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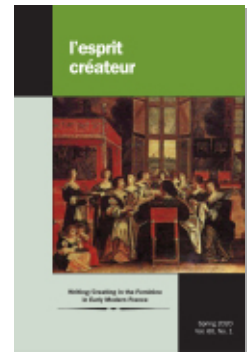
Honor Revenges in Marguerite de Navarre's *Heptaméron*

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L'Esprit Créateur, Volume 60, Number 1, Spring 2020, pp. 75-86 (Article)

Published by Johns Hopkins University Press

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1353/esp.2020.0010>



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## Honor Revenges in Marguerite de Navarre's *Heptaméron*

Cynthia Skenazi

FROM ACHILLES' WRATH at Agamemnon in the opening of the *Iliad* on, honor has been an essential component of the social life of Western elites. As with any form of conduct or code, this concept cannot be isolated from its historical and cultural context. Marguerite de Navarre's *Heptaméron* provides a lens to learn different views on this key notion from a fraction of members of the French court.<sup>1</sup> As critics have noted, the novellas, along with the discussions they generate among the ten narrators, offer a series of case studies in which the readers are invited to rethink the "gendered virtues of masculine combativeness and female chastity, silence, and obedience."<sup>2</sup> Little attention, however, has been given to the importance of honor in the *Heptaméron*'s representations of masculinity and femininity. This article focuses on stories about male and female honor revenges in the upper ranks. It argues that honor became a more flexible concept in sixteenth-century France, which served as a basis for new modes of self-evaluation and social interactions for both genders.

The question "what is honor?" elicits a wide range of answers depending on multiple parameters such as a person's gender and age, profession and social position, the location and circumstances under consideration, and so on. In Marguerite's time more specifically, this notion was part of a network of related concepts as evidenced by its definition in Randle Cotgrave's *Dictionary of the French and English Tongues* (1611): "Honneur: renowne; reputation, credit, praise, glorie, fame, great account, high reckoning, much estimation; worship, reverence; dignitie, promotion."<sup>3</sup> Defining each of these terms is no easy task for their meanings overlap and shift. One central aspect, however, has remained unchanged throughout the long history of honor in the Western world: the utterly public nature of this notion. An individual's feeling of his worth is of no use unless his qualities are publicly approved by people whose opinion one takes into account. In Latin, *honor* meant the publicly acknowledged superiority of those of high status or moral excellence. For twentieth-century anthropologist Julian Pitt-Rivers, who conducted research on Mediterranean societies in which honor was still an essential social concept, honor is "the value of a person in his own eyes, but also in the eyes of his society. It is his estimation of his own worth, his claim to pride, but it is also the acknowledgment of that claim, his excellence recognized by society,

his right to pride.”<sup>4</sup> In Marguerite’s France, honor as a matter of outward reputation played a special role in the social existence and self-fashioning of male and female members of the elite.

By elite, I mean the more privileged members of society exercising the greatest authority or enjoying the highest standing. The majority of them belonged to the aristocracy, and those who did not were nevertheless treated with a comparable deference. Despite differences in culture, power, wealth, and status, elite members were able to recognize one another if not as equals, at least as members of a particular community united by ideals of conduct and values which, in their different regional variations, bore a certain resemblance to one another. Under the umbrella of honor, French gentlemen of Marguerite’s time were concerned with various facets of their private and public life such as their family’s reputation, the attainment of office and associated influence, the performance of military duty—all of which denoted both gentle status and the possession of full, mature masculinity. Among the recurring ‘ingredients’ were birth and lineage, prowess on the battlefield, a particular lifestyle, virtue, learning and education, piety and godliness, loyalty, truthfulness, and keeping one’s promises. Sexual purity, chastity, and modesty were female honor’s primary constituents. Changes in the ranking of these components corresponded to parallel changes in members of the elite’s values; yet without honor, social existence became virtually impossible. Although the importance of this notion was taken for granted, its interpretation was an object of discussions, tensions, and ambivalences among upper rank members.

