in their own right. In my first chapter I explored the intertextual connections between these two genres via the seeming dichotomy of interiority and performativity/theatricality. In this chapter I have revealed, I hope, the skillfully tenuous resolutions of five of the novellas central to my study and have endeavored to expose the complex ideas on passion and reason within them, which, in turn, had such a powerful effect on Jacobean drama. Jacobean drama takes up this complex analysis of the relationship between passion and reason and builds upon it and expands it, often by removing these attempted explanations of motivation, thereby creating rich plays in which passion becomes the elevated focus of an ultimately open-ended storyline. Now, as I have touched on religious and philosophical points in this chapter, I wish to move forward in my final chapter to an exploration of marriage and the single state, looking specifically at how the treatment of this seeming dichotomy in the early modern novellas influenced its correlated manifestation in Jacobean drama.

CHAPTER THREE: MARRIAGE VERSUS THE SINGLE STATE

Using specific thematic lenses, my first two chapters have striven to show the strong influence of the early modern novella on Jacobean drama, apart from that which is usually attributed to them in terms of mere plot source material. My third and final chapter continues in this same vein, this time looking at the novellas' influence in relation to their treatment of marriage and, conversely, the single state. This chapter further extends my larger argument by looking at not only how Jacobean drama benefited from its novella predecessors technically and thematically, but also how these plays responded to the treatment, within the novellas, of a highly contentious contemporary religious and political issue: the abiding confusion as to what constituted marriage and its seeming opposite, the single state.

I cannot, of course, discuss marriage and the single state in the early modern period without addressing two other commonly utilized lines of demarcation: medieval versus early modern and Catholicism versus Protestantism. Unfortunately I do not have the space to go over in any great detail the medieval roots of the treatment of marriage and the single state in the early modern period; thus I will confine my discussion of the clear historical continuities between the adjoining periods to relevant points within the chapter. However, I will not fail to mention briefly James A. Brundage's significant contribution to the historical roots of the treatment of marriage and the single state in the early modern period. In his *Sex, Law and Marriage in the Middle Ages* (1993), he observes "that the discontinuities between the views that [he] found in medieval canonists and the discussions of marital matters and sexual problems by sixteenth- and seventeenth-century lawmakers, moralists, and social observers were by no means as sharp as modern

historians generally seemed to suppose” (xi). This discovery was the basis of his subsequent exhaustive research and also supports my view that the sharp differentiation sometimes assumed as regards the treatment of these matters by the Catholic and Protestant churches, which both shared strong roots in medieval tradition, is similarly blurred.

To turn, then, to this second line of demarcation — that separating Catholicism and Protestantism — it is my contention in this chapter that what constitutes a hard and fast marriage in the early modern period, and in turn marriage’s power to dictate sexuality (both within marriage and without), cuts across the Catholic/Protestant divide, if indeed such a clear-cut separation exists. Although the Protestant Reformation (and resultant Counter-Reformation) changed many aspects of everyday life, both in England and on the Continent, the concept of “marriage” that each side tried to define remained surprisingly similar in both Catholic and Protestant writings, many of which were designed to inform the religious and lay public as to specific ways in which marriage could be considered valid and/or licit (Catholic guidelines to be dispensed by the clergy, Protestant guidelines by conduct books, etc.). The similarities of these supposedly opposing documents, instead of simplifying the transition, rather added to the confusion and contradiction regarding marriage found in many of my central texts.

Although I will not ignore the relative influence of Catholic or Protestant actions and viewpoints in this chapter where appropriate, it is my overall contention that, as Kathleen Davies convincingly shows in “Continuity and Change in Literary Advice on Marriage,” marriage was treated in much the same way in England under Protestantism as under Catholicism:

There is enough continuity in the advice to the laity [under Catholicism] about the purposes of marriage and about the relationship between husband and wife in all its behavioural aspects — choice of partner, dominance of husband, mutual affection and respect, sexual activity, and sharing of work — to indicate that Puritan conduct books do not show any *change* to domesticity and affection as ideals of marriage. There was nothing new in such ideals. And whether they show anything about how people actually behaved, for example whether there was an *increase* in patriarchy, seems highly questionable. (78)

In addition to the “purposes of marriage” referenced above, the *act* of making a marriage in England (and in Catholic Italy and Spain) — despite continued attempts in both Catholicism and Protestantism to move the act of marriage into the church — remained fundamentally, until well into the eighteenth century, a matter of consent between two willing individuals (called spousals or spousal contracts). Christine Peters, in her 2000 article “Gender, Sacrament and Ritual: The Making and Meaning of Marriage in Late Medieval and Early Modern England” argues that although marriage, for Protestants, “was mostly a secular concern” (Sokol and Sokol 81) and was subsequently removed from the list of sacraments,

we need to question whether the average layperson would have seen much difference between Protestant descriptions of marriage as “divinely ordained,” “blessed,” and “holy,” and Catholic ones. At the very least, if we accept the power of ritual symbolism, it is hard to see how a reformed wedding ceremony which now took place entirely within the body of the church could be a move towards a stronger view of marriage as a civil contract. (77)

Thus, even the seemingly significant decision of the Protestant church to take away marriage’s status as a sacrament can be seen, for our purposes here, as largely a nonissue. In both cases marriage, although legally binding in both religions at the exchange of mutual consent, was being slowly moved toward, rather than away from, the control of the church. The authors I treat in the study, I believe, saw these similarities and sought to problematize them.

Merry E. Wiesner-Hanks, in her *Christianity and Sexuality in the Early Modern World: Regulating Desire, Reforming Practice* (2000), points out a number of continuities in how Catholics and Protestants viewed sexuality and marriage:

In a number of matters regarding sexuality, Protestants did not break sharply with medieval tradition. They differed little from Catholics in regard to basic concepts such as the roots and proper consequences of gender differences, or the differences between “natural” and “unnatural” sexual practices. Though Luther flamboyantly rejected canon law — publicly burning canon law books before the students of the University of Wittenberg at one point — it eventually formed the legal basis of much Protestant law regarding marriage and sex. Breaking with tradition in terms of the power of the papacy or the meaning of key rituals turned out to be easier than breaking with tradition in terms of sexual and gender relations. Protestants also did not reject, and in some cases strengthened, the intellectual authority of early Church Fathers such as Augustine who had been most influential in establishing western Christian hostility to, or ambivalence about, sexuality. (62)

She also continuously makes differentiations between the Protestant movement of the Continent and that of England, where the transition was much more gradual and subtle. She notes that although

[m]ost Protestant areas . . . went through at least a brief period of disorder and uncertainty during which the authority of the old bishop’s courts was no longer accepted, but no new institutions had yet been established. . . . This did not happen in England, where the church courts were not disbanded when Henry VIII broke with the papacy, but simply continued as bodies for which the ultimate authority was the king rather than the pope. (70)

Thus, while things changed much more quickly and drastically in Germany and the Low Countries, England’s smoother transition from Catholicism to Protestantism aided the Church of England in retaining some of its older, Catholic religious laws. For example, “[n]either Henry VIII nor Elizabeth I was in favor of clerical marriage” (73), and “the Anglican and Anglo-Irish Churches rejected divorce and continued to assert the indissolubility of marriage” (79). Interestingly, although these continuities appear to make the English transition from Catholicism to Protestantism easier, in fact these

“smooth transitions” simultaneously and somewhat paradoxically (and confusingly) helped to maintain the old notions of what made a marriage throughout the early modern period in England, despite changes attempted by the Protestant church. Partly because of this relative continuity (and the confusions and contradictions caused by it), basic opinions about exactly *how* marriages were made were slow to change not only in England but in Italy and Spain as well, despite attempts in both Protestant and Catholic countries to regulate these activities. Fundamental to this question of “what made a marriage” in the early modern period was the concept of spousals, a form of marriage contract established in the twelfth century and not completely eliminated until the eighteenth.

Martin Ingram, in his “Spousal Litigation in the English Ecclesiastical Courts c.1350-1640,” details the establishment of *de futuro* spousals in addition to *per verba de praesenti* spousals. Ingram examines the layers of contradictions and inconsistencies apparent in late Middle Age/early modern marriage practices. Until 1753 the only thing *technically* necessary in England to make a binding marriage was the present-tense consent of the partners — a *per verba de praesenti* spousal (“I marry you”). Along with this enduring rule, there were increasing numbers of (sometimes contradictory) “guidelines” put in place, which were legally binding and which could be pursued in the ecclesiastical courts if not followed. However, even if a marriage went against these guidelines, it was not invalidated so long as it was made *per verba de praesenti*; instead, it was merely “illicit” (and thus likely open to dispute in a canonical court, if desired by any of the affected parties). Ingram makes this slight but helpful differentiation between a “valid” marriage and a “licit” one:

Though these procedures for ensuring that unions were made publicly and in a liturgical context were not essential to marriage . . . they were required to make a marriage fully licit. Any union which involved substantial deviation from the prescribed regulations was irregular, and referred to as clandestine. To neglect the solemnization of a contract was definitely illicit. This was so even if the contract had been witnessed. (39)

Similarly, despite both churches' strict positions against premarital sex, *de futuro* spousals (future-tense mutual promises to marry, i.e. "I will marry you") which had been consummated were considered valid and legally binding marriages: "With either secret or public spousals, matters grew still more complicated if a couple indulged in sexual intercourse before being married *in facie ecclesiae*. This act translated the espoused condition into a binding union" (Cook 191). Thus, even though premarital sex was largely forbidden in both a Catholic and Protestant context, consummating a *de futuro* spousal was a legitimate and legal (though still illicit) way to bind a marriage, and one fairly commonly practiced. Wiesner-Hanks notes that

while church and state authorities regarded a marriage as complete only after the church ceremony, many people, especially in rural areas, viewed a formal engagement or the signing of a marriage contract as the point at which sexual intercourse was allowable. Thus many of the cases of fornication were actually between individuals who intended to marry [in a church solemnization service] or who were in fact married [legally *and* licitly] by the time the case came to court. Historians have found that between one-fifth and one-half of brides were pregnant upon marriage in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. (80-81)

B. J. and Mary Sokol, in their 2003 *Shakespeare, Law, and Marriage*, argue that in Catholic Europe "[t]he Council of Trent in 1563 had solved some of the problems caused by clandestine marriages for the Catholic Church by requiring two witnesses to a valid marriage, one of whom was to be the parish priest" (94). However, even with this alteration, marriage remained primarily a private issue of consent between two willing people (with varying degrees of outside pressure, of course, from family, friends, and

society); and, as Wiesner-Hanks points out, despite these additions “the Council of Trent . . . [still] regarded clandestine marriages as valid” (121). The regulations of a Church (either Catholic or Protestant) for in-church solemnizations, over time, became more and more recognized (especially in the face of potential litigation); however, the power of religion to regulate marriage and the power of individuals to make binding commitments to one another clearly remained in tension throughout the early modern period.

These are just some of the many complexities and contradictions regarding marriage that had been established as early as the twelfth century and were carried on well into the eighteenth century, complexities and contradictions that were therefore at their height during the early modern period, to some extent regardless of the religious upheaval. There are of course many more intricacies regarding marriage and spousal contracts, and I will address some of these as necessary in the following pages. However, as this is a literary and not an historical study, my look at precise historical detail has been focused on my specific points and is by no means exhaustive. Suffice it to say that there coexisted during the early modern period (in England until 1753 and in Catholic Europe up until, and past, the Council of Trent) fundamental conflicts between what *did* make a marriage and what *should* make a marriage, conflicts that remained largely the same regardless of which church was in charge.

Unfortunately, despite the interconnectedness of Protestant and Catholic thought, there has been, particularly in early modern England, a critical tendency to approach marriage in early modern literature from either a Protestant or Catholic perspective.²⁴

²⁴ Lawrence Stone’s 1977 publication of *The Family, Sex and Marriage in England 1500-1800* sparked a lively ongoing critical conversation as to exactly how family, sex, and marriage changed in the early modern period over the course of the Protestant Reformation. Stone’s book argues for “a dramatic and relatively sudden swing away from

This has started to change, however, as critics have begun to recognize the inherent difficulty of separating one from the other during this time of sometimes subtle and seemingly smooth yet complex transition. In this vein, two critical works that significantly influenced this chapter are Hopkins's *The Shakespearean Marriage: Merry Wives and Heavy Husbands* and Sokol and Sokol's *Shakespeare, Law, and Marriage*. As the publication of these works seems to suggest, there has been some recent movement away from either a "Catholic" or "Protestant" perspective in favor of a more holistic view of marriage in the early modern period, which did not change substantially from one religious institution to the other and which must instead be looked at as a complex, contradictory state that resisted, for a long time, the efforts of either Protestantism or Catholicism to subdue it.

It is my desire in this chapter — and indeed, I would argue, the intention, whether conscious or not, of the authors included in this study — to look at the treatment of marriage and the single state as the product of centuries, rather than the confused product of a single religious or political shift. As I will show, marriage in the novellas, whether from Italy during the time of the Council of Trent, from Reformation England, or from Counter-Reformation Spain, is revealed to be complex, contradictory, and problematic. Marriage is not shown to be a cure-all for human sexuality, and a religious life of celibacy is not portrayed as a realistic alternative to marriage. Once again, I would like to introduce an analysis of these undervalued early modern texts in order to reveal their

the extended kinship groupings towards what we would now recognize as something roughly resembling the modern nuclear family" (Hopkins 2). Huston Deihl's 1997 *Staging Reform, Reforming the Stage: Protestantism and Popular Theater in Early Modern England* emphasizes early modern theater's Protestantism, and the 2003 *Theatre and religion: Lancastrian Shakespeare* edited by Richard Dutton, Alison Findlay, and Richard Wilson argues for a much more pervasive Catholic influence.

influence on Jacobean drama in terms of one final seeming dichotomy: marriage and the single state.