### **Male honor revenges**

The *Heptaméron*’s novellas 36 and 12 provide insights on the various and sometimes conflicting ways in which elite members understood male honor. The first story, told by Ennasuite, is about a husband who takes revenge on his enemy to preserve his family’s reputation. The young wife of an older president of Grenoble’s Parlement has an affair with a young clerk. A servant informs his master who wants to see the lovers himself before taking action. Alerted by the servant, he comes back home to catch the adulterous couple. Before entering the bedroom, he asks the servant to remain outside and block the door. He tells him that he has taken along the only key of the bedroom’s wardrobe. Honor cannot be entirely lost until it is *seen*—by others—to be lost: once in the bedroom, the president orders the lover to hide in the wardrobe and then calls in the servant to witness that the wife was alone. Then he dismisses the servant with a good severance, using the pretext that the servant had lied to him. He feels no shame before his servant whom he looks down

upon, but he fears the gossip of his peers since slanderous speech about wives is damaging to a husband's reputation and requires an appropriate response. He is especially concerned about the effects of the scandal on his daughters because an unfaithful wife inflicts disgrace on the whole family. He forces his wife to appear at various social events and tells everyone how much he loves her. He even asks her to dance with the clerk in public and in his presence. He then orders the lover to leave town immediately and for good. Much later, he poisons his wife with a salad.

In theory, honor should function as a social discipline, encouraging members of a group to perform their allotted social role by holding out the incentive of collective approbation and the deterrent of disgrace. But in this case, the importance of public reputation leads a man to commit a crime. The storytellers' reactions offer the readers various perspectives on this issue. Enna-suite sees the wife's murder as a warning to unfaithful women, while Parla-mente commends the president for his wise handling of a delicate situation. Hircan thinks that the president's revenge is appropriate because adultery is "la plus grande injure, que la femme peult faire à l'homme" (380). Longarine would have condoned the president had he killed the couple on the spot, blinded by an impulsive wrath, but she finds no moral and religious justification for his cold planning of a belated blood vengeance. As her comment makes clear, the president's action was based on a calculation of benefits and risks. Guebron responds that he acted in a self-interested way so as not to bring shame to his family; but Longarine replies that the murder was unnecessary: the wife had learned her lesson, and the husband had time to quiet down. Saffredent disagrees: the president, "le dernier jour qu'il feit sa sallade, il estoit encor aussi courroucé que le premier" (381). His reaction reveals the close connections between honor, pride, and self-esteem. That honor triggers such strong emotions, including the will to avenge an insult, is confirmed by the storytellers' final remarks on anger.

Only a formal action directly related to the circumstances of the original loss—revenge—can restore a person's honor. In an anthropological perspective, the murder committed by the president aims at rebalancing the 'level' of honor that the adultery has left unbalanced. The notion of justice takes its full meaning in a novella whose protagonist is a high-ranked lawyer. For centuries, the question of adultery was at the center of endless comments in Roman law, which was the foundation of French legal judgments. The *lex Julia de adulteriis coercendis* (promulgated by Augustus in 18 BC) was a milestone in the history of family relations and sexual ethics in this respect. With this law, female sexual behavior passed from the private family domain

to the public sphere. Illicit sexual relationships became an offense leading to a public trial against male citizens and punishable for the adulterous couple. For our purpose, suffice it to say that Augustus denied a man's previously unrestricted right to kill an adulterous wife under his legal power.<sup>5</sup> If he did, he was condemned as a murderer. Commenting on this law, the Roman jurist Ulpian (c. 170–223), still an authority in sixteenth-century French law, explains that the insult inflicted by adultery and the need to defend one's honor put a man in an uncontrollable state of emotion, therefore "the heat and violent impulse of a husband readily making a judgment was to be restrained."<sup>6</sup> As time went by, there was a legal extension of a husband's right to kill his unfaithful wife under the umbrella of a code of honor, when the lovers were caught in the act and in the husband's house. Brantôme records several cases in sixteenth-century France where honor was recognized as grounds for complete immunity for a husband who murdered his wife in the same circumstances as the president of novella 36.<sup>7</sup>

Defending one's honor might form a compelling legal excuse for murdering one's wife, but the president of novella 36, along with the *devisants*, and Marguerite's upper-class audience knew the consequences of such action: by his crime, a betrayed husband rendered his shame public. If, on the other hand, he sued his unfaithful wife, the risk of ridicule was also great. In Marguerite's story, the president manages to handle this difficult situation. He saves his public image, protects his family's honor, and takes the law into his own hands by poisoning his young wife. Secular law had no ground to punish him, but canon law had other standards in this matter: the Church did not exempt a criminal husband from eternal damnation.