Just as, in Chapter Two, I showed how Cinthio, Painter, and Cervantes took advantage of the multiple definitions of passion and reason in order to create novellas with complex, contradictory morals that very often satisfied their readers' desire both for passion and for (at least the appearance of) a moral, reasoned conclusion, in this final chapter I reveal how these novellists took advantage of the confused and contradictory definitions of marriage and the often displaced and misunderstood state of singlehood in order to create novellas that questioned these contradictions as well as the changes that were being attempted in both Protestant England and Counter-Reformation Europe. Jacobean dramatists were undoubtedly responding in part to contemporary religious and political conflict regarding marriage, as well as marriage's long and storied history; however, I argue that they were also responding to the particular complex and contradictory representations of marriage and the single state in the novellas they used as source material. Whether original or adapted from prior sources, these novellas offered a complex treatment of the changes occurring throughout Europe regarding marriage and the single state, one that was clearly adapted, built upon, and expanded in the Jacobean dramas. While marriage increasingly became the focus in both the novellas and the dramas, in line with both romance and a new Protestant emphasis on the importance of marriage over celibacy (the repercussions of which were felt in Catholic Counter-Reformation Europe just as they were felt in England, as I will reveal below), the Jacobean dramatists built upon the complex representations in the novellas in order to interrogate further, and more completely, the question of just what makes a marriage.

I begin my analysis with an examination of Cervantes's *La ilustre fregona* and *La fuerza de la sangre* and their influence on the treatment of marriage and the single state in Fletcher's *The Fair Maid of the Inn* and *The Queen of Corinth*. From there I move to a discussion of Cinthio's "Epitia" *novelle* and its influence on Shakespeare's *Measure for Measure*. Finally, I conclude with a brief discussion of Cinthio's "Moor" *novelle* in relation to Shakespeare's *Othello*.

Cervantes included marriage as a key theme in the *Novelas ejemplares*. Carmen R. Rabell argues, and I agree, that this is because of the contradictory positions of the Church and the state regarding marriage, a problem that still would have been quite fresh during the time of Cervantes's writing. The Council of Trent (held by the Catholic Church over a twenty-odd-year period in the mid-1500s) the purpose of which was, in part, to clarify points of Catholic religious doctrine regarding marriage and celibacy, particularly in relation to the new Protestant views, in many cases caused more confusion than clarification. The initial Canons of the decree *Tametsi* of the Council of Trent are quite clear in their arguments: "let him be anathema" to anyone who disagrees with these fundamental points (194). For example, the first Canon is an obvious and direct reaction to the Protestant religious demotion of marriage as a sacrament: "If any one saith, that matrimony is not truly and properly one of the seven sacraments of the evangelic law, (a sacrament) instituted by Christ the Lord; but that it has been invented by men in the Church; and that it does not confer grace; let him be anathema" (194). However, as the twenty-fourth session continues on to an attempted definition of Catholic marriage, the writing turns to paragraph rather than Canon form, with points being made and then

retracted or adjusted “by permission of the said parish priest, or of the Ordinary” (197). For example, after giving some detail as to marital procedures, the decree makes this exception: “Then, before the consummation thereof, the banns shall be published in the church; that so, if there be any secret impediments, they may be the more easily discovered: *unless the Ordinary shall himself judge it expedient, that the publications aforesaid be dispensed with, which the holy Synod leaves to his prudence and judgment*” (197, emphasis mine). To further the potential for confusion, the statement purportedly defining marriage actually begins with an acknowledgement that “it is not to be doubted, that clandestine marriages, made with the free consent of the contracting parties, are valid and true marriages, so long as the Church has not rendered them invalid” (196). It is only because of “the grievous sins which arise from the said clandestine marriages” (196) in some situations that the Church has decided to implement certain rules for the proper performance of marriage rites. Although the announcement of banns and other “requirements” are listed, at the very middle of the paragraph lies this statement: “or at least the marriage shall be celebrated in the presence of the parish priest, and of two or three witnesses” (197). Marriage, therefore, following the Council of Trent in Counter-Reformation Europe, was not much more clearly delineated than it was in post-Reformation England. Although it was preferable, marriages did not need to take place in a church but only, as before, with “two or three witnesses”; the only major difference is the presence of the parish priest, who presumably could be called to attend a wedding at a moment’s notice and use his powers in order to waive any of the other, optional, requirements. It is “flexible” marriage situations such as those allowed above which are dealt with in Cervantes’s *novelas*. I will first look at the *novelas*’ treatment of marriage in

Counter-Reformation Spain and then show how Fletcher learns from and adapts this treatment for an English audience.

In both of Cervantes's *novelas* dealt with in this study, rape is of paramount importance to the marriages that take place at the end of the stories. Rabell argues that "Spanish novellas explored the contradictions between civil and canon law regarding marriage within the private domain of the home in order to suggest further contradictions within the public sphere of the state and the Church. The fictitious case, thus, provided a rhetoric to test the validity of the legal grounds of Counter-Reformation Spain" (4). I believe that Cervantes explored these contradictions in both *La ilustre fregona* and *La fuerza de la sangre* through the confusingly placed crime of rape and its ability to lead to marriage.

Although "abduction" is given a small section in the Council of Trent in regard to when marriage is possible following an abduction, there is no mention of what should be done in cases of rape. This is likely because rape, as an unclear criminal category in the early modern period, was not prosecutable in the church courts: "common law and statute, not canon law, developed definitions of the offence [of rape] and its punishment" (Sokol and Sokol 107), despite the fact that "[t]he church courts did have jurisdiction over other sexual offences, such as prostitution, fornication, and adultery" (110).²⁵ Sokol

²⁵ In the early modern period, rape was not clearly defined as a sexual crime but was often conflated with the crimes of abduction or elopement. Brundage notes that "[t]he canonists, from the time of Gratian onwards, gradually defined four constitutive elements of rape in their law. Rape must involve the use of violence, it must involve abduction, it must involve coitus, and it must be accomplished without the free consent of one partner" (VIII 67). While this is to a large extent true in the early modern period, he ends his analysis in the 1200s, before the prosecution of rape was moved largely into the secular courts and thus prior to the period discussed in detail by Sokol and Sokol. Therefore, although the rapes in *La ilustre fregona* and *The Queen of Corinth* do not involve a movement from one place to another, they will still be treated as instances of rape per Sokol and Sokol's findings.

and Sokol argue that “it is necessary to discuss the crime of rape because both in law and in available historical evidence rape was often hard to disentangle on the one hand from abduction and ravishment, and on the other from consensual elopements disguised as abductions” (105). The confusion and contradiction inherent in prosecuting one potentially sex-related crime in the secular courts and others in the canonical courts combined with the contradictions and confusions involved in differentiating rape (in the modern definition of sexual assault) from abduction or elopement (consensual or forced), led (I believe) to Cervantes’s willingness to portray a cruel, unrepentant sexual rape as the basis for a sequence of resultant marriages in *La ilustre fregona* and a single, unequal marriage in *La fuerza de la sangre*.

I will first look at *La ilustre fregona*, where the issues of rape (as sexual assault) and marriage are not raised until the *novela*’s conclusion. As I have dealt with the general storyline in depth in earlier chapters, I will move quickly to the ending. Tomás, having fallen in love with the fair maid at the Salamanca Inn, has been biding his time there, hoping for some situation to arise in which he could marry her. Fortunately for him, such a situation does come to light following the visit of his and Carriazo’s fathers, when they learn that Carriazo’s father “took her [Costanza’s mother] by force alone and against her will” (129), despite the fact that “she was of such a high station that [Don Diego, Carriazo’s father] could be her servant” (129). This sexual assault led to the birth of Costanza nine months later, though her high status was unknown until this point. The revelation of this rape elevates Costanza to the extent that she is finally worthy marriage material for Tomás. This, ostensibly, is a happy ending — at least for Tomás. Tomás, however, is not the only one married at the conclusion of the *novela*. Despite the Council

of Trent's reaffirmation that only consent between two individuals, and not the decisions of their parents, could make a marriage valid, it is the fathers and not the children who decide who will marry whom:

the Corregidor, Don Diego de Carriazo and Don Juan de Avendaño came to an agreement that Don Tomás should marry Costanza, her father giving her the thirty thousand *escudos* her mother had left her, and the water-carrier Don Diego de Carriazo should marry the daughter of the Corregidor, and Don Pedro, the son of the Corregidor, one of Don Juan de Avendaño's daughters. Her father offered to arrange the dispensation necessary because of their blood relationship [as they were the children of first cousins]. (133, 135)

It is primarily this short passage, and the circumstances leading up to the revelation of Costanza's true identity, that I will deal with in this section.

Despite its seemingly cavalier treatment at the end of the *novela*, marriage is of foremost importance to the resolution of the story, and thus the marriages that take place, and how they take place, must be examined. Three marriages are arranged at the conclusion of the *novela*: the unconventional marriage between Tomás and Costanza, which requires no dispensation despite her bastardy and only recently discovered parentage; that of the Corregidor's son and Tomás's sister, who are second cousins who have never met; and Carriazo and the Corregidor's daughter, who must have been in close proximity but have also seemingly never met (she, like Tomás's sister, is never mentioned until this point).

The marriage between Tomás and Costanza is unconventional in that it is a quickly reconciled marriage between seeming unequals, who are only "equalized" by the revelation of an illegal sexual assault. However, despite these odd circumstances, the marriage between Tomás and Costanza is simultaneously conventional and within the bounds of the regulations of the Council of Trent: Tomás, at least, is marrying for love

and has thus consented to the marriage. Although Costanza does not explicitly give her consent, her behavior to him (i.e. not exposing him to her foster parents once she receives his letter or behaving particularly coldly to him) is likely meant to imply that she is not averse to marrying him, and this behavior would generally have been considered sufficient consent on the part of the female party for marriage. As the marriages do not take place within the scope of the story (a characteristic typical of both the novellas and dramas of the early modern period), we are free to imagine, should we choose to do so, that her actual verbal consent is given at another time.

The marriage of the Corregidor's son, who had loved Costanza as well, to Tomás's sister, although also unconventional, is less disturbing than that of Carriazo to the Corregidor's daughter (discussed in earlier chapters), since he is described as "want[ing] to meet his cousin and his future wife" (135). However, the fact remains that the two marriages are arranged without the explicit consent of the individuals involved. The Council of Trent specifically says that "those who falsely affirm that marriages contracted by the children of a family, without the consent of their parents, are invalid, and that parents can make such marriages either valid or invalid [are anathema]" (196), indicating that parental consent, while important, has no bearing on the validity of a marriage. Interestingly, however, it makes no mention of invalidating marriages that are made without the consent of the children but *with* the consent of the parents, leaving a loophole as to just how much control parents have over their children's marriages.

As I have mentioned in earlier chapters, although the least is said in reference to the marriage of Carriazo to the Corregidor's daughter, it is this marriage that leaves us with the most discomfort at the end of the *novela*. Throughout the story, Carriazo has

shown no interest in settling down, let alone marrying — he is seemingly happy being single and is thoroughly independent in nature. Although we are told that he eventually has “three sons who do not take after their father, nor are they aware that there are tunny fisheries in the world” (135), this is no assurance that Carriazo himself has changed; he has acquiesced to his father’s wishes in that he has had children with the wife his father has chosen, but his consent is never either given or implied. If anything, marriage may be seen in his case to have been a makeshift “solution” for his independence and perpetual wanderlust, for although Carriazo shows no inclination toward marriage, he also shows no inclination toward a religious life of celibacy. Marriage, therefore, is the only way to tie Carriazo down and prove that he “was a real gentleman after he had changed his clothes and forsaken his ass and his pitchers” (135). It is, however, an imperfect fix at best. Although Cervantes turns in this *novela* to a conventional happy ending in allowing these three marriages to occur, supposedly unproblematically, I agree with Rabell in seeing this particular portrayal as a commentary on the complex and contradictory statuses of marriage and the single state in Counter-Reformation Spain. However, I disagree with her that “Cervantes . . . exploit[ed] the ambiguous discourse of the fictitious case to propose means to *correct* the contradiction between civil and canon laws regarding marriage” (112, emphasis mine). Instead, in both *La ilustre fregona* and *La fuerza de la sangre* I see Cervantes’s “exploitation” of the contradictions both between canon and civil law and within canon law as more critical and less corrective/conclusive. Although Cervantes and his contemporaries were undoubtedly interested in avoiding prosecution for their writings, I believe that Cervantes’s *novelas* are more complex, multifaceted, and perhaps even underhanded, than Rabell suggests. Rather than simply

flying under the radar, I argue, Cervantes is deliberately, though subtly, exposing the problematic nature of these contradictions without offering any real solution: both *La ilustre fregona* and *La fuerza de la sangre* end in marriage, but, because of the problematic nature of these marriages, this ending does not indicate that marriage in these cases is any more than an uneasy but necessary last-ditch resolution.

As I have shown in the previous two chapters, Fletcher is extremely attuned to the complex stylistic and thematic techniques of Cervantes, and in relation to the interrelated issues of singlehood, marriage, and rape, there is no exception. In *The Fair Maid of the Inn*, the themes of the previous and current chapters come together. Some of the central issues at stake are passion and marriage and how to make the one conform to or become compatible with the other during particularly unstable and confusing times. Sandra Clark points out, correctly I think, that “Beaumont and Fletcher create opportunities to raise questions about the social functions of courtship and marriage, and the extent to which marriage resolves the problem of sexual desire” (*Beaumont and Fletcher* 158). This is, I believe, precisely what occurs in *Fair Maid*; in this instance, however, this question is made exceedingly complex by the introduction not only of various persons of higher and lower social position but also a complete confusion of the familial ties that normally provide guidance as to whom one may or may not marry. The play forces us to ask, what makes a marriage here?

As an Englishman, Fletcher, I believe, saw the similarities between Cervantes’s complex treatment of rape and marriage in response to the contemporary political and religious situation in early modern Spain and the confusing and contradictory status of marriage in post-Reformation England, and sought to build upon Cervantes’s

representations in order to expose even more fully not only the contradictions inherent in the various laws and traditions within and outside certain faiths, but the contradictions and problems inherent within the very notion of elevating marriage as a necessary and holy end for all people.

Just as *La ilustre fregona* is one of the least studied of Cervantes's *novelas*, *The Fair Maid of the Inn* is one of Fletcher's least studied and most reviled plays. John Curran, for example, in his article "Declamation and Character in the Fletcher-Massinger Plays," says that "This is by no means an infallible dramaturgical formula; no debt to the *Controversiae* nor anything else can save *The Fair Maid of the Inn* from stupidity" (49). Despite the critical disfavor of these works, however, in looking at the two as a connected pair, particularly in relation to the treatment of rape (as sexual assault), marriage, and the single state, we can learn still more about the extensive contributions of the early modern novella to Jacobean drama.

Marriage in *Fair Maid* is a point of focus from the very beginning. Although, as in *La ilustre fregona*, the actual marriage ceremonies do not take place within the scope of the play (Baptista's and Alberto's marriages take place prior to the play's beginning, and Cesario's and Mentivole's take place in some future time following the play's conclusion), the nature of who can/should be married (and what makes these marriages valid and/or licit) is key to the play's progression of events. Again, like *La ilustre fregona*, there are three possible post-play marriages (not including the briefly suggested marriage of Cesario to his mother): that of Cesario to his sometimes-sister, Clarissa, that of Cesario to the sometimes-kitchen-maid, Bianca, and that of Clarissa to Mentivole,

Cesario's best friend. As the Cesario character doubles as both the Tomás and the Carriazo character from Cervantes's *novela*, I will focus solely on the first two.

The play opens with bawdy references to the first potential marriage, between Cesario and his sister Clarissa, with Cesario making thinly veiled remarks as to his interest in his sister and her sexual purity in the guise of brotherly advice. Cesario begins by asking her to "Interpret not, Clarissa, my true zeal / In giving you counsel, to transcend the bounds / That should confine a brother / . . . / Misconstrue not my purpose" (I.i. p.11). Clarissa's answer, interestingly, is not "I do not" but "Sir, I *dare* not" (I.i. p.11, emphasis mine). Of course, opening the play with a rather over-zealous *denial* of Cesario's inappropriate feelings for his sister (and her sly recognition of them) has the opposite effect on the audience: we begin the play with the assumption that Cesario does indeed have poorly concealed sexual feelings for his own sister. This beginning prepares the audience for Cesario's later temporary bastardization, when his mother, Mariana, lies and says that Cesario is not her and Alberto's son in order to save him from Baptista's revenge. This lie, however, backfires when the Duke orders Cesario to marry his (former) mother (her husband Alberto being presumed dead in battle), to which Cesario eagerly replies that he will marry his sister instead:

we will forget
 How once I and Clarissa interchang'd
 The ties of brother and of sister; henceforth
 New-style us man and wife.
 . . .
 Yet, in all my dotage
 On thy perfections, when I thought, Clarissa,
 We had been pledges of one womb, no loose,
 No wanton heat of youth desir'd to claim
 Priority in thy affections, other
 Than nature might commend; chastely I tender'd
 Thy welfare as a brother ought: but since

Our bloods are strangers, let our hearts contract
 A long life-lasting unity; for this way
 The sentence may be observ'd, or no way. (IV.i. p.66)

Mariana, while sickened, cannot get out of either potential incestuous marriage without disclosing her lie. It is not until Alberto miraculously returns with Baptista's erstwhile wife that the truth in its entirety can finally be revealed and Cesario's hopes for a marriage with Clarissa are dashed.

The play's extensive examination of the limits of the laws of consanguinity is very likely reflective of the mention, in *La ilustre fregona*, of the requirement of a dispensation. While the Corregidor's son will need and no doubt receive a dispensation for his marriage to his second cousin due to consanguinity, however, in no case in early modern Europe would there have been a dispensation for consanguinity involving a brother and sister marrying. Fletcher thus builds upon this arbitrary distinction between who may or may not make a marriage by magnifying this small piece of information found at the end of the *novela*, recognizing its importance to an examination of marriage in the early modern period. Initially, one might suppose that, given that Cesario's unlawful feelings do (for what turns out to be a short span of time) become lawful — he no longer has to hide his feelings for his sister under a guise of brotherly concern or affection — the play can end happily with the marriage of Cesario and Clarissa (happily, at least, for Cesario). This potentially neat conclusion, however, is hampered by a number of different things. This marriage cannot resolve Cesario's "problem of sexual desire" because (1) it goes against the Duke's direct order that he marry his (now former) mother Mariana; (2) Clarissa is engaged to Cesario's former best friend Mentivole; (3) Clarissa and Cesario are, it is later revealed, actually blood brother and sister, making such

marriage anathema; and (4) although such a relationship would have easily been recognized as prohibited, had it turned out that Cesario was not related by blood to Clarissa, this was no assurance that the marriage could proceed. There may still have been a prohibition forbidding their marriage based on the extended laws of consanguinity, which outlawed marriage not only between even distant blood relations but also between those “related” by marriage or through other religious or secular connections. Sokol and Sokol note that “the complexity of the law [of consanguinity] meant that marriages inadvertently falling within the prohibited degrees were probably not uncommon,” even as late as 1599 (141). And even when this occurred advertently, they note that “[r]emote degrees of affinity or consanguinity were difficult to trace; it was relatively simple for couples at risk to purchase a dispensation from banns or licence, or to visit a lawless church for the ceremony” (96). In portraying a potential marriage between Cesario and Clarissa as at first impossible, then possible, and then once again impossible, Fletcher sets up an interesting interrogation into the laws of consanguinity and just how far they might be bent for the person determined to make a technically incestuous marriage. In *La ilustre fregona*, it is intimated that getting the dispensation for the marriage of the Corregidor’s son to his second cousin will be simple — a mere formality. Sokol and Sokol suggest that getting such a dispensation in England was similarly easy; and even if a dispensation was not granted, “the impediments of consanguinity and affinity did not make a child illegitimate” (158). Yet, in *Fair Maid*, it is apparent that Cesario’s marrying Clarissa would be unacceptable in any circumstance. What, Fletcher seems to ask, is the real difference in these two cases, both of which are technically disallowed? What would happen in the case of brother marrying sister? How

far can the laws of consanguinity be bent in order to make a marriage valid? Licit? Despite an alternate “resolution” at the end of the play, Fletcher deliberately allows Cesario’s desire for his sister to remain in the atmosphere of the play without hope of true satisfactory conclusion.

Although in *La ilustre fregona* marriage to Costanza is Tomás’s main aspiration, Cesario’s eventual planned marriage to the former kitchen-maid Bianca is at most second-best in his eyes. Although he professes to love her, his initial wooing of Bianca clearly aspires to nothing more than her attainment as mistress. She seems, in fact, to be a substitute for his sister, whom for the time being he cannot have. He insists that Bianca be grateful that he has “. . . [laid] by / Consideration of the unequal distance / Between my blood and thine, to shun occasions / Of courtship with ladies of the time, / Noble and fair, only for love to thee, — ” (III.i. pp.49-50), and he declares that he has avoided seeking a wife among his own class only for love of Bianca; however, one can only suspect that it is in actuality because of his lust for his own sister and the impossibility of attaining that desire. Bianca clearly has feelings for Cesario and encourages him in the way of marriage, but she refuses to do anything to besmirch her honor and leaves him when he makes such suggestions. As both Protestant thought and the Council of Trent strictly forbade such “concubinage” (although it continued to exist despite its disallowance), the inclusion of such intentions would have been yet another challenge to the sanctity and priority of marriage in the play. Building upon the initial impossibility of marriage between Costanza and the highborn Tomás, Fletcher extends this situation to the limits of its potential in a way that Cervantes cannot, at least explicitly, without risking punishment. In both the *novela* and the play a last-minute *anagnorisis* allows for

the marriage of seeming unequals, but only in the *novela* does this have at least the potential to create a positive union. While Cervantes subtly questions the happiness of the marriage by deliberately withholding Costanza's verbal consent, Fletcher poses the question more intently by having the Duke use the language of consent (in effect a *de futuro* spousal) for the parents rather than the children: "So you consent, great lady [Juliana, Bianca's mother], your Bianca / Shall call Cesario husband" (V.iii., p.103). Once again it is not the marrying partners but the parents who are called upon for their "consent" regarding the marriage of their children. Juliana gives her permission, and Cesario replies, "One in which you make / A sad man happy" (V.iii., p.103). Cesario is happy, in a way, to get out of the mess created by his lust for his sister, but he is also sad to have lost her forever to Mentivole. Unlike Costanza, Bianca is given a final line, but it too is obscure and inconclusive. She says only to Cesario, "Kneel not; all forgiven" (V.iii., p.103). This exchange is unsettling, because it is not clear either that Cesario is apologizing for anything in his offer to kneel, or exactly what, if anything, Bianca is forgiving him for, since "all forgiven" lacks a clear subject, object, and verb; her words, interestingly, although kind, show no hint of consent. Marriage between two people who have had so many misunderstandings, and for whom a union is being forced, suddenly, under very different circumstances, not only questions marriage as a happy, consensual union, but as the necessary end for these characters. It is never clear if this will be a marriage based on love or one based on parental approval. If this latter is the case, the issue of consanguinity is once again raised, at least in terms of affinity between these two extremely close families. Bianca may love Cesario, but it is difficult to believe that she has truly forgiven him for first treating her like a harlot and then scorning her marriage

proposal when he is supposedly of low birth. She tells him, when he tries to propose following the loss of both his mother and sister as marriage partners, that “Wherein you slighted, or contemn’d me rather, / I took a vow to obey your last decree, / And never more look up at any hope / Should bring me comfort that way! / . . . / . . . your suit to me / Henceforth be ever silenc’d!” (IV.ii., p.84). This is, perhaps, in the end, an issue of semantics. Cesario’s suit to Bianca has been, in fact, forever silenced, and yet the two will marry following the conclusion of the play in spite of both keeping their word. Rather than a happy ending or something that is made through mutual consent, marriage, then, is something that seems to “happen” inevitably, much as it does in *La fuerza de la sangre*, in which a sudden *anagnorisis* similarly allows a questionable marriage to occur.

Before moving on to a discussion of *La fuerza de la sangre*, however, we must spend a few moments discussing the cause of Bianca’s *anagnorisis* at the end of the play — the discovery of Baptista’s long lost “wife” and their secret daughter, who turns out to be Bianca. As stated above, this alteration occurs, in *La ilustre fregona*, with the revelation that Carriazo’s father had once raped a highborn widow, which resulted in a child. Although Fletcher deals explicitly with sexual rape in his *Queen of Corinth*, in *The Fair Maid of the Inn* he replaces this assault, interestingly, with a clandestine marriage that results in prosecution and separation. According to Baptista,

We [Juliana and Baptista] were closely [secretly] married, and for some few months
 Tasted the fruits of ‘t; but . . .
 . . .
 A faithless servant, privy to our plot,
 . . .
 Discover’d us to the incensed Duke [her uncle],
 Whose rage made her close prisoner, and pronounc’d
 On me perpetual banishment. Some three years
 I wander’d on the seas, . . .

. . . but what fate
 Attended her . . .
 . . .
 Is yet uncertain. (I.i., p.19)

By altering this circumstance from explicit sexual assault to clandestine (and consensual) marriage, Fletcher chooses to focus his tale more completely on an examination of marriage as specifically handled by the canonical rather than the secular courts — or at the very least to address both Churches' confusion regarding the technical differences between rape as sexual assault and abduction, and between abduction and elopement/clandestine marriage. This secret marriage, which would likely have been “valid,” i.e. legally binding, but not “licit” (since we are given no additional details), further interrogates the complex and contradictory laws regarding how marriages were made both in England and in continental Europe. There is no mention, upon Juliana's return, of there being a solemnization of the marriage by a priest or in a church in order to legitimize the union. Marriage, therefore, in *Fair Maid*, is shown to be both illicit and problematic as a solution, either to love or to the wishes of outside influences. Baptista's secret marriage to Juliana, though made with consent and love, is denied by law and the couple is forced to separate for many years. Their technically legitimate, highborn daughter is forced to live to adulthood in poverty, completely unaware of her true parentage. The marriage of Cesario and Bianca, made with neither true consent nor true love on behalf of the two parties and yet with the approval of both sets of parents, is pushed through unquestioningly. Just like in *La ilustre fregona*, marriage is a problematic conclusion to the play that suggests nothing more than an uneasy but necessary resolution, and one whose legitimacy cannot, in the course of the play or its conclusion, be definitively determined.

As I mentioned above, rape as sexual assault figures prominently in both *La ilustre fregona* and *La fuerza de la sangre*. Although in both *novelas* there is a marriage as the result of a sexual assault, only in *La fuerza* does rape lead to the marriage of the rapist and his victim. Also, only in *La fuerza* does the sexual assault also include an abduction, thus bringing it more solidly under the jurisdiction of the canonical rather than the secular courts. According to the Council of Trent,

The holy Synod ordains, that no marriage can subsist between the abductor and her who is abducted, so long as she shall remain in the power of the abductor. But if she that has been abducted, being separated from the abductor, and being in a safe and free place, shall consent to have him for her husband, the abductor may have her for his wife; but nevertheless the abductor himself and all who lent him advice, aid, and countenance, shall be ipso jure excommunicated, for ever infamous, and incapable of all dignities; and if they be clerics they shall forfeit their rank. The abductor shall furthermore be bound, whether he marry the person abducted, or marry her not, to settle on her a handsome dowry at the discretion of the judge. (201-202)

Although there is no mention of sexual contact in this brief paragraph, it can be assumed that an abduction would be for some sexual or at least monetary or political purpose (thus why the Council of Trent required monetary compensation — in order to dissuade this course of action). It is unclear whether there were other common reasons for abductions in the early modern period. Sokol and Sokol note that “It is probable that in some cases nominally treated as fornication or bastardy by these courts were really cases of rape” (110); to this I would add abduction as described above, for sexual or other gain.