Honor was a gauge by which people judged and by which they were judged, but the protean quality of its interpretations opened it up to different understandings of masculinity. For Hircan who sees noblemen's honor in a medieval martial tradition, this notion implies physical courage, violence, and military prowess. For Parlamente, on the other hand, a gentleman who defends his honor should be prudent and circumspect, two qualities most appropriate for a man of justice like the protagonist of this story. The underlying assumption of both interlocutors is that those at the apex of society should have a distinctive set of standards, yet the loyal president's servant proved to have a more honorable behavior than his master. Throughout the *Heptaméron*, the stories and the conversations they generate among the *devisants* invite readers to compare and evaluate different values as well as different human behaviors.<sup>8</sup> Novella 36 focuses on the social and emotional importance of guarding one's reputation of morality among one's peers.

Novella 12, told by Dagoucin, raises similar issues with other implications. In this tale, the Medici Duke of Florence, a noted womanizer, seeks the favors of one of his courtier's sisters and threatens to kill him if he does not arrange a date with her. The gentleman is torn. On the one hand, he owes the Duke everything, including his reputation, as he tells him: "Monsieur, je suis vostre creature, tout le bien et l'honneur que j'ay vient de vous" (168). On the other hand, he loves his sister, a virtuous lady, and values "l'honneur de sa maison plus que le plaisir du Duc" (168). He finally comes to the conclusion that "son cuer et son honneur ne se pouvoient accommoder à luy faire ce service" (168). He pretends to oblige the Duke without informing his sister. As the Duke, unarmed, waits for her in her bed, the gentleman murders him with the help of a servant. He leaves the corpse in the bedroom, asks the bishop to open the city's gates, and disappears in Turkey. When the corpse is found, it is too late to arrest the gentleman, but the bishop confiscates his properties. In the end, the lady is informed of her brother's action and is grateful to him. Each of the gentleman's two sisters marries an honest nobleman.

Once again, the story generates contradictory reactions. For the male storytellers who understand honor in terms of allegiance to a lord, protocol, and hierarchy, the gentleman was a "traistre et mauvais serviteur" who killed "celuy qui luy avoit faict tant de bien et d'honneur" (173). In their perspective, the primary source of a courtier's honor is skillful service to his superior. For their female counterparts, on the other hand, the gentleman was a good brother and a good citizen. He protected his own life, his sister's honor, and his family reputation; moreover, he freed the city from an immoral and cruel tyrant. They point out the importance of a nobleman's sexual respectability. The Duke's libertine conduct implied contempt for Florence's ethical order, hence for the court's honor. These remarks cast the female storytellers as educators, yet the author-narrator prefaces them by noting that "les dames selon leur coustume, parloient autant par passion que par raison" (173).

In his *Epistles* (a widely influential work in sixteenth-century France), Seneca argues that honor (as defined in terms of outward reputation) is "the praise rendered to a good man by good men": "For just as reputation does not consist of one person's remarks, and as ill repute does not consist of one person's disapproval, so renown does not mean that we have merely pleased one good person."<sup>9</sup> In novella 12, the bishop's decision to punish the gentleman *in absentia* (by confiscating his properties) should not be trusted, and the comments of the male storytellers are worth less than those of the female ones. Yet the story does not end well for the protagonist; the contrast between his voluntary exile and the unchanged and comfortable situation of

the president in novella 36 is striking in this respect. The latter understood honor in its most inauthentic form of public recognition and sought to deceive his peers; yet his strategy worked well for him. In novella 12, on the other hand, the prospect of compromising his career did not influence the gentleman. He was convinced that a good name was worth far more than wealth and social status at the court. He drew his self-respect from a deliberate adherence to a demanding standard of behavior, but outward reputation and inner virtue are not distinct notions in this story: the gentleman's honor was temporarily 'suspended' through an error in the bishop's interpretation of the gentleman's action, but he persisted in being honorable in the eyes of his most valuable judges.

Together, the two novellas show the centrality of honor in a nobleman's life and the elusive nature of a concept that could encourage or destroy an individual's ethical concerns. Both stories question the treatment of honor as merely a name bestowed by people on themselves that is of no real value and the overly ambitious pursuit of social recognition. What emerges from the two stories is an effort, sometimes strained, to articulate different imperatives that could be contradictory. It is precisely on those areas where a single rigid 'honor code' of conduct is ineffective that Marguerite's novellas, along with the storytellers' comments, focus. Interestingly, some of the older rules are often not so much discarded as reinterpreted and integrated within a new social language. The duke's murder in novella 12 exemplifies this shift: for the gentleman, honor is still a matter of aggressive violence, but the male aristocratic ideal of combativeness now coexists with classical concepts of honor emphasizing moral excellence and personal integrity. Moreover, the nobleman's traditional service to his lord strikes a nationalistic note since the gentleman pledges allegiance to the city of Florence rather than to its immoral ruler.

Ideals that for centuries were passed from one generation to another, somehow impersonally and without being questioned, are now reported as lived experiences, debated, and examined in their complexity. As evidenced by the discussions following the stories, the realm of 'civil conversation' was also an arena of competition for outward reputation, where gentlemen like Hircan have to maintain their sense of honor (or rather their own version of it), and enhance their male status in defensive or assertive social display. An ironic exchange on love and honor between Ennasuite and Dagoucin adds another layer of complexity, by emphasizing that a gentleman may not mean what he says to a lady: "une response honneste et gratieuse, telle que parfaite et honneste amitié requiert, n'y pourroit qu'accroistre l'honneur et amender la conscience," Dagoucin observes. To which Ennasuite immediately replies,

“c’est tousjours la fin de voz raisons qui commencent par honneur et finent par le contraire” (174).

### **Female honor revenges**

Throughout the *Heptaméron*, modesty and chastity are undoubtedly important in the construction of female identity, but sexual conduct is only one aspect of an honorable lady’s behavior. In many ways, male and female conceptions of honor as they appear in Marguerite’s collection overlap. For both female and male characters, considerations of communal pressure accompany inner feelings and demonstrable virtues. For both genders, honor serves as a frame of reference in reaching decisions about self-presentation and social interactions. Novellas 4 and 21 provide suggestive ways to examine the diversity of opinions on this matter and the range of elements to consider.

Novella 4 is about a virtuous young princess who lives with her brother and her sister-in-law in Flanders. She is a witty widow who often joins her brother at social events. A gentleman courts her, and because of her polite refusal of any love conversation, he is convinced that he can easily conquer her. He invites her brother to stay in his house for a few days under the pretext of hunting; as usual, the princess comes along. At night, the suitor slips in her bed, but she resists, scratching and biting him. She then calls her lady-in-waiting (“sa dame d’honneur”), and her attacker flees without being recognized. He is so disfigured that he stays in his room in the morning pretending to be ill, when his guests take their leave. The princess is now certain that he was her aggressor. She wants her brother to avenge her publicly, but the lady-in-waiting prevents her from doing so. She points out that an honorable lady should not be too ready to take offence in reacting angrily. This advice, which echoes some of the storytellers’ observations at the end of novella 36, is particularly suited to women whose honor is based on “douceur, patience, et chasteté,” in Parlemente’s words elsewhere (novella 43, 427). The lady-in-waiting adds another consideration: spreading the news of the assault could make her peers believe that her friendly behavior encouraged the gentleman’s attempt, since everyone was used to seeing them together. Moreover, should the brother provoke the gentleman in a duel, the princess would be held responsible for one of these men’s death.