Rodolfo’s actions fall into the category of “abduction for sexual gain.” In choosing to rape Leocadia, Rodolfo has no thought of marriage — the abduction seems to be more a matter of convenience than anything else. Rather than sexually assaulting her where he finds her, in public, Rodolfo chooses to abduct her and bring her back to his

apartment. Marriage is not brought into the equation until the end of the *novela*, when he is summoned home from Italy by his parents for the purpose of marriage to an unknown person. Once again, as in *La ilustre fregona* and *The Fair Maid of the Inn*, marriage is initiated by the parents and accepted (if not verbally consented to) by the children being married. The translator notes that “Although *The Power of Blood* [*La fuerza de la sangre*] can be read as a comedy, in that it starts in darkness, confusion, and violence, and ends with feasting, marriage, and ‘the happy ever after’ convention, it is not an easy story to understand” (101). As in *La ilustre fregona*, I believe that the “confusion” sensed by Price is not accidental, as suggested by some earlier critics,²⁶ but instead is the result of Cervantes’s subtle critique of the current confused and contradictory positions of rape (as sexual assault), abduction, and marriage in Counter-Reformation Spain.

Unlike in *La ilustre fregona*, there is no *anagnorisis* at the end of this *novela* which would change Leocadia’s status or make her a suitable match for Rodolfo. Although he is not a likable character (indeed he is not present long enough in the narrative for anything but a negative view of his general heartlessness and conceit), it is established early on that he is noble and rich in comparison to Leocadia’s quiet respectability as the daughter of a less wealthy gentleman. As I mentioned above, rape, in this case, is not intended as a precursor to marriage, and in fact Rodolfo leaves the country only a few days later, not to return until seven years have passed in order to meet the wife his parents have chosen for him. Ironically, Cervantes notes that Rodolfo “had had the idea of going to Italy for some time, and his father, who had been there persuaded him to go, saying that *gentlemen could not be gentlemen only in their own country, and it was necessary to show one’s breeding abroad as well*” (113, emphasis mine). One can

²⁶ See J. B. Avallé-Arce and others as referenced in R. M. Price.

only fear for the women in Italy to whom he also “showed his breeding.” Thus Leocadia is left to the care of her family, with whom she eventually gives birth to Rodolfo’s child, Luis.

Interestingly, there is no talk of going after Rodolfo or even of shame in this secret, illegitimate birth. Instead, Cervantes notes that the child’s “charm, beauty and wisdom so enchanted his grandparents that they came to regard the misfortune of their daughter as good fortune, because it had given them such a grandson” (113). Although Leocadia and her parents must conceal Luis’s true parentage, Cervantes seems to portray Leocadia’s contented independence and Luis’s bastardy as nonissues. For a time, at least, marriage does not seem to be a necessary or even possible conclusion to the story — everyone is happy as is.

This is soon disrupted, however, when Luis is severely injured and subsequently rescued, by chance, by Rodolfo’s father. Once Rodolfo’s parents know the truth of Luis’s parentage, they set in motion the marriage between Rodolfo and Leocadia without either their request or explicit consent: Rodolfo’s father “consoled and embraced Leocadia, he kissed his grandson, and . . . ask[ed] their son to return at once, because they had arranged a marriage for him with a very beautiful woman, completely suitable for him. They did not allow Leocadia to return to the house of her parents, who were very happy for the good fortune of their daughter” (119). From this point on, marriage becomes the focal point of the *novela*.

Because of Rodolfo’s family’s superior status, it appears that Leocadia and her family cannot challenge their decisions, and indeed it seems they have no wish to; after all, marriage into such a wealthy, noble family would not have been remotely possible,

had it not been for the rape and resultant child. Thus Cervantes concludes his tale with an unequal marriage — the type of marriage that George Whetstone decries in his *Heptameron*, that is considered impossible in *La ilustre fregona*, and that leads to many negative consequences in *The Duchess of Malfi*. Although the marriage is cast as superficially happy, this conclusion still invites criticism. Cervantes is well aware that such a marriage would have been rare. Rape, and even the fathering of a child out of wedlock, did not make a binding marriage or encourage noblemen to marry those they impregnated. A number of things have to happen in just such a way in order to bring about this conclusion, leading critics such as J. B. Avalle-Arce “[to] regard[] the characters as unlikely and their speeches incredible” (Price 99). However, the lack of verisimilitude in the *novela* is, I believe, purposeful. Marriage becomes the unlooked-for solution to a problem that had, in a way, already reconciled itself, for in presenting rape as a valid, if not endorsed, alternative to marriage, Cervantes subtly suggests a criticism of marriage as a solution to that alternative or to independence in general by making light of both marriage and the preceding rape, which, ultimately, is turned into just another sexual experience. Suzanne Gossett views the rape, particularly in the play versions (*The Queen of Corinth* and *The Spanish Gypsy*, both of which are adapted from Cervantes’s *La fuerza de la sangre*), as “just an unfortunate side effect of that valuable commodity, manliness” (187). She argues that “Rape must still be expiated by marriage, but the unspoken conclusion is that the men have proved their manhood in the process and will be desirable husbands. . . . The ostensible happy ending retains the notion that a woman is marked as the property of a man who has sexual relations with her, but it does not confront her feelings as she enters the marriage” (187). Rape is not always “expiated by

marriage,” as we have seen in the example from *La ilustre fregona* (although, had the lady not died, marriage may have been a possibility in that case as well); however, it is clear that, despite the callousness of the rape, Rodolfo and Leocadia are meant to be seen as having a bond, even though he does not even remember her as the same person: “And at once the beautiful image of Leocadia entered, by his eyes, into his soul and took possession of it, and she . . . seeing so close to her the person she already loved more than the light of her eyes, looking at him now and then, began to go over in her imagination what had happened to her with Rodolfo” (123). There is a certain inevitable level of revulsion raised for twenty-first-century readers in the intimation that Leocadia is reviewing the rape now, not as a horrific experience, but as her first night of pleasure with her soon-to-be husband. Cervantes shows himself to be well aware of the blurred lines in terms of what differentiated abduction from sexual assault and the degree of consent that may have taken place in either or both cases. Leocadia, seeing Rodolfo “only for the first time in daylight” (Price 100), reimagines her experience as something licit, taking place in the light rather than in the dark and forbidding night. Thus their reunion symbolizes a rebirth, a new beginning for them. Rodolfo never recalls the rape in connection with Leocadia, and they are married without any acknowledgment, apology, or forgiveness.

The only thing left to address is the marriage itself, which, unusually, occurs within the *novela* itself: Rodolfo’s mother “told the priest to marry her son to Leocadia at once; he did so, because all this happened in the time when marriages could be performed at the will alone of both the persons concerned, without the just and holy precautions which are required today, and so there was nothing to prevent the marriage” (125). The

accompanying note tells us that “Before the Council of Trent established required preliminaries to a wedding, it was possible for a priest to carry out the ceremony, before witnesses, whenever convenient” (136, note 18). However, as was discussed earlier, given dispensation by the parish priest, this same type of wedding remained perfectly legal *after* the Council of Trent. Doña Estefanía, as part of her plan to reunite Rodolfo and Leocadia, has included “the priest of the parish” (125) in their gathering ostensibly for just this reason, for he is the one person who can choose to dispense with the usual banns and marriage in a church and simply marry them with “two or three witnesses” present. Rather than this being a simple explanation of religious law, therefore, I believe that Cervantes, in including a reference to spousals *per verba de praesenti*, is actually pointing out and making fun of the regulations regarding marriage, which were constantly changing but also constantly resisting that change, thus creating confusion and contradictions. This is made abundantly clear by the subtly mocking tone in which “the just and holy precautions” that were tentatively put forward by the Council of Trent are referenced. If these additional requirements for marriage were so “just and holy,” why does Cervantes not require that these precautions be taken before this marriage goes forth, or simply note that the parish priest has dispensed with them? Since it is the wealthier side of the marriage equation that is pushing for the marriage, there can have been little worry in regard to objection in reaction to the reading of the banns and little worry of consanguinity, since they are from such different social levels. One might argue that it is simply for ease of storytelling — after all, the marriage is “solemnized,” if such a word can be used here, in a single sentence. The *novela* is then concluded with Doña Estefanía’s revelation to Rodolfo of Leocadia’s true identity, celebration of the marriage,

and eager anticipation of “the longed-for hour” in which the “happy couple” re-consummated their marriage and continued their family (127). Rape is thus transformed from an act of violence to an act of marital love, and the couple is described as having “enjoyed many happy years together, with their children and grandchildren; all this being granted by heaven and by the power of the blood which the valiant, noble, and Christian grandfather of Luis saw spilled on the ground” (127). In ending the *novela* in this way, Cervantes is overtly acknowledging the accidental and arbitrary circumstances that lead to the marriage of Rodolfo and Leocadia: for all his nobility, Rodolfo’s father does little more than rescue the hurt boy from the street — everything else is handled by his wife. Had he chosen to leave the boy, however, the marriage would have never taken place — a marriage, we must remember, between a girl and a man whose real name we never actually learn: “This gentleman, then, whose name we shall for a moment conceal for certain reasons, calling him instead Rodolfo . . . ” (103). Why do we never learn Rodolfo’s real name, or the reason for its concealment, when we are (ostensibly) told his parents’ names? The omission of this information furthers the fantasy notion of this marriage, during an indeterminate time when marriage laws were as confused and contradictory as they still were while Cervantes was writing. Thus, in presenting a marriage of unequals as the result of a rape and a chance encounter, between a fairly happily independent single woman and a largely despicable man whose real name we never learn, in a (perhaps) legally binding but likely not thoroughly licit ceremony, Cervantes invites and even encourages a questioning of the contradictions still existent even in post-Council of Trent, Counter-Reformation Spain.

Fletcher's *Queen of Corinth* reflects many of these same themes in his extensive adaptation of *La fuerza*. As I have addressed this play in detail in the previous two chapters, I will focus on the play only as its marriages are influenced by the treatment of marriage in Cervantes's *novela*. At the end of the play, three marriages take place or are at least arranged to take place: that of Beliza and Euphanes, that of Theanor and Merione, and that of the Queen and Agenor. Two other potential marriages referenced in the play are that of Merione to Agenor and Euphanes to the Queen. Although marriage is the problematic conclusion to *La fuerza*, and to *Queen* as well, in *Queen* marriage frames the play and is also involved in much of the interior action as well. Fletcher, I believe, recognized the significance of marriage between rapist and victim and between social inferior and social superior, as well as the significance of marriage as an act of consent of behalf of the couple (in this case *per verba de praesenti*); he also observed Cervantes's emphasis on the contradictory and confusing status of marriage in the *novela*, and thus chose the complex and contradictory state of marriage as the major theme around which to guide his play. Instead of placing all of these important contemporary marital issues on a single couple, however, Fletcher instead chooses to split these issues over multiple character pairings within the play — thus why there are five potential marriages within the play rather than just one.

The first marriage referenced in *Queen* is that of Prince Agenor of Argos and Merione, daughter of the general who until recently had been at war with the Prince on behalf of the Queen. Like the marriage between Leocadia and Rodolfo, this marriage is arranged entirely at the behest of the parents for political purposes in order to reestablish peace between the two nations. In contrast to the quickly completed marriage between

Leocadia and Rodolfo at the end of the *novela*, this is a marriage based upon a *de futuro* spousal contract and is thus waiting on solemnization and consummation to be considered both binding and licit. However, we are immediately made aware of another implied, preexisting *de futuro* contract between Merione and Theanor, son of the Queen of Corinth: Crates in fact refers to “such a [prior] contract, / Which you [the Queen] repenting afterwards, revok’d it” (V.iv, p.485). Although Merione and Theanor love each other, they are compelled by their Queen to put this love aside for the good of Corinth. Theanor, however, is less able to handle this sudden change of fortune than is Merione, and, with Crates egging him on, decides to sexually assault Merione the night before her solemnization. As Gossett has previously pointed out, both works’ fixation on rape (as sexual assault) and marriage and their problematic relationship with one another is indeed a key thematic connection between the two works. Thus the sexual assault in *Queen* is not done out of lust alone but also out of anger and perhaps another even more interesting reason. As I have mentioned above, sexual intercourse during an existing *de futuro* spousal, in both Catholic and Protestant tradition, made that marriage legal and binding. There is the very real possibility, however hidden, that Theanor rapes Merione at least in part in an attempt to make his *de futuro* spousal contract with Merione binding before her *de futuro* spousal with Agenor can be solemnized. The fact that the sex was not consensual and was anonymous could have complicated the legality of such a “marriage,” but the subtle yet real possibility remains that in consummating their prior intentions to marry, Theanor has in fact added the possibility of bigamy should Merione have subsequently decided to go through with her proposed marriage to Agenor.

Like the rape in *La fuerza*, Theanor's anonymous rape of Merione leads not to any initial thought of (public) marriage but instead to a life of singlehood for Merione, who, following the assault, refuses to marry Agenor and, because of her trauma, is allowed out of this her second *de futuro* contract. However, because no child results from the rape, Merione's experience must be made public, which results in a much less happily independent single character than Leocadia. Theanor, who is never far from Corinth or Merione, suffers as well, but in less sympathetic ways. Instead, he acts out until his mother the Queen is so enraged by his behavior that she goes to war with him and eventually almost puts him to death. His resolution to rape Beliza, which results in Merione's consent to be raped by Theanor a second time, also further complicates the role of rape in canonical and secular law. Although Merione's consent in this situation initially appears shocking, given the rules of spousal contracts, she can (in following my earlier train of thought) be seen as attempting to seal permanently her initial marriage to Theanor. During the second rape, their roles are somewhat reversed, despite Theanor's appearing to have all the control in both situations: in consenting to be raped, Merione is in a way concluding and binding the second half of their original *de futuro* contract, for whereas Theanor was aware, during the first rape, that he was raping Merione, while she was unaware of this fact, during the second rape, Merione is aware that she is being raped by Theanor, while Theanor believes he is raping Beliza. In combining these two experiences, we (arguably) have the mutual consent needed to make their earlier *de futuro* spousal contract valid and binding.

If this reading is credible, Fletcher seems to be making explicit some of the dicier ways in which a "normal" marriage might be made in the early modern period — rape,

sadomasochism, and love are all combined here to make a valid marriage between these two twisted individuals. Marriage between Merione and Theanor, between victim and rapist, seems to be the only solution for each of their clearly pervasive mental problems. Although their love is not well evidenced within the play, it seems clear that neither one will be good with anyone else. Despite this eventual resolution, however, such a marriage is still problematic: although neither of them has done particularly well since their initial pre-marriage spousal contract was broken, there is no assurance that they will do any better as a married couple. Marital love in the midst of the rapes and general thoughtlessness in both *La fuerza* and *Queen* seems unlikely to persevere. Fletcher thus builds upon the problematic nature of the marriage between rapist and victim in *La fuerza* in order to interrogate both the legal and religious nature of marriage in the early modern period.

I will next look briefly at the love triangle of Beliza, Euphanes, and the Queen of Corinth. Like Theanor and Merione, Beliza and Euphanes have a prior *de futuro* spousal contract, and also like them, that contract is threatened by the entrance of a third party. Instead of sexual assault, however, the challenge to their relationship comes in the form of the threat of marriage between social unequals: that of the lower-born Euphanes and the Queen. The Queen's much higher status and thus her ability to dictate marriages as she pleases threatens both Beliza's security in her relationship with Euphanes and Corinth's faith in their queen, especially as she had already made one inferior marriage prior to the action of the play, to Theanor's father.

There is a clear parallel between Rodolfo's interest in Leocadia and the Queen's interest in Euphanes — in this case, however, male and female roles are reversed.

Although the Queen does not rape Euphanes, nor is this ever a consideration, the positions of power are clearly inverted in that she, as the most powerful person in Corinth, has the ability to make and/or dissolve proposed marriages as she sees fit. Despite this power, however, she determines not to use it to ruin Beliza's hopes. It is apparent that the Queen loves Euphanes and, as a result, does everything she can to elevate him from his gentlemanly but poor status as a younger brother:

How dost thou, honest lord? . . .
 . . .
 I'll build thee yet,
 The good foundation so pleases me,
 A story or two higher; let dogs bark:
 They are fools that hold them dignified by blood;
 They should be only made great that are good. (III.i., p. 444)

She also declares, in an off-hand manner, her desire to marry him:

Sirrah, I was thinking,
 If I should marry thee, what merry tales
 Our neighbor islands would make of us:
 But let that pass; you have a mistress
 That would forbid our banes [banns]. (III.i., p.444)

By addressing him as “honest lord” upon her first entrance, but “sirrah” in this subsequent speech, she acknowledges the problem of their inequality of rank. Unlike Rodolfo (or Theanor), however, she follows such fleeting thoughts with clear evidence of her self-control in the face of temptation: “Only to try thee this, for, though I love thee [Euphanes], / I can subdue myself; but she that can / Enjoy thee, doth enjoy more than a man” (III.i., p.446). She is an example of one who can experience attraction to someone of unequal status and yet, although she is “anger'd” — arguably both by her attraction and by Euphanes's dedication to another — honor the commitment of even those of lower ranks. She is not only able to resist temptation, she is also able to sacrifice her own

happiness in order to marry Agenor and thus preserve the peace treaty that had, ever since Merione's rape, been hanging in the balance.

The conclusion of this parallel love triangle is interesting, because as a couple the Queen and Euphanes are much more suited for one another than are Theanor and Merione, and yet Theanor and Merione find "happiness" in marriage while the Queen must be "pleas'd that in the night [Beliza] shall enjoy [Euphanes], / And that's sufficient for a wife; the day-time / I will divorce you from her" (V.ii., p.474). This romantic self-sacrifice is similarly more compelling than the respectful but clearly obligatory relationship between Euphanes and Beliza, the latter who had been funding the poverty-stricken Euphanes prior to his elevation by the Queen:

Best lady,
 That I do honour you, and with as much reason
 As ever man did virtue; that I love you,
 Yet look upon you with that reverence
 As holy men behold the sun, the stars,
 The temples, and their gods, they all can witness;
 And *that you have deserv'd this duty from me,*
The life, and means of life, for which I owe you,
Commands me to profess it, since my fortune
Affords no other payment. (I.ii., p.403, emphasis mine)

We are shown earlier in the play that this relationship is seen as similarly obligatory from the outside, when Crates notes that

the whole city speaks it with me;
 . . .
 For you are given out for the provident lady,
 That, not to be unfurnish'd for her pleasures,
 . . .
 Have made choice of an able man, a young man,
 Of an Herculean back, to do you service;
 And one you may command too, that is active,
 And does what you would have him. (I.ii, p.408)

Thus, while Euphanes's and the Queen's dedication to honor and country lead them into marriages based not on love but on obligation, rape has ultimately led both Leocadia and Rodolfo and Merione and Theanor into love matches. I believe that this is purposeful on the part of Fletcher in that he is revealing the complex and contradictory nature of marriage in the early modern period in general and marriage as specifically portrayed by Cervantes in *La fuerza*. Rape and abduction are illegal in the secular and canonical courts respectively and yet they are proven to be an effective way to bring about marriage; marriage without the consent of others outside the relationship is binding at this time, and yet the input of others cannot be discounted lest political or financial repercussions occur; marriage outside a church is at this time binding and yet illicit, effective and yet illegal. The Council of Trent, like the pronouncements and various church books published in Protestant England during the mid-sixteenth century, ultimately changed little and yet influenced much in terms of how marriage was treated in early modern literature. This is exemplified in the last-minute pre-death "marriage" of Merione to Theanor, for, interestingly, it is never made clear *what* exactly constitutes a marriage within the context of this pagan setting. Toward the end of the play, when the Queen has determined first to marry Merione to Theanor and then to put him to death for his supposed assault of Beliza, she says only "Raise up thy weeping eyes, Merione: / With this hand I confirm thy marriage" (V.iv, p.484). In portraying such a simple, indeterminate marriage, Fletcher builds yet again upon Cervantes's treatment of marriage, this time echoing the reflection, in *La fuerza*, on a time when things were simpler and marriage could be enacted in any number of ways, as suitable to the parties involved. Instead of commenting directly on the controversy, however, Fletcher instead chooses to respond to Cervantes's sly

questioning by portraying a marriage that would not have been valid in any context, Catholic or Protestant, medieval or early modern. Marriage, Fletcher suggests, is such a confusing and contradictory topic, one that may be the domain of either the canonical or secular courts depending on the issues at stake, that in order to save Merione from her mournful single state, the Queen as head of the Church can institute it, ultimately, in any way she likes. In a newly Protestant England, one in which the last monarch lived and died a virgin queen, this play suggests that although singlehood is good and noble when inferior marriages are avoided, in the end the person who demands unhappy marriages from her subjects may, in the end, have to accept one for herself as well, for the good of the realm.

At this point I would like to move on to a discussion of Cinthio's "Epitia" *novelle* and its relationship to Shakespeare's *Measure for Measure*, particularly as "Epitia" and *La fuerza de la sangre* both deal with a problematic rape that instigates the action of the novellas, and as *The Queen of Corinth* has clear ties to *Measure for Measure* in terms of its treatment of marriage — particularly in both plays' final scenes. Gossett, attributing (as others have done) *Queen*'s conclusion to Massinger rather than to Fletcher, states that "In the conclusion Massinger tried to fall back on *Measure for Measure* for assistance" (180).²⁷ I agree that the trial scene of *The Queen of Corinth* bears a very strong resemblance to the final scene of Shakespeare's *Measure for Measure*. Fletcher consistently suggests that he is not interested in marriage as a happy ending, and thus, as I discuss above, he ends the play with the announcement of their marriage and the Queen's proposal to the man intended for Merione, a proposal strikingly like the Duke's (though

²⁷ It must be noted that the *Gesta Romanorum* has also been singled out as a source by Herbert F. Schwartz.

the Queen, unlike the Duke, receives a vocalized affirmative response). David Beauregard, in his chapter “Shakespeare on Monastic Life: Nuns and Friars in *Measure for Measure*,” similarly recognizes that “[t]he overall tone [of *Measure for Measure*’s concluding marriages] is markedly less celebratory and more sober than in the romantic comedies” (328). In order to recognize Shakespeare’s complex attitudes toward marriage in both *Measure for Measure* and *Othello*, however, we must first back up and look at his original source material.

Prior to Shakespeare’s *Measure for Measure*, no less than four different versions of the story had been published, and likely more. In addition to the abbreviated version found in Whetstone’s *Heptameron*, there is Whetstone’s long, two-part play, *Promos and Cassandra*, Cinthio’s “Epitia” *novelle*, which is the main focus of the discussion of *Measure for Measure* in this dissertation, and Cinthio’s dramatic version, *Epitia*. Whetstone’s *Heptameron* is made up of “civil discourses” rather than novellas, with moral commentary constantly interrupting the text in brackets. In this version, although Cassandra is given a speech in the beginning, the story is primarily conveyed via the narrator Isabella’s descriptions. Marriage is never offered or even alluded to by Promos, who sleeps with Cassandra and then orders her brother Andrugio’s death anyway. Nevertheless, a kind jailer secretly lets Andrugio go in the middle of the night, with another similar head conveniently taking its place. When Cassandra goes to complain to the king, the king decides to marry Promos to Cassandra and then to execute him. Andrugio, feeling bad for his sister, who has been pleading for her new husband’s life, decides to come forward. Because Andrugio is living, Promos is allowed to live as well,

and the two married couples — Promos and Cassandra and Andrugio and Polina — ostensibly live happily ever after.

Although Whetstone's *Heptameron* is an important source to be familiar with for textual affinity — for example, Shakespeare likely used the name “Isabella” for his Cassandra/Epitia character based upon this version — there is little clear influence from this story on the treatment of marriage in *Measure for Measure*.²⁸ Marriage, in this story, is uncomplicated and serves only to make the ending of the story “happy”: “Madam (quoth Soranso) your good conclusion, [Ruthfull tales, raiseth remorse in the hearers.] hath likewise preserved vs from a great daunger: for had you ended with the sorrow you began, wee had beene all like to haue bene drowned in teares” (114). Although the participants briefly discuss lessons learned, there is no indication that either of these marriages might prove problematic in the future.

In Whetstone's dramatic version, *Promos and Cassandra*, circumstances are slightly changed that make the play a bit more complicated in terms of an analysis of the treatment of marriage and the single state. This time, when marriage is suggested prior to Cassandra's sleeping with Promos, he agrees to marry her and thus sets forth a *de futuro* spousal contract that would have been made binding when “subdued with natural love [she] did agree” to sleep with him (Part II, III.iii, p.121). That no allusion or later commentary is made to this prior contract is most likely due to the strong Protestant bent of Whetstone's writing: although Cassandra is not found to be at fault, they must be taken away and married properly, in a church, before they can be *licitly* and legally wed. Once this official solemnization takes place, Whetstone then seems determined to portray their

²⁸ Oddly, in his largely Catholic interpretation of *Measure for Measure*, “Shakespeare on Monastic Life,” David Beauregard focuses primarily on Whetstone's virulently Protestant text when referring to “the significance of Shakespeare's development of his sources” (313).

relationship as having metamorphosed into the ideal Protestant relationship, no matter how problematic this might seem to his readers/viewers. Cassandra asks of Promos, “Whither goes my good Lord?” to which he responds, “Sweete wife, to dye” (Part II, V.v, p. 122). Immediately following their wedding they are loving to one another and desirous of staying together. When Andrugio reappears, thus saving Promos’s life, Promos asks, “Cassandra, howe shall I discharge thy due?” to which she replies, “I dyd but what a Wyfe shoulde do for you” (Part II, V.v., p. 124). Marriage, being the highest Protestant institution, comes with certain obligations once the vows have been taken, and duty to one’s spouse immediately erases any prior events. Like the earlier discourse in the *Heptameron*, the play remains an extended moral lesson, thoroughly immersed in Protestant rhetoric. While this does not discount the play, it does, however, limit its interpretive possibilities, particularly on the subject of marriage.

Having discussed the other potential source material briefly, I would like to move on to a more in-depth discussion of Cinthio’s “Epitia” *novelle* and its treatment of marriage. For the sake of brevity I will omit a lengthy discussion of his dramatic version, which also would have provided Shakespeare primarily with textual rather than thematic “borrowings.”²⁹ Unlike in Whetstone’s two versions of the story, in Cinthio’s *novelle* Epitia’s brother Vico is guilty of rape and not simply fornication; as in Cervantes’s *novelas*, therefore, rape is once again inextricably intertwined in the tale’s treatment of marriage and singlehood and is responsible for all the subsequent action in the *novelle*.

²⁹ I should note that Naseeb Shaheen, in “Shakespeare’s Knowledge of Italian,” argues that “Shakespeare’s use of an Italian source centres not so much on Cinthio’s ‘Story of Epitia’ in the *Hecatommithi* (although the *Hecatommithi* was his main source for *Othello*), as on his use of Cinthio’s play, *Epitia*” (167). However, I contend that the primarily “verbal similarities” provided by Shaheen suggest that the influence of the play was largely literal rather than thematic, and thus largely inapplicable to the study at hand. As he agrees that Cinthio’s *Hecatommithi* was Shakespeare’s primary source for *Othello*, I see no reason for a difference in this case.

Also as in Cervantes, rape is treated with a curious lack of concern by the other characters in the story. Rape is regarded as something that can be “solved” by marriage, as in Eptia’s initial (second-hand) argument to Juriste in favor of her brother, in which

she went to Juriste and prayed him to have compassion on her brother, because of his youth (he was no more than sixteen years old) which made him deserving of pardon, and because of his inexperience of life, and the violent impulse that Love had in his heart. . . . She claimed that if the law might be alleviated in any case, it should be in offences done for love, especially where the honour of the injured lady remained unharmed, as it would in her brother’s case, who was very willing to make her his wife. (422)

The young lady raped by Vico is not consulted in this plan; instead, it is simply assumed that she would rather be married to her rapist than suffer the indignity of the loss of her virginity as a single woman. Regardless of her role, however (which in both the *novelle* and Shakespeare’s play is minimal), it is Vico’s rape of a virgin that first brings up the question of marriage following such violation. In this first instance marriage is refused in favor of the secular law, which requires death, but in the second case — Juriste’s (at the very least) nonconsensual coupling with Eptia — rape is allowed to end in marriage.