For some elite members, female honor was obviously more than a question of sexual conduct; it was a key facet of a lady’s social and personal life. In *The Civilizing Process*, Norbert Elias argues that standards of personal behavior took root during the sixteenth century; the Church and court society each demanded that men and women more tightly control their impulses and



accommodate their behavior to elaborate standards of decorum.<sup>10</sup> Likewise, in the lady-in-waiting's opinion, vengeance is a human urge that requires proper direction. Shame and unrequited love are the gentleman's best punishment, she says. The princess would even benefit by forgiving her offender because a reputation for kindness is a marker of honor. One of the implications of Elias' thesis is that matters related to honor entered the context of manners. Self-discipline and a circumspect behavior became more important in impressing one's equals than combativeness and violence, which had been central to male noble identity. In novella 4, the lady-in-waiting reminds the princess that honor should be a spur to and an expression of virtue, a notion to which I shall return shortly. Moreover, the princess should make sure that she has nothing to reproach herself. Boasting of her victory would make her like her suitor, blinded by pride and self-love. Instead she should humbly thank God who helped her to resist an attractive gentleman physically stronger than her.

The princess follows her lady-in-waiting's advice and finds peace of mind. This is her reward for having made the right choice. Her suitor, on the other hand, is overcome with sorrow and shame. Like honor, shame is based on a personal evaluation of one's value and functions as a social sanction that ensures a certain level of performance in accord with a group's norms. The gentleman falls short of being the self he wants to be; what he has done has brought him disrespect in his own eyes. He also suffers from guilt for having acted immorally. He comes back to the court once his wounds have healed and blushes when he sees the princess. From then on, she maintains a polite distance from him, a behavior particularly compelling when exercised by a social superior. He has lost any hope of conquering her heart. As the lady-in-waiting predicted, the princess's gentle and considerate reaction was more effective than a public scandal, a duel or any other threat of violence.

For Hircan who champions the medieval male honor code of combativeness, the suitor should have killed the lady-in-waiting instead of fleeing; the princess would have then been helpless. His remark echoes the comments he made in novellas 36 and 12: in his view, a man's honor is a matter of physical courage and sexual conquest. Parlamente sums up such a conception of masculinity elsewhere: Hircan believes that men's (more specifically noblemen's) "plaisir gist à deshonorer les femmes et [leur] honneur à tuer les hommes en guerre, qui sont deux pointcs formellement contraires à la loy de Dieu" (novella 27, 328). Hircan is convinced that an honorable man has to take vengeance on his offender; he who does not respond to an affront risks shame. Moreover, cowardice is a major factor of male dishonor; a nobleman cannot

“perdre la face”—which the gentleman literally did in novella 4, since he was disfigured. In contrast to Hircan, the female storytellers condemn the suitor’s assault and praise the princess’s defense of her chastity as well as the lady-in-waiting’s wisdom.

Men’s and women’s honor are dissimilar, yet this notion proves to be a key aspect of the social experience and self-fashioning of both genders. An honorable elite member—whether female or male—is a person of superior moral strength, with a strong sense of self-discipline and a good judgment insofar as the protean nature of honor involves evaluations and qualities related to conflict resolution. By and large, these features correspond to classical moralists’ views of virtue. In his *Epistles*, Seneca observes:

But the happy man, whose virtue is complete, loves himself most of all when his bravery has been submitted to the severest test, and when he not only endures but welcomes that which all other men regard with fear, if it is the price which he must pay for the performance of a duty which honor imposes, and he greatly prefers to have men say of him: “how much more noble!” rather than “how much more lucky!” (*Epistles* 71, 90–91)

These qualities are essential when seeking “a life of the greatest honor, and not of the greatest security” (*Epistles* 104, 204–5), but in the *Heptaméron*, honor depends ultimately on God. Novella 21 provides a striking case of this religious perspective.

In this story, the virtuous Rolandine is a close relative of the queen and a member of her entourage. Having an honest and virtuous husband as well as children is an important factor in the *Heptaméron*’s representation of female honor. Indeed, at age thirty, Rolandine is ashamed not to be married. Neglected by her father who is unwilling to provide her with a dowry, disliked by the queen, she has turned entirely to God. She falls in love with a bastard of noble birth but inferior house, neither rich nor handsome. The queen forbids her to see him, but they keep communicating with each other despite the queen’s close watch, and marry secretly, taking God as a witness of their vows. For the queen and for Rolandine’s father who understand honor in terms of lineage, this wedding is unacceptable because Rolandine must preserve and enhance the honor transmitted to her by her ancestors. Should she fail to do so, her shame is passed on to her relatives. In a long speech, Rolandine accuses the queen of having distorted the meaning of her wedding, using repeatedly the word “honor”: “d’une chose bonne, et juste, et sainte, dont jamais n’eust esté bruit que bien honorable, sinon que vous l’avez trop tost eventé, et fait sortir un scandale, qui monstre assez l’envie que vous avez de mon deshonneur estre plus grande, que le vouloir de conserver l’honneur de vostre maison” (266).