Of all the source versions of this tale, Cinthio’s *novelle* version is the most subjective and legally creative, and thus, in my opinion, the most interesting, particularly as relates to a discussion of marriage and the single state. Soon following Eptia’s initial meeting with Juriste, the subject of marriage arises once again, as Juriste has decided that, like Vico, he also wants to have sex outside of marriage. In attempting to convince Eptia to sleep with him, Juriste says, ““There is no other way, . . . and you should not behave so coyly, for it might easily happen that our first coming-together would result in your becoming my wife”” (424). He then follows this statement by declaring that ““You may well become my wife . . . ”” (424). Juriste is clearly choosing his words wisely here,

and in so doing he reveals his superior knowledge of the rules for binding a marriage in a religious context. He knows that had he said “You will become my wife” or something to that effect, as is done in *Promos and Cassandra*, he would have been planning the binding consummation of a *de futuro* marriage contract; had he said nothing of marriage, as in “Promos and Cassandra,” the purpose and end result(s) of the sexual encounter would have been clearer — that the sex was purely for the purpose of saving her brother and not for marriage as well — but also less enticing to a modest girl. The ambiguity of Juriste’s phrasing here, I believe, sets the tone for the ambiguity, confusion, and contradiction that runs rampant in Shakespeare’s subsequent problem play. The fact that both the *novelle* and the play rely on an adherence to the letter of the law and its relation to justice and mercy separates them from the rest of the texts studied in this chapter, for the endings of each entail not only a search for justice and mercy but, in effect, spousal trials much like those which would have occurred in the early modern period. Each asks the question, “What makes a marriage?” and in neither case are satisfactory answers forthcoming.

Although in his dramatic version Cinthio does allow Vico to escape death and to be reunited with both his victim and his sister, in the *novelle* version Vico is not so lucky. Epitia’s decision to argue for her husband Juriste’s life following their marriage, which was ordered by Emperor Maximian only to save her honor, shows her to be an especially strong and eloquent character; she does not fall into Protestant clichés or silently accept her fate, but instead pursues what she feels is right, even if it might not be the best thing for her personally. Marriage, therefore, in “Epitia,” is far more complex than in the other potential source material. Rather than a noble end or “heaven on earth,” or even a

“second best” to a celibate life, which Epitia (unlike Shakespeare’s Isabella) has never shown an interest in pursuing, it is an arrangement entered into with eyes wide open, neither elevated nor disdained but one that is ultimately secured for utilitarian ends. The *novelle* concludes: “Juriste, realizing the extent of Epitia’s generosity to him, held her ever dear; so that she lived happily with him for the rest of her days” (430). Although this indicates a happy ending, it is a happy ending that has been hard-won, and, because of the day’s theme of “ingratitude” in the larger frame-narrative, we are aware that the marriage, however “happy” it seems, is maintained rather with guilt and gratitude than with love. The ambiguity of Juriste’s original “proposal” still hangs over the end of the *novelle*, encouraging the reader to question the double standard of death for Vico and life for Juriste, and these contradictions carry over into Shakespeare’s *Measure for Measure*.

The problematic nature of marriage is clearly a major theme in Shakespeare’s *Measure for Measure*, and as I argue above, much of this confusion and contradiction inherent in the play can be gleaned from Cinthio’s *novelle*. Building upon both Epitia’s strength and independence as a single woman and Juriste’s knowledge of spousal intricacies, Shakespeare looks at not only the confused and contradictory definitions of marriage presented in Cinthio’s *novelle*, but also at how this relates to the devolving status of sexual and legal independence in early modern England.

As I have argued previously, there is an inverted quality to Shakespeare’s play in relation to Cinthio’s *novelle*: while Epitia grows in eloquence and strength of character over the course of the *novelle*, Isabella is increasingly silenced, bending first to the will of the Duke-as-friar and then, possibly, to the Duke himself. Although Epitia does, in the end, marry Juriste, that the marriage is allowed to take place and continue with Juriste

alive is entirely at her behest. Epitia is the one responsible for her (living) marriage to Juriste, and Cinthio makes Juriste's debt to her clear. Marriage is not merely a sacrifice of her self and her values but rather an affirmation of that self. This does not necessarily make the marriage palatable to Cinthio's readers, however — even the Emperor Maximian does not understand or support her decision and vows to interfere, should she ever have cause for complaint. The contradictions in this ending are evident: the marriage is simultaneously an affirmation of Epitia's increasing independence, strength of character, and magnanimity, and a conscious decision, through marriage, to surrender that power. Shakespeare recognizes this overwhelmingly contradictory treatment of marriage and the single state and their interrelatedness and works this into his *Measure for Measure*.

The primary focus of a discussion of marriage in *Measure for Measure* will of course have to be on the proposed marriage of the Duke to Isabella. There are, however, a number of single, independent characters who, by the end, are destined for married life. At the beginning of the play, the Duke, Isabella, Angelo, Claudio, and Juliet are all single. Lucio and Kate Keepdown are of course also initially single, and it is in fact the early scene with the characters involved in their subplot that focuses the theme of the play squarely on the relationship between marriage and the single state. Lucio, Mistress Overdone, and some gentlemen, while discussing the gossip of the day, hit on two seemingly dissimilar topics: first, that of Claudio's imprisonment for impregnating Juliet out of wedlock, and second, that of the "proclamation . . . / [that a]ll houses [of prostitution] in the suburbs of Vienna must be plucked down" (I.ii.98-99). These brief, bawdy discussions prepare the audience for a core issue of the play, namely the desire to

replace sexual independence and the single state with proper, lawful marriage. Sex out of wedlock, whether it is consensual with intent towards marriage or consensual with intent towards sexual gratification and profit, is equally punishable in Shakespeare's Vienna. Marriage, it seems, is the only acceptable alternative — even for the religious. This second point is emphasized during Lucio's visit to Isabella at her convent in order to inform her of her brother Claudio's troubles. Rather than behaving respectfully, Lucio continues the bawdy tone of the earlier conversation by mocking her choice of sexual independence and singlehood through religious life:

I would not, though 'tis my familiar sin
 With maids to seem the lapwing, and to jest,
 Tongue far from heart, play with all virgins so.
 I hold you as a thing enskied and sainted,
 By your renouncement, an immortal spirit;
 And to be talked with in sincerity,
 As with a saint. (I.iv.31-37)

Even as he mocks her religious vocation, in describing Claudio's inability to marry Juliet as penance for his supposed sin, Lucio is similarly critical of Angelo's rumored frigidity as "a man whose blood / Is very snow-broth one who never feels / The wanton stings and motion of the sense" (I.iv.57-59). In Lucio's opinion, all sexual abstinence is suspect and leads characters into abnormal behavior, regardless of religious motivation. He lives, however, in a society in which sexual freedom is being increasingly curbed. Everyone's sexual status is thus in question: Lucio does not understand marriage but neither does he understand celibacy. His sexual independence and singlehood is the freedom to sleep with and impregnate whom he wants with impunity. His society is mainly that of the bawdy house, but his opinions clearly extend to the general public. In this initial setup, Isabella and Angelo should be on the same side; however, just as Cinthio reveals an

extensive understanding of early modern marriage laws, Shakespeare builds upon the contradictions of these laws, detailing their increasing inflexibility not only in reference to the bond of marriage itself but in the importance of all persons undertaking such a bond.

Through Angelo, Shakespeare reveals a thoroughly Protestant, Puritanical notion: that even the most holy-seeming men have a dangerous sexuality that is just waiting for the right temptation to make it emerge. Angelo is single because he seeks to be overly pure. It seems that we are meant to see Angelo's strict adherence to the letter of the law as an extreme that is ultimately untenable. In a Protestant world, it is clear that no one is or can remain free of impure thoughts. His resistance to marrying his original betrothed, for whatever reason, is a resistance to the natural order, despite Cook's correct assertion that "[w]hen the loss of Mariana's dowry at sea leads Angelo to break their *de futuro* spousal agreement, he is squarely within his legal rights to refuse a bride when the provisions of the prenuptial contract have not been fulfilled" (213). It is only natural, therefore, that his "disgusting" lust should reveal itself in an unlawful way, since he has refused the only lawful and acceptable way of confining his inevitable sexual desires. Once Angelo has satisfied his sexual desires with someone, he is once again willing to turn his back on marriage and on mercy and to continue in his old ways.

Contrasting this image is Isabella. Nowhere in the play do we get the impression that she would break her vows as a nun or that she is at all inclined toward sins of the flesh. She is disgusted by Angelo's propositions and would rather her brother be killed than lose her maidenhead. In her lack of mercy for her own brother, however, Isabella is showing herself to be just as unmerciful as Angelo, who refuses to do anything but

uphold the letter of the law when it comes to Claudio's punishment. They are both unmerciful and need to temper their fervor (for religion, for the law) with merciful judgment.

Lucio, of course, is behaving improperly when it comes to sexual relations because he is a man who remains single while sleeping with prostitutes rather than with a properly wed wife. According to Mistress Overdone, Lucio has himself impregnated a woman whom he swore to wed: "Mistress Kate Keepdown was with child by him in the duke's time; he promised her marriage: his child is a year and a quarter old" (III.ii). He has since refused to marry her and she, under the Duke's rule, seemingly had no recourse to the law. Oddly enough, the only persons in this play moving toward the logical solution to the problem of lust are Claudio and Juliet. Although they do sleep together before marriage, they are engaged "upon a true contract" (I.ii) and were waiting "Only for propagation of a dower / Remaining in the coffer of her friends, / From whom we thought it meet to hide our love / Till time had made them for us" (I.ii). This statement, in a way, questions the different methods of marriage available at the time. Could this have counted as a clandestine marriage, only waiting for a public marriage when the monetary situation righted itself? Most likely, yes. Because these two young people came together with the express intention of getting married, they are perhaps the only example within the play of characters doing the right thing in both Protestant and Catholic thought.

The end of the play, therefore, seems to attempt to resolve some of these outstanding sexual and marital issues. Because Claudio is alive, he is allowed to marry Juliet. Lucio, very much against his will, is married to the prostitute he impregnated, Mistress Keepdown. Angelo is married to his former betrothed, Mariana. Technically, all

of these couples are already married due to consummation of a *de futuro* contract, but the marriages are now publicly recognized and *licit*. Nearly all of the problems of the play seem to be solved. With everyone married, the conclusion is that marriage provides an outlet, and a proper one, for sexual desire. It is also clear, however, that this ending is meant to be seen as problematic. Lucio's forced marriage to Mistress Keepdown is nothing more than a punishment — definitely not, for either, a mutually consented to heaven on earth. Marriage may bind him to Kate Keepdown enough to encourage him to pay for the upkeep of his child, but there is little doubt that Lucio will keep to his former habits and will keep his sexual independence.

This brings us to the very end of the play. The only single persons left are Isabella and the Duke, and the Duke solves this by proposing to Isabella in the closing lines of the play. All Isabella has desired throughout the play is a religious life; how, therefore, is a marriage to the Duke a solution for her, or for the Duke? Unlike in "Epitia," in which Epitia is a strong, well-educated, independent woman, in Shakespeare's *Measure for Measure* Isabella's one true desire is to be a nun in strict confinement. However different these may initially appear, both women seek to be in complete control of their sexual choices. In Isabella's case, however, her decision is blasted at the end through the Duke's rather disturbing, and unanswered, proposal of marriage — a twist that, I argue, parallels Cinthio's decision (in his *novelle* version) to have his title character, Epitia, argue for the life of her new husband (the same one who just ordered, and had carried out, the murder of her brother) and thus avoid returning to the single state. While Epitia's decision further emphasizes her independence and strength, however, Isabella's silence at the end of *Measure for Measure* is indicative of her increasing weakness and lack of independence

as a single woman. Marriage, Shakespeare echoes from Cinthio, is a complex and contradictory state that is not necessarily negative (which we see through the marriage of Claudio and Juliet), but neither is it wholly positive. Marotti, in his chapter “Shakespeare and Catholicism,” suggests a parallel in the proposal of the Duke’s proposal to Isabella (still both in their religious weeds) to Martin Luther’s marriage to a former nun: Regardless of “[w]hether or not the spectators would have [recognized this potential] allusion . . . they would certainly have found it difficult to see the scene either as a celebration of marriage in the manner of romantic comedies or as an endorsement of clerical religious celibacy” (229). Similarly, Beauregard argues that this conclusion is “a calculated ambiguity [that] would have done double service by not offending Catholics in the audience and by pleasing Protestants with an ending implying marriage” (330). Regardless of religious affinity, however, the negation of two (at least superficially for the Duke) religious callings in favor of a marriage that at least one is clearly opposed to on religious grounds is problematic even for a Protestant audience, who like the Catholics among and before them acknowledged consent as the primary necessity for a marriage to be valid. By leaving the ending of the play open, Shakespeare builds upon the complex representation of marriage in Cinthio’s *novelle* in order to further, and perhaps more controversially, interrogate the question of what makes a marriage.

Up until this point I have been discussing marriage as it functions in the early modern novella and Jacobean drama mainly as a problematic *conclusion* to the tales. I would like to end this final chapter with a novella-play grouping that *begins* rather than *concludes* with marriage: Cinthio’s “Moor” *novelle* and Shakespeare’s *Othello*. Marriage

is of course, in both Cinthio's and Shakespeare's versions of the "Moor" story, the metaphoric center around which the entire plot revolves. It is the marriage of Desdemona (Desdemona) and the Moor (Othello) that sets the plot in motion and that ultimately is seen as, at the very least, an indirect cause of the story's tragic ending. Marriage, in both incarnations of this tale, is more than a "problematic solution" to the curbing of sexual urges or female independence — it is the problem itself, for, as I mentioned above, both stories of the Moor begin, rather than end, with a marriage. By making this interesting alteration, Cinthio can continue the story of "Epitia" discussed above by exploring a problematic marriage such as the one between Epitia and Juriste that only begins at the end of that *novelle*. Although rape is not explicitly explored in the "Moor" tale as it is in "Epitia," the lines between rape and abduction in early modern Europe were still very blurred, as were the lines between abduction and clandestine marriage. Cinthio, by avoiding entirely the manner in which this unapproved but legally binding marriage takes place between Desdemona and the Moor, reminds his readers of these confused boundaries, which are subsequently built upon by Shakespeare in his extended public explication of how exactly the marriage takes place (off-stage as well) in his *Othello*. William Kerrigan emphasizes this point in *Othello*, noting that "[i]f anything significant is denied to a curious audience in the first act of the tragedy, it is the vows of Othello and Desdemona. They triumph before the Venetian Senate without repeating them or giving any specifics about the form or circumstance of their spousals" (154). In addition, by having the story revolve around three married couples, with no single characters, Cinthio suggests that even the most "companionate" marriage — that of Desdemona and the Moor — cannot solve problems of marital strife, jealousy, sexual passion, and infidelity.