Rolandine is convinced that her marriage meets God's approval since the Church recognizes a couple's exchange of vows. As she keeps telling the queen, "je sçay que Dieu et mon honneur n'y sont en rien offensez" (266); "ma conscience et mon honneur ne me reprennent point en ceste affaire" (266). Indeed, her love is based "sur la vertu et sur l'honneur" (256) because at her request the bastard agreed not to consummate the marriage before being granted her father's consent. Although the bastard loves Rolandine, he is attracted to her wealth and high social rank. His calculating behavior leads him to seek "les honneurs": "Il n'y avoit gueres lieu où l'honneur se peust acquerir, que ledict bastard n'y allast" (257). Rolandine turns down several marriage proposals during his absence. Upon his return, they resume their secret meetings until the queen intercepts a letter mentioning their marriage. Rolandine refuses to comply with the queen's order to disregard her wedding and is sent back to her father who imprisons her. Meanwhile, the bastard, who had hoped to gain the king's favor with his military prowess at war, has to flee to avoid being put in jail. His letters to his wife soon start striking a colder note as he is about to marry a wealthy lady in Germany.

The story ends with three successive deaths. First, the bastard dies, and Rolandine calls her father who repents. With his consent, she marries an honest gentleman of the same rank as her, who bears the arms of her own family. Her father passes away, and her brother who stole her inheritance dies, leaving her his wealth. The story ends well for Rolandine: "Ainsi elle fut heritiere d'une bonne et grosse maison, où elle vesquit honorablement et saintement en l'amour de son mary. Et après avoir eslevé deux fils que Dieu leur donna, rendit joyeusement son ame à celuy où de long temps elle avoit sa parfaite confiance" (271).

Rolandine's story articulates a new set of values and expectations without, however, overthrowing the notion of honor. Following the Gospels and Saint Paul's *Epistles*, the protagonist defines *whose* acknowledgement really counts: true honor is honor in the eyes of God. "I care very little if I am judged by you or by any human court," Saint Paul notes. "It is the Lord who judges me" (I. *Cor.*, 4:3-4).<sup>11</sup> This kind of honor cannot be inherited; it is offered up to God and to those whom he holds in the highest regard among humans. If you lack grace, you will not attain honor; each is a precondition of the other. Rolandine closely follows Jesus' lessons. She knows that everything that shines in the world—wealth, reputation, social status, and lineage—can become an offense to God. In Saint Matthew's version, Jesus blames individuals like the bastard who seek to gain honor and power by the mere appearance of virtue: "Be careful not to do your 'acts of righteousness' before men,

to be seen by them. If you do, you will have no reward from your Father in Heaven” (Matt. 6:1). Likewise, for Rolandine, honor means dispossession, renunciation of all pretension to precedence. The queen and Rolandine’s father (before the latter repents) see her as a person to be ashamed of; this is the cross of the true Christian: the loss of outward reputation in the eyes of some of one’s peers.

Yet rewards await such an individual. Jesus contrasts grants of honor from neighbors with grants from God (Matt. 19:27–29; John 12:43). “Honored are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me” (Matt. 5:11).<sup>12</sup> In Saint John’s version, Jesus disdains praise and honor in the eyes of the world (John 5:41; 7:18; 8:50). In novella 21, however, sacred and profane perspectives on honor are closely linked since God counters the shame and social disgrace that Rolandine suffered on his account with true honor in this world. On her way to the prison, she gains the respect of her community for humbly submitting to God’s will instead of obeying the queen’s order. Although she never seeks revenge for being badly treated, God would have risked his own honor by not retaliating. The bastard’s and the brother’s deaths are the result of a divine intervention restoring justice in this life (270–71).