Instead, the increasingly indissoluble nature of marriage, even among those of high birth, leads to situations in which the only way to escape is through murder and death.

It is common to see the marriage of Desdemona and Othello as a marriage of unequals gone wrong in critical texts discussing Shakespeare's *Othello*: race, religion, status in Venice, all of these differences between the two principal characters have been pointed out and discussed in detail. Thus there might seem to be an initial similarity between this marriage and the Duchess's marriage to Antonio in both Painter's and Webster's versions of that tale. However, the first thing we notice when comparing these two clandestine unions, both of which occur at the beginning rather than at the end of their respective tales, is that there is no specific problem that the marriage of Desdemona (Desdemona) and the Moor (Othello) is solving or that it seeks to solve — at least not explicitly or consciously. While the marriage of the Duchess and Antonio seeks to solve the problem, among others, of the Duchess's desire for companionship and marriage and her lack of suitable options, in Cinthio's version of the "Moor" story in his *Hecatommithi*, both Desdemona and the Moor are of similarly high rank in Venice and thus they do not have this barrier to cross in joining together. Race, which comes up again and again in criticism of *Othello*, is not explicitly emphasized in the beginning of the *novelle* as an impediment to the marriage. The only hint we get that the marriage is less than ideal to those around them is when the narrator states that "their affection was so mutual that, *although the parents of the lady strove all they could to induce her to take another husband*, she consented to marry the Moor;" (135, emphasis mine). In utilizing this specific phrasing, Cinthio emphasizes the most important element in any marriage during the early modern period, whether Catholic or Protestant — consent of the

marrying parties through the mutuality or equality of their feelings for one another. Their marriage, while not approved by Disdemona's family, is clearly tolerated and, based on the loving consent of Disdemona and the Moor, unstoppable and, unlike that of the Duchess and Antonio, fundamentally acceptable.

In this way the marriage is more comparable in scope to that of Cinthio's Epitia and Juriste. In that case, the Emperor's initial resistance to the marriage takes the place of the resistance of Disdemona's family; although there is disapproval in both cases, and there is, at the very least, inequality of character between Epitia and Juriste, Epitia responds to her new husband's loving gratitude toward her for sparing him and responds, as does the Moor to Disdemona's love and admiration, with love in return. While we are told that "[Epitia] lived happily with [Juriste] for the rest of her days" (430), however, we remain skeptical, as I detailed above. Despite the order of the two *novelles* in the *Hecatommithi* (in which the "Moor" tale appears well before that of "Epitia"), I believe that Cinthio's skepticism regarding such a marriage is carried over into his story of an actual marriage that is similarly based on love and gratitude amidst outside criticism. Although the characters themselves are very different, the two *novelles* can be seen as separate snapshots in time: marriage as a problematic solution, and marriage as inherently problematic.

Cinthio's narrator shows that Disdemona (as in *Othello*) has fallen in love with the Moor first: "a virtuous lady of marvelous beauty, named Disdemona, fell in love with the Moor, moved thereto by his valor; and he, vanquished by the beauty and the noble character of Disdemona, returned her love" (134-135). Because it is clear in the *novelle*, unlike in the play, that a significant amount of time passes before the Moor is sent to

Cyprus (“and they lived in such harmony and peace in Venice that no word ever passed between them that was not affectionate and kind” [135]), it can also be much more easily assumed that the marriage, in the *novelle* if not in the play, is consummated. Thus Disdemona and the Moor, in Cinthio’s *novelle*, are shown to have a satisfactory relationship with one another. They are close enough that Disdemona can tell when her husband is upset, and when the Moor receives his appointment to Cyprus, she “. . . longed to accompany him to so honorable a post. And all the more it vexed her to see the Moor so troubled; and not knowing what could be the reason, one day, when they were at dinner, she said to him, ‘How is it, O Moor, that when so honorable a post has been conferred on you by the Signoria, you are thus melancholy?’” (135).

It is also apparent, however, that the Moor is hesitant to share his problems with his young wife. Rather than discussing his worries regarding his new appointment, Disdemona is forced to “read” him and to question him directly in order to learn the source of the “melancholy” that he has been carrying around for, apparently, quite some time. From the beginning of the *novelle*, therefore, we can see that the narrator is providing foreshadowing of what is to come, first by having the Moor stay silent as to his concerns for Disdemona and the voyage to Cyprus, and then immediately after, in his response to her claim that she would rather be with him regardless of the danger: “I will accompany you whitherso’er you go, were it to pass through fire, as now to cross the water in a safe and well-provided ship; if indeed there are toils and perils to encounter, I will share them with you” (136). His response is such that implies that he is already nervous that the relationship will sour: “The Moor, in the fullness of his joy, threw his arms around his wife’s neck, and with an affectionate and tender kiss exclaimed, ‘God

keep you long in such love, dear wife!” (136). There is more than a hint of relief in this response, and he even dashes off immediately afterwards for the ship, as if he is worried that she will change her mind.

Unlike in Shakespeare’s *Othello*, in the *novelle* there are many more hints that indicate that the Moor is indeed the jealous type. There is therefore a greater disparity in character between the Moor and his wife. He is prone to jealousy, insecurity, and irrationality, while she takes only the route of selflessness (which perhaps aids in her downfall). What matters even more, however, is not their own characters but how each sees the other. The Moor, I think incorrectly, sees Desdemona as a fragile woman in spite of her bold offer to “pass through fire” with him if necessary. Desdemona, on the other hand, sees her husband as a daring and adventurous man and, although a Moor and thus of a “hot . . . nature,” as ultimately a loving and supportive husband and, strangely enough, “the most lighthearted man in the world” (141). The Moor’s idealized vision of Desdemona assists him in believing the Ensign’s lies as to Desdemona’s infidelity, as he is judging her from a place of perfection which she in fact never inhabited. Once this ideal is shattered by the Ensign’s mention of her “aversion to [his] blackness” (138), he begins to wonder if his idealized vision of Desdemona is not wrong in every instance. Similarly, Desdemona’s consistently positive view of her husband (which coexists problematically with her assumptions about his stereotypical characteristics as a “Moor”) allows her to deny clear evidence of negative traits and behavior. Even as his treatment of her becomes increasingly poor and suspicious, and even though, despite her stated opinions, he has been withdrawn and melancholy for most of the tale, Desdemona clings to her artificial ideal until her death.

The ongoing controversy as to what makes a marriage during this time is of course an issue that must be discussed in regard to this marriage. Cinthio adds another layer to this controversy — the fact that the Moor is a Moor and thus was ostensibly born a Muslim. Interestingly, however, this facet of his “otherness” rarely comes into play, at least overtly, in the *novelle*. Cinthio’s narrator emphasizes that when they “made a change in the troops whom they used to maintain in Cyprus, . . . they appointed the Moor commander of the soldiers whom they dispatched thither. Joyful . . . was the Moor at the honor proffered him, such dignity being only conferred on men of noble rank and well-tried faith, and who had displayed bravery in arms” (135). Since we are told in the first sentence that he has “given proofs in war of great skill and prudence” (134), we are left only to wonder whether the Moor is happy that he received this promotion *because* of his “well-tried faith” (in addition to his bravery and nobility) or *in spite of his lack* of well-tried faith. Venice being somewhat of a melting pot of different faiths and ethnicities, this reason for his elevation might have been more easily dispensed with in Venice than in other places. This brief emphasis on “faith,” however, has deeper implications than whether or not the Moor has become a Christian, for the very word would necessarily bring to mind the ongoing controversy of the Protestant belief via faith and Catholic doctrine, which was seen to rely more on visual signs. Diehl, in discussing Shakespeare’s *Othello*, argues that

Rather than simply affirm[ing] Protestant teaching, it [*Othello*] dramatizes a resistance to the notion that faith can be sustained in the absence of visible proof, for it constructs the doubting Othello as tragic in his misperceptions and all too human in his desire for certain knowledge. Othello’s demand for ocular proof is, I suggest, a typical response to the renewed emphasis in reform culture on faith. (137)

The basis of this argument is clearly found here, in Cinthio's *novelle*, in which the Moor's "faith" is neither clear nor "well-trying," and in which "faith" is never clearly defined as having to do with religion. The confusion of "faith" as interpreted by Catholicism and Protestantism respectively is thus extended, in the *novelle*, to include faith in others — most significantly, faith in one's spouse, but also faith in one's choices and in the recommendations of one's parents and friends. The marriage between Disdemona and the Moor, shown as a somewhat triumphant love-match at the beginning of the story, is thus quickly revealed to be as mired in contradictions as the others in this study. A love-match, which in "Duchess" falls apart as a result of overt external pressures (put in motion, of course, by the Duchess's marriage to Antonio in the first place), is thus revealed in Cinthio's *novelle* to be in just as much danger from the actions and beliefs of those within the relationship. As Theodore Levin notes, "It is the Duchess who sends Antonio away and it is Antonio who keeps departing (as do Macbeth, Othello, and Antony). We do not really need a snake in the garden — a Ferdinand or a Bosola (an Iago, a Caesar) — to break up such a marriage: the husband and wife induce their own interruptions and collaborate in them" (254). Thus, Cinthio, like Painter and Cervantes, once again reveals marriage to be complex, contradictory, and problematic, even when love and consent are both involved.

Before moving on to a comparison with Shakespeare's *Othello*, I would like to briefly mention the other marriages in Cinthio's tale: that of the Ensign (the Iago figure) and, to a lesser extent, that of the Captain (the Cassio figure). Like the Moor, the Ensign is also a foreigner married to a native Venetian, although we are never told what his "own country" (146) actually is. Also like the Moor and Disdemona, it is apparent that the

Ensign and his wife have been married for some time, since they have a three-year-old daughter. This marriage is clearly not a happy one, however, since “[t]he Ensign’s wife . . . knew the whole truth (her husband wishing to make use of her to compass the death of Disdemona), [and though] she could never consent to such a project, dared not, from fear of her husband, disclose a single circumstance” (142). We are never told anything of the beginning of this marriage, so we have no way of knowing if it began a happy one (although it seems unlikely). Rather, her fear of her husband, coupled with the Ensign’s ability to “[fall] passionately in love with Disdemona” (136), suggests a complex and troubled relationship that neither solves the problem of human sexuality nor provides the “companionate” side of marriage. However, interestingly, the tale ends by revealing that “all these events were narrated by the Ensign’s wife, who was privy to the whole, after his death, as I have told them here” (146). Despite the seemingly unhappy nature of their marriage, by keeping quiet she is able to stay alive, while Disdemona, in all her innocence and oblivion, is put to death before she can even conceive a child. The Ensign’s wife knows all and yet says nothing, while the unknowing Disdemona knows nothing and yet continues to speak. And while the Ensign’s wife in *Othello* stays silent as to her husband’s actions only until she realizes what he has done, her inability to keep silent on this point means that in Shakespeare she, like Desdemonia, does not live to tell the tale.

At first the marriage of the Captain to his wife seems more idyllic, but we quickly learn that they, too, have their problems. On one page we learn that he “had a wife at home who worked the most marvelous embroidery upon lawn” (142) — a very domestic picture — and on the next page we see that the Ensign, planning to murder the Captain,

“ . . . met the Captain on his way to visit a courtesan” (143). Marriage, therefore, as we can see, is imperfect in all three relationships in the *novelle*. Desdemona and the Moor marry for love but against the advice of her parents, and ultimately the Moor allows himself to be led into jealousy by the Ensign and, unknowingly, allows that man to act out his unfulfilled passions by killing her, in front of her husband, with his permission. The Ensign and his wife marry for unknown reasons and have enough of a relationship to have a child together, but it is evident from the beginning that the Ensign is not invested in the marriage and seeks love and lust outside what he can get from his lawfully wedded spouse. The marriage of the Captain and his wife seems to be a very ordinary one at the outset, but he is also seeing a courtesan (the source of his confusing marital status in *Othello*). So while the Ensign *attempts* to be unfaithful to his wife but is unsuccessful, the Captain is successful, and the Moor, although he has no desire to be unfaithful, unwittingly creates unfaithfulness in his own relationship. Marriage thus provides no happy ending for any of the characters in the *novelle*. Rather than a solution to singlehood and celibacy, marriage becomes something that, if one is as lucky as the Ensign’s wife, one might just outlive.

As is probably apparent from this brief look at marriage in Cinthio’s *novelle*, there are many similarities between Cinthio’s tale and Shakespeare’s *Othello*. In this section I will focus mainly on the marriage of Desdemona and Othello, while also discussing the marriage of Iago and Emilia and these couples’ relationships to one another. I will then discuss specifically how Shakespeare utilizes his source material to expose further the complex and problematic nature of marriage as a solution to singlehood and independence.

In Cinthio's tale, the Moor is first the husband of Desdemona and second a noble and decorated war hero of Venice. The marriage is the first subject of discussion, while his involvement in Venice's military (and with Venice's military personnel) eventually and fatally interferes in their relationship. In Shakespeare's play, on the other hand, Othello is first and foremost a warrior. This is emphasized by the opening scene, in which Shakespeare first identifies Iago and Cassio's roles in relation to Othello (Iago feels he has been slighted in being named only ensign, while Cassio has been named Othello's lieutenant) before getting to what is supposedly Iago and Roderigo's primary purpose: to inform Brabantio that his daughter Desdemona has eloped with Othello. We also learn early on that (unlike in the *novelle*) Othello has already, prior to his marriage to Desdemona, been offered and has accepted the job of leading troops to Cyprus. In this warlike atmosphere, love and marriage are things to be apologized for rather than embraced and cherished:

. . . For know, Iago,
 But that I love the gentle Desdemona,
 I would not my unhousèd free condition
 Put into circumscription and confine
 For the seas' worth. (I.ii.23-27)

Othello approaches the confrontation with Desdemona's father in much the same way that he handles military situations, with action rather than long-winded eloquence: "Let [Brabantio] do his spite. / My services which I have done the Signiory / Shall out-tongue his complaints" (I.ii.16-18). He is first confident of his worth to the Venetian people; only then is he confident of the love between himself and Desdemona.

By placing military before marital concerns at the outset of the play, however, Shakespeare does not necessarily suggest that the former are primary to his story. The

play's primary focus on the complex nature of marriage as a problematic solution, particularly in reference to Othello's role as a married man, is clearly suggested in the speech of the First Senator to the Duke of Venice, who argues that they should not be deceived into thinking their enemies, the Turks, are headed to Rhodes rather than to the much more important Cyprus:

We must not think the Turk is so unskillful
To leave that latest which concerns him first,
Neglecting an attempt of ease and gain
To wake and wage a danger profitless. (I.iii.27-30)

This statement applies as much to Othello as it does to Venice's enemy, the Turkish army: it at once questions Othello's ability to balance his dedication to Venice with his love for Desdemona and foreshadows his ultimate decision to destroy both his career and his marriage through the "profitless" decision to believe Iago and murder his wife. Othello, unlike Venice's (and his) much more capable handling of military matter, is deceived by false information meant to mislead him, and this leads to his eventual, and completely unnecessary, self-destruction.

Although marriage is the primary focus of *Othello*, however, a key element of this focus is how Othello's status as a warrior affects his interpretation of love and marriage. In the *novelle*, we are shown an inner conflict within the Moor in terms of how to divide his heart and his duty: "Joyful as was the Moor at the honor proffered him . . . yet his pleasure was lessened when he reflected on the length and the dangers of the voyage, fearing that Desdemona would be pained at his absence" (135). Shakespeare turns this inner conflict into a public discussion before the principal men of Venice, removing all sense of an extended private life between Othello and Desdemona. According to the pacing of the play, Othello and Desdemona have had no time alone since their wedding,

and so must simultaneously defend their decision to wed and make their future plans in front of a war council. Again, Othello feels a need to defend his decisions surrounding Desdemona, not only to marry her but to have her with him in Cyprus:

Vouch with me, heaven, I therefore beg it not
 To please the palate of my appetite,
 Nor to comply with heat — the young affects
 In me defunct — and proper satisfaction;
 But to be free and bounteous to her mind;
 And heaven defend your good souls that you think
 I will your serious and great business scant
 When she is with me. (I.iii.256-263)

Interestingly, the Duke tries to relocate such discourse to the private sphere — “Be it as you shall privately determine, / Either for her stay or going” (I.iii.270-271) — and yet Othello stays stubbornly on stage with the Duke, deciding publicly that she will go with Iago as her guide. It is only once the war plans are completed that he is able to spend some time, off stage, alone with his wife: “Come, Desdemona. I have but an hour / Of love, of worldly matter, and direction / To spend with thee. We must obey the time” (I.iii.293-295). Thus their marriage, while founded on love as in the *novelle*, is much more subject to war and the constraints of time. While he is well spoken, his words are not “affectionate and kind” (135) as in Cinthio’s tale; instead, he appears merely to fit love and marriage (along with “worldly matter, and direction”) into a tight wartime schedule. In both the *novelle* and the play we are initially given much more of Othello’s public persona than of his inner thought process; however, Shakespeare builds upon the Moor’s depiction in the *novelle* in order to create a character for whom marriage is a concession to love rather than a submitting to it. The basis of this can be found in Cinthio’s suggestion that the Moor does not merely “fall in love” with Desdemona but is instead “vanquished by the beauty and the noble character of Desdemona” (135). Love is not

something the Moor submits to but something he is defeated by, and therefore he must, as an honorable man, concede to it in marriage. Shakespeare acknowledges this by suggesting repeatedly that, had Desdemona not fallen in love with him and vice versa, Othello would have preferred never to wed. As Hopkins notes, “It is certainly quite clear that Othello does not unequivocally embrace the married state” (149). He continually argues that his marital state will not affect his person or his martial abilities for Venice. It is this determination that Iago seeks to undermine in the play — the idea that Othello can have both love and military honor.

The marriage of Desdemona and Othello continues to be a public spectacle when both arrive safely in Cyprus, to a battle that has already won itself. Their love has, according to Othello, already reached its peak: “If it were now to die, / ‘Twere now to be most happy;” (II.i.187-188). Although Othello agrees with Desdemona’s rebuttal that “[t]he heavens forbid / But that our loves and comforts should increase / Even as the days do grow” (II.i.191-193), their marriage — set to be consummated that night but inevitably interrupted by Cassio’s drunken quarrel — is shown to be problematic from the beginning, as they both have much different visions of how marriage should be. This quickly becomes evident as the marriage moves from the more public spectacle of Venice and war to the more private everyday life involving only Desdemona, Othello, and their close friends Iago and Emilia.

Cassio’s drunken fight roughly divides the play, from the public sphere mentioned above to the private domestic sphere inhabited by the four principal characters. It is shortly after Cassio’s dismissal that Iago begins to lead Othello to believe that Cassio and Desdemona are having an affair. Most of these later scenes, interestingly, are *about* the

marriage of Desdemona and Othello but involve only Iago and Othello. Kerrigan notes that, while we never see the marriage vows of Othello and Desdemona, we *do* in fact see a formal promise ceremony between Othello and Iago: “The absence of detail about marriage vows gives a sinister emphasis to the vows we actually witness at the pivotal moment of the tragedy [between Iago and Othello]” (162), which are made on their knees in the present tense, just like a *per verba de praesenti* spousal. These vows appear much more binding than the invisible marriage vows, for soon following this exchange Othello believes thoroughly that Desdemona and Cassio are having an affair and is unable to control his temper around her, even hitting her before a visitor, Lodovico (IV.i.240). He once again proves that he is first and foremost a soldier by declaring that he could have endured physical torture much more readily than being cuckolded (IV.ii.46-63). Although he married Desdemona for love, the marriage becomes problematic when he realizes, not that the marriage is not working privately (for he seems to have no problem evading alone time with his wife), but that the marriage has become something that will hurt him publicly. As Hopkins argues, “marriage in Shakespeare is above all a social relationship as well as a personal one, and where the social infrastructure is lacking the personal interaction is simply not enough to sustain the bond” (158). Othello, who has never thoroughly embraced a personal, companionate relationship with his wife, reverts to acting as though he were once again a single man, embracing military life and eschewing the partnership he had so recently defended in favor of a new vow to Iago, to whom he declares:

. . . my bloody thoughts, with violent pace
 Shall nev’r look back, nev’r ebb to humble love,
 Till that a capable and wide revenge
 Swallow them up. [*He kneels.*] Now, by yond marble heaven,

In the due reverence of a sacred vow
I here engage my words. (III.iii.454-450)

Desdemona is thereby replaced with his promise to Iago to revenge the “relationship” of Cassio and Desdemona; and, in turn, Iago’s wife Emilia has been (or continues to be) put aside in favor of Iago’s vow of revenge against Othello.

The marital relationship of Iago and Emilia is a complicated one. Although Cinthio’s *novelle* is supposedly narrated by a frame narrative character who had heard the story directly from the Ensign’s wife, we know little of her, and out of fear of her husband she never speaks in the narrative. In the play Iago several times suggests that he himself is a jealous husband, suspecting first Othello and then Cassio with his wife; however, in the same monologue he also suspects that Cassio, and even he himself, might also be in love with Desdemona (II.i.281-312). We do not see Iago and Emilia together until the final scene, but it is clear that Iago is not hesitant to involve Emilia in his schemes, nor does he doubt his ability to control her. Once he tells Cassio to appeal to Desdemona rather than to Othello for his restoration, he says, “My wife must move for Cassio to her mistress; / I’ll set her on;” (II.iii.383-384). It is also evident that following this episode Emilia believes entirely in the good motives of her husband and seeks to further his plan: “I warrant it grieves my husband / As if the cause were his” (III.iii.3-4). When Othello causes Desdemona to drop her handkerchief, Emilia takes it to make a copy without being in the least bit curious as to why Iago has wanted it for so long:

I am glad I have found this napkin;
This was her first remembrance from the Moor.
My wayward husband hath a hundred times
Woody me to steal it; but she so loves the token
(For he conjured her she should ever keep it)
That she reserves it evermore about her
To kiss and talk to. I’ll have the work ta’en out
And give’t to Iago. What he will do with it,

Heaven knows, not I; I nothing but to please his fantasy. (III.iii.289-297)

When she tries to discover why he needs it, he refuses and she does not push the issue. She even lies to Desdemona when she asks where it could be (III.iv.23). However, despite these acts of loyalty toward her husband, it is clear that she is unwilling to go along with anything that consciously appears to hurt another. Thus, when Othello questions Emilia regarding a possible affair, Emilia denies it adamantly (IV.ii.1-18), and when she discovers the lies her husband has been telling Othello, which result in Desdemona's death, she shouts the truth even as Iago kills her. She is gullible in so easily believing her husband and even Othello, when he does not at first admit to killing Desdemona, but, unlike the Ensign's wife, she is willing to risk her life in order to expose her husband's actions.

Iago, however, is of course much less comprehensible. The question of Iago's motivations is a path well traveled, so I will not say much on this subject but to point out the connections between the *novelle* and Shakespeare's play. In both texts, the Ensign/Iago is portrayed as inherently evil. However, in the *novelle* the Ensign's specific actions toward the Moor, the Captain, and Desdemona are explicitly said to stem from his unrequited love for Desdemona, which in his disappointment he mistakenly attributes to the Captain rather than to her husband the Moor: "Now the wicked Ensign, regardless of the faith that he had pledged his wife, no less than of the friendship, fidelity, and obligation he owed the Moor, fell passionately in love with Desdemona" (136). This statement not only explains the Ensign's motivation in attempting to destroy the Moor's marriage, but it also highlights his willingness to break his own wedding vows. When he fails and decides, falsely, that "Desdemona loved the Captain of the troop" (137), he

includes a third marriage in his fatal plans. Karina Feliciano Attar, in her 2011 “Genealogy of a Character: A Reading of Giraldi’s Moor,” argues successfully that “the narrative puts us on guard against those that are closest to us, most like ourselves, even those who bear our ‘standards,’ those who are the guardians of our own identities” (62). The Ensign is the Moor’s “standard bearer”; yet, instead of guarding the Moor’s identity, he destroys it by attacking it at its major point of weakness: his marriage to Desdemona. In *Othello*, Iago is similarly attuned to the precarious nature of Othello’s marriage in relation to his larger identity; however, he shuns love, and it is difficult to imagine him ever falling in love with Desdemona. When Roderigo threatens to kill himself after Desdemona’s marriage to Othello is not overturned, Iago says, “Ere I would say I would drown myself for the love of a guinea hen, I would change my humanity with a baboon” (I.iii.309-311). He instead encourages Roderigo to cuckold Othello while at the same time suggesting that Othello himself has cuckolded Iago. This suggestion is not significant to Iago, but the “suspicion” (I.iii.380) is a good enough excuse for him to act against Othello (although he has already given other explanations). Marriage, whether its promise, its existence, or its destruction, for Iago is merely a vehicle through which to attain his evil goals. Iago uses lust, infidelity, and jealousy to reveal the problematic nature of such a solution for human sexuality.

Ultimately, Shakespeare takes Cinthio’s depiction of an illicit but valid marriage between a Moor and a Venetian woman and builds upon it to create a more controversial and complex vision of marriage as inherently problematic. Its problematic nature is emphasized by the fact that we are never explicitly shown exactly how the marriage is made. While Cinthio allows for an initial genuine, private happiness between Desdemona

and the Moor, Shakespeare never allows a private intimacy to grow between Othello and Desdemona. As Hopkins notes, “[Shakespeare’s] use of the marriage motif is driven by a similar awareness of both its usefulness as social glue and its arbitrariness and psychological cost, and that he subjects the workings of the microcosm to precisely the same kinds of examination as he does to those of the macrocosm” (9). Shakespeare here builds upon a *novelle* primarily about the private sphere of marriage, though with a strong militaristic basis, and moves it to the public sphere of international war and military prowess. While jealousy in both cases proves the marriage’s undoing, it is the public effect on his single state that ultimately, in Othello’s case, drives him to murder and suicide.

Having looked once more at the intertextual connections between a number of early modern novellas and Jacobean plays, I hope that this final chapter on the complex representations of marriage and the single state as they are expressed and interpreted and built upon in history, the early modern novella, and the novellas’ counterparts in Jacobean drama has provided a final glimpse into the importance of these novellas, both in the formation of modern canonical literature and as literature in their own right. Through my three thematic divisions within this dissertation — interiority versus performativity/theatricality, passion versus reason, and marriage versus the single state — I have sought to reveal the vastly different ways in which the early modern novella has influenced and even fundamentally altered the creation of the more popular, and certainly more canonical, Jacobean dramas of the period. While Fletcher’s *Fair Maid of the Inn* may never be a critical hit, I hope I have shown that it owes just as much to the creative

brilliance of Cervantes as Shakespeare's *Measure for Measure* owes to the sophisticated, enigmatic thematic presentation of Cinthio's "Epitia" *novelle*. Painter, a translator as well as a novelist, was able to contribute much to the Jacobean dramas that used his novellas as source material, not only through the stories themselves but through organization, narratorial commentary, and placement within the collection as a whole. There is much more that can and no doubt will be done to explore the significance of these often-overlooked early modern texts, but I hope that this dissertation has begun to reveal their importance, not only to current canonical works, but to the shape of the canon as a whole.

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