Parlamente, who told this story, immediately comments on Rolandine’s behavior in terms of honor. She tells the female storytellers, “gardez vous bien que nul die qu’elle ait offense son honneur, veut que par sa fermeté, elle est occasion d’augmenter la nostre” (271). Interestingly, Rolandine’s submission to God challenges the queen’s authority but does not put into question her filial duty. It is true that she did not ask for parental consent before marrying the bastard—a question much debated in the juridical and theological circles of sixteenth-century France; but at age thirty, she was legally free to do so.<sup>13</sup> In addition, the disposition of her heart and mind is more important than her act of disobedience itself; in fact, she never dishonored her father since her first marriage was not consummated. Once a widow, she respectfully asks for her father’s consent before her second marriage. Throughout the novella, she complies with the fifth Commandment, “Honor your father (and mother).” In Saint Matthew’s gospel, sons who are shamed by their families for disloyalty to their social traditions are honored by adoption into a new and better family, that is, “sons of your Father who is in Heaven” (Matt. 5:45). Likewise, in contrast to her biological father who was unfair to her for years, Rolandine’s divine father is the most honorable one in the whole cosmos.

**A flexible concept**

From Homer's *Iliad* to Marguerite de Navarre's *Heptaméron*, the psychological strength of honor derives from the enduring human desire for the esteem of one's peers. In this respect, honor's ability to include an individual into his community and its role in differentiating him from others remained unchanged for centuries. What changed in sixteenth-century France was the range of interpretations of this notion, and the ways it could be invoked in the context of specific aims and values, forcing nobles into more individualistic modes of thoughts. This aspect was the outcome of honor's different legacies. For gentlemen, the medieval code of violence, with its emphasis on lineage and on allegiance to one's lord coexisted with moral and religious concerns. For ladies, honor became also a more diffuse concept which involved negotiations between matters of individual conscience, self-presentation, and social interactions. Marguerite's collection is thus a valuable document on the changing identity of the French elite.

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*Notes*

1. Nicole Cazauran in Marguerite de Navarre, *L'Heptaméron*, Nicole Cazauran and Sylvie Lefèvre, eds. (Paris: Gallimard, 2000), 44.
2. Theresa Brock, "Subverting Seduction: Gender and Genre in Marguerite de Navarre's *Heptaméron*," *Women in French Studies*, 26 (2018): 14.
3. Randle Cotgrave, *A Dictionarie of the French and English Tongues* (London: Adam Islip, 1611).
4. Julian Pitt-Rivers, "Honor and Social Status," in *Honor and Shame: The Values of Mediterranean Society*, J. G. Peristiany, ed. (Chicago: U Chicago P, 1965), 21.
5. There were, however, some provisions of the *lex Julia*. The husband could kill his wife's lover if he caught him in his own house and if the lover was a slave, a disreputable person or a freedman of the family. Eva Cantarella, "Homicides of Honor: The Development of Italian Adultery Law over Two Millennia," in *The Family in Italy from Antiquity to the Present*, David Kertzer and Richard Saller, eds. (New Haven: Yale U P, 1991), 233.
6. Alan Watson, ed., *The Digest of Justinian* (Philadelphia: U of Pennsylvania P, 1985), 48.5.23.4
7. Cazauran, 688.
8. John Lyons, *Exemplum: The Rhetoric of Example in Early Modern France* (Princeton: Princeton U P, 1989), 91.
9. Seneca, *Epistles*, Richard M. Gummere, trans. (Cambridge: Harvard U P, 1917), Ep. 102, 172-73. Aristotle states that honor (*timè*), great or small, is of two kinds; it may be given by a crowd of ordinary men or by those worthy of consideration. *Nicomachean Ethics*, H. Rackham, trans. (Cambridge: Harvard U P, 1933), IV, 218-19.
10. Norbert Elias, *The Civilizing Process: Sociogenetic and Psychogenetic Investigations*, Elias Jephcott, trans. (London: Blackwell, 2000), 155-69.
11. *Bible*, New International Version (Colorado Springs: International Bible Society, 1984).
12. Same observation in Luke 6:22.
13. Cazauran, 663. See also Emily Thomson, "Shifting Rules and Shifty Wives: A Historical Reading of Three Tales from the *Heptaméron*," *L'Esprit Créateur*, 57:3 (2017): 67-78.